**EXAMINING RAPE CULTURE; WHO IS OFFENDING AND WHY?**

by

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Abstract

Sexual assaults in North American society continue to be prevalent and the number of victims coming

forward with sexual assault allegations are growing. This paper looks at the role rape culture plays, if

any, within our society and if it is a contributing factor to the continuing incidents of sexual assaults

among college campuses. Furthermore, the paper looks at the potential connection between sexual

assault perpetrators and narcissism. This paper makes multiple recommendations including the need for

great social change in the way we view our roles in society and the need of creating more student-led

policies.

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Dedication

I dedicate this paper and my educational success to my beautiful loving wife and my parents.

I also dedicate this paper to all the kids in school who have been told they are not smart enough to be successful or have been doubted by others. Never give up! Prove everyone wrong!

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Introduction

        Sexual harassment and sexual assaults in North American society continue to be prevalent. In fact, recent media coverage conveys that North America is currently experiencing a crisis. As a result of the #metoo movement, victims are increasingly becoming apparent. The latest statistics indicate the seriousness of the issue as annual self-reported incidents of sexual assault increased to 636,000 in Canada alone (Conroy & Cotter, 2014). With such high numbers, it is no wonder the issues around sexual assault, rape, and rape culture have been making headlines across the nation.

        Progress by the anti-rape movement over the past forty years has been remarkable, and has included increased awareness and recognition of the problem, the proliferation of victim services, legislation reform to criminalize these behaviours, and the creation of new policies to help with reporting; yet, there is still a lot that needs to be done, as sexual assault incidents continue to occur (Conroy & Cotter, 2011; McMahon & Farmer, 2011). Moreover, incidents of sexual assault are happening in all areas of society, including in the workplace and on school campuses; two places where one would expect to be safe from such incidents. While school campuses have been dealing with rape and rape prevention for the last twenty years, their prevention efforts appear to have limited effect to date as evidenced by the continued reporting of sexual assaults and sexual harassments on campuses across North America (Banyard et al., 2005; Senn et al., 2014).

        Sexual assaults are not only an individual or social issue, but also a major criminal justice and public health problem as well (Kamdar, Kosambiya, Chawada, Verma, & Kadia, 2017; McMahon, 2010). The costs include everything from taking the offender through the criminal justice system (policing, courts, incarceration, probation/parole) to costs associated with the victim going through the health care system (hospital stays, counselling, medical treatments). Due to the negative psychological and physical effects as well as the direct and indirect costs associated with sexual assault, there is a special and urgent need for the continued efforts to identify predictors and factors of sexual assault (Sutton &

Simons, 2015). This includes gaining a better understanding of what rape culture is and what role it may play in shaping individuals' perceptions of and attitudes towards sexual assault. Understanding the factors that contribute to an individual's risk of offending can enable the identification of what needs to change in order to reduce any future risks (Grubin, 2004). By conducting a literature review of the existing research, this paper will examine the notion of rape culture and determine what role, if any, rape culture plays in our society. Furthermore, this paper will explore predictive factors by reviewing whether there are higher rates of sexual assault among certain population groups and if so, why that is. Additionally, in hopes of identifying more predictive factors, this paper will examine the potential connection between sexual assault perpetrators and narcissism. Finally, this paper will provide recommendations in anticipation of reducing, preventing, and eliminating rape cultures and, subsequently, sexual assaults.

## Definitional Issues

One of the difficulties with preventing sexual assault is the inconsistent terminology used in its definition. For example, many ordinary citizens continue to use the word "rape" and believe "rape" is an offence under the *Criminal Code of Canada* (CCC). However, the term "rape" was replaced in the CCC in January 1983 under Bill C-127 with a more broad term (Tang, 1998). Today, rape is known as "sexual assault". The CCC defines sexual assault as an assault that is committed in circumstances of a sexual nature, such that the sexual integrity of the victim is violated (Hoddenbagh, Zhang, & McDonald, 2014). The CCC definition is therefore very vague and broad, with little detail given to the exact components, such as whether it is physical penetration, penetration with an object, touching, oral, or sexual exposure. However, the CCC does categorize sexual assault by breaking it down into three levels: sexual assault, sexual assault with a weapon, and aggravated sexual assault (Hoddenbagh et al., 2014). It is also important to distinguish sexual assault from sexual harassment as the two vary in definition. Sexual

harassment is defined as behaviour characterized by the making of unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks or sexual advances (Oxford, 2018).

Conversely, rape in its originality was defined very precisely and identified specific components. Rape was defined as being vaginal, anal, or oral sexual intercourse obtained through force or threat of force; containing a lack of consent; or the inability to give consent due to age, intoxication, or mental status (Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan, 2004). Adding further to the confusion, many people interchange rape, sexual harassment, and sexual assault with "sexual coercion", even though sexual coercion is completely different. Whereas rape and sexual assault are physical actions, sexual coercion is a non-physical behaviour. Sexual coercion can be defined as behaviour that involves an array of tactics to gain sexual access to an unwilling partner, such as the use of frequent arguments, verbal pressure and threats to end a relationship, lying, and emotional manipulations (Zeigler-Hill, Enjaian, & Essa, 2013).

To further add to the lack of clarity around definitions, individuals may have difficulties defining the above terms because they believe the definitions may change based on situational factors (Burnette et al., 2009). Many believe that an act or behaviour in one situation may be differently defined than if it were in another situation. For example, a man slapping a woman's buttocks in a bar as she walks by may not be defined as sexual assault compared to if the man and woman were waiting in a bank line up or at an office workplace. Although the action of slapping a non-consenting woman's buttocks, regardless of where it took place, is a sexual assault, many people may not define it as such within the bar setting. One negative outcome of the inability to have a common definition by all is that it mutes or prevents victims from speaking about their experiences since individuals who cannot properly define sexual assault will not be able to relate to or understand the victim and given the example above, may not even be aware that they have been the victim of a sexual assault  (Burnette el al., 2009; Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017).

Although the definitions of both rape and sexual coercion have much greater detail than sexual assault, this level of detail means that they can also be restrictive. For the purpose of this paper, the term "sexual assault" and its broad definition will be used to include everything that was previously defined under rape, as well as all other forms of non-consensual sexual contact, including sexual coercion and sexual harassment (Sutton & Simons, 2015). Furthermore, this paper will use the term "victim" to describe anyone who is subject to a sexual assault. Although many may prefer the term "survivor" as it gives credit, strength, and power to the individual, others believe it can downplay the seriousness and criminal nature of the behaviour. Using the term victim more strongly conveys that these behaviours are crimes unwillingly inflicted upon others. Additionally, some proponents explain that a survivor is someone has been through an incident and has healed or moved on, whereas many individuals or victims of a sexual assault never truly heal or are able to move on. As this paper's aim is to speak about the seriousness of the crime of sexual assault, the term victim is therefore best suited. It should be noted that the term victim does not downplay or minimize the strength, power, or ability of individuals who have had to experience a sexual assault.

Finally, it should be noted that victims are both males and females and perpetrators are both males and females; however, for the purpose of this paper, the female pronoun will be used for victims whereas the male pronoun will be used for perpetrators, as this relationship matches the typical statistical profile of sexual assault cases.

### Negative Consequences of Sexual Assaults

It could be argued that sexual assaults are on the top end of the most serious crimes possible because of the array of negative effects it has on the victim and on society as a whole (Hoddenbagh et al., 2014). The negative impact of sexual assault includes harmful physical and mental health issues, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases (STD), depression, suicidal ideation, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Senn et al., 2014; Sutton & Simons, 2015). The sexual assault

itself or the victim fighting back may cause physical injuries to the victim, such as bruising and cuts. They

may receive physical scars that could last forever, which would be a constant reminder of their pain and

suffering. Mentally, the victim can feel embarrassed, shamed, or helpless, which could lead to self-

blaming (Lee, Pomeroy, Yoo, & Rheinoldt, 2005). This can be particularly difficult if the victim is from a

small community or peer group, since they may believe that everyone knows about the incident.

Furthermore, these negative thoughts can spiral into depression or suicide (Rainn, 2018). As the effects

of the incident linger and the victim continues to suffer, they can also progress into PTSD (Conroy &

Cotter, 2014).

Additionally, sexual assault victims often experience secondary effects, such as poor future

interpersonal relationships, poor academic or work performance, and lower self-esteem levels

(McMahon, 2010; Sutton & Simons, 2015; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013). Victims can become isolated and

closed off from their community, resulting in fewer relationships, both socially and professionally. This,

ultimately, results in a lack of social support for the victim at the time when it may be most needed.

Furthermore, sexual assault victims can have more negative perceptions of their neighbourhoods, lower

levels of trust towards others, and less confidence in the police, as compared to non-victims (Conroy &

Cotter, 2014). For instance, an individual who may have been previously active within their community,

going for evening walks, helping neighbours, and believing in the police may no longer do such activities.

Victims can also suffer what is known as "secondary traumatization" as a result of the criminal

justice system response to their victimization. This secondary traumatization occurs when victims are

questioned, interviewed, or spoken to by professionals, such as police, lawyers, judges, health care

workers, and counsellors, who may lack the proper training and education to respond to victims using a

trauma-informed approach (Potter, 2016). When an individual must enter the criminal justice system by

virtue of being a victim of a crime, they are required to describe the incident, in great detail, over and

over again. At almost every stage and with every new professional, they must describe what happened,

their feelings, and their thoughts. This process can trigger many negative flashbacks and in fact, cause greater harm than the initial incident (Bartol & Bartol, 2005). Furthermore, if the professionals are not trained to be supportive or the victim themselves feel that they are receiving a non-supportive reaction, they may experience further psychological harm (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Hence, it is important to make sure that anyone who interacts with victims of sexual assault, including all criminal justice professionals, health care workers, and even family and friends, understand the harmful short- and long-term effects of sexual assault on an individual. In essence, there is a need for trauma-informed practice. Being trauma-informed means becoming aware and understanding of the way in which individuals who have experienced a traumatic event have their future life trajectories shaped by the experience itself and its effects (Randall & Haskell, 2013). It is about understanding how trauma can change the way of life for an individual and how this knowledge can help better the life of trauma exposed individuals.

The traumatization and suffering a victim feels is often magnified when the sexual assault is perpetrated by an acquaintance, friend, or loved one because of the implied trust that had previously characterized the relationship (Bartol & Bartol, 2005). Since a majority of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, victims will often have a harder time trusting people in the future (Conroy & Cotter, 2014; Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017; Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010; Iconis, 2008; McMahon, 2010; Senn et al., 2014). This adds to their suffering as they are not able to express themselves or open up to individuals they would have normally in the past. If a woman was out with a group of her friends and she was sexually assaulted, she may feel like her friends did not protect her or she may not trust going out with them again since the last time she went out with them, she was sexually assaulted. Again, this has a negative ongoing effect on the victim in that they may withdraw from their social relationships.

Sexual Assault Statistics

Sexual assaults are among one of the very rare crimes that have not decreased over the years (Banyard et al., 2005; Senn et al., 2014). According to the General Social Survey (GSS), there were approximately 636,000 self-reported incidents of sexual assault in 2014, a number that remained unchanged from a decade ago (Conroy & Cotter, 2014). These are only incidents that victims voluntarily reported in a survey and not necessarily to the police. In fact, this figure clearly does not reflect police reported statistics as multiple studies have shown that sexual assault is amongst one of the most underreported crimes (Belknap, 2010; Conroy & Cotter, 2014; Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017; Hayes, Abbott, & Cook, 2016; Lee et al., 2005; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). As a result of underreporting, official police and court statistics are much lower. In fact, Fisher et al. (2003) found that only 2% of sexual assault victims make police reports and only 4% of victims report their victimization to a campus or school authority (Banyard et al., 2005; Belknap, 2010). To illustrate this, in 2014, according to the Uniformed Crime Report (UCR), there were only 20,735 police-reported sexual assaults (Conroy & Cotter, 2014). In fact, taking the self-reported figure of 636,000 from the GSS and the UCR figure of 20,735 provides a police reporting rate of around 3%, similar to Fisher et al.'s findings.

Sexual assaults are not just a Canadian problem, nor are they isolated to just one region. The reality is that sexual assaults are becoming a global epidemic and are occurring at significant rates in some sub-populations. In the United States alone, someone is sexually assaulted every two minutes, and that number is four times greater for a college-aged female (Bouffard, 2010), meaning a college-aged female is sexually assaulted every 30 seconds in the United States. Research has actually indicated that more than one in four college or university female students have been sexually assaulted in North America (Klaw et al., 2005; McMahon, 2010; Senn et al., 2014; Sutton & Simons, 2015). Similarly, across the globe, sexual assaults are also an issue; for example, in India a woman is sexually assaulted every twenty minutes (Kamdar et al., 2017).

Overall, with everything else being equal, women are six times more likely to be sexually assaulted than men (Conroy & Cotter, 2014). In particular, women between 16 to 24 years of age are at the greatest risk of being a victim of sexual assault (Belknap, 2010; Conroy & Cotter, 2014; Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017; Hayes et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2005; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). This age group is at higher risk because of their immaturity and more frequent social engagements. In fact, approximately 41% of all self-reported sexual assaults incidents in Canada were reported by students aged 15 to 24 (Conroy & Cotter, 2014). One theory is that they are just starting off their sexual experiences and are engaging in very inexperienced relationships. Of all the college-aged women who were victims of a sexual assault, 80% of the incidents occurred during a woman's first year in college or university with someone they knew (Bartol & Bartol, 2005). Statistics indicate that more than half of sexual assaults that involve full sexual intercourse are with a romantic partner of the victim (Banyard et al., 2005). Furthermore, this age group is also just beginning their experience with alcohol and recreational drugs. Their inexperience, along with their desire to be accepted by their social groups, makes them more vulnerable, and so creates a very risky and dangerous situation.

As previously noted, the official statistics on sexual assault do not illustrate the complete picture, since research has identified gaps between actual and reported incidents (Belknap, 2010; Conroy & Cotter, 2014; Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017; Hayes et al., 2016). There are many reasons why sexual assault victims may not report their incident to the police. Victims may fear judgement, self-blame, and mislabelling from both their peers and friends/family, as well as from authorities (Franiuk, Seefelt, & Vandello, 2008; Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Hayes et al., 2016; Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013; Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010; Lee et al., 2005; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). In some cases, victims would rather forget that a sexual assault ever took place than come forward and be subject to negativity from others. There may also be a fear of retaliation, which prevents them from stepping forward with their claims (Kamdar et al., 2017). Victims may believe that if they came forward with allegations of a

sexual assault, particularly against a person in power or authority that they may retaliate against them. For example, a person in power or authority may spread false rumours or fail to offer career development opportunities to the individual as forms of retaliation. Likewise, some researchers have noted that sexual assaults are underreported due to the idea that victims are muted or unable to communicate their incident due to the dominant group's or perpetrator's ability to silence them (Burnette et al., 2009). What this means is that because of the position, power, or control some perpetrators have over their victims, victims are unable or unwilling to speak out for fear of further victimization. For example, victims can be silenced through tactics of fear, such as fear of retaliation, judgement, and labelling. A perpetrator may also scare a victim by telling them that they will spread false rumors about them or they will have them fired from their job if they report the incident. Furthermore, a victim in a male dominant group will often be silenced through peer pressure by other males to not report the incident.

Even with only the fraction of incidents that are brought forward, sexual assaults still have a substantial cost associated with them. As summarized in Table 1, the total costs of all sexual assaults cost Canadians over $4.8 Billion in 2009 (Hoddenbagh et al, 2014). In fact, sexual assaults cost more than homicides (at $3.7 Billion) and cost more than common assault ($2.08 Billion), criminal harassment ($472 Million), and robbery ($1.5 Billion) combined ($4.05 Billion) (Hoddenbagh et al, 2014). Since the nature of these crimes means that victims often experience physical, emotional, and psychological suffering to an extent not often seen with other victims, there are additional costs accompanying them. For example, victims of sexual assaults must often seek medical and professional help in the form of hospitals, care aids, and counselling, which can cost the system upwards of $64.1 million (Hoddenbagh et al, 2014). Furthermore, when looking at policing costs alone, aside from murders, sexual assaults (level 3 offences) are the most costly, costing police approximately $50,894 per incident (Hoddenbagh et al, 2014). Even with the majority of victims being able to identify their perpetrator to the police, since

the majority of perpetrators are previously known to the victim (Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017; Iconis, 2008; Kamdar et al., 2017), these costs shows just how complex and difficult sexual assault investigations can be.

**Table 1: Summary of costs- sexual assault and other sexual offences** (Hoddenbagh et al., 2014)

| Cost category or item | Female victims | Male victims | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Justice system costs | | | |
| Criminal justice system costs | $137,693,965 | $12,355,133 | $150,049,098 |
| Total Justice system costs | $137,693,965 | $12,355,133 | $150,049,098 |
| Victim costs | | | |
| Medical costs | $64,133,011 | $48,988,297 | $113,121,308 |
| Lost productivity | $210,169,873 | $676,900 | $210,846,773 |
| Intangible costs | $3,140,618,999 | $1,151,014,152 | $4,291,633,150 |
| Other costs | $576,966 | $0 | $576,966 |
| Total Victim costs | $3,415,498,849 | $1,200,679,349 | $4,616,178,197 |
| Third-party costs | | | |
| Employer losses | $8,872,446 | $9,555,258 | $18,427,704 |
| Social services operating costs | $26,208,747 | $5,729,081 | $31,937,827 |
| Total Third-party costs | $35,081,192 | $15,284,339 | $50,365,531 |
| **Total Sexual assault and other sexual offences** | **$3,588,274,006** | **$1,228,318,820** | **$4,816,592,826** |

Of the perpetrators that are reported by victims, only approximately 1% of them are successfully prosecuted (Franiuk et al., 2008). Obviously, a 1% prosecution rate is extremely low and should be of serious concern. Although this paper does not go further into the reasons for such low rates, one can assume that there are a variety of reasons, including victims who are unwilling to stand trial, a lack of evidence, or perhaps even the inability or unwillingness of police to do proper investigations. A 2017 Globe and Mail investigation into how police dealt with sexual assault complaints found that 1 in 5 complaints were dismissed or considered unfounded by police because they could not gather the proper evidence needed (Doolittle et al., 2017). Even with the 1% prosecution rate, the likelihood for the prosecution of men with a professional, privileged, or powerful status becomes even less (Bartol & Bartol, 2005). Professional, privileged, or powerful men seem to somehow have their cases dropped or are taken to court unsuccessfully. There therefore needs to be greater attention placed on ensuring that

prosecution rates increase and justice for victims is sought. On top of the already low reporting

problems, a failure to prosecute or conduct proper investigations would only further deter victims away

from reporting in the future.


## Perpetrators of Sexual Assault

Although anyone is capable of being a perpetrator and anyone is at risk of being a victim, the

statistics indicate that the vast majority of perpetrators are males, while the majority of victims are

females (Conroy & Cotter, 2014; Iconis, 2008). Within the male population, there are certain sub-groups

who appear to have a higher likelihood of engaging in sexual assaults than others. For example, within

the college and university population, fraternity men are three times more likely than non-fraternity

men to commit a sexual assault (Franklin, Bouffard, & Pratt, 2012; McMahon, 2010; Sharp, Weiser,

Lavigne, & Kelly, 2017). Furthermore, men who participate in team-based sports or live in all-male

residences not only have a higher likelihood of committing sexual assaults but also have greater levels of

acceptance towards sexual assault behaviours by others (Carr & VanDeusen, 2004; Franklin et al., 2012;

Hayes et al., 2016; McMahon, 2010; Powers, Leili, Hagman, & Cohn, 2015).

Researchers have argued that the athletic culture of privilege and masculinity may be

contributing to the increased likelihood of committing sexual assaults (Franiuk et al., 2008; Suarez &

Gadalla, 2010). There is a perception that college athletes, particularly all-star athletes, must be strong,

tough, masculine men, who every woman would love to be with. Athletes gain their prestige, power,

and masculinity by being physically dominating (Burnette et al., 2009). This false perception has created

a situation where an athlete who may be insecure with their own masculinity or who is unable to

physically dominate on the sports field tries endlessly to prove their masculinity to others and

themselves through sexually assaulting others (Sharp et al., 2017). Additionally, these insecure men are

provided with the support and encouragement to commit sexual assaults through other privileged peer-

support networks, such as provided via fraternities and clubs (Carr & VanDeusen, 2004; Giraldi & Monk-

Turner, 2017; Powers et al., 2015; Sharp et al., 2017). For instance, Blecker and Murnen (2005) found that men in peer-supported fraternity groups have greater acceptance of sexual assault behaviour by other men than non-fraternity men do.

Incidents such as the Brock Turner (California) or Connor Neurauter (British Columbia) cases and the rape chants (Muller, 2015) commonly heard during frosh weeks at many college and university campuses illustrate the magnitude of the problem within college and university campuses. Brock Turner, a star athlete and swimmer at Stanford University, sexually assaulted an intoxicated and unconscious 22-year-old woman behind a dumpster after being at a fraternity party together (Wilson, 2016). Turner was found guilty of three counts of sexual assault and was facing up to fourteen years in prison; however, he was sentenced to a mere 6 months in prison (Sanghani, 2016). Connor Neurauter, a 21-year-old convicted sexual offender from British Columbia who was studying at the University of Calgary when convicted was given a delayed 90-day sentence for his actions, in order to continue his studies for the semester and play out the remainder of his hockey season (CBC News, 2018). Students at other Canadian campuses, such as the University of British Columbia and St. Mary's University, have chanted slogans such as "yes mean no, no means anal" and "Y is for your sister, O is for oh-so-young, U is for underage, N is for no consent, G is for grab that ass" (Kingston, 2013; Sharp et al., 2017). These cases not only show that sexual offending is still happening, but that university prevention of sexual offending is weak. The lack of appropriate sentencing and the promoting of sexual assault behaviours by students are only a couple of examples of how 'rape culture' is perceived by society today.

Aside from the college and university populations, society has also seen a recent increase in victims stepping forward and pointing accusations of sexual assault towards very privileged, powerful, and famous men. This increase in reporting has uncovered a population of perpetrators whose alleged sexually assaultive behaviours were traditionally ignored because of their status. It does not take much to see that there are serious issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment within this sub-group of

men. The recent proliferation of allegations of sexual assault against privileged, powerful, and famous

men originated in October 2017, when prominent Hollywood producer and co-founder of the Weinstein

Company, Harvey Weinstein, was accused of sexual assault by multiple women (Almukhtar, Gold, &

Buchanan, 2018). Harvey Weinstein was among the top producers and one of the most powerful men in

Hollywood, producing award-winning films such as Pulp Fiction, Shakespeare in Love, and Gangs of New

York (Christodoulou, 2018). For decades, Weinstein was able to use his power, position, and status to

engage in sexually assaultive behaviour. Yet, Weinstein was not a lone wolf. In fact, since Weinstein's

victims first stepped forward in October 2017 up until January 2018, 78 other powerful or high profile

men have been accused of similar behaviour (Almukhtar et al., 2018). Kevin Spacey (actor), Louis C.K.

(comedian), Dan Schoen (Minnesota State senator), James Rosen (Fox News correspondent), Alex

Kozinski (US Federal appeals court judge), Andy Rubin (creator of Android), and Matt Lauer (TV "Today"

host) are just a fraction of the people who have recently been accused of sexual assault and misconduct

(Almukhtar et al., 2018). This list just shows that it does not matter what area of society they come

from, men who are among the most powerful and privileged may commit sexual assaults, just as college

students or athletes do. It is paramount that we try to identify why men of such calibre commit these

types of acts if we want to prevent future sexual assaults by any degree.


Rape Culture

One of the biggest contributing factors to the tolerance of sexual assault within a community or

society can be described as a "rape culture". Rape culture may be defined as any culture, society, or

environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual

assaults and abuse (Franiuk et al., 2008; Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010; Oxford, 2018). This is often done

through what is known as "rape myths". Rape myths, as defined by Burt (1980) are "prejudicial,

stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists". Others have defined rape myths as

attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny

and justify male sexual aggression against women (Iconis, 2008; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). Rape myths are all about blaming the victim and excusing the perpetrator in instances of sexual assault (Aosved & Long, 2006; McMahon, 2010).

There are many different rape myths and they contribute to rape culture in many different ways. For example, since these myths are intended to go against victims in a way that legitimizes the assault, many rape myths include suggestions that a victim is lying, deserved it, or asked for it because of how she was acting or how she was dressed (Baumeister, Bushman, Bonacci, & van Dijk, 2003; Franiuk et al., 2008; Hayes et al., 2016; Iconis, 2008; McMahon, 2010;). In fact, research has identified these as the most prevalent rape myths seen on prime time television (Belknap, 2010; Franiuk et al., 2008). Other rape myths include "only bad girls get raped", "she's crying rape because she's been jilted", or "she's covering up her decision" (Burt, 1980, p. 217; Burnette et al., 2009, p. 466; McMahon & Farmer, 2011). In a society where rape myths are prevalent, claims will be made and believed that the victim is falsely reporting a sexual assault in order to protect her reputation or to get revenge (Burnette et al., 2009; Hayes et al., 2013). In a contrasting perspective, other society members might believe that we suggest women are either lying or indirectly asking for it in order to protect ourselves by believing we or a loved one could never become a victim (Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Franiuk et al., 2008; Ryan, 2011; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). In other words, to separate ourselves from victims, society may paint the victim in a very negative light that does not represent the average person, thereby telling ourselves that we would never act, dress or behaviour like the victim did, and therefore we are safe.

The success of rape myths is in the language that is used. For example, in rape-supportive environments, it is common to hear language such as "accuser" rather than "alleged victim" or language that shifts responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim (Franiuk et al., 2008; Iconis, 2008; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). Other examples of language are when sexual assault perpetrators are referred to using terms such as "sex-crazed psychotic person"; these terms not only

stereotype a perpetrator but also help distance other "normal" men from the "bad crazy" guys (Burt, 1980; Franiuk et al., 2008; Giaopassi & Dull, 1986; Ryan, 2011). Additionally, one thing rape culture attempts to do with language is define our understanding of things. For example, even with a legal definition provided by the CCC., we only understand an incident to be a sexual assault if it fits the narrow cultural stereotype definition in which the act of forced sexual conduct was committed by a stranger in a very violent and brutal manner towards a female of good reputation (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Giacopassi & Dull, 1986). In other words, anything different than what is defined to us by society is not really a sexual assault, even if it matches the legal definition.

As the primary goals of rape myths are to excuse or minimize the perpetrator's behaviour and cast the typically female victim as an "other", and since the majority of reported perpetrators are males, it is no wonder that males have a higher acceptance of rape myths than females (Aosved & Long, 2006; Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010; Iconis, 2008; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). Individuals will use rape myths to help excuse a male perpetrator by suggesting he was not able to control himself or that he is not the type of person who would do such a thing and he must have been encouraged in some manner (Foubert & Marriott, 1997; Franiuk et al., 2008; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). For instance, male perpetrators may argue that they lost control of their urges or may justify their behaviour because they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol (Abbey et al., 2004; Bartol & Bartol, 2005). Furthermore, comments such as "boys will be boys" or "no really means yes" are used to mask, downplay, and normalize a perpetrator's sexually aggressive behaviour (Burnette et al., 2009; Foubert & Marriott, 1997; Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017). Another manner by which rape myths excuse behaviour is by providing entitlement to men. Men believe that if they invest something into a relationship (money, gifts, drinks, dinner, favours, etc), they in return are entitled to sex (Bartol & Bartol, 2005). Therefore, an incident may not be seen as sexual assault but rather as entitlement to what is rightfully theirs.

Aside from excusing the perpetrator, another primary focus of rape myths is on victim blaming. Victim blaming is where individuals find examples within the victim's behaviour, such as drinking alcohol or wearing provocative clothing, to hold the victim at least partially responsible for a sexual assault (Hayes et al., 2013). By focusing on the negative aspects of the victim and making the sexual assault about the victim rather than the perpetrator, the shift of responsibility is turned away from the perpetrator to the victim themselves. As a result, victim blaming often leaves victims with a lack of support from others and the perception that they (the victim) did something to deserve the sexual assault (Hayes et al., 2013). Since the focus is targeted towards the victims, victims are subsequently less likely to report a sexual assault in a victim-blaming rape culture environment because they fear judgement, self-blame, retaliation, or mislabelling (Franiuk et al., 2008; Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Hayes et al., 2013; Hayes et al., 2016; Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010; Kamdar et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2005; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). Victim blaming is so prevalent that research has indicated that over 40% of college students believe a woman is responsible for being sexually assaulted if she was intoxicated (Powers et al., 2015). Further research by Kamdar et al. (2017) found that 75% of both males and females, in general, agreed that a woman should be responsible for preventing her own sexual assault. Individuals believe that any woman can prevent a sexual assault simply by not drinking, dressing conservatively, or not behaving seductively.

Rape culture is more prevalent among members of certain sub-groups. For instance, first and second-year college students have greater rape culture acceptance than more senior students (Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2005). Fraternity men have even higher acceptance rates because of how rape myths have manifested themselves into the values and norms of fraternity students through promoting as acceptable various actions, such as disrespecting women, exercising dominance over women, and even engaging in group sex (Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017). Given their endorsement of these myths, these subgroups of men are therefore more likely to blame a victim and excuse a perpetrator in a sexual

assault case. Furthermore, research has shown that men who endorse rape myths are more likely to admit their likelihood of committing a sexual assault, if assured that there will be no repercussions for those actions (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Franiuk et al., 2008; Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Widman & McNulty, 2010). In fact, in one recent study, 60% of Canadian college men admitted they would commit a sexual assault if they were certain that they would not get caught (Canadian Federation of Students [CFS], 2015). This shows that rape myths not only make individuals believe it is okay for others to commit sexual assault but also make it okay for themselves to commit it as well, as the only thing preventing some men from committing a sexual assault is the fear of getting caught.

At a time where women feel increasingly empowered and in control of their lives within society, rape myths can be used to remove or counter the surge of female power or control within a society (Sharp et al., 2017). Some men view forcing sex as the ultimate form of power, dominance, and control over women. Sex or gender roles are also used within the contexts of rape myths to safeguard male dominance, and those who accept rape myths also tend to accept traditional sex roles (Aosved & Long, 2006; Burt, 1980; Franklin et al., 2012; Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Guarez & Gadalla, 2010; Iconis, 2008). One of the main ways to show power and dominance is through aggression; therefore, individuals who support rape myths often also support sexual aggression (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Morry & Winkler, 2001; Sharp et al., 2017). The question is whether one leads to the other or whether they are both influenced or caused by a common third factor. For example, if aggression and rape myths work hand in hand, then those who are aggressive will support rape myths, and those who support rape myths will engage in aggression.

Another part of rape myths and particularly connected to victim blaming is the notion of a "just world". The Just World Theory is the theory or belief that one's individual actions and behaviours will cause them to "get what they deserve" (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Hayes et al., 2013). In other words,

because of their actions and/or behaviour, a victim deserved what they got. This further puts a victim in a negative light. For example, if a victim claims that she was at a party and she got sexually assaulted at the end of the night, individuals may make comments such as "she shouldn't have been drinking so much", "maybe next time she won't dress like that", or "she shouldn't flirt like that". These comments show both a lack of remorse for the victim and puts the onus of responsibility on the victim. Moreover, those who support a Just World or engage in victim blaming are less likely to intervene or prevent a sexual assault from happening because of their perception of the victim (McMahon, 2010).

        With respect to culture in general, rape myths are not new trends or something recently created, they actually have deeply entrenched roots in religious texts, laws, philosophy, and in general society (Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017; Powers et al., 2015). Many religious texts and historical laws were created with the idea that men were above females and men should have full control, including sexual control, over females. These ideologies appear to have carried on to today. Cultures with strong oppressive belief systems (racism, sexism, homophobia, etc) have greater levels of total acceptance and support for rape myths (Aosved & Long, 2006). In fact, environments where rape culture persists provide men with the opportunities to use coercive strategies, such as manipulation, impairment, or physical force to engage in sexual intercourse under the guise of normative sexual encounters (Sutton & Simons, 2015). In addition, the culture of masculinity and privilege is directly related to rape myth acceptance as rape myths protect the dominant group, often being the masculine and privileged men (Aosved & Long, 2006). Finally, in the unplanned, casual, and ambiguous nature of the dating scene in today's society, rape myths give men the backing to push boundaries within relationships (Sutton & Simons, 2015). Rape culture has allowed men to engage with a female for a night with the sole purpose or goal being to have sex (known as "hooking-up") and enables them to push as hard as they need to in order to achieve their goal.

Alice Walker, an American novelist and activist, once said, "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they do not have any" (as cited in Wong, 2014, p. 351). This is exactly what rape myths and a rape culture has done for women. It has caused women to think they are hopeless, voiceless, and powerless against the male dominant group. Rape is not a woman's problem nor should it be defined solely as an individual woman's issue as it is damaging and counterproductive to society, yet that is exactly what rape culture is doing (Sharp et al., 2017). Rape culture has made the issue of sexual assault a woman's problem and has released males and perpetrators of all accountability. Still, not all men are would be perpetrators of sexual assault. It is important to recognize that typologies of perpetrators exist in which men with particular shared characteristics are at higher risk of endorsing rape myths, believing in rape culture, and consequently, perpetrating rape.

## Typology of Perpetrators

As discussed, there are over 600,000 self-reported sexual assaults annually in Canada, which means that there are likely also hundreds of thousands of perpetrators as well. These perpetrators can range in age, characteristics, and personalities; however, many may also exhibit similarities among each other. Grouping similar characteristics of offenders together is helpful for identifying the common characteristics to sexual assault perpetrators. Hence, researchers at the Massachusetts Treatment Center (MTC) formulated a classification system that took into account the different and similar characteristics of sexual offenders based on the notion that sexual assaults involve both sexual and aggressive features (Cohen, Garofalo, Boucher, Seghorn, 1971; Cohen, Seghorn, & Calmas, 1969). Similar to the researchers at the MTC, Nicholas Groth also created a typology system; however, his system was based on the premise that sexual assault offenders have particular underlying motivations and aims (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Groth, 1979). Although these classification systems are not a one-fit-all system and there may be cases where a perpetrator may not fit cleanly into any one particular typology, these systems do give us a better understanding of some common characteristics of sexual assaults.

Researchers at the MTC originally identified four primary categories of sexual offenders: (1) Displaced aggression; (2) compensatory; (3) sexual aggression; and (4) impulsive (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Cohen et al., 1971; Cohen et al., 1969.). Displaced aggression offenders are often extremely violent and aggressive, with little or no sexual feeling or remorse for their victim. Compensatory offenders' basic motivation is a desire to prove sexual competence and adequacy to their victim or others (Bartol & Bartol, 2005). Sexually aggressive offenders engage in violence and infliction of pain and suffering to their victims for the purposes of sexual arousal. Finally, impulsive offenders engage in spontaneous acts only when an opportunity presents itself (Bartol & Bartol, 2005).

Although this classification system was simple and easy to use for criminal justice professionals, it was too broad and generalized for the variety of differences in individual cases. Consequently, over the years, the MTC classification system was redefined and further developed into what is now known as the MTC: R3 [MTC: Rapist, Version 3] (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Bojanic & Delijkic, 2011). The MTC: R3 was developed by Knight and Prentky (1990). The MTC: R3 adjusted the classification system into a four category and nine subtype system. The primary groups are opportunity, pervasive anger, sexual gratification (sadistic vs. non-sadistic), and vindictiveness (Knight & Prentky, 1990; Knight, Warren, Reboussin, & Soley, 1998). Within these four groups are nine sub-types (Figure 1): (1) Opportunistic-high social competence, (2) opportunistic-low social competence, (3) pervasive anger, (4) overt sadism, (5) muted sadism, (6) sexualized-high social competence, (7) sexualized- low social competence, (8) vindictive-low social competence, and (9) vindictive-high social competence (Bojanic & Delijkic, 2011; Knight & Prentky, 1990). Sub-types (1) and (2) fall under group one, sub-type (3) falls under group two, sub-types (4-7) fall under group three, and sub-types (8) and (9) fall under group four.
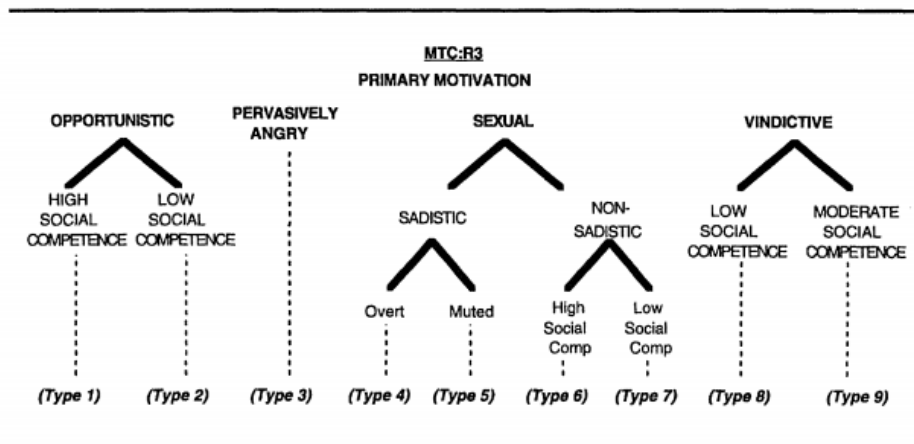
Groth's (1979) typology, on the other hand identifies only three categories based on motivation

and intent: (1) anger, (2) power, and (3) sadistic. An anger based offender will use a great amount of

physical force, often more than necessary, to commit their sexual assault (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Bojanic

& Delijkic, 2011; Groth, 1979). These offenders have built up anger within them and will often unleash

their rage onto their victims. The power motivated offender will seek dominance and control over their

victim, rather than purposely inflicting harm (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Bojanic & Delijkic, 2011; Groth,

1979). Power over their victim is the sole intent; therefore, they may use violence or force but will stop

once they have acquired the control or power they wanted. Finally, according to Groth (1979), the

sadistic offender will express both sexual and aggressive desires through violent attacks on the victim.

These offenders can cause the greatest harm and victimization due to their actions, which can include

inducing pain, suffering, or even murdering their victim, as they receive sexual satisfaction from the

infliction of pain and suffering on others.

In the MTC: R3 system, opportunistic offenders engage in impulsive, predatory acts where a

situation or opportunity has been presented to the offender to act on (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Knight &

Prentky, 1990). This is similar to the MTC original impulsive offender classification. For the opportunistic

types, the incidents are based on situational and contextual factors more than anything else (Knight, 1999). For example, if a male at a party is alone in a room with a female, the male may see this opportunity as his chance to engage in sex, whether desired or not by the female. The pervasive anger type offenders, similar to Groth's displaced anger model, have a global and undifferentiated anger that pervades all aspects of the offender's life (Knight, 1999; Knight & Prentky, 1990). These offenders hate everyone and everything equally, and sexually assaulting females is just part of their anger and hate. The third grouping, sexual gratification, akin to Groth's sadistic classification, is based on pleasure as a result of violent and aggressive tendencies towards their victims (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Knight, 1999). Finally, vindictive offenders are misogynistic individuals who have a specific and focus hatred towards women, who seek to cause great harm, pain, and humiliation to them (Knight, 1999; Knight & Prentky, 1990). These offenders are the ones that will often video tape their assault in order to humiliate and expose their victims. There is more and more of this form of offending as a result of greater technology use among college students. Although their specific intent may not be to cause great harm or pain, their actions of recording their offence with their cell phone and distributing it relates to their desire to humiliate and expose their victim.

     Moving away from typologies concerned with the act and focusing more on the offender, Lussier, Leclerc, Cale, & Proulx (2007) introduced the developmental pathways to sexual deviance by identifying three main categorizes: internalization, externalization, and sexualisation. Lussier et al. (2007) believed that sexual offenders present both general and distinctive developmental factors that relate to their offending and by identifying such factors, we can gain a better understanding of the offender. Under internalization, negative emotions or emotionality, such as anxiety, depression, or social withdrawal, contribute to the sexual offending of an individual (Lussier et al., 2007). However, the continuity of offending due to internalization factors are limited and more specifically concerned with child molesters than others.

The externalization pathway is based on four primary under-controlled behaviours within a person. Lussier et al. (2007) noted that the first factor is if a person lacks authority control (e.g.: parental control) this could lead to defiant behaviour at home, school, or work. The second under-controlled behaviour is engaging in reckless or risky behaviour such as substance use, drinking, or gambling (Lussier et al., 2007), which are overall indicative of low self-control. This pathway is highly visible within the college population of sexual offenders, and risky behaviour, such as binge drinking, is a contributing factor to many on campus sexual assaults (Abbey et al., 2004; Franklin et al., 2012; Hayes et al., 2016). The third and fourth factors are covert behaviours (dishonest, lying, stealing) and overt behaviours (aggression and violence towards others and objects), either of which may lead to sexual offending. Once again, sexual perpetrators among college students and elite professionals will often use multiple tactics, such as lying, stealing, and even using aggression and violence to complete their sexual offence. Further, individuals with high externalization factors engage in offending against adults (as compared to child abusers), have higher numbers of offences and begin at an early onset, and engage in high levels of sexual coercion (Lussier et al., 2007). The final pathway, sexualisation, refers to the inability to control sexual behaviour or urges, which results in higher numbers of impersonal sexual experiences with a greater number of sexual partners (Lussier et al., 2007).

More recently, Lussier (2017) proposed using the developmental life course (DLC) perspective to investigate and identify sexual offending in youth by presenting two distinct trajectories within juvenile sexual offending: (1) the adolescent-limited offender and (2) the high-rate/slow-desister offender. The adolescent-limited offenders often show little sexual behavioural problems during their childhood; however, problems begin to arise within their adolescent years (Lussier, 207). Many of the risk factors for these offenders include things such as peer-influence, binge drinking, and sexual arousal or opportunity. Although the majority of Lussier's research was conducted on adolescent aged individuals, many of the aspects of the research can extend to an adult population. For example, when looking at

college-aged sexual offenders, many are influenced by peers (through club memberships, team members, friends) and through binge drinking. Similar to the findings of Lussier's research, the situational, contextual, and social factors are pivotal in creating sexual offending opportunities for both college students and men of power and privilege (Lussier, 2017).

The other trajectory is the high-rate/slow-desister type offender, who has their onset of sexual offending early in their childhood with atypical sexual behaviours (Lussier, 2017). Since their sexual offending begins at childhood, many will continue with their offending into adulthood; additionally, many are also victims of childhood sexual abuse or are exposed to sexually deviant adults (Lussier, 2017). As will be discussed in the coming sections, this typology of offenders can be explained theoretically through childhood victimization theories such as the intergenerational transmission theory (McCuish & Lussier, 2017).

It is clear that there are multiple types and groups of perpetrators who each have their own specific and combined characteristics, many of which can be applied towards college student and powerful/privileged population groups. However, there are limitations to these typologies as not all perpetrators may fit into a specific typology. Thus, it is important to understand that there may be more theoretical explanations for offending then described here. This paper recognizes that each typology may have multiple or combined theoretical explanations that help connect perpetrators to their offending behaviour which have not been explored further here.


## Theoretical Explanations of Sexual Assault

There are dozens of criminological, psychological, and sociological theories that may explain why some people commit sexual assaults while others do not. Since humans are complex and sophisticated beings, there is no one theory that can explain sexual assaults in its entirety. However, there are a few theories that do provide strong evidence on why certain individuals may commit such crimes.

## Social Learning Theory

Ronald Akers' (1977) social learning theory states that people can become involved in crime by learning criminal behaviour through imitation of their social associations. As an extension of Sutherland's differential association theory, Akers explained that there are four elements which determine whether or not an individual will engage in criminal behaviour: differential association, definitions, differential reinforcement, and imitation (Bartol & Bartol, 2005; Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 2011; Nicholson & Higgins, 2017). Differential association refers to the different social interactions a person has, for example with family, friends, co-workers, or neighbours. These interactions become the setting where social learning of behaviour will occur (Nicholson & Higgins, 2017). Definitions are how a person defines their own beliefs and attitudes. For example, how a person defines something as right or wrong, good or bad, pleasurable or non-pleasurable. The third component is differential reinforcement, which refers to the cost-benefit calculation of a particular behaviour (Nicholson & Higgins, 2017). In other words, for a person to engage in a particular behaviour or to learn a particular behaviour, they will conduct a cost-benefit analysis and if the rewards outweigh the costs or if they are rewarded for their behaviour, then there is a greater likelihood of completion in the future. Finally, imitation is the manner in which a person will learn a particular behaviour, through modelling what they see. In summary, according to Akers (1977), crime and criminal behaviour are learned through social interaction.

Akers' social learning theory can help explain why some men, particularly men who newly enter into a social group, such as a fraternity, sports team, or even a professional management team, engage in sexual assaults. Although social learning is paramount at younger ages, humans are continuously learning and adapting to their environment, making them subject to social learning theory at all times. An individual will interact with these associations on regular and consistent bases. The definition of acceptable sexual behaviour will be defined or created by the way other members of their group behave and act. If members of that specific social group make it okay to degrade females, then that individual will define the behaviour of degrading females as rightful. They may engage in that behaviour, even if it

is to a superficial degree, to show that they fit with their peers and others. Additionally, the person may

do a cost-benefit calculation and determine that the benefits of staying in the social group outweigh any

wrong they may encounter in during their involvement with the group. For example, a person may say

that the reward they get from their social peers (praise, respect, popularity, etc) from engaging in a

sexual assault outweighs any punishment they may receive afterwards. Finally, as an individual spends

more time with their social group, they will be exposed to more behaviour, which they will eventually

adopt and copy as their own.

## Self-Control Theory

Gottfredson and Hirschi's self-control theory of crime has been used to identify why some

individuals commit a crime while others do not. Their self-control theory is based on the idea that an

individual's level of self-control will determine if they fall prey to the seductions of crime or not

(Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Lilly et al., 2011). Self-control is the restraint that allows people to resist

crime and other forms of short-term gratification (Lilly et al., 2011). In others words, low self-control

would result in the increased likelihood of criminal behaviour (Franklin et al., 2012). Additionally, a lack

of self-control paired with a criminal opportunity will increase criminal engagement even more (Ha &

Beauregard, 2016). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) similarly explain that low self-control is related to

low tolerance for frustration, a lack of empathy, and with high-reactive temperament.

When looking at self-control theory in relation to sexual assaults, Ha and Beauregard (2016)

found that individuals who lack self-control had greater difficulty resisting sexual temptations when a

sexual opportunity was presented, despite the potential and real consequences associated with taking

advantage of those opportunities. These findings are in conjunction with Gottfredson and Hirschi's

theory. The self-control theory of crime can therefore be used to explain a man's engagement in sexual

assaults and other forms of sexual violence (Franklin et al., 2012). Moreover, this theory helps further

explain the MTC's impulsive and MTC: R3's opportunistic offenders by explaining that these types of

individuals saw an opportunity or acted on a vulnerable victim as a result of their lack in self-control and

their inability to engage in a cost-benefit analysis. Such an offender will jump on an opportunity without

calculating the consequences. This is demonstrated when offenders are trying to excuse or defend their

behaviour. They may say things such as "I didn't mean it, it was in the heat of the moment" or "I didn't

think of it as a big issue". This theory can also help explain why some sexual offenders engage in

violence or show no empathy for a victim during their violent attack (Ha & Beauregard, 2016). Their lack

of self-control is linked to violence and a lack of empathy.

### Childhood Victimization Theories

According to the *intergenerational transmission of violence theory*, hostile and physically harsh

parenting styles and/or aggression and violence between parents (caregivers) can teach children that

violent and coercive behaviours are acceptable and part of everyday living (Black, Sussman, & Unger,

2010; Sutton & Simons, 2015). In other words, children who are subject to and witness violence,

aggression, and coercion, will grow up to experience violence, aggression, and coercion themselves,

either as perpetrators of such or as a victim. The intergenerational transmission of violence theory

works in conjunction with social learning, social attachments, and social information processing (Black et

al., 2010; Sutton & Simons, 2015; Widom & Wilson, 2015). A child learns from what they see and hear,

so when a child grows up witnessing his or her parents' fight, particularly if they witness their father

violently hurt their mother, they will grow up at risk of displaying the same behaviour they were a

witness to.

Intergenerational transmission of violence not only explains the cycle of violence and abuse but

also provides insight into why childhood victimization can cause serious problems, especially in cases of

sexual assault, in the future. Numerous research has indicated a link between childhood victimization of

abuse, violence, and neglect to increased prevalence of sexual assault behaviour, either as a victim or an

offender, later in adulthood (Abbey et al., 2004; Conroy & Cotter, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2017). Studies

have shown that men who have been sexually or physically abused as a child will have a much greater

likelihood of committing a sexual assault and women who have been sexually or physically abused will

have a greater risk of being a victim again (Abbey et al., 2004). In fact, the likelihood of offending or

victimization within this population of individuals is four times greater than non-childhood-victimized

individuals (Conroy & Cotter, 2014). Going back to social learning theory and intergenerational

transmission theory, it is clear how a young child who is subject to sexual or physical abuse will learn

that it is either acceptable to abuse another person or normal to be subject to abuse by a partner.

## Hierarchical-mediational confluence theory

The hierarchical-mediational confluence model proposed by Neil Malamuth states that there are

two pathways to the perpetration of sexual aggression: (1) the sexual promiscuity path; and (2) the

hostile masculinity path (Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes, & Acker, 1995). Research has shown that the

confluence of hostile masculinity and impersonal sex produce the highest levels of sexually assaultive

behaviour (Malamuth et al., 1995). In addition, this model has successfully differentiated between

sexually aggressive and sexually non-aggressive males, and between sexually coercive and sexually non-

coercive males (Wheeler, George, & Dahl, 2002). This is an important characteristic of this model

because it helps us understand offenders based on their unique characteristics.

The sexual promiscuity path encompasses the willingness to engage in impersonal,

noncommittal, and game-playing sex with the objective to have as many sexual partners as possible,

without forming any emotional attachment to the partner (Malamuth et al., 1995; Mouilso & Calhoun,

2016). These individuals are more concerned with engaging in the act of sex itself and with as many

partners as possible than with building any romantic or emotional connections. Men within this pathway

often have social influences (family, friends, peers, etc) that may influence their interpersonal

development resulting in deficits among building and sustaining meaningful and intimate relationships

with others (Wheeler et al., 2002). The sexual promiscuity path helps best explains non-aggressive or

non-violent sexual perpetrators, as these individuals are not interested in physical violence. For example, these perpetrators will uses alcohol, drugs, lies, gifts, or other means, rather than violence to engage in sex.

The hostile-masculinity path encompasses two main components: (1) the drive towards the full dominance and control of women; and (2) an insecure, defensive, and distrustful orientation towards women (Malamuth et al., 1995; Mouilso & Calhoun, 2016). Men in this pathway fear their masculinity is inadequate or at jeopardy at the hands of strong, powerful women; therefore, they will use coercion, threats, and violence to regain and prove their masculinity (Malamuth et al., 1995). Interestingly enough, males within this path were frequently exposed to hostile and abusive parental relationships early in their childhood (; Abbey, Jacques-Tiura, & LeBreton, 2011; Wheeler et al., 2002). What it may indicate is that their desire for dominance and control and their harmful orientation towards women may be a result of social learning. The second component of this pathway (the insecure, defensive, and distrustful orientation towards women) can explain anger based or overt sadistic perpetrators. As these perpetrator's behaviours are fuelled by hatred towards women, their offending is often very violent. The hostile-masculinity path may further explain offenders within compensatory, vindictive, or power groups. More importantly, the personality profile described within the confluence model is very similar to the emotional, interpersonal, and behavioural characteristics of a narcissistic individual.

### Narcissistic reactance theory of sexual assault

Baumeister, Catanese, and Wallace (2002) developed a theory for sexual assaults based on reactance and the characteristics of narcissism. Reactance can be defined as the negative response to the loss of freedom or choice (Baumeister et al., 2003). The theory comes from the idea that people want what they cannot have. As Baumeister et al. (2002) explained, when a man desires sex from a particular person but is unable due to resistance or refusal from that person, the man will react in a negative manner, often with violence and force. When a woman refuses or denies a man sex, the man

may view that as a denial of his freedom, particularly if the man believes he is free and entitled to sex; therefore, the male will push and fight back in order to regain what he believes is rightfully his: sexual access and freedom (Mouilso & Calhoun, 2016). The more they are refused the more they will fight back until they get what they want. So, when a victim not only refuses but also fights back, the offender will fight back hard and more violently until they are successful. Narcissistic characteristics will increase the likelihood that a man will exhibit more negative responses to the reactance (Baumeister, Catanese, & Wallace, 2002).

This theory may explain why some men use extreme violence in their crimes and why some men have issues with consent, especially the concept of consent revocation after the initial consent was given. It is not uncommon for a victim to explain that they were in the bedroom and planning on having sex or engaging in other flirtation behaviour but changed her mind and wanted to leave, yet the man continued to pursue and would not stop, and at which point he sexually assaulted the victim. In other words, the male originally desired sex with the female and when she first consented to sex, the male took that as her acceptance. However, as soon as the victim refused, it turned into a denial and the male felt as if he was entitled to sex since she already agreed to it. This denial or rejection is an important element when looking at people with narcissistic personality disorders, as these individuals are not receptive to rejection. This denial or rejection by the female may be the trigger that sends a narcissistic individual into offending. Therefore, depending on the situation, perpetrators will often begin with less intimidating strategies and escalate to extreme violence the more their desires are denied (Sutton & Simons, 2015). For example, a perpetrator will use less intimidating strategies on their victim in order to get their victim into the bedroom. Once in the bedroom, if things are not going the way of the perpetrator, the degree of violence will increase until the perpetrator gets what they want. These perpetrators are also associated with the power and control type. Many males relate freedom of choice and entitlement to having power and control over a woman; therefore, these males will exert a physical

force onto their victims' in order to gain back any perceived loss in power or control through the woman's refusal or denial.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th ed. [DSM-5], a personality disorder occurs when there is significant impairment in oneself and in functioning, along with one or more pathological personality traits (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). Additionally, these conditions must be relatively stable and consistent over a period of time, not be part of the normative, development of the individual or be part of the normative socio-cultural environment, and not be conditioned by substance use or medical reasons (APA, 2013). The DMS-5 lists 10 personality disorders, each of which are subdivided into three main clusters and defined by their own set of traits and characteristics. Cluster A deals with odd, bizarre, or eccentric personality disorders. These include paranoid personality disorder, schizoid personality disorder, and schizotypal personality disorder. Cluster B deals with dramatic and erratic disorders, such as antisocial personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder, and narcissistic personality disorder. Finally, Cluster C is concerned with anxious and fearful conditions, which are avoidant, dependent, and obsessive-compulsive personality disorders (APA, 2013).

When examining sexual offending, studies have shown a strong link between sexual aggression and narcissism (Dudeck, Spitzer, Stopsack, Freyberger, & Barnow, 2007; Mouilso & Calhoun, 2011; Mouilso & Calhoun, 2016; Zeigler-Hill, 2013). In fact, narcissistic personality traits have been empirically and theoretically linked to sexual aggression and sexual offending (Baumeister et al., 2003; Blinkhorn, Lyons, & Almond, 2016; Mouilso & Calhoun, 2012; Mouilso & Calhoun, 2016; Widman & McNulty, 2010). Narcissism has also been associated with greater acceptance of rape myths, less empathy for rape victims, greater enjoyment of rape-related entertainment, and overall sexual aggression towards women (Baumeister et al., 2003; Mouilso & Calhoun, 2016; Widman & McNulty, 2010). Similar to

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individuals who believe in rape myths and a rape culture, narcissistic individuals are more accepting of violence and the use of force to dominate and control women (Blinkhorn et al., 2016). Men with narcissistic personality disorders have been associated with high frequent perpetration rates (Mouilso & Calhoun, 2011; Widman & McNulty, 2010). Further, Widman and McNulty (2010) found there is a significant positive correlation between sexual narcissism and lifetime number of sexual intercourse partners. This may explain why we often see sexual perpetrators with dozens, if not hundreds, of victims. Since these sexual perpetrators do not believe they are in the wrong and they are seldom reported, they will have the tendency to continuously sexually assault victims until they are caught.

In order to understand the link between sexual aggression or sexual offending as a whole and narcissism, it is important to first understand the structure of narcissism and then relate each characteristic to sexual offending behaviour. Narcissism is a Cluster B personality disorder and is often characterized by an overly positive and grandiose view of the self, as well as the tendency to engage in behaviour that is interpersonally exploitive and designed to promote admiration by others and aggrandizement of the self (Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010). Narcissistic personality disorder is further characterized by arrogant or egotistical behaviour, feelings of entitlement, a lack of empathy, and an inability to accept rejection (APA, 2013; Mouilso & Calhoun, 2012).

The notion that there is a connection between men with narcissistic personality features and the likelihood of engaging in sexual aggression or coercion is not surprising given that narcissistic behaviour aligns proportionately with sexual offending behaviour (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013). For example, sexual offending in nature is considered an exploitive, oppressive, and cruel behaviour that traumatizes and victimizes females through violence, aggression, or threats, all which are of a sexual nature. Similarly, narcissistic individuals tend to participate in exploitive, oppressive, and cruel behaviour for their own desires and pleasures (Mouilso & Calhoun, 2011; Mouilso & Calhoun, 2016; Sperry, 2016). For example, someone who lies, cheats, or threatens a woman in order to have intercourse with them is a

sexual perpetrator, but also demonstrates narcissistic traits. Narcissistic men are also more willing to violently exploit their victims during the course of a sexual assault. In fact, both Mouilso and Calhoun (2011) and Zeigler-Hill et al. (2013) found that the perpetration of any form of sexual aggression was associated with higher scores of narcissism within men.

Furthermore, narcissistic individuals have an inflated sense of entitlement. They believe they are entitled to whatever and whoever they want because of who they are. Narcissistic individuals do not accept rejection well and will not stop when rejected (Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013). Since men with narcissistic tendencies have difficulties with rejection, they are found to respond more aggressively to interpersonal rejection (Baumeister et al., 2003; Widman & McNulty, 2010). For example, a narcissistic man may believe he is entitled to sex with a woman because he took her out to dinner or simply because he is in a position of power; therefore, he may not comprehend the fact that a woman has said no or has rejected his advances. Additionally, their false sense of entitlement makes them believe women "owe" sexual favours to them (Baumeister et al., 2013; Mouilso & Calhoun, 2012). This leads to what was discussed above about reactance. If a person is denied sexual access to a partner who they initially believed they were entitled to, they may respond with sexual aggression against their partner (Baumeister et al., 2003; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013). The more they are refused what they believe they are entitled to, the more aggressive and violent their response will be. In other words, their inflated sense of entitlement makes them more prone to reactance (Baumeister et al., 2003).

Another facet of narcissism that is often seen in sexual offenders is the lack of empathy. As discussed above, some perpetrators have little or no remorse, care, or concern for their victims; they have no empathy. They are not interested in the suffering or trauma they have imposed on their victims. Empathy consists of being able to emotionally identify with another person, aesthetically project oneself into the state of another person, feel the same emotions as others would in a given situation, have concern for the well-being of others, and understand another person's perspective (Lishner, Hong, Jiang,

Vitacco, & Neumann, 2015). Both sexual offenders and narcissistic individuals lack the ability to do any of those items. Subsequently, as many facets of narcissism are interrelated, a lack of empathy only further emphasizes their sense of entitlement. A narcissistic individual will not only use sexual aggression against their entitled partner, they will have no empathy for their victim either, causing far greater amounts of violence and coercion (Baumeister et al., 2003; Zeigler-Hill et al., 2013).

Narcissism also helps explain sexual offending by the powerful and dominant group by identifying key traits associated with both sex offending and narcissism.  To begin with, narcissistic individuals have an inflated view of their own abilities and achievements (Widman & McNulty, 2010). They believe they are better and more skilled than they actually are. Sexual offenders often misinterpret that the woman secretly wants them. This false belief gives them the sense that women desire them because of their abilities and talent. Furthermore, similar to fraternity leaders, popular athletics, and Hollywood stars, narcissistic individuals will use their authority and power to control and dominate a woman (Widman & McNulty, 2010). Individuals in these positions will often use threats of humiliation, false promises, or threats of harm to have women give in to their sexual needs. For example, because of the popularity status of a fraternity leader or star athletic, they can give a false promise to the woman that if they slept with them, they would help make her popular too. This is also seen in workplace environments where narcissistic men will use job-related matters (such as pay, promotions, etc.) as "bait" for sexual favours (Baumeister et al., 2003).

When looking back at the different classifications of sexual offenders, it is possible to see how many of the personalities and behaviours are associated with different facets of narcissism. Although narcissism is not a one and all explanation for sexual offending, it does provide some degree of explanation. It is also important to note that other theories may also explain sexual offending in the similar manner that narcissism does and that sexual offenders may hold traits that are very similar to other forms of personality disorders which may mistakenly been seen as narcissism. It is important to

know that not all sexual offenders are narcissistic and not all narcissists are sexual offenders; however, we can still build a positive link between narcissism and sexual offenders. For example, the Anger/Pervasive-Anger type offenders often have little or no empathy for their victims. They will engage in violent behaviour and have no emotional connection with their victim. This is similar to the lack of empathy found among narcissistic individuals. Narcissists do not care whether or not their victim is suffering or in pain. Since narcissistic individuals also have an unjustified sense of entitlement along with an inability to accept rejection well, any contradiction to their entitlement will lead to inappropriate anger and violence towards their victims. Furthermore, a Narcissist's willingness to exploit others falls in line with the characteristics of the vindictive type offenders. Both are able to impose great harm onto their victims, without self-guilt, in order to achieve what they want. Additionally, similar to men in a rape culture who promote and do not condemn sexual coercion, narcissist men are also less prone to condemn such behaviour (Baumeister et al., 2003).

When looking back at theories such as childhood victimization and sexual promiscuity theory, many sexual offenders began their sexual experiences at a very early stage, either as a perpetrator or victim. Perhaps due to their own childhood personal experiences with sexual victimization, sexual narcissism is also associated with more sexual experiences that begin at very early stages (Widman & McNulty, 2010). Since sexual experiences are usually continuous, starting such experience at an early age means that the prevalence of such experiences increases over time. One reason for the increase in sexual partners through sexual offending may be because the individual believes they are entitled to sex with a partner since they have had access to others in the past or they build a dependency with sexual partners. If a new partner does not commit to them (ex: rejects them), the individual may turn to reactance and sexual aggression or force. Another reason is that their past success with sexual partners may create an inflated sense of self and abilities. Finally, if their early sexual experiences were part of

childhood victimization, they may behave in a manner similar to their own accusers through social learning.

While the research in this paper is limited to a literature review and no original research or first-hand assessments were conducted, the theoretical explanations provided here show a strong connection between narcissism and sexual offending. And although narcissism is not the only explanation for sexual offending, it is one explanation that is plausible for the population of men being accused of sexual offending we see today. Some of traits seen within some men accused of sexual offending are akin to narcissism. From their sense of false entitlement to their inability to accept rejection, the traits of narcissism may help us explain the continuing trend in reports of sexual assault against powerful/high status men. Understanding that there is a connection or pattern of narcissistic tendencies within some men, we must adjust our response to sexual offending in a way that not only protects victims but helps break the relationship between narcissism and sexual offending.

## Current Response

Even though the prevalence of sexual offending is increasing in our society, it does not mean we have not taken actions in response to such behaviours. We have at all levels attempted to respond to such behaviours in a tactical and meaningful manner. From policy changes at the highest levels of government to social media campaign awareness stunts, people are continuously trying to make change for the better.

## Social Media

There has never been a time where information and knowledge has been shared among millions of people quicker than in the era of Twitter, Facebook, and other social media sites that we see today. Social media has allowed for the spread of information, knowledge, and awareness on nearly anything to a global audience with a single click of a mouse. For that reason, social media campaigns have played a helpful role in the fight against sexual assaults and as a counter to rape myths.

The hashtag #MeToo has become a trending social media campaign movement after the sexual assault allegations against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein to help illustrate the magnitude of the sexual harassment and sexual assault problem in society (LaMotte, 2017). It was first posted by actress Alyssa Milano on October 15, 2017, as a request to everyone who had been previously harassed or sexually assaulted to speak up (LaMotte, 2017). Within 24 hours, #MeToo was posted more than half a million times on twitter and over 12 million times on Facebook (Thorpe, 2017). The idea behind the hashtag was to create a way that could un-silence the silenced, bring visibility to something that is often hidden, and create discourse on something that is often considered taboo. The #MeToo movement has been fundamental in its ability to showcase the extent of sexual assault globally, as #MeToo has trended in over 85 countries since October 15, 2017 (Thorpe, 2017). The #MeToo campaign has not been the only online movement in recent years which has tried to bring attention to sexual harassment and sexual misconduct. Other hashtags, such as #YesAllWomen, #WhyIStayed, #YouOkSis, and #EverydaySexism have created a social outpouring of support for victims and towards sexual assault prevention conversations (LaMotte, 2017).

Although these social media campaigns are strong and powerful, they often fail when it comes to taking real action. While they get people talking about sexual assault, open up important discussions, and may even encourage some victims to come forward with their own incidents, this is often the extent of the activism. To date, no policy, program, or laws have been created or changed as a direct result of these online trends. It appears people are willing to talk about change online, but the talk does not extend offline and into the office of the people in power. People must use the power of social media to extend their frustration and concern offline to the streets and legislative offices through social pressure by means of peaceful marches, protest, and rallies. Until those in power witness the need for change by the public both online and offline, not much will be done.

Legislation

The government of Canada has made previous commitments to Canadians to ensure that workplaces are free from harassment and sexual violence after identifying that power imbalance and gender norms underpinned our culture, which led to the common tolerance of sexual misconduct behaviour (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017). Therefore, in November 2017, after much public and political pressure, the Government of Canada introduced and passed Bill C-65. Bill C-65 amended the Canadian Labour Code to strengthen the framework for the prevention of workplace sexual harassment and sexual violence (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017). Prior to Bill C-65, it was a patchwork of laws and policies that aimed to prevent sexual misconduct behaviour. With any patchwork fix, there will always be slips or cracks within the framework in which undesirable behaviour may exist or occur. The hope is that with the passing of Bill C-65 as one complete and comprehensive legislation, the ability for sexual violence or harassment to happen is significantly minimized.

Although it cannot be said that Bill C-65 will prevent narcissistic perpetrators from committing sexual offences as a whole, it may help prevent future sexual misconduct behaviour by creating policies that do not allow such behaviour to continue. Victims are given greater support through the policies to report sexual misconduct and harassment and as such, perpetrators will be addressed through increased reporting. Bill C-65 is hoping to prevent sexual offences by prohibiting sexual misconduct and harassment behaviour within the workplace.

On April 27, 2016, the Government of British Columbia introduced the *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act* with the aim of making post-secondary campuses safer and more responsive to the needs of victims (Ministry of Advanced Education, 2016). The legislation requires all post-secondary schools to have a well-established sexual misconduct policy that addresses sexual misconduct through providing procedures on how complaints or reports of sexual misconduct involving a student can be forwarded and how to respond to such complaints or reports (Wilkinson, 2016). Failure to comply with

the policies may result in funding cuts by the governments (Lum, 2018). What sets BC's policy Act above others is that fact that the Act requires the post-secondary institutions to consult with their own students and with any prescribed classes of persons during the creation of their policy and at every scheduled review (Wilkinson, 2016).

The University of British Columbia [UBC] approved a new thirteen-page policy (policy number 131) titled *Sexual Assault and Other Sexual Misconduct*, which articulates UBC's duty and commitment to support victims of sexual assault or misconduct (University of British Columbia [UBC], 2018). The policy speaks to the procedures the university will take in regards to complaints/reports they receive and how they will respond. It also speaks to the services and resources they will provide to victims. Of the thirteen pages of policies, there is only one subsection that speaks to helping potential offenders. Section 2.3, subsection 3, states "The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office will lead the education program to counter broader social attitudes regarding gender, sex and sexuality that normalize Sexual Misconduct and undermine equality." (UBC, 2018). In essence, the policy is just a very broad and generalized statement that speaks about how they will counter the culture of rape and sexual assault on their campus without identifying specific tactics or action plans. As illustrated above, the research has shown clear evidence of university students emerged in rape myths and a rape culture; yet there appears to be a significant gap in the response to rape myths and targeting individuals who have immersed themselves in such cultures.

In America, after the Brock Turner sexual assault case, the Obama administration took swift action to further protect victims of sexual assault through directing colleges, universities, and schools across the country to take serious measures in preventing and protecting victims of sexual assault (Eilperin, 2016). The Obama administration believed that victims were not given the attention nor were they being taken seriously when a sexual assault incident was brought forward. The Obama administration requested that all schools use a "preponderance of evidence" standard, rather than the

more stringent "clear and convincing" standard in proving a sexual assault case (Dooley, 2017). The

administration's aim was for schools to adopt policies in which sexual assault cases were easier to prove.

The administration also launched a public-awareness campaign titled "It's on us", in hopes of

encouraging men and women to intervene before or during a sexual assault in order to stop it (Eilperin,

2016). They believed that it was just as important for members of society, as it was for government, to

work together to not only prevent and stop sexual assaults but to also create a cultural change around

the acceptance of sexual offending behaviour. The It's On Us campaign used powerful celebrities and

individuals as their spokespeople to spread the message that it is on the members and citizens of society

to make sure.

   However, in September 2017, under the new Trump Administration, the actions and works of

the Obama administration were reversed and requests to schools for sexual assault policy changes were

withdrawn (Sampathkumar, 2017). The Trump administration believed that the actions and requests by

Obama against sexual assaults ignored legal procedures and due process since the rights of the accused

were not fairly balanced compared with those of the victims (Sampathkumar, 2017). The current Trump

administration saw the lowered standard of proof as being discriminatory towards offenders and thus

unfair to alleged sexual perpetrators (Dooley, 2017). There has been tremendous pushback from

organizations, public offices, and the general public, across the nation as a result of the Trump

administration's actions.

   As seen above, the current responses from government and private organizations are all very

similar to each other. They are built around victims, with victims as their primary concern. The current

policies speak on how victims can report incidents, how officials can respond to victims, and how

organizations/people can help prevent individuals from becoming a victim. The one key piece missing

from all the current responses is the offender. The current legislations or policies do not speak to

aspects around offenders, such as how to identify potential offenders, how to prevent potential

offenders from acting, or how to help potential offenders, particularly offenders with personality traits like narcissism. Yet, while policies are helpful at taking a firm stance on an issue, they will be ineffective if they are not informed by a clear understanding of the perpetrators' characteristics, behaviours, and motivations.

Recommendations

The continuous high rates of sexual assault have indicated the need for more effective policies, services, and interventions in our communities and campuses as our current frameworks are both insufficient and unproductive (Burnette et al., 2009; Klaw et al., 2005; Senn et al., 2014; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Sutton & Simons, 2015). Many sexual assault, rape myth, and anti-rape-culture programs and policies today use information or instruments that were developed years or even decades ago (McMahon & Farmer, 2011). Due to the changing demographics and offender populations, many of the current programs and policies do not address or meet the needs of today's generation of students. For example, many still assume that gender roles and sexism is an old man's thinking, yet there is evidence that it is the younger and lower level post-secondary students who are more inclined to believe in rape myths and become immersed in the rape culture; hence, this particular group should be the target of intensive educational programming and policy (Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015).

Rape myths are so deeply entrenched into society that education and general policies alone fail to provide an ameliorative effect (Powers et al., 2015). In fact, Klaw et al. (2005) found that actions against sexual assaults must emerge from fundamental changes in people's worldview, self-concept, and interpersonal patterns of relating. Individuals must first begin to recreate their own culture by redefining their views on what is acceptable and what is not. Once we as a society have been able to redefine our views, we can we begin a cultural adjustment. One way we can change our views on sexual offending is to shift the focus in understanding how the event unfolded from victims to offenders. For instance, the primary focus of current sexual assault policies and programs so far have often been on victim safety

and helping victims protect themselves from being a victim (McMahon & Farmer, 2011). Although there

are treatment programs in place for sexual offenders, there has been little to no effort on adopting

policies aimed specifically towards identifying and preventing future potential offenders from acting on

their behaviour. In other words, by targeting and eliminating the potential perpetrators, vulnerable

individuals will be safe.

Additionally, current programs often do not reach students across all gender, ethnic, and

demographic groups on campuses, as research has shown that over 75% of participants in sexual assault

educational programming are Caucasian females (Lee et al., 2005). Yet, sexual assaults occur across all

ethnic groups and in fact non-Caucasian victims are the least likely to disclose their sexual assault

experience (Lee et al., 2005). To fix the issue, males and females from all ethnic groups should be

educated on sexual offending behaviour. The education should be provided in ways other than the

conventional methods of learning since people learn in different ways and may be more receptive to

other more modern forms of learning. For example, the educational messages can be provided through

social media site such as Facebook or Tweeter, or even through music videos or T.V. commercials.

Likewise, the programs that are being offered are also found to be ineffective in dealing with actual

sexual offending incidents. For example, although programs such as personal self-defence and force

option training have been shown to empower women, such training is unlikely to be used by women

during a sexual assault since in the majority of sexual assault incidents, the victim either personally

knows their perpetrator or the victim does not realize they have been sexually assaulted until after the

fact (Senn et al., 2014). Such training is thus ineffective in the prevention of real-time sexual assaults.

The single one greatest recommendation towards the prevention and elimination of sexual

offending is social change. Social change is necessary before any policy, law, or program can work

effectively (Burt, 1980; Hayes et al., 2016; Iconis, 2008; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Social change is about

changing how society as a whole views the facets of their own culture. Although there is no one single

solution or quick fix, social change can occur through continuous and persistent efforts over time. By

redefining and giving to meaning to what is acceptable and what is not, cultural change can occur.

Furthermore, we must start to look at sexual assaults and all its components from a different

perspective. For example, rape culture is a macro problem, yet we address it at an individual level

(Hayes et al., 2016). We need to start looking at it for what it is, a cultural issue affecting a full nation,

not an individual issue affecting one individual person. Sexual assaults are not a woman's problem nor a

man's problem, they are society's problem.

Another way to understand and address rape culture through social change is by viewing it as a

social communication phenomenon, in which the communication around sex, rape, and consent are

essential to defining, understanding, and resolving rape culture (Burnette et al., 2009). For instance, a

contributing factor to the growing rates of sexual assaults evolve around communication: a victim's

miscommunication and a perpetrator's misinterpretation can lead to a sexual assault incident (Burnette

et al., 2009). To illustrate, a woman may indirectly tell a man that she is not interested but the man may

misinterpret what the woman is saying as being flirtation or as playing "hard to get". It so becomes

essential that we educate people on direct and explicit verbal communication skills, including teaching

individuals the ability to interpret indirect communication. This can be done through training courses or

through social awareness campaigns through social media sites or through advertisements on T.V.

In regards to the concern for students, the creation of a mandatory online sexual offending

awareness and prevention course for all incoming students should be implemented. An awareness

course where all incoming students must enrol and pass before continuing with their studies would help

build better understanding and knowledge around topics that students may not have had any formal

education in. Research has shown that interactive, long-term internet-based programs produce the

most stable change in student attitudes (Hayes-Smith & Levett, 2010). Students should not only be

enrolled in the awareness course at the start of their studies but be enrolled in a mandatory refresher

course if they join at-risk groups, such as sport teams, campus clubs, or fraternity groups. The online course would teach about sexual assaults, rape myths, consent, traits and characteristics of sexual perpetrators, preventive measure, and provide resources for self-identified predatory students.

Similar to what the Government of B.C. has recommended, and as research has indicated as being successful, all current and future policies, laws, and programs should have the input and feedback from all stakeholders, including victims, students, parents, educators, and activists (Sharp et al., 2017; Sutton & Simons, 2015). Politicians and government officials may be the ones creating anti-rape policies and laws but they are not the ones who are witnessing the epidemic of sexual assaults first hand. Students have a better understanding of what occurs in fraternity parties, bars, and dorm rooms. Students understand the culture that plays within sports teams and among the campus grounds. The input from the students can be extremely helpful in both creating effective policies and by identifying target populations. Additionally, policies and legislation should not be created from a knee-jerk reaction but rather from an evidence-based theoretical perspective that uses science and research as its proven measure.

As we have seen, childhood victimization can be a significant contributing factor to sexual offending behaviour, both to an offender and to a victim. If we want to create a future without the rates of sexual assaults we have today, we must start by eliminating child abuse and victimization today. The development of a parental educational program that teaches parents the impact of their negative behaviour on their children's growth into adulthood is crucial. Many parents may not understand the importance of strong social bonds and positive attachments on a child; therefore, educating parents and caregivers on such topics can help reduce or prevent antisocial behaviours later in life. Furthermore, research has shown that a long-term strategy for tackling gender role stereotyping and other rape-myth stereotypes is to address it at a very young age (Burt, 1980; Letourneau et al., 2017; Reys et al., 2016). Parents should be educated on how to teach their children about diversity, equality, and inclusiveness

so children do not enter into adulthood with predisposed biases. One creative way educational

programming for parents and caregivers can occur is through the school system. When children are

enrolled in elementary, the school can offer a course to every child's parent.

Many may argue that social change in today's society is an impossible task and since rape myths

have been the norm for decades it is hardwired into some individuals. However, one should look and

compare sexual assaults to drunk driving. The anti-drunk driving movement and the public response to

drunk driving over the last couple decades have been a phenomena we have never seen in recent times

(Potter, 2016). For decades, not only was driving after drinking normal, it was an acceptable behaviour,

in the sense that there was no real pushback to individual who got caught. People went to bars, had a

few drinks, drive home; however, many would get into serious and fatal car accidents. As the incidents

of drunk driving accidents continued to rise and people who believed it would never happen to them got

into accidents with drunk drivers; major social outcry for change began. People wanted social change

and wanted to make drunk driving an unacceptable behaviour. With continuous efforts through tough

new legislation and intensive public awareness campaigns, drinking and driving today is not only

unacceptable and illegal, it is one of the most frowned upon behaviours within society. The same can be

done with sexual assaults. With the right legislation and public awareness campaigns, sexual offending,

rape myths and the existence of a rape culture can be eliminated.


Conclusion

There were three main questions this paper intended to answer: whether rape culture exists in

today's society, if sexual offending occurs more within certain population groups, and if there are any

links between sexual perpetrators and narcissism. Through a review of existing research, this paper was

able to draw firm conclusions and provide recommendations based on the finds of the three questions.

Rape myths, which are a part of a rape culture, are certainly still a part of our society, especially

among post-secondary students. The number of sexual assault incidents among school campuses, and in

the general public, show not only the prevalence of sexual assaults but the level of acceptance towards such behaviour. Men are still encouraged and supported to show sexual offending behaviour as a form of masculinity, dominance, and power. Excusing a perpetrator's behaviour and placing responsibility on a victim is still happening as evidence by thoughts and comments such as "it was the alcohol", "look at what was she wearing", or "she's lying". It goes beyond the general public; our criminal justice system has shown a culture of rape acceptance by failing victims time after time through inadequate sentencing, a lack of victim support, and inappropriate comments by judges such as that by Canadian Federal Judge Robin Camp, where he questioned a 19-year-old victim as to why she 'just couldn't keep her knees together' (Willingham & Hassan, 2016).

Additionally, sub-populations such as fraternity clubs and sports teams still emerge in a culture of male dominance and power, where dominance and power in defined through sexual aggression. Prevalence of sexual offending has been shown to be higher among these population groups than others. Furthermore, certain population of individuals within society have been found to hold higher rates of sexual offending behaviour than others, including individuals who have suffered childhood victimization (intergenerational transmission of violence theory), individuals who have lacked positive social bonds and attachments (Aker's social learning theory), and individuals who have a lack of personal self-control (Gottfredson & Hirschi's self-control theory).

This paper also found that there are multiple similarities between the traits and characteristics of a sexual perpetrator and that of a narcissist. Those who engage in sexual offending pose the same traits found among individuals with narcissistic personality disorder. As a result of such similarities, there is the possibility, although not definite, that narcissistic individuals may be sexual perpetrators and sexual perpetrators may be narcissistic.

Although the literature is not conclusive as to why we are seeing an increase in sexual assault complaints, though modern social media has certainly been a contributing factor, it does tell us a lot

about the rape culture that has been submerged into our society for the better part of more than 20

years. The literature has provided a strong understanding and connection between sexual offending and

certain population types, including narcissistic individuals. However, the literature also gives us hope

that we can, through effective and innovative approaches, tackle this issue in a positive manner.

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