

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS REGARDING SEXUAL ASSAULTS

by

AMBER MOSIER

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

May 2013

Copyright © by Amber Mosier 2013

All Rights Reserved

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was through the support and encouragement of many people that I have finally completed this challenging task. First, I would like to thank my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Rhonda Dobbs, for her encouragement and guidance throughout the development and execution of this study. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Jaya Davis and Kristy Smith, M.A., for their support and guidance.

It is very important to me to express my gratitude for Diane and Steve McClure, without their continued support throughout my life; I would never have been able to accomplish what I have. There are always those special people in your life that you need to keep you encouraged as well as root for you, these are those people. Lastly, I would like to thank all of my friends and loved ones for their support and patience with me throughout my Master's degree. Not only have I had to sacrifice my time with them, but they have had to do the same. I am lucky to have such understanding individuals by my side.

April 02, 2013

ABSTRACT

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS REGARDING SEXUAL ASSAULTS

Amber Mosier, M.A.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2013

Supervising Professor: Rhonda Renee Dobbs

Perceptions of sexual assaults were compared among college students in this thesis. The findings indicate that men and women have significantly different perceptions of sexual assault and the fairness of the criminal justice system. The findings also showed that those who are criminal justice majors as opposed to those who are not do not generally have significantly different perceptions of sexual assault. The one exception to this was that CRCJ majors are more likely to believe a victim has given a false report of sexual assault victimization to law enforcement. Self-reported likelihood of reporting sexual assault victimization to law enforcement and the reasons are also considered. These reasons were consistent with those reported in previous research. Policy implications and suggestions for future research are also provided.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
2.1 Defining sexual assault .....	3
2.2 Sexual assault statistics .....	6
2.3 Impact on sexual assault victims .....	7
2.4 Risk factors for sexual assault .....	8
2.4.1 Perpetrator characteristics .....	9
2.4.2 Victim characteristics .....	10
2.4.3 Situational characteristics .....	11
2.5 Reasons for not reporting .....	12
2.6 Criminal justice system response .....	14
2.6.1 Police involvement .....	14
2.6.2 Prosecutor involvement.....	18
2.6.3 Rejection of sexual assault cases by prosecutors .....	19
2.7 Perceptions of reporting .....	21
2.8 Community involvement in sexual assaults .....	27
3. METHODS .....	29
3.1 Sample selection .....	29
3.2 Measurement instrument .....	30

3.3 Variables used in this analysis .....	31
3.4 Hypothesis.....	33
4. FINDINGS .....	35
5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION .....	40
5.1 Policy implications .....	43
5.2 Limitations of the present study .....	44
5.3 Suggestions for future research .....	45
APPENDIX	
A. SURVEY .....	46
REFERENCES.....	51
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION .....	60

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.2 Most Commonly Listed Personal Beliefs About Rape Victims (n=124) .....	25
2.3 Most Commonly Listed Cultural Stereotypes About Rape Victims .....	26
3.1 Classes Surveyed .....	29
3.2 Descriptive Statistics for the Sample.....	30
3.3 Perceptions of Sexual Assaults.....	32
3.4 Frequency for Knowing a Sexual Assault Victim .....	33
4.1 T-test Results for Perceptions of Sexual Assault by Major .....	35
4.2 T-test Results for Perceptions of Sexual Assault by Gender .....	36
4.3 T-test Results for Perceptions of Sexual Assault by Knowing a Victim of Sexual Assault.....	37
4.4 Reasons for Reporting and Not Reporting Sexual Assaults .....	38

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2013) distinguishes between rape and sexual assault. Rape is defined as coerced or forced sexual intercourse. Sexual assault is any other sexual victimization that is not rape or attempted rape. The state law in Texas concludes that a person does not agree to sexual activity if he or she is forced, coerced, threatened, unconscious, drugged, a minor, mentally disabled, mentally ill, or undergoing a medical procedure (Beckham, 2011).

A 2003 Texas Health Survey discovered that nearly two million adults have been sexually assaulted. Of those sexually assaulted, this study concluded that only 18% of victims reported the sexual assault to law enforcement (Busch, Bell, DiNitto, & Neff). Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) (2009) statistics revealed that nationally 44% of sexual assault victims are under the age of 18 and 80% are under the age of 30.

Every year, there are roughly 207,000 victims of sexual assault in the United States. Out of six women, one will be sexually assaulted in her life time and 1 in 33 men will be sexually assaulted in his lifetime (RAINN website, 2009). These rates indicate that someone is sexually assaulted in this country every two minutes. Often times, these victims fail to report the incidents to law enforcement. In 2010, U.S. residents ages 12 and older experienced an estimated 188,380 rape and sexual assault victimizations; however, only 50.0% of these victimizations were documented with the police (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011).

In a study performed by O'Neil and Morgan (2010), experts interviewed stressed that sexual violence impacted all entities of American society and that it happens more frequently than many citizens realized. According to the experts, most people have had some sort of sexual violence experience, either directly or indirectly. Although there is pervasiveness and

familiarity with the issue, the study concluded that the public did not have a grasp on how many people have experienced sexual violence or have been affected by it (O'Neil & Morgan, 2010).

Entire communities can be impacted by the crime of sexual. The safety factor in a community can be jeopardized, as well as, the trust of citizens. Financial and psychological tolls can be placed on communities (Wilson & Perryman, 2011). Sexual assault costs to Americans were estimated at \$127 billion per year (US Department of Justice, 1996). Sexual assaults are considered crimes with no boundaries due to the far-reaching effects they have. Therefore, a community response is necessary for sexual assaults in a community to be addressed effectively (Wilson & Perryman, 2011).

Even when these crimes are reported to the police, a large problem that remains is the prosecuting of rape cases. In 2004, the conviction rate for felony defendants charged with rape in the 75 largest counties in the United States was 62%; 54% of the defendants were convicted of felonies and 8% were convicted of misdemeanors (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008). The legal and policy changes implemented over the past three decades notwithstanding, sexual assault continues to be a crime characterized by low reporting rates and high rates of case attrition (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008).

This thesis will examine college students' perceptions of sexual assault and the processing of such cases in the criminal justice system. Also, attention will be given to self-reported likelihood to report and reasons for reporting or not reporting. Understanding perceptions of reporting may help encourage more victims to report their sexual assaults, as well as, aid in improving the criminal justice response to such reports.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Sexual assault is largely understood to be an underreported crime. A recent Bureau of Justice report (Langton, Berzofsky, Krebs & Smiley-McDonald, 2012) indicated that 65% of sexual assaults reported in the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) between 2006-2010 were not reported to law enforcement. This was the highest rate of non-reporting for any serious violent crime considered. Forty-one percent of robberies during this time period were not reported to law enforcement, while 44% of aggravated assaults were not reported. The only offense examined that had a higher percentage of non-reporting was theft, with 67% of those offenses not reported to law enforcement.

A study of 650 college-age women reported that 42% had been victims of sexual assault coercion and, of those, only 28% asked for help. Among the victims that sought help, 75% went to a friend rather than a professional (Ogletree, 1993; Ullman, 1999, as cited in Sable, Danis, Mauzy, & Gallagher, 2006). A study conducted in the UK found that 79% of men did not seek help after a rape incident occurred and only 15% reported the incident to police. Those that were sexually assaulted at age 16 or older waited approximately seven years to seek any sort of care regarding the sexual assault (King & Woollett, 1997).

#### 2.1 Defining sexual assault

Sexual violence includes an array of crimes including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape. A stranger, acquaintance, friend, intimate partner and even a family member can be the perpetrator. All forms of sexual violence can harm the individual, family unit and society (National Institute of Justice, 2010).

Legal definitions of rape vary by jurisdiction. Most of the state statutes define rape as nonconsensual oral, anal, or vaginal penetration to an individual by body parts or objects using

force, threats of bodily injury, or by taking advantage of an incapacitated individual.

Incapacitation can include being mentally or cognitively disabled, self-induced or involuntary intoxication, being a minor, or any other condition that is defined by law that voids the consent of the individual (National Institute of Justice website, 2010).

The definition of a sexual assault, according to the Texas Penal Code Chapter 22, Section 22.011 (LexisNexis, 2011), is:

§ 22.011. Sexual Assault

(a) A person commits an offense if the person:

(1) intentionally or knowingly:

(A) causes the penetration of the anus or female sexual organ of another person by any means, without that person's consent;

(B) causes the penetration of the mouth of another person by the sexual organ of the actor, without that person's consent; or

(C) causes the sexual organ of another person, without that person's consent, to contact or penetrate the mouth, anus, or sexual organ of another person, including the actor; or

(2) intentionally or knowingly:

(A) causes the penetration of the anus or female sexual organ of a child by any means;

(B) causes the penetration of the mouth of a child by the sexual organ of the actor;

(C) causes the sexual organ of a child to contact or penetrate the mouth, anus, or sexual organ of another person, including the actor;

(D) causes the anus of a child to contact the mouth, anus, or sexual organ of another person, including the actor; or

(E) causes the mouth of a child to contact the anus or sexual organ of another person, including the actor.

The Texas Penal Code defines aggravated sexual assault as (LexisNexis, 2011):

§ 22.021. Aggravated Sexual Assault

(a) A person commits an offense:

(1) if the person:

(A) intentionally or knowingly:

(i) causes the penetration of the anus or female sexual organ of another person by any means, without that person's consent;

(ii) causes the penetration of the mouth of another person by the sexual organ of the actor, without that person's consent; or

(iii) causes the sexual organ of another person, without that person's consent, to contact or penetrate the mouth, anus, or sexual organ of another person, including the actor; or

(B) intentionally or knowingly:

(i) causes the penetration of the anus or female sexual organ of a child by any means;

(ii) causes the penetration of the mouth of a child by the sexual organ of the actor;

(iii) causes the sexual organ of a child to contact or penetrate the mouth, anus, or sexual organ of another person, including the actor;

(iv) causes the anus of a child to contact the mouth, anus, or sexual organ of another person, including the actor; or

(v) causes the mouth of a child to contact the anus or sexual organ of another person, including the actor; and

(2) if:

(A) the person:

(i) causes serious bodily injury or attempts to cause the death of the victim or another person in the course of the same criminal episode;

(ii) by acts or words places the victim in fear that death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping will be imminently inflicted on any person;

- (iii) by acts or words occurring in the presence of the victim threatens to cause the death, serious bodily injury, or kidnapping of any person;
  - (iv) uses or exhibits a deadly weapon in the course of the same criminal episode;
  - (v) acts in concert with another who engages in conduct described by Subdivision (1) directed toward the same victim and occurring during the course of the same criminal episode; or
  - (vi) administers or provides flunitrazepam, otherwise known as rohypnol, or gamma hydroxybutyrate to the victim of the offense with the intent of facilitating the commission of the offense;
- (B) the victim is younger than 14 years of age; or
- (C) the victim is 65 years of age or older.
- (b) In this section, "child" has the meaning assigned that term by Section 22.011(c).
- (c) An aggravated sexual assault under this section is without the consent of the other person if the aggravated sexual assault occurs under the same circumstances listed in Section 22.011(b).
- (d) The defense provided by Section 22.011(d) applies to this section.
- (e) An offense under this section is a felony of the first degree.

## 2.2 Sexual assault statistics

Most sexual assaults are committed by perpetrators who are known to their victims. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) (2011), among those who are victimized between ages 18 to 29, two-thirds had a previous relationship with the perpetrator. Six in ten sexual assault victims stated that they were assaulted by a relative, friend, acquaintance or intimate partner according to the BJS (2011).

Men are less likely to be victims of sexual assault than women. The National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) of 8,000 men and 8,000 women found that 1 in 33 men and 1 in 6 women reported being a victim of an attempted or completed sexual assault in their lifetime

(Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Women are also significantly more likely than men to sustain an injury during a sexual assault. In a study funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), 31.5 percent of female sexual assault victims, compared with 16.1 percent of male sexual assault victims, reported an injury during their most recent sexual assault (Thoennes & Tjaden, 2000).

Sexual violence can occur early in life. Thoennes & Tjaden (2000), found that among the female rape victims studied, more than half were younger than the age of 18, with 34.4 percent ages 12-17 and 21.6 percent under the age of 12 when the victimization occurred. When it comes to early abuse and later victimization, young age is a risk factor for sexual victimization as an adult. As part of a longitudinal study that began in 1973, Siegel and Williams (2001) analyzed interview data regarding the impact of child sexual abuse. They found that females who were victimized before the age of 12 had the greatest risk of re-victimization, followed by those between the ages of 13-17, who were at a greater risk of sexual assault as an adult than any other woman (Siegel & Williams, 2001).

### 2.3 Impact on sexual assault victims

There has been extensive research in the past several years on the impact of sexual assault on a women's mental health (i.e. Briere & Jordan, 2004; Kilpatrick, Amstadter, Resnick, & Ruggiero, 2007; Resick, 1993; Rogers & Gruener, 1997). This research consistently shows that rape is one of the more severe traumas that leads to several long-term negative consequences (Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2009). There are no typical types of sexual assault nor is there a typical response to the sexual assault by the victim. Sexual assault victimization can lead to emotional and psychological trauma; some victims are left feeling powerless and helpless (Wilson & Perryman, 2011). In Texas, many victims do not report their forcible rape due to the stigma and fear of embarrassment, according to the Crime in Texas 2004 report. Victimization by sexual assault is very personal and possibly devastating. It can take a victim of sexual assault many years to recover from the physical, emotional, and spiritual effects that may result from the victimization. The physical problems seen in victims of sexual

assaults may include eating and sleeping disturbances, substance abuse, body aches, breathing problems, nausea, and memory problems. Post-traumatic stress disorder, characterized by psychological cycles of depression, fear, anxiety, shame, anger, and secrecy, can also occur in some sexual assault victims (Wilson & Perryman, 2011).

The findings of Robin Warshaw's (1994) work concluded that 82% of rape victims had reported that the sexual assault had changed their lives permanently. The National Crime Victim Survey that was conducted in 1992 indicated that 30% of rape victims had contemplated suicide and 13% of those made an attempt (Kilpatrick, Edmunds & Seymour, 1992). Victims of sexual assault are three times more likely to suffer from depression, six times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, and 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol than those who have not been victimized by a sexual assault. Victims that were sexually assaulted are also 26 times more likely to engage in drug activity and four times more likely to contemplate suicide (RAINN, 2008).

Victims self-report characteristics of their psychological health after their contact with the legal system personnel indicate the following: 87% felt bad about themselves, 73% had feelings of guilt or self-blame, 71% felt depressed, 89% felt violated, 53% felt a lack of trust for people, and 80% reported a reluctance to seek further help (Campbell, 2005; Campbell & Raja, 2005). Several studies were done on victim/police contact and the results showed that low legal action such as charges not being filed and high secondary victimization were both correlated with increased PTSD symptomatology (Campbell, Ahrens, Wasco & Barnes, 2001; Campbell & Raja, 2005). PTSD was more prevalent in victims of non-stranger rapes whose cases were not prosecuted and were also involved in high levels of secondary victimization (Campbell et al., 2009).

#### 2.4 Risk factors for sexual assault

Identifying variables that influence sexual assault victimization is essential to inform effective prevention efforts. The three areas of research regarding risk factors of sexual assault

include characteristics of the perpetrator, characteristics of the victim, and situational characteristics (Loh, Gidycz, Lobo, & Luthra, 2005). Loh, et al. (2005) contend that the most productive way to reduce sexual assault occurrences would be to focus on perpetrator characteristics that increase the likelihood of perpetration as opposed to focusing on characteristics of victims. By contrast, O'Neil & Morgan (2010) contend that we need to address "cultural norms regarding gender inequality, especially as these mores are represented in the media" (p.11).

#### *2.4.1 Perpetrator characteristics*

The characteristics that have been shown to separate men who are sexually aggressive from those who are not include the differences in socialization experiences, beliefs and attitudes about sexuality, personality, and alcohol usage (Loh et al., 2005). Pro rape attitudes and the individualistic perpetrator characteristics are viewed as being part of a general cultural context that objectifies women and allows the use of force by men to obtain sexual conquests (Berkowitz, 1992; Burt, 1980; Kanin, 1985). The role of peer relationships and perceived norms on sexually aggressive behavior were examined by Berkowitz (2003). He found that men who believe their friends or other peer groups of importance tend to use coercive behavior to obtain sex are theorized to be more likely to portray the same behaviors. The men that partake in groups that advocate male dominance could be more comfortable committing sexually aggressive acts compared to men without peer support condoning that behavior (Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991). Displayed peer approval of forced sex is greater for perpetrators of sexual assault than those who are not perpetrators (Abbey, McAuslan, Zawacki, Clinton, & Buck, 2001).

Perpetrators of sexual assaults can be strangers, family members, acquaintances, spouses, and intimate partners to their victims (Wilson & Perryman, 2011). According to RAINN (2008) approximately 73% of adult sexual assault victims know who their assailant is, when it comes to juvenile sexual assaults, 93% know their assailant. Some assailants use threats,

physical violence, coercion or other types of manipulation to commit sexual assaults. The motivation behind the sexual assault for the offender is to have power and control which is achieved by degrading and humiliating the victim of the sexual assault (Wilson & Perryman, 2011).

O'Neil and Morgan (2010) conducted telephone interviews with ten experts who are key practitioners working on issues related to sexual violence. These experts described perpetrators as people who are known and most of the time loved by the victims even though the media tends to portray reports of sexual violence by strangers, when this is the least common form of sexual violence. The experts explained that those citizens they came in contact with perceived sexual violence as a matter of "stranger danger" (O'Neil & Morgan, 2010). Rather than explaining sexual violence as an individual pathology, these experts pointed out that the primary causes of such violence are embedded within our culture.

#### *2.4.2 Victim characteristics*

Some research has examined factors related to sexual victimization. Walsh, DiLillo, and Messman-Moore (2012) note it is important to understand what victim characteristics might be related to sexual assault. One factor that has been examined is risk recognition, or the ability to identify cues to sexual assault. Marx, Calhoun, Wilson and Meyerson (2001) found that women who were more likely to be victimized had difficulty recognizing risk. Similarly, response to perceived threat has also been examined, with those who are slower to respond to risk being more likely to be victimized (Messman-Moore & Brown, 2006). Using a risk vignette, Walsh et al. (2012) studied the impact of sexual assault victimization on self-reported likelihood to leave the situation. They found women with prior sexual assault victimization reported they would stay in the situation longer than those without victimization experience. They posited that sexual victimization might impede the ability of these women to engage in effective risk assessment.

Smith, White, and Holland (2003), contend that previous physical victimization is a risk factor for future sexual assault victimization. Using longitudinal data from two cohorts of female college students, they found that the women who been victimized in both childhood and adolescence were the most likely to be victimized in college. Further, women who were victimized physically during college were more likely to experience subsequent victimization during college.

#### *2.4.3 Situational characteristics*

Situational factors that can be indicative of a sexual assault can include, the man knowing the woman well, an isolated setting, alcohol consumption, prior consensual sexual activity. Further, Abbey et al., (2001) contend that a potential perpetrator tends to feel a false sense of entitlement when a woman gives what he perceives to be an unclear impression of her sexual interest. Alcohol is one of the major risk factors in a sexual assault. Pre-assault alcohol usage by victims and perpetrators has shown to cause more severe sexual victimizations. In a study done by Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, (1998), it is proposed that sexual assault victimization could be associated by alcohol expectancies. This means that men who believe that alcohol enhances sexuality may drink alcohol when they want to experience sexual feelings. Misconceptions of sexual intent could be due to the decreased sensitivity to social cues when alcohol is involved (Abbey et al., 2001).

A woman's claim of sexual assault could possibly be less believed if she was drinking alcohol at the time of the victimization, especially if the male companion was drinking as well. Many studies have investigated the above statement by presenting participants with vignettes in which the alcohol consumption of two targets portrayed is varied (Schuller & Stewart, 2000). Studies have found victim intoxication to be correlated with negative perceptions of the victim and perpetrator (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Richardson & Campbell, 1982). The intoxication on the part of the perpetrator led to depleted perceptions of the blame for the perpetrator (Richardson & Campbell, 1982). There were two studies in which researchers

found that alcohol consumption by perpetrators and victims leads to validity concerns when it came to the accusation of rape. The victim was viewed more in a negative aspect and more responsible and blamed than the assailant. The exception to this was where male perpetrators were more intoxicated than that of the female victims; only at this time was he looked at more harshly (Norris & Cubbins, 1992; Stormo, Lang, & Strizke, 1997).

### 2.5 Reasons for not reporting

According to the Bureau of Justice (1994), crimes attempted and crimes that did not result in physical injuries were less likely to be reported to police than crimes that have been carried out or had produced injuries. The victims that reported violent crimes stated that they felt it was the right thing to do in order to prevent future acts of violence. A primary reason for not reporting sexual assault was due to privacy issues that the victim felt would be in jeopardy due to reporting. Statistics provided by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2006) showed that the most common reasons individuals did not report a rape or sexual assault to the police is because they felt the police would not want to be bothered (n=8,734), another 6,791 individuals did not report their rape or sexual assault to police because they felt that police were inefficient, ineffective or biased.

The Rape in America report (Kilpatrick et al., 1992) included information pertaining to why most victims are cautious to report. Major concerns identified by victims were: being blamed by others, their families finding out, other people finding out, and their names being made public by the news media. In regards to being blamed by others, this could mean people might view them as bringing it on themselves. For example, if a woman is known as a prostitute and states she was raped, others might blame her for being raped; however, even prostitutes can be raped. Families finding out about a rape could dissuade victims from reporting. Some families have a belief system where once raped, you might be viewed as un-pure or they may shun you or be embarrassed to talk about the situation. Other people finding out makes victims leery of reporting because many times when people are raped, they do not feel like they can

trust anyone and they tend to keep it to themselves. They are fearful of telling anyone, even their spouse, due to how they may be perceived. Publicity plays a role in victims reporting their sexual assault. This fear comes from a retaliation stand point and concerns that the family of the perpetrator may come after the victim or the friends and family of the victim or the news could tarnish the reputation of the victim and their family (Kilpatrick et al., 1992).

Langton et al. (2012) examined NCVS data for reasons victims give for not reporting crimes to police. The most important reasons why crimes were not reported to police included: the victim dealt with the crime in another way, the crime was not important enough for the victim to report, police would/could not help, fear of reprisal or getting the offender in trouble, "other" reason, or not one most important reason. Compared to victims of other serious violent crimes (robbery and aggravated assault), victims of sexual assault did indicate some different reasons for not reporting their victimization to police. Victims of sexual assault were less likely to report that the incident was not serious enough to report, with only 6% indicating this. They were more likely to report fear of reprisal, with 28% giving this as the most important reason they did not report. Victims of sexual assault were also more likely than victims of other serious crimes to indicate an "other" reason for not reporting. In fact, "other" was the most common reason for not reporting for victims of sexual assault, with approximately one-third responding in this manner. Sexual assault victims felt that police would not or could not help; therefore, 13% did not report their victimization. In comparison to the unreported serious violent crimes, robbery victims were equally likely to not report due to dealing with it in another way or describing it as a personal matter, but less likely than victims of aggravated assault to report their victimization (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012).

The likelihood that police would not be notified about a sexual assault is greater if the relationship between the female victim and the offender was very close. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, about three-fourths of all victimizations were not reported if the offender was a current or former husband or boyfriend. If the offender was a friend or acquaintance,

61% of completed rapes, 71% of attempted rapes, and 82% of sexual assaults were not reported to law enforcement. If the offender was a stranger, 54% of completed rapes, 44% of attempted rapes, and 34% of sexual assaults were not reported to law enforcement (Rennison, 2002).

## 2.6 Criminal justice system response

There are some scholars that argue women who report sexual assault are treated poorly in the criminal justice system (e.g., Stanko, 1985; Erez, 2002; Belknap, 2001; Koss, 2000). It is suggested that the men who commit violence against women are treated too leniently by the police and courts, while the female victims are mistreated. Many commentators argue that female victims of sexual assault have had adverse experiences when dealing with the criminal justice system. An example of this would be the qualitative research conducted by Erez and Belknap (1998), that conclude the attitudes and behaviors of individuals who work in the criminal justice system are often “harmful and demoralizing to victims” and “may cause battered women a deeper despair than the abuse itself” (p. 263). The negative experiences with the criminal justice system for victims of a sexual assault are described as secondary victimization (Allison & Wrightsman, 1993). When a victim of a sexual assault first reports an assault and is willing to cooperate with the police and prosecutors, the case moves forward and sometimes they must confront criminal justice officials because officials may become skeptical of their allegations and question the victim’s credibility (Estrich, 1987).

### *2.6.1 Police Involvement*

The initial stage of the process is when the police investigate who the suspect is and whether they should make an arrest of that suspect. After they have identified and arrested the suspect, they need to determine which charges should be filed and then proceed with referring the case to a prosecutor, if the case warrants such. Due to what Kerstetter (1990) refers to as “gatekeeping” decisions, the investigative process does not always produce the outcome, such as arrest and successful prosecution, which the victim would anticipate. Taylor (1987) mentions,

“Police determine how rape victims and cases are treated by the criminal justice system. . . .

After giving a valid rape report and fully cooperating with the police, a woman may find herself in the unexpected and bewildering predicament of having come to the police for aid . . . only to have the door slammed firmly in her face” (p.89).

A highly criticized and important decision made by law enforcement is whether to substantiate the charges or to consider them “unfounded”; meaning whether or not, after the investigation has been completed, the incident constitutes a crime or there is enough evidence to determine that a crime occurred. If the officer does not believe a crime has been committed, either because they do not believe the victim’s story or the evidence is not strong enough to proceed, then it is concluded that a crime did not occur and the case is considered to be unfounded. Konradi (2007) makes mention that when police feel that the odds of an arrest and prosecution are low, police may use the unbounding decision to clear or erase the case.

One measure of police effectiveness, both at the departmental and individual officer level, is the rate of cases cleared (Martin, 2006). According to the FBI, cases are cleared either through arrest or exceptional means.<sup>1</sup> Unfounding, or determining a crime did not occur, is also a practice that will indirectly impact clearance rates (Martin, 2006). The importance of clearance rates may lead to encouraging “officers to unbound ambiguous or difficult cases, including those where a victim is reluctant, emotional, uncooperative, or compromised in some way (e.g., had smoked marijuana, was a prostitute, had a former sexual relationship with the rapist” (p.53). McCahill, Meyer, & Fischman (1979) make the same claim by stating that police label cases unfounded for illegitimate reasons, such as that a woman is poor, African American or Hispanic, a prostitute, or has a criminal record. Further, McCahill et al. (1979) argue that the

---

<sup>1</sup> For an offense to be cleared by arrest, three conditions must be met: someone is arrested, charged, and turned over for prosecution. For an offense to be cleared by exceptional means, four conditions must be met. An offender must be identified, there must be enough evidence to support an arrest and charge, there must be a known location of the offender, and there must be a circumstance that prevents the arrest, charging, and prosecution. Examples of exceptional means include lack of cooperation from the victim and death of the offender (U.S. Department of Justice, 2010).

police may unfound a case because they feel that the sexual assault was warranted because the victim brought it on themselves or that the case would not hold up in court.

A study conducted by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (1977), sheds light on what police officers considered to be unfounding decisions in sexual assault cases. When police officers were asked to classify the factors that affected their decisions when predicting whether a case would be founded or unfounded, they stated the most important predictors were proof of penetration and the suspect's use of physical force. In a later study by Kerstetter (1990) analyzing sexual assaults reported to the police in Chicago in 1981, he differentiated between cases in which the identity of the suspect was unknown and those in which the victim and the suspect knew each other in some way. In the cases where the "identity" was not known, the most important predictors of the police founding decision were the complainant's willingness to prosecute, whether the sexual assault victim physically opposed the attack, whether a weapon was utilized, and whether the suspect was apprehended. On the contrary, in the cases where the victim did know the attacker, the police were more willing to label the case a crime if the suspect was in custody, if the victim suffered an injury, and if there was enough evidence proving the attack occurred. The findings from this study guided Kerstetter (1990) to conclude that when the police made a decision to unfound a report, it was affected by a combination of legally relevant, highly important factors, and legally unimportant victim characteristics.

Frazier and Haney (1996) examined case attrition in 569 sexual assaults reported during 1991 to a Midwestern police department. They focused on the following three areas for their study (p. 617): There were 273 cases where the suspects were identified, 187 of the identified suspects were questioned by police, and all of the identified suspects that were questioned were referred to the prosecutor. Frazier and Haney (1996) concluded that the identified suspects were more likely to be questioned by the police if they were unknown to the victim, if there was proof of penetration, if the victim was injured in any way, and if there was a

witness to the crime. The final conclusion, “evidentiary and credibility factors as well as offense severity are associated with cases proceeding to the prosecuting attorney’s office” (Frazier & Haney, 1996, p. 624).

Legal and extra-legal criteria are both used by police when making the decision to arrest a suspect accused of sexual assault or unfound a case involving allegations of sexual assault. Legally relevant criteria can include, but is not limited to, physical evidence and whether or not the victim is willing to cooperate with the prosecution. The extra-legal criteria can include victim, suspect and case characteristics such as the victims and/or suspect’s race, class, demeanor, and level of intoxication (Kerstetter, 1990).

Out of the 569 cases of sexual assault that were reported to a Midwestern metropolitan U.S. police department in a one year period involving female victims of sexual assault, only 22% of the cases were referred by the police to the prosecuting attorney (Frazier & Haney, 1996). As discussed earlier, there are many factors that the police take into account when making the decision to proceed with a sexual assault case. One of the decision factors is whether alcohol was involved, either by the alleged assailant or the victim. An estimated one third to three fourths of all sexual assault cases are estimated to involve alcohol intoxication (Testa & Parks, 1996).

Perceptions of the victim being intoxicated during a sexual assault did influence the officer’s perception of the case. The greater the intoxication level, the less credible the victim was viewed and the more she was believed to be interested in sexual intercourse, as well as, her communicated interest in sexual intercourse. Victims with a high intoxication level were blamed for letting things go too far and the assailant was less likely to be blamed because they honestly believed that the complainant was willing to engage in the intercourse. In conclusion, an officer’s judgment appeared to be driven based off their perceptions of the victims’ drinking habits rather than the intoxication level of the man (Schuller & Stewart, 2000).

Research has demonstrated that women who are victims of a sexual assault are more apt to be viewed as genuine victims if they are considered to be pure and respectable (Du Mont, Miller & Myhr, 2003), do not know their assailant (Szymanski, Devlin, Chrisler & Vyse, 1993), sober (Hammock & Richardson, 1997), have defended herself (have visible injuries to prove it) (Ehrlich, 2001), and reported the incident to police immediately (Horney & Spohn, 1996). Researchers have shown that people tend to judge female victims of sexual assault blameworthy if the way they acted violated traditional gender role behaviors that are deemed appropriate for females (Abbey et al., 2001).

Women whose lives, backgrounds, and characteristics that deviate from the narrow confines of “ideal victims” in sexual assault cases are labeled “bad” victims. They are the women whose sexual assault experiences are scrutinized, who deem to be less deserving of the law’s protection, as well as, whose credibility is attacked. This is where victim-blaming starts to develop. The thought behind victim-blaming is that women are, and should be, responsible for their own safety, managing men’s sexual interest and aggression, and the ability to assess and avoid risk (Comack & Peter, 2005).

During the law enforcement process, there may be secondary victimization, followed by many more victimizations due to the victim being asked to repeatedly recount the sexual assault (Campbell et al., 2009). Throughout the questioning, law enforcement tend to ask victim-blaming questions dealing with what they were wearing, their prior sexual history, and if they responded sexually to the sexual assault (Campbell, 2005, 2006; Campbell & Raja, 2005).

#### *2.6.2 Prosecutor involvement*

Supreme Court Justice Jackson stated in 1940, “The prosecutor has more control over life, liberty, and reputation than any other person in America.” The prosecutor plays a crucial part in the prosecuting of sexual assault cases since they hold the discretionary power to decide who will be charged and what charges will be filed. They also decide if a plea bargain will be

offered, and if offered, they decide the type of bargain that the plea entails (Holleran & Spohn, 2004).

Kerstetter (1990, p.182) refers to the prosecutor as, “the gateway to justice,” since the initial decision to prosecute a case or not prosecute a case lies solely in the hands of the prosecutors. The prosecutors are not only the voice for the criminal justice system, but also for the victim. The prosecutor plays a crucial role in the criminal justice system. Prosecutors have wide discretion at this particular stage in the process because there are no legislative or judicial guidelines for charging sexual assaults. As stated in *Bordenkircher v. Hayes* (434 U.S.357, 364), “So long as the prosecutor has probable cause to believe that the accused committed an offense defined by statute, the decision whether or not to prosecute, and what charge to file or bring before a grand jury, generally rests entirely in his discretion.”

Frazier and Haney’s (1996) case study shows that prosecutors’ charging decisions in sexual assault cases are strongly influenced by legally relevant factors such as the seriousness of the crime, the offender’s prior criminal record, and the strength of the case. A relationship between the victim and the accused also has been shown to have a profound effect on decision making when it comes to sexual assault cases.

### *2.6.3 Rejection of sexual assault cases by prosecutors*

Qualitative data was used in three studies to analyze why prosecutors reject charges in sexual assault cases (Frohmann, 1991, 1997; Spohn, Beichner, & Davis-Frenzel, 2001). The idea that decisions in rape cases could hinge on “typifications of rape held by processing agents” (LaFree, 1989, p. 241) plays a crucial role in the research gathered by Frohmann (1991, 1997), which was obtained by screening processes and interviews with prosecutors to analyze explanations of and justifications for case rejections. The credibility of rape victims came into question by prosecutors due to their ability to convict. Frohmann (1991) argued that prosecutors were looking for ways to make the victims look unconvincing. She stated, “prosecutors are actively looking for ‘holes’ or problems that will make the victim’s version of

'what happened' unbelievable or not convincing beyond a reasonable doubt" (Frohmann, 1991, p. 214). Orientation towards possible jurors reflects victim credibility by prosecutors, according to Frohmann (1991). "The ability to construct a credible narrative for the jury and the jurors' ability to understand what happened from the victim's viewpoint are pivotal in prosecutors' assessment of case convictability" (Frohmann, 1997, p. 536).

Throughout the observations and interviews, Frohmann (1991) concluded that prosecutors justify case rejections using a variety of techniques to discredit victim's claims of sexual assaults. One of the techniques she labeled "discrepant accounts," is where the inconsistencies in a victim's story or incongruities between the victim's account and prosecutor's beliefs about "typical" rapes to justify rejection would be used. Frohmann (1991) identified a second technique that prosecutors used to discredit victims' allegations of sexual assaults; this was to try to prove the victim had an ulterior motive. The way the prosecutor was able to do this was by digging into the victim's current situations such as whether they were trying to cover up non-marital sexual activity, illegal behaviors, and explain away a pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases.

Spohn, Beichner, and Davis-Frenzel (2001) use focal concerns theory to examine prosecutors' charging decisions, expanding on work by Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer (1998) which examined the focal concerns guiding judicial decisions. The perspective of the focal concerns theory suggests that judges' sentencing decisions can mirror their assessment of the blameworthiness or culpability of the perpetrator, their ambition to keep the community safe by putting dangerous offenders in steel cages, and their regard to the consequences or social costs of the decision they made in sentencing (Spohn et al., 2001). A "perceptual shorthand", is developed on account of the judge not having enough information to determine the culpability or dangerousness of a perpetrator (Hawkins, 1981, p. 208; Steffensmeier et al., 1998, p. 767). This shorthand is based on stereotypes and attributions that are linked to perpetrator characteristics which include race, gender, and age. The result, "race, age, and gender will

interact to influence sentencing because of images or attributions relating these statuses to membership in social groups thought to be dangerous and crime prone” (Steffensmeier et al., 1998, p.768).

The focal concerns that guide prosecutors’ charging decisions are close, but not completely like those that guide judicial decisions (Spohn et al., 2001). Charges are more likely filed by prosecutors when the victim is shown to have suffered physical harm and when there is strong enough evidence against the perpetrator. Prosecutors and judges are motivated by “practical constraints and consequences” of decisions (Steffensmeier et al., 1998, p. 767).

### 2.7 Perceptions of reporting

A plethora of research has been done on the beliefs and attitudes of people regarding female rape victims. Much of this research has focused on the idea that some sexual assault victims are viewed as responsible for their victimization (Pollard, 1992). A variety of factors, including characteristics of the victim and perpetrator and the nature of the situation around the assault influence judgments towards sexual assault victims.

A study conducted by Sable et al., (2006), examined college students’ perceived importance of barriers on reporting of sexual assaults. They considered 13 reasons for female victims and 14 reasons for male victims. The leading barriers to reporting sexual assault as perceived by both male and female respondents included shame, guilt, embarrassment, confidentiality concerns and the fear of not being believed. Women were more likely to report barriers such as fear of retaliation, financial dependence on the perpetrator, perpetrator interference in seeking help and not wanting a family member or friend to be prosecuted. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to report shame, guilt and embarrassment that men felt over women. Men also expressed more concerned over being judged gay than did women. Both men and women perceived the lack of available services, the dislike or distrust of police and the justice system, and the fact that they were unaware of the importance of treatment as barriers to

reporting. Men displayed higher distrust of police and the judicial system. Sable et al., (2006) suggested that rape is perceived as a female issue.

The results from the study indicate that the prevalence of shame, guilt and embarrassment, concern for privacy, distrust for criminal justice proceedings, and the fear of retaliation are all perceived barriers to reporting sexual assault victimization. Continuing to explore gender differences about perceived importance barriers could help broaden the understanding of factors that contribute to the underreporting of sexual assaults, as well as, helping to interpret commonalities and differences in barriers to reporting (Sable et al., 2006).

The attitudes and beliefs towards victims of a sexual assault are indicative of whether or not the victim will report the sexual assault to police or medical services (Pollard, 1992). A large amount of research into perceptions of female sexual assault victims has shown that women tend to make more pro-victim judgments than men do. Males tend to blame female victims more than women do which has furthered the feminist argument that blaming of a sexual assault is a result of a patriarchal sexual assault supportive culture (Pollard, 1992).

Society's perception of sexual assault victims is typically not useful for victims if the information from the trauma is used to describe how sexual assault victims should behave (Buddie & Miller, 2001). A distinction is made by Burgess and Borgida (1999) between descriptive and prescriptive gender stereotypes. They have described the descriptive component as the characteristics that women do possess such as women being nurturing. The prescriptive components are the characteristics that women should possess such as women must be nurturing. These two components are related and can lead to different consequences. The more hostile and more likely to be related to sexual harassment are prescriptive stereotypes (Burgess & Borgida, 1999).

Gender stereotypes are culturally supported behaviors, attitudes, values, and beliefs that are based on the biological sex and deemed appropriate for males and females (Parent, 2010). In a study done by Ben-David & Schneider (2005), 150 Israeli undergraduate students

were surveyed regarding the connection between sex role attitudes and the attribution of rape. The findings indicated the increase tolerance of rape were related to traditional sex role norms as well as contributed to attributions made about rape (Ben-David & Schneider, 2005). Yamawaki (2007) studied 12 undergraduate students regarding rape attribution and sex role stereotype. In relation to heterosexual encounters, students perceived it is conventional for the males to be domineering, powerful and more sexually aggressive; however the women should be passive, submissive and reluctant for sexual contact (Yamawaki, 2007).

Gender roles play a factor in the blame for rape according to the study done by Anderson and Lyons (2005). One hundred twenty-one undergraduate students between the ages of 18-40 years were randomly assigned to one of four different scenarios. The different scenarios were replicas of actual newspaper articles that had reported a rape. The outcome suggested that men were more likely than women to place the blame on victims and they had a less liberal attitude when it came to gender roles. Once gender role attitudes were taken out of the equation, participants' gender was no longer a factor in predicting victim blame. This suggests that although men and women have a difference of opinion when it comes to blaming victims of rape, it is due to their gender role attitudes and not their individual gender (Anderson & Lyons, 2005).

An assessment of gender role attitudes was conducted by Simonson and Subich (1999) which included four different scenarios, each characterizing a different type of rape. The rape categories included marital, date, acquaintance or stranger. There were 219 undergraduate participants between the ages of 17-52 which were randomly assigned one of the four rape category scenarios. The results indicated that the higher the score on gender-role stereotypes scale, the more likely the participant was to blame the victim and less likely to perceive how serious the rape was (Simonson & Subich, 1999). The findings from Anderson and Lyons (2005) were shown to be the same in this study; gender is not a significant predictor of attitudes when it comes to rape when the gender role attitudes were controlled.

Buddie & Miller (2001) examined the personal beliefs and perceptions of cultural stereotypes surrounding rape victims. Students at a primarily Caucasian University between the ages 18-21 shared their personal beliefs or their perceptions of cultural stereotypes regarding rape victims and rated a particular specific rape victim according to their beliefs or their perceptions. There were 241 introductory psychology students who participated in the study, 102 males and 139 females (Buddie & Miller, 2001). Participants were given rape vignettes. Half were asked to list their personal beliefs/opinions regarding the rape victim portrayed. The other half were asked to list how they think the average student would respond (the researchers labeled these cultural stereotypes (Buddie & Miller, 2001). Table 2.2, indicates the most commonly listed personal beliefs about rape are focused on the negative consequences for victims, such as causing them to be scared, hurt, and angry. Also included among the personal beliefs are some rape myths including attractiveness and helplessness (Buddie & Miller, 2001).

\*Tables 2.2 & 2.3 provided by Buddie & Miller, 2001.

Table 2.2 Most Commonly Listed Personal Beliefs About Rape Victims (n=124)

<b>Trait/characteristic</b>	<b>Percentage of participants who listed the trait</b>
Scared/afraid/fearful	45
Violated	31
Hurt	28
Female	27
Victims	25
Angry	24
Ashamed	24
Untrusting	23
Alcohol involved	21
Blame self	19
Not responsible/not to blame	19
Problems in relationships	16
Scarred	16
Attractive	15
Helpless	15
Weak	14
Vulnerable	14
Taken advantage of	14
Strong	14
Life changes/issues for life	13

Table 2.3, reflects the cultural stereotypes about rape victims. There is a good bit of overlap between the two tables with many of the same traits listed on both. However, victim-blaming such as victims dressing promiscuously, being flirtatious, and being slutty were more prevalent among the cultural stereotypes.

Table 2.3 Most Commonly Listed Cultural Stereotypes About Rape Victims

Trait/characteristic	Percentage of participants who listed the trait
Weak	47
Female	44
Attractive	42
Scared/afraid/fearful	40
Alcohol involved	31
Young	27
Dresses promiscuously	26
Flirtatious	25
Slut/whore/tramp/bimbo	23
Asking for it	22
Angry	20
Helpless	17
Naïve	17
Victims	17
Untrusting	16
Depressed	16
Stupid/dumb	15
Quiet	15
Blame self	15
Careless	13

A study done by Chasteen (2001) examines women's perceptions of rape specifically. Chasteen (2001) states "women do not define rape in a uniform way, and, moreover, they do not understand it in a homogeneous way" (p. 123). Varying life experiences and social situations impact how women understand rape. Chasteen (2001) uses the constructionist framework to examine women's perceptions of rape. She uses an open ended survey and a scenario to examine attitudes toward rape. Women perceived rape as a permanently devastating experience. Describing rape by using analogies varied by age groups. Out of any other age group, those in their twenties described a more dramatic image of sexual violence

and used themes of personal destruction. Themes of social stratus to describe rape were often used by women over the age of forty, which indicated the social effects of being raped (Chasteen, 2001).

Women who had been raped were less likely than others to say the woman in an ambiguous scenario was definitely not a rape victim. The victims of rape were more likely to omit the question or state that other factors were relevant in determining if the individual was a rape victim. Personal destruction was used to describe rape by those who have been raped, those who have not been raped described rape in images of theft in the analogies, which the most graphic of the analogies came from those woman who had not been rape victims. Chasteen (2001) suggested that “for women who experience rape, the event becomes part of who they are and something they have survived, like a robbery of something ‘sacred’...” (p. 121). Women who have never experienced a sexual assault maintain that a rape is a horrifying event. They tend to view themselves as being unable to survive a rape. Women of all ages have different perceptions of rape depending on their age and if the experienced event could be labeled as rape (Chasteen, 2001).

O’Neil & Morgan (2010) found that the members of the public they interviewed believed in a meta-cultural model. The model underlines different issues involving sexual assault such as what it is, why it occurs, the characteristics of the actors involved, when and how it takes place, and how it might be prevented or deterred. In regards to sexual violence, this model was used by informants to reason the motivations of perpetrators and victims and to ponder interventions that could possibly address or prevent sexual violence. The perceived notion of sexual violence issues focus on individual moral failings by perpetrator and victims, as well at the lack of responsibility of one’s own safety (O’Neil & Morgan, 2010).

### 2.8 Community involvement in sexual assaults

Over the last two decades, many changes have been made in the area of sexual assault violence. Larger law enforcement agencies, child protective services, and district

attorney offices have made specialized units that focus on investigating and prosecuting sexual assault crimes (Wilson & Perryman, 2011). Much more research has been done in reference to the psychological and emotional effects of a sexual assault on the victim. Due to this research, rape crisis centers, advocacy centers, victim assistance units, and other crisis and treatment centers have blossomed to provide support and intervention to victims of sexual assault. The problem with the proactive programs is that they are not uniform throughout local, state, and national communities. There is a lack of resources that are needed, even with the most exceptional programs. Waiting lists for services for victims are often long and some prevention programs are not being utilized, such as those that address risk reduction for possible victims and those that address the factors in society that allow the tolerance of sexual assault victimization (Wilson & Perryman, 2011).

One of the needs in communities is the issue of providing more education to the public about acquaintance rape, dating violence and sexual assault in marriage relationships. Another need is to educate the public and professionals regarding sexual offences committed by juvenile offenders and what resources are available to the rape victims in the community. Another critical need of the community is the expansion of counseling and advocacy services for all victims of sexual assault, especially male rape victims and disabled rape victims. There continues to be a lack of awareness of the Crime Victims' Compensation (CVC) program that assists with paying for counseling services in the community. An effort that is ongoing is providing education to the public to the importance of reporting sexual assault incidents and for providing specific culture services to those who are non-English speaking victims. Lastly, there is a substantial need for the improvement of collaborative relationships between service providers, law enforcement and other agencies (Wilson & Perryman, 2011).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

The primary reason for conducting this study was to explore the perceptions and attitudes of college undergraduates about sexual assaults. Perceptions of the fairness of all parties involved throughout the criminal justice process were examined, as well as, self-reported likelihood to report sexual assault victimization.

#### 3.1 Sample selection

The study was completed at The University of Texas at Arlington during the spring semester 2013. Five undergraduate classes were purposely selected, one in Sociology and four in Criminal Justice, for survey administration. See Table 3.1 for a list of classes selected. The final sample consisted of 292 surveys, which were all utilized in this study.

Table 3.1 Classes surveyed

SOCI 1311 Introduction to Sociology
CRCJ 2334 Introduction to the Criminal Justice System
CRCJ 3300 Theoretical Criminology
CRCJ 3340 Criminal Justice Statistics
CRCJ 4332 Community Corrections

Table 3.2 provides demographic information for the sample. Of the 292 respondents, 179 were female respondents (61.3%), while 113 were males (38.7%). Further, 37.7% of the respondents indicated that they were Hispanic/Latino, 33.6% were Caucasian, 17.5% were African American, 4.8% Asian American, 2.1% Native American, and 4.5% identifying as some other race/ethnicity. The majority of the respondents were either juniors (31.5%) or seniors (28.1%), with 17.1% of the respondents being Freshman and 22.9% Sophomores. More than half (54.8%) of the respondents were Criminal Justice majors, leaving 43.8% of the respondents identifying some other academic major. The largest proportion of the respondents were between the ages of 20-21 at 33.9% with ages 18-19 following closely at 26.0%, 18.2% are 22-23, and 20.9% were age 24 or older.

Table 3.2 Descriptive statistics for the samples

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sex of Respondent</b>		
Male	113	38.7%
Female	179	61.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Race of Respondent</b>		
American Indian/Native American	6	2.1%
Asian American	14	4.8%
African American	51	17.5%
Hispanic/Latino	110	37.7%
Caucasion	98	33.6%
Other	13	4.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Classification in School</b>		
Freshman	50	17.1%
Sophomore	67	22.9%
Junior	92	31.5%
Senior	82	28.1%
Missing	1	30.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Major</b>		
Criminal Justice	160	54.8%
Other	128	43.8%
Missing	4	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Age of Respondent</b>		
18-19	76	26.0%
20-21	99	33.9%
22-23	53	18.2%
24+	61	20.9%
Missing	3	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 3.2 Measurement instrument

The questionnaire was self-administered and was divided into four sections (See Appendix A for a complete copy of the survey). The first section of the survey consisted of the individual's general attitude towards sexual assaults when compared to other crimes. Also

included in the first section of the survey was the opinion on the main reason why victims of sexual assaults do not report.

The second section involved giving a percentage for individuals who do not report a sexual assault because they feel like law enforcement will not believe them, as well as, the percentage of sexual assaults reported that are false. A Likert scale question was given from 0 being completely disagree and 10 being completely agree regarding fairness throughout the process in the criminal justice system.

Section three included whether a person of a sexual assault would report the assault to law enforcement and, if not, why they would not report it or if they would report it, why they would. A contingency question was also included in this section having to do with whether the individual taking the survey has ever been a victim of a sexual assault, who assaulted them, and whether or not they reported the assault to law enforcement, and the reasons why they did or did not. The last question asked in section three was whether they knew someone who was a victim of a sexual assault; this question was important because it might have bearing on how they feel about reporting and fairness.

The last section of the survey was the demographics which consisted of sex, race, classification in school, major, and age. The purpose of asking for this information was to understand how the person may have developed the view point at which they listed in the survey. Variables such as sex and age can have a lot to do with the reporting of a sexual assault, these were some of the most important demographic variables in the survey.

### 3.3 Variables used in the analysis

SPSS student version 20.0 was used in the analysis of the student surveys. The aim was to perform a quantitative statistical analysis of the surveys that were completed. Independent samples t-tests were used to analyze bivariate relationships between the

variables. Table 3.3 includes the items for the perceptual measures with mean scores and standard deviations for each of the individual items. These nine items serve as dependent variables in this study.

Table 3.3 Perceptions of Sexual Assaults

Variable	Mean (standard deviation)
What % of individuals victimized don't report	51.47 (21.99)
What % of victim reports made to law enforcement are false	20.75 (16.51)
Victims of sexual assaults are treated fairly in the Criminal Justice System	5.48 (2.43)
Believe less likely a person was victimized if alcohol involved	4.73 (2.93)
Perpetrators are treated fairly in the Criminal Justice System	5.06 (2.52)
Less likely to believe a victim if they knew perpetrator	3.08 (2.81)
Police treat victims of sexual assault fairly	5.62 (2.42)
Prosecutors treat victims of sexual assault fairly	5.45 (2.36)
Juries treat victims of sexual assault fairly	5.82 (2.46)

Items 1 and 2 were based on a 100% scale, allowing respondents to enter in their perceived percent to each of the questions. When asked what percentage of individuals victimized by a sexual assault they think don't report to law enforcement for fear of law enforcement not believing them, the mean was 51.47%. This shows that respondents felt that a little over half of sexual assault victims do not report due to law enforcement possibly not believing them. When respondents were asked what percent of sexual assault victims they believe to have made a false report to law enforcement, the mean was 20.75%.

For the remaining six, a score of 0 indicated completely disagree and a score of 10 indicated completely agree. As shown, item 3 states that the victims of a sexual assaults are treated fairly in the Criminal Justice system; the mean for this item was 5.48, indicating that the respondents were in between completely disagreeing and completely agreeing. Item 4

addresses whether a victim of sexual assault is believable if alcohol is involved; the respondents indicated a mean of 4.73 which shows that more respondents were closer to disagreeing with the statement. A mean of 5.06 for item 5 regarding whether the respondent believes the Criminal Justice system is fair to perpetrators indicates that the responses were in the middle of completely disagree and completely agree. Item 6 states that a victim of a sexual assault is less likely to be believed if they know the perpetrator; the mean of 3.08 suggests that respondents have more of a disagree attitude. The mean for items 7, 8, and 9 were in between completely disagreeing and completely agreeing with the fairness provided by police, prosecutors and juries to sexual assault victims.

Table 3.4 indicates whether or not the respondent knows a victim of a sexual assault, 61.0% responded that they did know someone who has been victimized, while 36.3% of the respondents did not know anyone victimized by a sexual assault. This will serve as one of the independent variables in the analysis.

Table 3.4 Frequency for knowing a sexual assault victim

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Do you know anyone who has been a victim of sexual assault</b>		
No	106	36.3%
Yes	178	61.0%
Missing	8	2.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 3.4 Hypothesis

There are three primary hypotheses being tested in this study. These hypotheses are as follows:

- Criminal justice majors will have different perceptions of sexual assault reporting and the fairness of the criminal justice system than non-criminal justice majors.

- Men and women will have different perceptions of sexual assault reporting and of the fairness of the criminal justice system.
- Respondents who know a victim of sexual assault will have different perceptions of sexual assault reporting and the fairness of the criminal justice system than respondents who do not know a victim of sexual assault.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

The t-test results for mean perceptions of sexual assault by academic major for the individual items are reported in Table 4.1. Possible values for the first two items in the table range from 0 to 100%. For the remaining items, a score of 0 indicates that the respondent completely disagrees and a score of 10 indicates the respondent completely agrees with the statement. As illustrated in the table, there is only one statistically significant difference between Criminal Justice majors and non-Criminal Justice majors for these nine items. CRCJ majors perceived a higher percentage of false reports of sexual assaults being made to police than did non-CRCJ majors. This was significant at the  $p < .05$  level. While both groups perceive a higher percentage of false reports than is accurate, criminal justice majors reported an average of 23% of reports being false compared to 18% for non-CRCJ majors.

Table 4.1 T-test results for perceptions of sexual assault by major  
(standard deviation in parentheses)

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Non-CRCJ</b>	<b>CRCJ</b>
Percent that don't report	49.68 (22.54)	52.88 (21.48)
Percent of victim reports made to law enforcement that are false	18.45 (13.96)	22.66* (18.16)
Victims of sexual assaults are treated fairly in the Criminal Justice System	5.39 (2.52)	5.52 (2.36)
Believe less likely a person was victimized with alcohol involved	4.91 (2.98)	4.56 (2.90)
Perpetrators are treated fairly in the Criminal Justice System	4.91 (2.42)	5.11 (2.58)
Less likely to believe a victim if they knew perpetrator	2.95 (2.72)	3.11 (2.87)
Police treat victims of sexual assault fairly	5.64 (2.25)	5.57 (2.56)
Prosecutors treat victims of sexual assault fairly	5.29 (2.30)	5.54 (2.41)
Juries treat victims of sexual assault fairly	5.65 (2.49)	5.91 (2.44)

\*sig. @  $p < .05$

The t-test results for perceptions of sexual assaults by gender for the 9 perceptual items are reported in Table 4.2. There were significant differences between male and female respondents for all but one item (percent of reports that are false). Female respondents reported a higher mean percent of victims not reporting to law enforcement (54% compared to 47%). This was significant at  $p < .01$ . Interestingly, both males and females perceive that roughly half of victims of sexual assault do not report to law enforcement. For the remaining items, the means for females were lower than that for the male respondents, indicating that females showed significantly more disagreement with each statement than did the males. Specifically, women more strongly disagreed than did the males that both victims and perpetrators of sexual assault are treated fairly by the criminal justice system and that police, prosecutors and juries treat victims of sexual assault fairly. Females also disagreed more strongly that they would be less likely to believe victims if alcohol was involved or if the victim knew the perpetrator.

Table 4.2 T-test results for perceptions of sexual assault by gender

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Percent that don't report	47.04 (20.66)	54.29** (22.41)
Percent of victim reports made to law enforcement that are false	21.52 (17.71)	20.26 (15.74)
Victims of sexual assaults are treated fairly in the Criminal Justice System	6.16 (2.35)	5.06*** (2.39)
Believe less likely a person was victimized with alcohol involved	5.23 (2.84)	4.42* (2.94)
Perpetrators are treated fairly in the Criminal Justice System	5.51 (2.57)	4.78* (2.46)
Less likely to believe a victim if they knew perpetrator	3.75 (2.88)	2.66** (2.69)
Police treat victims of sexual assault fairly	6.15 (2.28)	5.30** (2.44)
Prosecutors treat victims of sexual assault fairly	6.02 (2.24)	5.10** (2.36)
Juries treat victims of sexual assault fairly	6.41 (2.38)	5.46** (2.44)

\*sig. @  $p < .05$

\*\*sig. @  $p < .01$

\*\*\*sig. @  $p < .001$

The t-test results for perceptions of sexual assault by knowing a victim of sexual assault are reported in Table 4.3. There are significant differences for five of the nine items.

Respondents who knew someone who had been the victim of sexual assault were more likely to disagree with these five items. Those that knew a victim of a sexual assault disagreed more that they would be less likely to believe a victim if alcohol was involved. When respondents were posed with the statement that victims were treated fairly by the Criminal Justice system, prosecutors and juries, those that knew a victim of sexual assault disagreed more with each of these statements than those that did not know a victim of a sexual assault. Lastly, those who know a victim of a sexual assault disagreed that they would be less likely to be a victim if they knew their perpetrator.

Table 4.3 T-test results for perceptions of sexual assault by knowing a victim of sexual assault

<b>Variable</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Percent that don't report	54.43 (21.93)	49.62 (21.80)
Percent of victim reports made to law enforcement that are false	22.33 (15.90)	19.80 (16.83)
Victims of sexual assaults are treated fairly in the Criminal Justice System	6.16 (2.41)	5.14** (2.35)
Believe less likely a person was victimized with alcohol involved	5.24 (2.99)	4.50* (2.86)
Perpetrators are treated fairly in the Criminal Justice System	5.35 (2.54)	4.89 (2.49)
Less likely to believe a victim if they knew perpetrator	3.78 (2.97)	2.73** (2.66)
Police treat victims of sexual assault fairly	6.00 (2.38)	5.43 (2.43)
Prosecutors treat victims of sexual assault fairly	5.93 (2.43)	5.17** (2.27)
Juries treat victims of sexual assault fairly	6.36 (2.39)	5.54** (2.45)

\*sig. @ p<.05

\*\*sig. @ p<.01

In the survey given to the 292 students, 19.3% stated that they would not report a sexual assault against them to law enforcement while the other 80.7% stated that they would

report. Below in table 4.4 are the reasons that those 80.7% of students would report a sexual assault victimization to law enforcement and the reason the other 19.3% would not report. The percentages do not add to 100% because respondents could choose more than one reason. The table shows that 74% of the respondents would report to prevent future violence, 72% to protect others, 41% would report due to a duty they felt to report the crime, 79% would report to punish the offender and 6% gave other reasons. Some of the “other” reasons included self-respect, to empower themselves, and as a coping method.

Table 4.4 Reasons for Reporting or Not Reporting

<b>Reasons for reporting</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Prevent future violence	74%
Protect others	72%
Duty to report	41%
Punish offender	79%
Other	6%
<b>Reasons for not reporting</b>	
Would deal with it another way	49%
Not important enough to report	16%
Police would/could not do anything	20%
Fear of reprisal/offender punishment	18%
Shame/embarassment	13%
Other	13%

The top reason students would not report a sexual assault was due to dealing with the victimization another way. Of the students surveyed that would not report, 20% stated the reason was because they didn’t feel like the police could/would do anything, 18% were fearful of reprisal/offender punishment, and 16% didn’t feel that the victimization was important enough to report. What was interesting was that 13% would not report a sexual assault due to feeling shame or embarrassment, this response was not an option to choose in the survey, however, there were so many of these “other” responses that making a separate variable was important.

It is important to show that 13% were “other” reasons such as the victim being a male, he didn’t feel like anyone would take him seriously and details were hard to remember due to being drugged.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

There were three hypotheses examined in this thesis:

- Criminal justice majors will have different perceptions of sexual assault reporting and the fairness of the criminal justice system than non-criminal justice majors.
- Men and women will have different perceptions of sexual assault reporting and of the fairness of the criminal justice system.
- Respondents who know a victim of sexual assault will have different perceptions of sexual assault reporting and the fairness of the criminal justice system than respondents who do not know a victim of sexual assault.

The first hypothesis regarding criminal justice majors having different perceptions of sexual assault reporting and the fairness of the criminal justice system than non-criminal justice majors was not supported. Of the nine statements, there was only one significant difference between the two groups, with criminal justice majors perceiving a higher percentage of false reports of sexual assault to law enforcement. CRCJ majors reported that almost 23% of reports made to law enforcement were false compared to about 19% for non-CRCJ majors. This raises potential concerns given the fact criminal justice majors are presumably more likely going into the criminal justice field. This foundational disbelief of reports could potentially result in poor treatment of some victims, unfounding decisions made by police officers, and prosecutor's decisions regarding charging.

The assumption that almost 1 in 4 victims of sexual assault is making a false report could impact the way these respondents would treat a victim when reporting, such as constant

questioning and the types of questions asked. Perceived lack of victim cooperation is a key factor in the decision of criminal justice professionals to founding and prosecuting cases (Kerstetter, 1990). This process has a trickle-down effect, because some victims choose to not be cooperative, police tend to create a misconception that most victims of a sexual assault will not cooperate and that most sexual assault cases have no truth to them. The next case is treated the same way and the cycle continues on, as well as, the mistrust and non-cooperativeness between the police and the victims (NCWP, 2001).

The second hypothesis regarding men and women having different perceptions of sexual assault reporting and of the fairness of the criminal justice system was supported. There were eight of the nine items that were significantly different between men and women. The only item where there was not a significant difference was the perceived percent of false reports. Female respondents reported a higher mean percent of victims not reporting to law enforcement (54% compared to 47%). Interestingly, however, both males and females perceive that roughly half of victims of sexual assault do not report to law enforcement. Females showed significantly more disagreement with each statement than did the males. Specifically, women more strongly disagreed than did the males that both victims and perpetrators of sexual assault are treated fairly by the criminal justice system and that police, prosecutors and juries treat victims of sexual assault fairly. Females also disagreed more strongly that they would be less likely to believe victims if alcohol was involved or if the victim knew the perpetrator. These differences between men and women could be a result of women being victimized more than men; therefore, their perceptions of sexual assaults may vary. As noted in the literature review, women tend to make more pro-victim judgments than men (Pollard, 1992) and these findings are consistent with that. Previous research also suggests that gender differences may be due to gender role attitudes rather than gender (Anderson & Lyons, 2006; Simonson & Subich, 1999). It is not possible to assess whether this is the case in this sample since gender role attitudes were not assessed. The findings regarding fairness of the criminal justice system are somewhat

inconsistent with those of Sable et al. (2006) who found men to be more distrusting of the police and judicial system than women.

The last hypothesis predicted that respondents who know a victim of sexual assault will have different perceptions of sexual assault reporting and the fairness of the criminal justice system than respondents who do not know a victim of sexual assault. There are significant differences between these two groups for five of the nine items that were examined. Those that knew a victim of a sexual assault disagreed more that they would be less likely to believe a victim if alcohol was involved. When respondents were posed with the statement that victims were treated fairly by the Criminal Justice system, prosecutors and juries, those that knew a victim of sexual assault disagreed more with each of these statements than those that did not know a victim of a sexual assault. Lastly, those who know a victim of a sexual assault disagreed that they would be less likely to be a victim if they knew their perpetrator. This could be due to the fact that those who know victims of sexual assault were biased because of the way the victim had been treated throughout the process or because of the end result of the victim's process. Those that do not know victims of sexual assault do not know how victims are generally treated throughout the criminal justice process, therefore resulting in the thought process that victims are treated fairly.

In this study, the most common reason given for not reporting sexual assault victimization was that they would deal with it another way. Almost half (49%) of the respondents who said they would not report gave this as a reason. This is consistent from findings of Langton et al (2012). Somewhat similar to the BJS (2006) report, one of the more common reasons for not reporting was the belief that the police would/could not do anything. While this was the second most common reason given, it was only identified by 20% of those who said they would not report. The third most common reason given for not reporting was fear of reprisal/offender punishment. Langton et al (2012) also found this to be a common reason in their examination of NCVS data. Kilpatrick et al (1992) identified shame and embarrassment as

a major factor in why victims do not report. While it was not one of the main reasons for not reporting in this study, it is interesting that 13% of the sample did identify this in an open ended question.

### 5.1 Policy implications

The implementation of policies can reduce the acts of sexual violence. The set of policies that invoke the power to reduce incidences of sexual violence includes implementing continuous curriculum about sexual violence and sexual health in schools and having policies that are clear regarding sexual abuse and violence in the workplace as well as other institutions. There are preventative measures when it comes to sexual violence. Sexual violence is not considered a “natural” part of human social life but rather a social problem that can be preventable. The “upstream” metaphor has been known to be referred to regarding the idea that sexual violence is preventable. The metaphor focuses more on effective preventable measures that should be taken to figure out why people are getting into the river or why the water is as dangerous as it is as opposed to focusing resources on pulling those who are drowning out of the river. One of the most effective measures to prevent sexual violence is to change the cultural norms regarding gender inequality, mainly those highlighted by the media (O’Neil & Morgan, 2010).

Education of sexual assault needs to start at an earlier age so that there is a greater awareness. Since a large number of sexual assaults go unreported, education of how to report, what to report and where to report is crucial. Education about the consequences of a sexual assault should be given; this could help as a deterrent.

Effective and evidence based interventions are the consensus among practitioners who have studied sexual violence. More research needs to be done, as well as, the evaluation to identify and implement effective programs that represented the optimal use of public funds that were limited. Lastly, defining sexual health and recognizing what it entails is a must. Experts agreed that sexual health included autonomy with one’s sexuality, as well as, the ability to

engage in sexual relationships or activities that are not coercive. In the current social context it is difficult to define, communicate and achieve healthy sexuality due to the contradictory messages that American culture portrays about sexuality, thus the reason for defining sexual health is imperative (O'Neil & Morgan, 2010).

A significant emphasis on training individuals entering into the criminal justice realm is crucial to the field. The training given needs to be on an on-going basis and teach openness and understanding of sexual assault victims. Although one individual may have lied about a sexual assault, it does not mean that the next one will. This training needs to be available to those in the court system as well as law enforcement. This type of training will keep legitimacy of the system intact and will help victims of sexual assault through the process without skepticism.

#### 5.2 Limitations of the present study

Limitations of this study include poor generalizability and poor representativeness. This study included only 292 undergraduate college students, all of which were from the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Arlington. The sample is not representative of students at the University much less of the general public. This lack of representativeness means that there is limited generalizability of the findings to the general population.

The reasons for reporting and not reporting examined in this study were hypothetical. There were not enough people who had been victims included in the sample to look at their actual reporting behaviors and reasons. There could be differences in what someone says they think they would do if they were a victim of sexual assault versus what people actually do in that circumstance.

A third issue concerns the statistical analysis. Only bivariate analysis was performed so issues of causation cannot be determined. This limits the types of conclusions that can be drawn from the findings.

### 5.3 Suggestions for future research

Future research in sexual assault victimization should focus on whether or not female and males do not report sexual assaults because of law enforcement being a male dominated field; therefore, the odds of a female police officer responding to the sexual assault are slim. If this is the case, more research should be done on how to get police departments to staff more female police officers in order to make the victimization process smoother for the individual. Another area of research would be the amount of training that police officers receive regarding sexual assault, focusing on what they are learning and if they are being taught to handle sexual assault cases appropriately.

Research should also examine training and decisions made by prosecutors in relation to sexual assault cases. The decisions that prosecutors make need to be better examined. A checks and balances system in regards to prosecutorial decisions needs to be researched in order to protect victims of sexual assault.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY

## Attitudes and Beliefs Regarding Sexual Assaults

Purpose of Survey: This survey will determine attitudes and beliefs about the reporting of sexual assaults to law enforcement.

1. How important do you feel sexual assault crimes are when compared to other crimes? (choose only one)

- Not important
- Somewhat important
- Neutral
- Important
- Very important

2. Some victims of sexual assault choose not to report the victimization to police. In your opinion, what is the main reason why they do not report the victimization? (choose only one)

- Dealt with it another way
- Not important enough to report
- Police would not or could not do anything
- Fear of reprisal or getting offender in trouble
- Other reason or not one most important reason

3. What percentage of individuals do you think do **not** report a sexual assault because they feel like law enforcement officials will not believe them?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What percent of reports of sexual assaults made to law enforcement do you think are false reports?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being completely disagree and 10 being completely agree, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
a. Victims of sexual assault are treated fairly in the criminal justice system.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
b. I would be less likely to believe a report of sexual assault if the victim had been drinking alcohol.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
c. Perpetrators of sexual assault are treated fairly in the criminal justice system.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
d. I would be less likely to believe a report of sexual assault if the victim and perpetrator knew one another prior to the incident.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
e. Police treat victims of sexual assault fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
f. Prosecutors treat victims of sexual assault fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
g. Juries treat victims of sexual assault fairly.	<input type="checkbox"/>										

6. If you were ever the victim of an attempted or completed sexual assault, do you think you would report it to law enforcement?

Yes – answer the question in this column

No – answer the question in this column

a. What is/are the reasons you would report the victimization to law enforcement? (choose all that apply)

Prevent future violence

Protect others

A duty to report crime to police

Punish offender

Other \_\_\_\_\_

a. What is/are the reasons you would not report the victimization to law enforcement? (choose all that apply)

Would deal with it another way

Not important enough to report

Police would/could not do anything

Fear of reprisal/offender punishment

Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. Have you ever been a victim of a sexual assault?

- Yes (If yes, please answer question **7a**)
- No (If no, please skip to question **8**)

7a. How would you best characterize your relationship to the person who assaulted you? (choose only one)

- Stranger
- Casual acquaintance
- Someone well known to you

7b. Did you report the sexual assault to law enforcement?

Yes – answer the questions in this column

a. What was the reason for reporting the sexual assault to law enforcement? (choose all that apply)

- Prevent future violence
- Protect others
- A duty to report crime to police
- Punish offender
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

No – answer the question in this column

b. What was the reason for not reporting the sexual assault to law enforcement? (choose all that apply)

- Police would/could not do anything
- Fear of reprisal/offender punishment
- Would deal with another way
- Not important enough to report
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you know anyone who has been a victim of a sexual assault?

Yes

No

9. What is your gender?

Male

Female

10. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Would you describe yourself as:

American Indian/Native American

Asian American

African American

Hispanic/Latino

Caucasian

Other \_\_\_\_\_

12. Please indicate your classification in school.

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Graduate Student

Other

13. What is your major? \_\_\_\_\_

Your participation is critical to the success of this study and ongoing studies that follow. Your time and effort in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking part in this survey

## REFERENCES

- Abbey, A., McAuslan, P. and Ross, L.T. (1998). Sexual assault perpetration by college men: The role of alcohol, misperception of sexual intent, and sexual beliefs and experiences. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*. 17: 167-195.
- Abbey, A., McAuslan, P., Zawacki, T., Clinton, A. M., & Buck, P. O. (2001). Attitudinal, experiential, and situational predictors of sexual assault perpetration. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 16(8), 784-807.
- Allison, J.A., Wrightsman, L.S., (1993). *Rape: The misunderstood crime*. Sage, Newbury Park.
- Anderson, I. & Lyons, A. (2005). The effect of victims' social support on attributions of blame in female and male rape. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 35(7), 1400-1417.
- Beckham, D. B. (2011). *Texas penal code*. Austin, Texas: Texas District & County Attorneys Association. DOI: [books@tdcaa.com](mailto:books@tdcaa.com)
- Belknap, J., (2001). *The invisible woman: Gender crime and justice*, second ed. Wadsworth, Belmont, CA.
- Ben-David, S. & Schneider, O. (2005). Rape perceptions, gender role attitudes, and victim-perpetrator acquaintance. *Sex Roles*, 53(5-6), 385-399.
- Berkowitz, A. (1992). College men as perpetrators of acquaintance rape and sexual assault: A review of recent research. *Journal of American College Health*, 40(4), 175-181.
- Berkowitz, A. D. (2003). Applications of social norms theory to other health and social justice issues. In H.W. Perkins (Ed.), *The social norms approach to preventing school and college age substance abuse: A handbook for educators, counselors, and clinicians* (pp. 259-279). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Bordenkircher v. Hayes, 434 U.S. 357,364 (1978).
- Buddie, A. M., & Miller, A. G. (2001). Beyond rape myths: A more complex view of perceptions of rape victims. *Sex Roles*, 45(3/4), 1-22. Retrieved from <http://download.springer.com/static/pdf/89/art%3A10.1023%2FA%3A1013575209803.pdf?auth66>
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1994). *Criminal victimization*. 1994. Washington, DC.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2006). *Criminal victimization in the United States—Statistical tables index. Rape/sexual assault*.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2008). *Felony defendants in large urban counties*. Washington, DC
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2011). *Criminal victimization, 2010*. Washington, DC.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2012). *Victimizations not reported to the police, 2006-2010*. Washington, DC.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2013). *Female victims of sexual violence, 1994-2010*. Washington, DC.
- Burgess, D., & Borgida, E. (1999). Who women are, who women should be: Descriptive and prescriptive gender stereotyping in sex discrimination. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 5, 665–692.
- Burt, M. R. (1980). Cultural myths and supports for rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 38(2), 217-230.
- Busch, N.B., Bell, H., DiNitto, D.M., & Neff, J.A. (2003). A health survey of Texans: A focus on sexual assault. Retrieved from <http://www.taasa.org/library/pdfs/TAASALibrary215.pdf>.
- Campbell, R. (2005). What really happened? A validation study of rape survivors' help-seeking experiences with the legal and medical systems. *Violence & Victims*, 20, 55-68.

- Campbell, R. (2006). Rape survivors' experiences with the legal and medical systems: Do rape victim advocates make a difference? *Violence Against Women, 12*, 1-16.
- Campbell, R., Ahrens, C., Sefl, T., Wasco, S. M., & Barnes, H. E. (2001). Social reactions to rape victims: Healing and hurtful effects on psychological and physical health outcomes. *Violence & Victims, 16*, 287-302.
- Campbell, R., Dworkin, E., & Cabral, G. (2009). An ecological model of the impact of sexual assault on women's mental health. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 10*(3), 225-246.  
Retrieved from <http://libproxy.uta.edu:2373/content/10/3/225.full.pdf.html>
- Campbell, R., & Raja, S. (2005). The sexual assault and secondary victimization of female veterans: Help seeking experiences in military and civilian social systems. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 29*, 97-106.
- Chasteen, A.L. (2001). Constructing rape: Feminism, change, and women's everyday understandings of sexual assault. *Sociological Spectrum, 21*, 2, 101-140.
- Comack, E., & Peter, T. (2005). How the criminal justice system responds to sexual assault survivors: The slippage between 'responsibilization' and 'blaming the victim'". *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law, 17*, 283.
- Du Mont, J., Miller, K. L., & Myhr, T. L. (2003). The role of "real rape" and "real victim" stereotypes in the police reporting practices of sexually assaulted women. *Violence Against Women, 466-486*.
- Ehrlich, S. L. (2001). *Representing rape: Language and sexual consent*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Erez, E., (2002). Domestic violence and the criminal justice system: An overview. *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*. Available from:  
<[www.nursingworld.org/ojin/topic17/tpc17\\_3.htm](http://www.nursingworld.org/ojin/topic17/tpc17_3.htm)>.

- Erez, E., Belknap, J., (1998). In their own words: Battered women's assessment of the criminal processing system's responses. *Violence and Victims*, 13, 251–268.
- Estrich, S. (1987). *Real rape*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Frazier, P. A., & Haney, B. (1996). Sexual assault cases in the legal system: Police, prosecutor and victim perspectives. *Law & Human Behavior*, 20, 607-628.
- Frohmann, L. (1991). Discrediting victims' allegations of sexual assault: Prosecutorial accounts of case rejections. *Social Problems*, 38, 213-226.
- Frohmann, L. (1997). Convictability and discordant locales: Reproducing race, class, and gender ideologies in prosecutorial decision-making. *Law & Society Review*, 31, 531-555.
- Hammock, G. S., & Richardson, D. R. (1997). Perceptions of rape: The influence of closeness of relationships, intoxication and sex of participant. *Violence & Victims*, 237-46.
- Hawkins, D. (1981). Causal attribution and punishment for crime. *Deviant Behavior*, 1, 207-230.
- Holleran, D., & Spohn, C. (2004). *Prosecuting sexual assault: A comparison of charging decisions in sexual assault cases involving strangers, acquaintances, and intimate partners*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/199720.pdf>
- Horney, J., & Spohn, C. (1996). The influence of blame and believability factors on the processing of simple versus aggravated rape cases. *Criminology*, 34(2), 135-162.
- Jackson, R.H. (1940). *The federal prosecutors*. Retrieved from Robert H. Jackson Center. [www.roberthjackson.org/the-man/speeches-by-robert-h-jackson/the-federal-prosecutor](http://www.roberthjackson.org/the-man/speeches-by-robert-h-jackson/the-federal-prosecutor).
- Kanin, E. J. (1985). Date rapists: Differential sexual socialization and relative deprivation. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 14(3), 219-231.
- Kerstetter, W. A. (1990). Gateway to justice: Police and prosecutorial response to sexual

- assaults against women. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 81, 267-313.
- Kilpatrick, D.G., Edmunds, N.N. & Seymour, A. *Rape in America: A Report to the Nation*.  
Arlington, VA: National Victim Center, 1992.
- King, M., & Woollett, E. (1997). Sexually assaulted males: 115 men consulted a counseling service. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 26(6), 579-588.
- Konradi, A. (2007). *Taking the stand: Rape survivors and the prosecution of rapists*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Koss, M. P., (2000). Blame, shame, and community: justice responses to violence against women. *American Psychologist*, 55, 1332–1343.
- LaFree, G.D. (1989). *Rape and criminal justice: The social construction of sexual assault*. Wadsworth Publishing Company. Belmont, CA.
- Langton, L., Berzofsky, M., Krebs, C., & Smiley-McDonald, H. (2012). *Victimizations not reported to the police, 2006-2010*. U.S. Department of Justice.
- Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. (1977). *Forcible rape: A national survey of the response by police* (Vol. 1). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- LexisNexis, C. A. (2011). *Texas criminal and traffic law manual*. (2011-2012 ed., pp. 46-50). Charlottesville, VA: LexisNexis Mathew Bender Publications.
- Loh, C., Gidycz, C. A., Lobo, T. R., & Luthra, R. (2005). A prospective analysis of sexual assault perpetration: Risk factors related to perpetrator characteristics. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20(10), 1325-1348. Retrieved from <http://libproxy.uta.edu:2365/content/20/10/1325.full.pdf.html>
- Malamuth, N., Sockloskie, R. J., Koss, M., & Tanaka, J. S. (1991). Characteristics of aggressors against women: Testing a model using a national sample of college students. *Journal of*

- Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 59(5), 670-681.
- Martin, P. Y. (2006). *Rape work: Victims, gender and emotions in organization and community context*. New York: Routledge.
- Marx, B.P., Calhoun, K.S., Wilson, A.E., Meyerson, L.A. (2001). Sexual revictimization prevention: An outcome evaluation. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 69:25–32.
- McCahill, T., Meyer, L., & Fischman, A. (1979). *The aftermath of rape*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Messman-Moore, T.L., Brown, A.L. (2006). Risk perception, rape, and sexual revictimization: A prospective study of college women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 30:159–172.
- NCWP. (2001). *Successfully investigating acquaintance sexual assault*. Retrieved from <http://www.womenandpolicing.org/publications.asp>
- Nij.gov, (2010), Retrieved from <http://nij.gov/topics/crime/rape-sexual-violence/welcome.htm>
- Norris, J., & Cubbins, L.A. (1992). Dating, drinking and rape: Effects of victim's and assailant's alcohol consumption on judgments of their behavior and traits. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 16, 179-191.
- Ogletree, R. (1993). Sexual coercion experience and help-seeking behavior of college women. *Journal of American College Health*, 41,149-153
- O'Neil, M., & Morgan, P. (2010). American perceptions of sexual violence: A frame works research report.   
[http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/pdf\\_sexualviolence/americanperceptions\\_ofsexualviolence.pdf](http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/pdf_sexualviolence/americanperceptions_ofsexualviolence.pdf).
- Pollard, P., (1992). Judgments about victims and attackers in depicted rape: A review. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 31 ( pp. 307–326)

- Rainn.org. (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.rainn.org/statistics>
- Rennison, C. (2002, August). ncjrs.org Retrieved from <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/rsarp00.pdf>
- Richardson, D., & Campbell, J.L. (1982). Alcohol and rape: The effect of alcohol on attributions of blame for rape. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 8, 468-476.
- Sable, M. R., Danis, F., Mauzy, D. L., & Gallagher, S. K. (2006). Barriers to reporting sexual assault for women and men: Perspectives of college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 55(3), 157-162.
- Schuller, R. A., & Stewart, A. (2000). Police responses to sexual assault complaints: The role of perpetrator/complainant intoxication. *Law and Human Behavior*, 24(5), 535-51. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/204152946?accountid=7117>
- Siegel, J.A. & Williams, L.M. (2001). *Risk factors for violent victimization of women: A prospective study*. National Institute of Justice.
- Simonson, K., & Subich, L. M. (1999). Rape perceptions as a function of gender-role, traditionality and victim-perpetrator association. *Sex Roles*, 40(7-8), 617-634.
- Smith, P.H., White, J.W., & Holland, L.J. (2003). A longitudinal perspective on dating violence among adolescent and college age women. *American Journal of Public Health*. 93(7): 1104-1109.
- Spohn, C., Beichner, D., & Davis-Frenzel, E. (2001). Prosecutorial explanations for sexual assault case rejection: Guarding the gateway to justice. *Social Problems*, 48, 206-235.
- Stanford University (2006). Retrived from <http://www.stanford.edu/group/svab/assault.shtml>
- Steffensmeier, D., Ulmer, J., & Kramer, J. (1998). The interactions of race, gender, and age in criminal sentencing: The punishment cost of being young, black, and male. *Criminology*,

36, 763-798.

- Stanko, Elizabeth A., (1985). *Intimate intrusions: Women's experiences of male violence*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Stormo, K.J., Lang, A.R., & Stritzke, W.G. K. (1997). Attributions about acquaintance rape: The role of alcohol and individual differences. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 27, 279-305.
- Szymanski, L. A., Devlin, A. S., Chrisler, J. C., & Vyse, S. A. (1993). Gender role and attitudes toward rape in male and female college students. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 37-57.
- Taylor, J. (1987). Rape and women's credibility: Problems of recantations and false accusations echoed in the case of Cathleen Crowell Webb and Gary Dotson. *Harvard Women's Law Journal*, 10, 59-115.
- Testa, M. & Parks, K. (1996). The role of women's alcohol consumption in sexual victimization. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 1 (3): 217-34.
- Texas Department of Public Safety. (2004). Crime in Texas: The Texas crime report.
- Thoennes, N. & Tjaden, P. (2000). Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women: Findings from the national violence against women survey. Washington, DC.
- Tjaden, P. & Thonnes, N. (1998). *Prevalence, incidence and consequences of violence against women findings from the national violence against women survey*. Washington, DC.
- Ullman, S.E. (1999). Social support and recovery from sexual assault: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior: A Review Journal*, 4, 343-358.
- U.S. Department of Justice. (1996). Uniform crime report: Crime in the United States, 1996.
- U.S. Department of Justice. (2010). Uniform crime report: Crime in the United States, 2009.

Walsh, K., DiLillio, D., & Messman-Moore, T.L., (2012). Lifetime sexual victimization and poor risk perception: Does emotion dysregulation account for the links? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 27(15): 3054-3071.

Warshaw, R. M. (1994). *I never called it rape: The ms report on recognizing, fighting, and surviving date and acquaintance rape*. New York, New York: Harper Perennial.

Wilson, S., & Perryman, D. (2011). Retrieved from Roxbury Publishing Company website: [http://www.tarrantcounty.com/egov/lib/egov/2011\\_Tarrant\\_County\\_CJPlan\\_12-16-10.pdf](http://www.tarrantcounty.com/egov/lib/egov/2011_Tarrant_County_CJPlan_12-16-10.pdf)

Yamawaki, N. (2007). Rape perception and the function of ambivalent sexism and gender-role traditionality. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(4), 406-423.

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Amber Mosier earned her Bachelor's degree in Anthropology from the University of North Texas in 2009. Upon completion of her Master's degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice she plans on getting her PhD in the same field sometime in the future. Her research interests include sexual assault victimization, fairness of the criminal justice system, and law enforcement. Future plans with employment are to work in the victimization unit, K-9 unit and criminal investigation unit at a police department.