Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Cases

BY

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DISSERTATION

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CSC   Criminal Sexual Conduct

RMA   Rape Myth Acceptance

SANE   Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

TPB   Theory of Planned Behavior

SUMMARY

Violence against women remains a pressing concern despite research and activism dedicated to eliminating violence in its many forms. The prevalence of sexual assault and its consequences for individuals and society has been the subject of much research and advocacy even though most cases remain unreported and when reported, rarely move through the criminal justice and legal systems. For several decades, research has explored the experience and consequences of sexual assault through the perspectives of victims, social service providers, health care professionals, and legal system actors; however, a smaller number of studies have provided a thorough account of the factors that explain decision making among the very first responders within the criminal justice system.

This study uses a mixed methods approach, including qualitative interviews and an online survey with officers from one police department. This study examines police officer perceptions and decision making processes in hypothetical sexual assault reports. Specifically, the study tests how officers interpret the victim's substance use with either a casual acquaintance or a well-known perpetrator, and how their prior views and definitions of sexual assault also shape their perceptions of the case and behavioral intentions. This study also explores an officer's rape myth acceptance, attributions of blame, perceived control over case processing and outcomes, and the influence of peers and supervisors. The research contributes to the literature by adding individual police officer characteristics and attitudes as well as perceived norms, expected control over decision making, and use of efficiency versus normative decision making frames in reported cases of sexual assault.

In Phase One of the study, qualitative interviews were used to explore police officer schema related to sexual assault. Factors influencing police officer perceptions of cases as

legitimate or ambiguous were explored, as well as factors influencing police officer decision making. These findings were used to further develop measures and procedures for Phase Two of the study. Phase Two involved an online survey of a larger sample of police officers. This survey utilized concepts from schema theory, attribution theory, and the theory of planned behavior to test factors that influence perceptions of cases and decision making intentions.

Findings indicate that there is wide variability in police officer perceptions of reported sexual assaults as "legitimate"[1] and perceptions of victims as credible. Officers consider reported sexual assaults involving strangers, the use or threat of a weapon, and evidence of injury, as more clearly legitimate. The majority of sexual assaults reported to the police are considered ambiguous, often because of prior relationship between the victim and suspect, substance use or intoxication, a lack of clear non-consent, and a lack of evidence in general. There is less (almost no) variation in officer's reported behavioral intentions, indicating that whenever a sexual assault is reported, almost all officers show strong support for writing the police report as a Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) and recommending that the victim go to the YWCA, the local Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. Officers do show more variation, however, in the behavioral intention to call out a detective and arrest the suspect, indicating perceived seriousness of the crime. Officers also show wide variability in acceptance of rape myths and attributions of blame towards the suspect. A variety of factors help to explain officer's different responses in terms of perceptions as well as behavioral intentions. Some officers point out the propensity for false reporting in sexual assault, however, many others counter this assumption, and argue that police officers should never insert their opinion or make judgments about the veracity of a reported sexual assault.

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[1] The use of the term "legitimate" does not imply any actual statement by the researcher of certainty or not of the crime status. Instead, it describes the way in which offers labeled and described different scenarios and reports as more or less clearly fitting their definition of the crime. It is sometimes placed in quotes to represent this sentiment.

This research contributes to a better understanding of police officer definitions of and attitudes towards sexual assault, as well as the factors that influence perceptions of legitimacy and decision making in reported sexual assault cases through the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This research has implications for the way in which first responders—often police officers, health care workers, social service providers, mental health professionals and victim advocates—take action in a dignifying manner with those who have experienced sexual assault and have reported the incident with the hopes of achieving justice. Because findings may provide a more thorough understanding of the factors that influence the initial perceptions, decision making, and progression of cases, the results may provide insight for areas of training with these first responders and for a greater theoretical or cultural understanding of attitudes and responses towards sexual assault.

This research has specific implications for social work, both in its advocacy efforts and direct practice with victim-survivors. Given the pervasiveness of sexual violence, social workers are likely working with victim-survivors of sexual violence every day, regardless of their practice setting (Macy, Nurius, Kernic, & Holt, 2005). Often social workers are among the first to provide mental health services to survivors of sexual assault in hospitals, in schools, as therapists, and as rape crisis team members (Campbell, Townsend, Long, Kinnison, Pulley, Adames, & Wasco, 2006; Ullman, Filipas, Townsend, & Starzynski, 2007). Macy (2007) argues that well-informed social workers could have an impact on the reduction of revictimization and more broadly in the lives of victim-survivors. Social workers often provide information and education to clients, which could help victim-survivors to better understand their experience, confront misperceptions and rape myths that might contribute to self-blame, and provide means to heal from the traumatic experience of sexual assault. Additionally, having a greater

understanding of law enforcement decision making can prepare social workers to assist victim-

survivors of sexual assault in their coping and in pursuing a criminal justice response if desired.

Social workers should also work with law enforcement to improve their response to reported

sexual assaults.

I. INTRODUCTION

A.   Background and Rationale

Because sexual assault is a crime, it is reasonable to expect that victims[2] of this crime

would report to the police and would be treated as victims of crime. Instead, most individuals

who experience a sexual assault do not report to the police, and of those who do, most do not

express satisfaction with their treatment during case processing or the progression of their case.

In fact, arrest and sentencing of the perpetrator almost never occurs. Some refer to this situation

as "the justice gap" (Jordan, 2008); others go further to say the gap is so wide that it is best

described as a "chasm" (Kelly, Lovett, & Regan, 2005).

Police officers[3] play a unique role in this context, in that when someone reports the

crime, their job responsibility is to be the first responders who interview the victim-survivor,

write the report, follow-up with investigation, and present a case to the Prosecutor's office.

Police officer perceptions of legitimate crime and credible crime victims have real consequences

on this "justice gap/chasm," in that police officers determine what questions are asked, what

level of response is used, and what cases are investigated. Because acceptance of rape myths, or

stereotypical and false perceptions of what constitutes "real rape," is pervasive within our society

at large, personal biases and attitudes may influence what is considered a "legitimate rape" and a

"credible victim" (Brownmiller, 1975). These attitudes along with perceptions of peer group

norms and limited control over all elements of case progression may also influence behavioral

intentions, or decisions to classify a sexual assault report as a crime and proceed with case

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[2] Throughout this paper, the term "victim" will be used to reflect the violent nature of this crime and the language used in much psychological and criminal justice research, and the term "victim-survivor" or "survivor" will be used to indicate that the experience of sexual violence includes both aspects of individual victimization and survival of a traumatic experience (Rozee & Koss, 2001).

[3] Throughout this paper, the term "police officer" refers to any sworn officer, including patrol, detective, and those in supervisory roles.

processing. These factors may also influence police officers' perceptions of crime seriousness and case strength, which may influence the level of response that is exercised. Because of personal characteristics, organizational culture, work demands, and limited training on sexual assault, police may become suspicious of the victim in pursuit of truth, which aims to determine responsibility. Because police officers and detectives are among the first to respond, they have a profound impact on the victim and subsequent case progression.

Although some studies assess the definitions of sexual assault among law enforcement officials, these studies do not take into account the surrounding culture, or normative beliefs regarding sexual assault. Within the literature on criminal justice system responses to sexual assault, previous studies focus mostly on either testing the influence of "extralegal" characteristics, such as victim and perpetrator characteristics, or on evaluating the effect of evidentiary characteristics on decision making (Buzawa, Austin & Buzawa, 1995; DuMont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003; Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Frazier & Haney, 1996; Kerstetter, 1990; Kingsnorth, MacIntosh, & Wentworth, 1999; LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985; Jordan, 2004; Spohn & Holleran, 2001; Soulliere, 2005). A small number of studies have begun to link law enforcement characteristics with case decision making; however, almost no literature simultaneously looks at the combination of individual attitudes and beliefs about sexual assault, the influence of social norms or peer-group norms, and the perceived control over decision making in sexual assault cases. This study expands the current literature by identifying factors that may work together to explain perceptions of the case, attributions of blame, and subsequent decisions or behavioral intentions.

B.   **Definition of Key Concepts in the Study**

Before presenting information on the incidence and prevalence of sexual assault, and what is known about the criminal justice system's response to reported sexual assaults, it is important to clarify the definitions of key concepts involved in this study. The following section presents the definition of sexual assault for the local context in which the study took place, and a description of the concept rape myth acceptance.

1.   **State Definition of Sexual Assault**

In the state in which the study took place, the legal term used for sexual assault or rape is Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC). It is gender neutral and includes marital, stranger, date, acquaintance, and child sexual assault. There are four degrees of CSC which cover a range of sexual contact and levels of force or intimidation. Victim-survivor resistance is not a factor in assessing CSC and the law is gender neutral. In summary, the first (CSC-1) and third (CSC-3) degrees involve forced or coerced penetration, whereas the second (CSC-2) and fourth (CSC-4) degrees involve forced or coerced sexual contact. Definitions of force, coercion, sexual penetration, and sexual contact are all included in the state Penal Code.

Additionally, a first degree CSC, punishable by life imprisonment, includes *sexual penetration*[4] and one of the following circumstances: 1) victim under 13; 2) victim 14, 15, or 16 and member of the same household, related by blood or affinity, or assailant in position of authority over victim; 3) occurs during commission of another felony; 4) assailant is aided by another person and there is either victim incapacity or assailant uses force or coercion; 5) weapon is involved; 6) force or coercion and personal injury; 7) personal injury and victim incapacity; and 8) victim incapacity and either related by blood or marriage, or assailant in

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[4] Sexual penetration includes sexual intercourse, cunnilingus, fellatio, anal intercourse, and any other intrusion of a body part or an object into genital or anal openings.

position of authority over victim. A second degree CSC, punishable by up to 15 year's

imprisonment, includes *sexual contact*[5] and any of the circumstances listed for CSC-1. A third

degree CSC, punishable by up to 15 year's imprisonment, includes *sexual penetration* and one of

the following: 1) victim 13, 14, or 15; 2) force or coercion; or 3) victim incapacity. A fourth

degree CSC, punishable by up to 2 year's imprisonment and/or fine of $500.00, includes *sexual*

contact and one of the three circumstances described in CSC-3. Elements that would deem a

CSC as the first, second, third, or fourth degree are extensive and can be found in a state-specific

guidebook, which includes definitions, sentencing information, evidence needs, defense

information, and so on. According to state law, people who are "developmentally disabled,"

"mentally disabled," "mentally incapable," "mentally incapacitated," "mentally retarded,"

"physically helpless," or under the age of 17 are deemed unable to give consent (all terms are

defined in the Penal Code[6]). The "victim" is defined as the person alleging to have been

subjected to criminal sexual conduct" ([State] Penal Code, 2009[7]).

 2. **Rape Myths**

 Central to this study is developing an understanding of the definitions, perceptions, and

schema that police officers maintain regarding sexual assault. These definitions or schema are

based on attitudes and experiences developed over time, and may include myths related to sexual

assault, which may in turn influence responses to sexual assault victims and those who choose to

report to the police. Rape myths consist of stereotypes or false beliefs held by the general public

about the characteristics of "real" rape and "true" victims. Rape myth acceptance is thought to

sustain male sexual violence against women within society. Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994)

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[5] Sexual contact includes intentional touching of intimate parts or clothing covering intimate parts, for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification.

[6] This reference is not included in order to protect the confidentiality of the police department and all sworn officers.

[7] Ibid.

define rape myths as "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (p.134). Definitions of rape myths vary; however, most definitions include beliefs about rape that serve to deny, trivialize, or justify sexual aggression of men against women (for reviews, see Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Examples of rape myths include but are not restricted to the following: women secretly want to be raped; rape is rare, rape is a result of uncontrollable passion, and only certain kinds of women are raped.

Although the construct of rape myths was introduced in the second wave feminism (Brownmiller, 1975; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1974), Burt (1980) was the first to publish a social scientific examination of myth acceptance. Burt defined rape myths as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" and theorized that they serve to create a hostile climate for rape victims (p.217). Burt (1980) introduced the first tool measuring individual levels of endorsement that includes myths about the victim, the perpetrator, and the nature of the sexual assault—the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS)—which remains one of the most widely used in the field.

Recent efforts, however, have begun to reconceptualize rape myth acceptance as an example of stereotyping with a focus on both shared belief and cultural function (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, 1995). Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald (1999) argue that "like stereotypes, the importance of rape myths lies not in their ability to truthfully characterize any particular instance of sexual violence; rather, the significance of cultural rape myths is in their overgeneralized and shared nature as well as their specified psychological and societal function" (p.30). Not only do rape myths function in a way that may justify or support violence against women and trivialize the sexual assault, they may also diminish support for victims of sexual assault. Rape myths

should then be understood within context, not solely as a function or outcome of individual attitudes, but resulting from and reinforced through socialization.

It is important to analyze rape myths because they are linked to victim blaming and the way in which police officers may perceive and question victims and ultimately make decisions in reported cases. One can assume that the way in which the responding officer questions and responds initially to a sexual assault victim-survivor would influence the decision to classify the case as a crime, determine the victim-survivor as credible, write the report, and consider the case as sufficiently clear to classify as a CSC.

C.   <u>**Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Assault in the U.S.**</u>

Although estimates of sexual assault depend on definition and methodology, research consistently shows high rates of sexual assault within the United States, with between 18 percent and 33 percent of women being victimized during their lifetime. According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, approximately 270,000 rape or sexual assault victimizations occurred in 2010 (Planty, Langton, Krebs, Berzofsky, Smiley-McDonald, 2013). According to population-based National Violence against Women Study, approximately 18 million women and three million men in the United States have been raped in their lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). More than half of the female victims and nearly three-quarters of the male victims were raped before the age of 18 (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). The U.S. National Crime Victimization Survey (U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006) reports that one in six women will experience a sexual assault over the course of her life. Some studies even find that one in three women will be raped in her lifetime (Koss & Harvey, 1991; Ullman & Knight, 1992; Randall & Haskell, 1995). The National Sexual Victimization of College Women Study estimated that between 20 to 25 percent of college women experience a completed or attempted

rape during their college years (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). While men also experience sexual assault, women are disproportionately more likely than men (1 in 6 compared to 1 in 30 respectively) to experience—and also report in research studies or to law enforcement—a completed or attempted rape at some point in their lives (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000, 2006). Although these figures represent a high overall incidence and prevalence of rape in the U.S, Planty and colleagues (2013) report that there has been a 58% decline in sexual assault victimizations from 1995 to 2010. This translates to a rate of 5.0 victimizations per 1,000 females age 12 or older to 2.1 per 1,000 (Planty et al., 2013).

Contrary to widespread belief or characterizations of sexual assault, the majority of all sexual assaults (estimates ranging from two-thirds to 90 percent), including both male and female victims, is committed by someone who is known to a victim, often a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or current or former girlfriend, boyfriend or acquaintance. The National Violence against Women Survey found that only 16.7 percent of all female victims and 22.8 percent of all male victims were raped by a stranger (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). In 2005-10, 78% of sexual violence was by an offender who was a family member, intimate partner, friend, or acquaintance (Planty et al., 2013). Of surveyed college women, about 90% of sexual assault victims knew their attacker prior to the assault (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000).

Characteristics of sexual assault and victim responses show variation. Presence of a weapon is rare, with only 11% of rape or sexual assault victimizations from 2005-10 including an offender who was armed with a gun, knife, or other weapon (Planty et al., 2013). A relatively small percentage of victims are treated for injuries, going from 24% in 1994-98 to 35% in 2005-10. Of those who were treated for injuries during 2005 through 2010, 80% of female rape or sexual assault victims received care in a hospital, doctor's office, or emergency room. In 2005-

102, about 25% of victim-survivors received services from a victim service agency (Planty et al., 2013).

D.   <u>Lack of Reporting</u>

Despite the high prevalence and incidence of sexual assault, a small proportion is reported to the police, according to national victimization surveys. The most recent "Special Report" on the National Crime Victimization Survey states that the percentage of victim-survivors who report to the police continues to fluctuate. For instance, in 2003, 56% of sexual assault victimizations were reported to the police; however, only 35% were reported in 2010, the lowest level since 1995 (Planty et al., 2013).   Sexual assaults committed by strangers are more likely to be reported to the police than sexual assaults committed by "non-strangers," including intimate partners, relatives, friends, or acquaintances (Reporting Crime to the Police, 2003).

Understanding police perceptions of sexual assault and decision making behavior may assist in understanding victim's reluctance to report to the police and may provide insight in how to better prepare victims for engagement with the legal system and how to prepare the legal system to better respond. Victims may be reluctant to report their sexual assault to the police due in part to their perception that they may be blamed, treated disrespectfully, stigmatized, not believed, retraumatized, or dismissed (Ahrens, Campbell, Ternice-Thames, Wasco, & Sefl, 2007; Chen & Ullman, 2010; Patterson, Greeson & Campbell, 2009;Rennison, 2002).

Factors influencing victim-survivor's decision to report to the police, such as labeling as a crime and sexual assault characteristics, may be closely related to the factors that influence police officers' perceptions and decision making. Researchers argue that the decision to report a sexual assault may be influenced by perception or labeling of the event as a crime, experience of

injury, self-blame, and acceptance of rape myths or passive denial of rape (Chen & Ullman, 2010; Koss, 1993; Koss, Bachar, Hopkins, & Carlson, 2004).

Many victims believe that the characteristics of their sexual assault experience do not match the defining characteristics of what they (and much of the general public) believe constitutes a true or real sexual assault. Chen and Ullman (2010) argue that victims of sexual assault do not report to the police because they may adhere to socially constructed perceptions of rape, such as "rape myths". These defining characteristics of "real rape," which don't match the reality of legal crime definitions and common sexual assault characteristics are often referred to as "rape myths." Rape myths consist of implicit stereotypical beliefs about sexual assault, such as "Women routinely lie about rape," and "Only certain women are raped." Myths about rape often include beliefs about crime characteristics, such as emphasizing sexual assaults committed by strangers, those involving a weapon, or those involving obvious physical injury. Studies find that victims of sexual assault whose assaults contained two components of the "real rape" myth, the use of physical force and the occurrence of physical injury, were more likely to report to the police, implying that victims whose assaults do not include physical force or weapon use may not report those incidences (Du Mont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003; McGregor, Wiebe, Marion, & Linvingstone, 2000).

Research shows that victims who report their sexual assault to the police are more likely to have experienced stereotypical elements of crime, such as severe violence and suffering (Starzynski, Ullman, Townsend, Long, & Long, 2007). A number of studies describe the factors, such as victim-offender relationship, presence of a weapon, presence of injuries, location of victimization, and demographic characteristics of victim and perpetrator, that influence crime reporting behavior in cases of sexual assault (Bachman, 1998; Chen & Ullman, 2010; Du Mont

et al., 2003; Edward & Macleod, 1999; McGregor et al., Livingstone, 2000). Bachman (1998) analyzed reports from 348 rape and sexual assault lone-offender victimizations in the US involving male offenders and adult (18+) females reported in the National Crime Victimization Surveys 1992 through 1994. Bachman (1998) found that whether the victim sustained physical injuries and the presence of a weapon were the only significant predictors that increased the likelihood of reporting. Women are more likely to report incidences that occur in their homes or cars and less likely to report those occurring in social settings (Chen & Ullman, 2010). Demographic factors may also affect decisions to report; older women are more likely to report than younger women, as are those without a college education, and those who are non-White (Chen & Ullman, 2010).

E. **Negative Experiences after Reporting**

The factors that influence a victim-survivor's decision to report to the police as well as the expectation of stigmatizing questioning often matches one's experience after reporting to the police. Even when cases of sexual assault are reported to the police, victims of sexual assault often experience *secondary victimization* by the criminal justice and legal systems. These negative experiences have been defined as the second rape (Madison & Gamble, 1991), the second assault (Martin & Powell, 1994), or secondary victimization (Campbell & Raja, 1999; Campbell, Sefl, Barnes, Ahrens, Wasco, & Zaragoza-Diesfeld, 1999). *Secondary victimization* has been defined as "victim-blaming attitudes, behavior, and practices engaged in by community service providers, which further the rape event, resulting in additional trauma for rape survivors" (Campbell, Wasco, Ahrens, Sefl, & Barnes, 2001, p. 1240). Sexual assault victims may experience *secondary victimization* by police through invasive questioning, victim-blaming attitudes, general insensitivity, and lack of progress with criminal investigation (Esposito, 2005).

Research clearly demonstrates the negative and traumatizing experience of victim-survivors with the legal system (Campbell, 2006; Campbell et al., 2001; Chen & Ullman, 2010; Frazier & Haney, 1996; Felson & Pare, 2008; Frohmann, 2002; Kaukinen & DeMaris, 2009; Konradi & Burger, 2000; Larcombe, 2002; Martin & Powell, 1994; Monroe, Kinney, Weist, Dafeamekpor, Dantzler, & Reynolds, 2005; Patterson, 2011). Konradi and Burger (2000) found that more than half of victims in their study expressed concern about achieving justice through the system. Campbell and colleagues (2001) found that more than half of rape victims viewed contact with the legal system as hurtful.

Negative treatment often begins with reporting to the police. Monroe and colleagues (2005) found that almost half of victims who filed charges expressed dissatisfaction with the police interview. Analyzing the nationally representative Violence against Women survey, Felson and Pare (2008) found that victims of both physical and sexual assault were more likely to complain about police treatment when the offender was someone they knew. When the offender was known to the victim, victims complained that the police were too lenient, expressed disbelief or skepticism, or did not take their charges seriously.

Kaukinen and DeMaris (2009) report that for those victims of sexual assault who experienced penetration, police-reporting appeared to exacerbate the impact of the sexual assault and increase depression levels. Patterson (2011) found that victims whose cases were dropped had many factors within the case that reduce perceptions of victim credibility, such as those involving late reporting and reports involving assault by an acquaintance; victim-survivors largely reported their detectives engaging in secondary victimization behavior. It was also noted that in most cases where a span of time passed without apprehension of perpetrators, detectives became less supportive of victims (Patterson, 2011). These studies on the experience of victims

of sexual assault have focused on obtaining the victim's perspective (Campbell, 1998; 2005; 2006; Campbell et al., 2006; Du Mont et al., 2003; Ullman & Filipas, 2001), as well as perspectives from medical personnel (Alexander, 1980; Campbell, 2006), mental health professionals, (Campbell & Raja, 1999), and rape victim advocates (Maier, 2007; 2008; Ullman & Townsend, 2007; Wasco & Campbell, 2002).

Research with rape victim advocates specifically highlights the secondary victimization by the police which impedes their work with victims (Campbell et al., 2001; Ullman & Townsend, 2007; Wasco & Campbell, 2002). Rape victim advocate centers report that this secondary victimization is the most salient direct service barrier to their work (Ullman & Townsend, 2007). Campbell (2006) found that rape survivors reported police reluctance in taking their reports; investigators told them that their cases were not serious enough to pursue further, asked about prior relationships with perpetrators, and asked whether they responded sexually to the rape. Most victims reported negative treatment by the police, even in the presence of a rape victim advocate (Campbell, 2006). Maier's (2008) qualitative analysis of 47 in-depth interviews with rape victim advocates also points to police questioning that may be detrimental to victims. Rape victim advocates described traumatizing interactions with police officers due to a lack of training on rape, preconceived notions of "real" rape victims, and poor communication skills of police officers. Advocates did acknowledge that some of the negative interactions may be related to the need for police to gather evidence to develop a strong case, such as detailed descriptions supported by physical and other corroborating evidence (Maier, 2008). Additionally, qualitative interviews with 39 SANEs cited the criminal justice system as a source of revictimization by failure to ask questions in a sensitive manner, failure to proceed with the investigation, and by asking victim-blaming questions (Maier, 2012). Revictimization also

occurred through charges never filed, cases dropped or postponed, unsatisfactory plea bargains, and the questioning of victims' character and credibility (Maier, 2012). As Patterson (2011) describes in a study on secondary victimization of rape victims, victim-survivors believed that detectives focused on "nailing" the offender, which precluded attention to victim well-being. Beyond individual harm, this negative interaction with the police may actually deter other victim-survivors from seeking help or pursuing a criminal justice response.

F.   **Lack of Progress in the System (Case Attrition)**

Compounding the negative treatment by police officers during the case reporting and interviewing, the vast majority of reported sexual assaults do not progress through the criminal justice and legal systems. Research demonstrates that sexual assault case attrition is linked to both police decision making and prosecutorial decision making (Campbell, 1998; Campbell et al., 2001; Coates, 1996; Du Mont et al., 2003; Frazier & Haney, 1996; Patterson, 2011; Spohn, Beichner, & Davis-Frenzel, 2001). Police officers make decisions at different points in the case processing, whether in taking a report, classifying as a specific crime or not, identifying a perpetrator, questioning or arresting the perpetrator, or sending the case to the Prosecutor's Office. According to the National Center for Policy Analysis (1999), the probability that an arrest will be made when a rape is reported is one in two (50.8%), and the overall probability that a rapist will be sent to prison is 16.3%, with 128 days being the average length of sentence.

Daly and Bouhours (2010) analyzed a body of research from five countries (Australia, Canada, England/Wales, Scotland, and the U.S.) to identify patterns in police, prosecutor, and court handling of rape and sexual assault cases using victimization surveys, police statistics, and court data. The study's major conclusions included the following: 1) Of sexual offenses reported during the past 35 years, the overall rate of conviction is 15%, with significant declines in the

rate from the 70s and 80s in England/Wales, Canada and to a lesser degree Australia, but not in the U.S. or Scotland; 2) With regard to where attrition occurs in the legal process, it was found to be greatest at the start of the process in which a small proportion of cases proceed past the police to the prosecutor's office (Daly & Bouhours, 2010).

Patterson's (2011) qualitative study of victims' found a linkage between secondary victimization and the ultimate legal outcome of a case. Patterson (2011) suggests that this is because detectives' role is to build a strong case by obtaining accurate information which may take the form of secondary victimization. It may also be possible that detectives engaged in secondary victimization as a strategy to influence victims to drop their case.

Lack of progression and prosecution in sexual assault cases may also stem from the role of evidence, specifically that of forensic medical examiners (FME). Rees' (2010) study of forensic medical examiners pointed out that their report can be used to reinforce the "real rape" stereotype that emphasizes clear physical injury. The FME report can serve to limit case processing and prosecution (Rees, 2010).

Research clearly points to high rates of sexual assault, under-reporting, and negative experiences of those who do report to the criminal justice system. In order to better understand these perceptions and realities of negative treatment and outcomes within the criminal justice system, it is important to better understand the perceptions and role of law enforcement in responding to reported sexual assaults.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Several theories provide guidance in understanding the role of rape myth acceptance in officer decision making in reported sexual assault cases. This study uses schema theory, attribution theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to organize key concepts that may influence perceptions of a reported sexual assault as a crime and behavioral intentions to respond in certain ways.

A.   Summary of Integrated Theoretical Model

Even though schema theory, attribution theory, and TPB maintain different assumptions about decision making, they can complement each other by including a wider array of factors that may influence perceptions, decisions, and behavioral intentions. Considering a combination of concepts from these various theories may help to develop a new framework and a richer understanding of how police officers think about sexual assault cases, how they perceive and attribute blame, and ultimately how police officers act or make decisions. Lurigio and Stalans (1990) argued that future research needs to pay more attention to process and should compare both the content and process of decision making across different domains in criminal justice settings. In this study, the theoretical framework is not presented to test any one theory per se, but instead provides guidance for the key concepts to measure, which may influence police perceptions and behavioral intentions or decision making (See Figure 1). A number of factors may influence this behavior or decision to classify a case as a Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) and forward the case to the investigating officer, including individual attitudes (e.g., Rape Myth Acceptance), attributions of responsibility and blame, individual characteristics (e.g., training, experience), subjective norms of peers, and perceived behavioral control in processing the report (See Figure 1). These theories taken together—schema theory, attribution theory, and the theory

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of planned behavior—provide unique and sometimes overlapping concepts important to understanding an individual's schema and procedural knowledge or decision making. The following section will describe the key components of each theory with an application to the aims of this study.

Figure 1. Combined Theoretical Model

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                    │      Vignette        │
                    │ (Case Characteristics)│
                    └──────────┬───────────┘
                               │
                               ▼                    ┌────────────────┐
┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────┐              │ Decisional Frames│
│  Rape Myth   │─────────▶│Attributions│────────┐   └────────┬───────┘
│  Acceptance  │          └──────────┘          │            │
└──────────────┘                                ▼            ▼
                                        ┌──────────────────────┐
┌──────────────┐                        │   Perceptions and    │
│  Individual  │                        │ Behavioral Intentions │
│Characteristics│                       └──────────────────────┘
└──────────────┘

        ┌──────────────────┐
        │ Subjective Norms │
        └──────────────────┘

            ┌──────────────────┐
            │    Perceived     │
            │ Behavioral Control│
            └──────────────────┘
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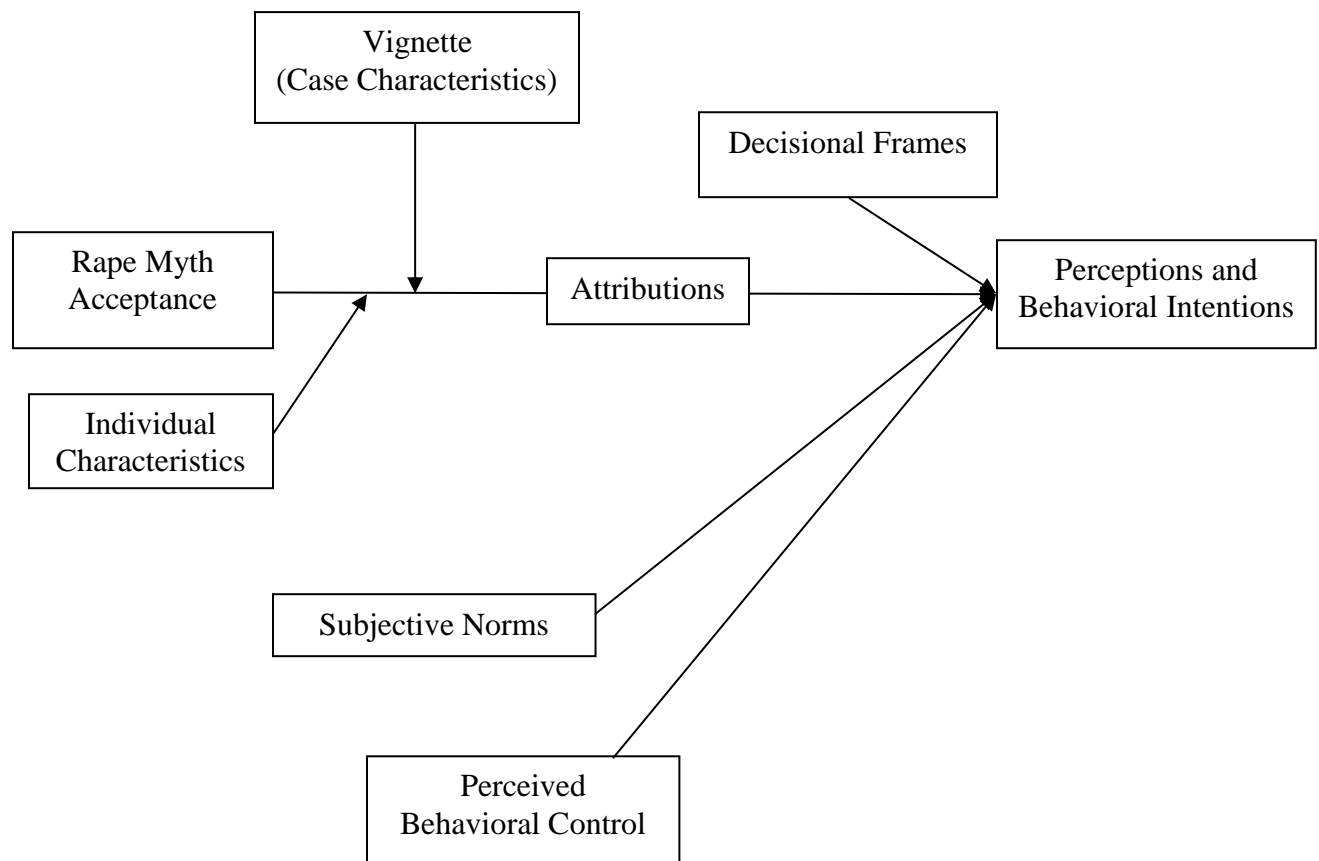
B.   Schema Theory

A schema is a cognitive framework that helps organize and interpret information (Brewer & Nakamura, 1984). Schemas allow individuals to take shortcuts in interpreting a large amount of information; however, these mental frameworks also influence individuals to exclude important information in favor of information that confirms prior knowledge or beliefs. When police officers initially classify a reported sexual assault as "founded," that is, when officers

believe, based on the victim report and existing evidence, that a crime occurred and this crime meets the legal definition of a CSC, they use their prior knowledge to interpret the victim's story and the evidence supporting the alleged assault. Police officers subsequently use this interpretation and apply it to their actions in the case.

This study intends to uncover various schema police officers have, develop, and apply based on their understanding of sexual assault and interpretation of sexual assault reports. Not only does schema theory provide guidance for understanding the "content" related to police officer's sexual assault-related schema, schema theory provides a framework for understanding how schema is applied—that is, the extent to which police officers employ their schema through decisional or procedural frames (Stalans & Finn, 1995). Finally, this study aims to understand the role of rape myth acceptance in police officer schema and the relationship between schema, rape myth acceptance, and decision making.

Schema theory provides a guide for understanding how individuals form ways of knowing and how the context or environment shapes what knowledge structures individuals utilize to interpret particular situations. Consequently, the application of schema will result in certain behaviors based on one's understanding of the situation. Schemas can sometimes contribute to stereotypes and make it difficult to receive new information or respond to unique situations that do not conform to established knowledge. Although Bartlett (1932) originally developed the idea, Rumelhart (1984) summarizes the major features of schemata: (a) schemata consist of variables; (b) schemata can be embedded, one within another; (c) schema represent knowledge at all levels of abstraction; (d) schemata represent knowledge rather than definitions; (e) schemata are active processes; and (f) schemata consist of recognition devices whose processing targets the evaluation of their goodness of fit to the data being processed.

All police officers maintain prior knowledge of sexual assault, whether from socialization within the culture at large or specifically within the police department, and from experience, both personal and professional, which is organized into schema. Schema theory offers the idea of "content knowledge," or the descriptive information on categories of people, events, or systems. This schema interacts with information from the current situation, the reported sexual assault, and influences the officer's interpretation of the report and his or her subsequent behaviors. In this study, "content knowledge" or knowledge about categories or groups of people and events, includes knowledge about sexual assault and the specific categorizations of individuals and assault "types" described by police officers.

In addition to understanding police officer's knowledge, attitudes, or the "content" of sexual assault-related schema, schema theory provides a framework for understanding the process of decision making. Within schema theory, "procedural knowledge" or "frames," contain rules about what is relevant and necessary information to make a decision. Stalans and Finn (1995) state that "frames are connected to individuals' worldviews, values, and concerns that help define the meaning of different situations, and are content-free knowledge structures" (p.290). In this proposed study, an individual officer's "frames" or basic assumptions about the world provide information about what questions are relevant to ask in the initial interview with the sexual assault victim-survivor and what information is relevant in making attributions in the case and deciding about the necessary and appropriate action of writing the initial report.

Stalans and Finn (1995) identified two types of procedural knowledge or "frames" that officers may use to guide their interpretation of a situation and make decisions: normative frames and efficiency frames. Officers who utilize a normative frame "focus more on the appropriateness of each disputant's actions based on societal norms" (Stalans & Finn, 1995, p.

293). Officers assess the moral character of the individuals and whether or not they should have acted differently. Efficiency frames, on the other hand, are based on practical interpretations of the situation, and the time and resources involved in certain responses. While officers who employ a normative frame "unravel the past to determine whether the person primarily responsible for the occurrence of the injuries should be blamed," officers who employ an efficiency frame consider the "immediate present and near future situation" (Stalans & Finn, 1995, p. 293).

This study hopes to uncover not only the content of officer's sexual assault-related schema, but also the procedural knowledge or "frames" that influences decision making. For instance, in what circumstances, or in which cases, are efficiency or normative frames used, and how do those "frames" influence behaviors? Officers who utilize an efficiency frame may be more pragmatic and concerned with following prescribed procedures. This may influence behavior toward the fastest method of resolving the situation. Officers relying on normative frames may be interested in judging victim or situational characteristics of the assault and assigning blame, whereas those relying on efficiency frames may either 1) efficiently write the police report and send to the detective thereby avoiding potential errors and scrutiny, or 2) based on content knowledge, quickly dismiss the "not real rape" case, thereby avoiding additional expended resources in case response.

Previous studies in the criminal justice literature have employed schema theory to understand attitudes and decision making of criminal justice professionals (Lurigio & Carroll, 1985; Lurigio & Stalans, 1990; Robinson, 2000; Ruby & Brigham, 1996; Stalans & Finn, 1995). This previous research indicates both benefits (e.g., efficiency, realism) as well as costs (e.g., rigidity, stereotyping) associated with utilizing one's schema. Studies suggest that schema

developed by criminal justice professionals from training and experience may allow them to make decisions more effectively (Lurigio & Carroll, 1985; Lurigio & Stalans, 1990). Lurigio & Carroll (1985) documented the types of schema among probation officers towards offenders and analyzed schema's effect on processing outcomes in hypothetical cases. The study suggests that more experienced probation officers had fewer but more well-developed schema, with both positive and negative implications (Lurigio & Carroll, 1985). For instance, with more detailed schema, more experienced officers may be more efficient at their job; on the other hand, more experienced officers may make assumptions and miss unique factors of individual cases that don't fit one's schema.

One study in particular looks at the role of rape myth acceptance as schema not among police personnel, but among lay jurors. Eyssel and Bohner (2011) looked at judgment processes or the social-cognitive functions of rape myth acceptance. This study asked two questions: 1) Does rape myth acceptance (RMA) function like a general cognitive schema that guides and organizes an individual's interpretation of specific information about rape cases? 2) If so, when would schema effects of RMA be most likely to occur and what exactly are the underlying mechanisms of such schematic influences of anti-victim attitudes? The study found that participants relied more strongly on their rape myth schema if external, yet case-irrelevant, information was provided that was amenable to schema-guided interpretation. In a second experiment, results indicated that schema effects of RMA were stronger even when participants thought they had been given additional information, even when they had not (Eyssel & Bohner, 2011).

Although widely used in understanding police officer response to crime, a gap in the literature exists surrounding the application of schema theory to understanding police officer's

interpretation of sexual assault calls and subsequent decision making. Schema theory clearly

provides a useful framework for understanding police response to reported sexual assaults by

taking into account the knowledge that police officers possess, which interacts with their

interpretations of reported crimes and their subsequent behavior and decision making. Schema

theory provides a framework for demonstrating the active and reflexive nature of decision

making and accommodates the roles that learning, socialization, and experience play in these

decisions.

C.   **Attribution Theory**

Attribution theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals make

decisions regarding responsibility for events (Heider, 1958; Shaver, 1975; Weiner, 1995). While

schema theory provides an understanding of the various ways individuals understand, interpret,

and respond to specific situations, attribution theory directly focuses on judgments related to

responsibility and blame. Attributions refer to the way in which individuals explain causes of

events, other's behavior, or one's own behavior. Heider (1958) argued that individuals perceive

events and automatically make causal inferences about why these events occur. Describing the

propensity of judgments of responsibility in everyday life, Weiner describes humans as "moral

vigilantes" (1995, p. 2). Weiner (1995) further explains how individuals interpret events by first

making causal determinations and then judgments of responsibility. Judgments of responsibility

may lead to attributions of blame, but this depends on inferences about personal versus

impersonal causality, controllability versus uncontrollability, and mitigating circumstances or

characteristics of the individuals and event. These factors all affect emotional responses and

attributions of blame. In summary, judgments are made in a hierarchical order from causal

determinations, to inferences of responsibility, to subsequent affective responses connected with

attributions of blame (Calhoun & Townsley, 1991; Weiner, 1995). Weiner (1995, p. 8) distinguishes these concepts by saying,

> Controllability refers to the characteristics of a cause—causes, such as the absence of effort or lack of aptitude, are or are not subject to volitional alteration. Responsibility, on the other hand, refers to a judgment made about a person—he or she 'should' or 'ought to have' done otherwise.

An attribution of cause does not necessarily lead to an attribution of responsibility or blame. Attributions of responsibility require examination of an individual's behavior in a social context, resulting in judgments about an individual's accountability for some event. A person is only judged as responsible for a negative event if the cause could have been changed; in other words, it could have been prevented. Blame, Weiner argues, is a cognitive concept, similar to responsibility, as well as an affect similar to anger; therefore it is a "blend" concept including both cognitive and affective elements (1995, p. 15). Blame mediates between responsibility and action precisely because of its affective element.

In the immediate response to a victim reporting a sexual assault, police officers will make inferences about the extent to which the victim contributed to his/her victimization, the extent to which he/she is responsible and blameworthy, and the extent to which the suspect is responsible and blameworthy. Applied to the current study, a victim-survivor of sexual assault may be held responsible for the sexual assault if his or her behavior leading up to the assault could have changed. Factors influencing judgments of responsibility may include questions about the victim-survivors attire or risk-taking behavior prior to the sexual assault (Cohn, Dupuis, & Brown, 2009; Stormo, Lang, & Stritzke, 1997). Regardless, assigning responsibility to the

victim in this case would not necessarily equate to an attribution of blame. Weiner (1995) argues that attribution of blame has more to do with affective responses, such as anger or sympathy.

Weiner's (1995) argument could also be interpreted by focusing on the assignment of responsibility and attribution of blame towards the suspect, rather than focusing on the victim. Although the suspect may have "caused" the sexual assault, the suspect may not be held responsible or blamed due to mitigating circumstances, or inferences about the suspect's intentions, and the degree of responsibility that corresponds with this. There may be mitigating circumstances that negate moral responsibility, such as perceived consent by the victim. In this line of reasoning, the suspect may be considered responsible but not to be blamed.

Research that applies attribution theory to cases of sexual assault focuses on how victim characteristics, suspect characteristics, and incident characteristics play a role in attribution of blame. In making decisions about responsibility, police officers may consider whether or not the victim caused or provoked the assault, which would lead to personal responsibility (Shaver, 1975). In addition, attribution theory would also suggest that certain affective responses, such as attributions of blame that lead to anger may limit helping behaviors, whereas attributions of blame that connect with empathy may lead to helping behaviors. For instance, if a police officer assigns responsibility and attributes blame to the alleged perpetrator, or to something other than the victim, this may lead to more willingness to resolve the situation quickly or pursue the suspect.

D. **Theory of Planned Behavior**

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is one of the most widely used theories for studying the process by which attitudes influence and direct behavior. Along with schema and attribution theory, TPB provides a broad framework for organizing key concepts that might

influence police officer's preliminary perceptions and decision making in initially classifying as a CSC requiring further investigation. In addition to understanding officer's prior knowledge or schema related to sexual assault, TPB offers additional concepts that are helpful in understanding the attitudes, perceptions, and outside factors affecting decision making of police officers. Sexual assault-related schema may exist, but it may operate in different ways depending on attitudes towards classifying the sexual assault as a crime, subjective norms (or beliefs about others' response) related to this action, and perceived behavioral control for this behavioral response. These three concepts—behavioral beliefs (attitudes towards the behavior), normative beliefs (subjective norms), and control beliefs (perceived behavioral control)—form the foundation of TPB, which explicitly aims to understand and explain individual attitudes by looking at "intentions" to perform a behavior as a proxy measure of actual behavior.

The TPB (Ajzen, 1991) is a modified version of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The TRA assumes that human beings are rational and make systematic use of available information before acting. TPB, in contrast to TRA, acknowledges that individuals do not always maintain the volitional control to perform a behavior. Instead, TPB recognizes that factors "external" to the individual affect behavior by mediating through the three central components of their model. These theories emerged in response to a failure to demonstrate strong links between attitudes and behavior. Presumably, one way to understand attitudes towards sexual assault or attitudes towards police involvement in classifying and investigating sexual assaults is to look at intentions to perform a behavior, such as intentions to classify a reported sexual assault as a Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC).

According to TPB, behavior occurs from intentions to act in a way that produces favorable outcomes and matches the norms and expectations of others. This coincides with the idea of efficiency framing in schema theory in which self-interest guides decision making. The theory of planned behavior asserts that three considerations guide human behavior: 1) attitudes towards the behavior (behavioral beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behavior and the evaluations of these outcomes); 2) subjective norms (normative beliefs about the expectations of others and motivation to comply with these expectations); and 3) perceived behavioral control (control beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behavior and the perceived power of these factors (Ajzen, 1991). In combination, attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perception of behavioral control lead to the formation of a behavioral "intention." As a general rule, the more favorable the attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control, the stronger the person's intention to perform the behavior should be.

Finally, given a sufficient degree of *actual* control over the behavior, people are expected to carry out their intentions when the opportunity arises. Intention is then assumed to be the immediate precursor of behavior. However, because it is difficult to carry out many behaviors because of limited ability or control over the behavior, it is useful to consider "perceived behavioral control" in addition to intention to perform a behavior alone. To the extent that people are realistic in their judgments, a measure of "perceived behavioral control" can serve as a proxy for actual control and contribute to the prediction of the behavior under study. This study aims to understand the role of these three TPB concepts in officer decision making in reported sexual assaults as well as the relationship between these three concepts, rape myth acceptance and sexual assault-related schema.

The TPB does not assume that only attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control influence or determine behavior. Other factors such as personality traits, attitudes towards people and institutions, and demographic variables may also influence behavior. These "external" factors may influence the beliefs a person holds or the strength to which an individual places importance on subjective norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

The current study utilizes the TPB to highlight key concepts, besides attitudes or schema alone, that influence decision making behavior. The study explores the relative influence of the many factors that may play a role in police officer perceptions and decision making, including the concept of rape myth acceptance, sexual assault-related schema, attributions, attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and decisional frames.

E.   **Conceptual Definitions of Components of the Integrated Theoretical Model**

      1.   **Definition of Dependent Variables**

            a.   **Behavioral Intention**

The dependent variable of this study is the intention to perform the behavior of classifying a reported sexual assault with the case title of Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC). Additionally, dependent variables include the perception of the case as legitimate, perception of the victim as credible, and belief that further investigation should occur immediately. Because this study utilizes hypothetical sexual assault cases through vignette methodology, behavior of police officers in real cases will not be observed but rather it will observe the behavioral intention, or the hypothetical decision to classify as a CSC, recommend the victim go to the YWCA[8], call out a detective immediately, and arrest the suspect. The primary measure of

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[8]The YWCA provides a variety of services, many targeted specifically at survivors of sexual assault. In the context of this study, police officers will often transport or recommend that the victim go to the YWCA, the location of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. In addition, the YWCA provides services such as crisis help, counseling, therapy, short-term respite, and support groups.

intention in this study is police officer's intention to file an initial report classified as a CSC in the situation presented in the vignette. This is measured by their support for certain behaviors and the extent to which they consider these behaviors worthwhile. At this point in the decision making, the responding officer makes an initial determination that a sexual assault may have occurred, validating the case as requiring further investigation by the investigating officer. The first responding patrol officer writes a report, at which point a detective follows with the questioning and investigation. This first classification of the crime occurs by writing the report itself, which is prior to other decision making on the case, even before the "founding" or "unfounding" of the case, which is decided by the detective assigned to the case after the patrol officer has written the initial report.

b. Perceptions of Legitimacy, Credibility, and Case Strength

In addition to the focus on officers' decisions of how to handle the case, the study examines how a variety of factors affect their inferences about the legitimacy of the sexual assault and the credibility of the victim. In addition to decision making power in terms of writing the initial report and forwarding cases for investigation, individual police officers display their authority in the way they initially "classify" or perceive a sexual assault. This perception may influence the way in which officers question and respond to individuals reporting sexual assault. Additionally, perceptions of the seriousness of the case may influence case progression. Perceptions of credibility may influence the use of victim blaming questions, which include but are not limited to questions pertaining to a victim's attire, the use of alcohol or drugs, reasons for being at certain locations at the time of the rape, degree of resistance as perceived by injury or testimony, prior sexual encounters with the alleged assailant, and whether the victim "led on" the

alleged assailant. Victim blaming questions and the belief in the "real" rape scenario may stem from acceptance of "rape myths."

> ## 2. Definition of Independent Variables

In police decision making in reported or alleged sexual assaults, attributions and the intention to file a report as a CSC (deeming the case as legitimate) do not exclusively determine the behavior. Other factors including attitudes, such as individual acceptance of rape myths, behavioral beliefs, including attitudes towards writing the report; normative beliefs, such as the perceived definitions and characteristics of sexual assault warranting criminal justice system attention; perceived behavioral control, such as the responding officer's perception of expectations and ability to carry through with the case may influence intentions to file the police report; and decisional frames determine the decision making behavior.

> ### a. Rape Myth Acceptance

Because the role of rape myth acceptance more globally is a focal interest in this study, rape myth acceptance will be included as a separate attitudinal concept in the model. The concept of rape myths fits with behavioral beliefs since attitudes towards deeming the case legitimate and writing the report (attitudes towards the behavior itself) may be related to attitudes about rape in general. Schema theory helps to situate the concept of rape myths within an individual's behavioral beliefs. Police officers may understand a specific sexual assault case through the lens of prior knowledge and possible stereotypes (rape myths) regarding appropriate definitions and classifications of sexual assault as legitimate or false. Police officers may fill in missing information regarding how to respond to the call with inferences from prior knowledge or with their individual schemas around sexual assault and rape myths.

b.   Attributions of Blame

Attributions of blame refer to the extent to which the police officer holds the victim responsible (responsibility).   Attributions of blame for both the suspect and victim will serve as predictors for the main dependent variables. Often the attribution of responsibility is made on the basis of police officers' perception of the degree to which the victim has caused the event, had control over those causes, should be held responsible for the event, and should be blamed or not, connected with the officer's emotional response to the victim (Edward & Macleod, 1999). Schema may also categorize certain cases or individuals as more believable or credible, which may be related to attributions of blame.

c.   Behavioral Beliefs and Attitudes toward the Behavior

Behavioral beliefs link the behavior of interest to the likely outcomes or consequences of the behavior and produce a favorable or unfavorable "attitude toward the behavior." Although a person may hold many behavioral beliefs with respect to any behavior, only a relatively small number are readily accessible at a given moment, and may be dependent on one's schema. It is assumed that these accessible beliefs—in conjunction with the subjective values of the expected outcomes—determine the attitude toward the behavior. Attitude toward a behavior is the degree to which performance of the behavior is positively or negatively valued. Law enforcement behavioral beliefs in regards to reported or alleged sexual assaults include the attitudes towards their own decision making behavior (whether or not they classify the case as a CSC and deem the case legitimate and the victim credible). Since behavioral beliefs specifically point toward attitudes towards performing a behavior, in this case writing the initial report, behavioral beliefs may tie prior knowledge about sexual assault to the current decision.

d.   Normative Beliefs, Subjective Norms, and Normative Frames

Normative beliefs and subjective norms include the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior. The foundation of subjective norms stems from social expectations and an individual's motivation to comply with those expectations. Normative beliefs and subjective norms relate to the normative expectations of others, usually important referent individuals or groups, and motivation to comply with these expectations (normative beliefs) in specific situations. Schema may have developed based on prior knowledge and help to interpret the situation; however, the role of subjective norms applies in specific situations and ultimately influences some behavior. These normative beliefs – in combination with the person's motivation to comply or go along with the referent group – assumedly determine the prevailing "subjective norm," or what is considered acceptable within that referent group. This concept from TPB guides the study to include questions about police officer's understanding of the norms of peers within the police department. This includes information regarding police officer's assumptions of how fellow officers would perceive and respond to different reported sexual assaults.

Rumelhart and Norman (1978) argue that the development of schemata occurs early on in an officer's socialization into police culture, and the occupational socialization of police officers encourages consistency or conformity and discourages change. Martin (2005) argues that goals, missions, policies, and procedures play an important role in how legal organizations and their employees socially construct sexual assault and sexual assault-related work.

Perhaps more measureable than the subjective norms within police culture as a whole, this study focuses on the role of perceived norms of direct colleagues, such as other officers and supervisors in influencing perceptions of the case and intentions to classify as a CSC. In this

study, normative beliefs may include beliefs regarding the assumed attitudes and behavior of others within the police department but also perceived cultural norms. Specifically, normative beliefs would include a police officer's perception about how other officers would respond. Subjective norms would incorporate the perception of social pressure to classify the report as a sexual assault and write an initial report, as well as the content that is included.   These subjective norms stem specifically from the key referent group, or the field of law enforcement that may influence a responding police officer's decision to conclude that a crime occurred, write the initial report, and recommend subsequent case follow-up. The concepts of normative beliefs and subjective norms clearly overlap with the idea of schema and the influence of prior knowledge on decision making. More specifically, the concept of "normative frames" presented by Stalans and Finn (1995) provides a related concept for understanding the influence of norms on decision making.

e.   Control Beliefs, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Efficiency Frames

Control beliefs consist of beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behavior. Control factors include required skills and abilities; availability or lack of time, money, and other resources; cooperation by other people; and so forth. It is assumed that these control beliefs, in combination with the perceived power of each control factor, determine the prevailing "perceived behavioral control," or people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behavior. To the extent that it is an accurate reflection of actual behavioral control, perceived behavioral control can, together with intention, predict behavior. Control beliefs may confound the effect of personal behavioral beliefs because of a stronger influence, which then encourages or prevents the behavior in question.

Proposed control beliefs or key concepts related to perceived behavioral control in this study includes the perceived or actual availability or lack of time, money, resources or ability; cooperation by other officers; and the presence of evidence perceived as necessary in claiming a sexual assault likely occurred (writing the report) and also in providing enough evidence for progression of the case. In the context of police handling sexual assault reports, perceived behavioral control may also include police officer perceptions about the organizational policies concerning their discretion in sexual assault cases. According to Mastrofski and colleagues, "Novice officers also learn what it takes to establish probable cause and 'how to…avoid unnecessary or fruitless effort, and write reports that will reduce the risks of a negative response from the police hierarchy'" (Mastrofski, Ritti, & Snipes, 1994, p.126-127).

Although sexual assault-related schema and subjective norms may contribute to the use of victim-blaming questions and decision making, the role of police officers within the legal system with limited perceived control over their actions may also influence behavior. For instance, the need for evidence so engrained in police practice may influence police to respond in certain ways in reported sexual assault cases. Not only may the need for evidence encourage more aggressive questioning of the victim, it may also limit law enforcement's ability to respond effectively to the crime of sexual assault. For instance, a high rape myth acceptance may tell officers that the sexual assault should not be written up in an initial report and sent to the investigating officer, but a stronger belief in following police procedure or limited behavioral control will influence the officer to file the report and call in the detective. On the other hand, a low rape myth acceptance may influence an officer to write the initial report, but the unavailability of time to complete the report may influence the responding officer towards not writing the initial report.

3.   <u>**Definition of Control Variables**</u>

Besides key concepts and variables directly fitting TPB, schema theory, and attribution theory, additional concepts will be included. Other independent variables in this study include police officer characteristics, such as age, sex, race/ethnicity, education level, number of years working in law enforcement, experience responding to sexual assault cases, and whether or not the officer received specific training on sexual assault.   Because social desirability bias may occur because of the topic, a measure of social desirability will be included. Based on the previous literature in this area, these variables will be included to examine their connection to rape myth acceptance and decision making.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study seeks to describe and explain the relationship between a number of factors that may influence initial perceptions, processing, and decision making in reported sexual assault cases. The literature review presents research within the concepts related to the study's theoretical framework.

First, the review will cover research on police culture, discretion, and individual police officer-level factors that may influence perceptions and responses in reported sexual assault cases. Individual police officer-level factors will be presented in the context of Ajzen's "behavioral belief" element of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), schema theory, and attribution theory. The review will then cover research on factors related to schema and behavioral beliefs, such as police definitions of rape and acceptance of rape myths; and studies of the influence of police officer characteristics, such as race, gender, experience, and training on case decision making.

Second, the review discusses studies that specifically include factors related to "subjective norms" regarding sexual assault or "normative frames" regarding the influence of norms on decision making. The influence of "subjective norms" in decision making in sexual assault cases comes from the sociological and criminal justice literature on police culture or organizational characteristics influencing police officer decision making.

Third, the review summarizes studies on elements of sexual assault cases, including victim, suspect, and case characteristics, such as demographic information or credibility factors. These characteristics are often used to determine the legitimacy of the case and decision making. Some of the important case characteristics affecting attributions and decision making will be included in the hypothetical case descriptions used in the study.

Fourth, studies that report the influence of "perceived behavioral control" or the role of "efficiency frames" on police decision making will be discussed. These studies include those that explore the ways in which the organizational context may influence decision making behavior. Perceived behavioral control may include the influence of evidentiary factors on decision making, including physical or forensic evidence, presence of weapons, and presence of witnesses.

The literature review reveals a large body of research in the area of law enforcement decision making regarding sexual assault; however, the majority of research focuses on a single methodology (e.g., case file content analysis, qualitative interviews) with a single group of participants (e.g., police officers, victims of sexual assault), and tests a singular theory (e.g., attribution theory) without a contextual understanding. Most studies are narrow in scope and cannot account for a wide range of influential factors, including both individual level attitudes and more macro level police culture or organizational factors, such as subjective norms or perceived behavioral control that might influence decision making and progression of cases within the legal system.

A.   Police Culture and Police Discretion

Literature on police culture and police discretion is a necessary foundation for understanding the way in which police officers may perceive sexual assault and respond to reported sexual assault cases in their daily work. Although previous research has explored extralegal factors that influence police decision making in cases of sexual assault, organizational or occupational cultural factors that may influence decision making have not been explored or controlled for in these studies. This study explores the relationship between professional discretion, influenced by a number of personal and situational factors, with perceptions of police

norms and expectations that might influence decision making in the progression of a reported sexual assault.

The criminal justice literature provides a background for understanding police culture and organizational and individual variation within this culture. Paoline (2003) provides an overview of policing literature that explains the causes, prescriptions, and outcomes of "the" police culture while acknowledging alternatives to the idea of a monolithic occupational culture. Paoline states that "police culture is a useful concept in understanding the many facets of policing from learning the ropes, day-to-day functioning, investigating forms of police deviance, keeping the police accountable, and the success of reform efforts" (2003, p.200).

The occupational culture of police work literature provides some insight into the ways that police officers may perceive and respond to reported sexual assault cases. Paoline (2003) argues that viewing police culture as an occupational phenomenon may point to collective attitudes, values, and norms that arise in the specific environment of police work. Police settings consist of an occupational environment marked by danger and coercive authority, and an organizational environment marked by supervisor scrutiny and role ambiguity (Paoline, 2003). These specific environments and resulting officer coping mechanisms point to important concepts in understanding how police officers perceive and respond to reported sexual assaults.

Criminal justice organizations, such as local police departments, may socially construct sexual assault in ways that limit their ability to effectively respond. Police organizations that are highly bureaucratized and seek to maintain authority and legitimacy through policies and procedures may influence individual police officers to handle cases of sexual assault in certain ways (Kerstetter & Van Winkle, 1990). According to loose coupling theory, a key responsibility of agency administration is to maintain organizational legitimacy in the eyes of the external

environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Lipsky, 1980). Organizations that demand efficiency and certainty, yet place a high level of scrutiny and oversight by supervisors after the fact, create constraints on officer discretion (Brown, 1988; Ericson, 1982; Fielding, 1988; Skolnick, 1994).

Because the daily work of policing is full of danger, unpredictability and organizational constraints, certain coping mechanisms, such as being suspicious, maintaining the edge, laying low, and putting on a crime fighter orientation, help officers to minimize the stress and anxiety created by their work environment (Paoline, 2003). Skolnick points out that "it is the nature of the policeman's situation that his conception of order emphasize regularity and predictability. It is, therefore, a conception shaped by persistent suspicion" (1994, p.46). This concept points to the idea that officers develop schema related to sexual assault calls, that they may classify or perceive them in ways that emphasize similarity or predictability. Similarly, maintaining the edge relates to "reading people and situations" (Muir, 1977; Van Maanen, 1974). Paoline points out that "part of reading people and situations is manifested through the sorting of clientele. Officers learn to sort citizens into categories (suspicious persons, assholes, and know-nothings)" (2003, p. 202). It is likely that officers categorize victims of sexual assault in certain ways and also categorize the "type" of sexual assault, including the "types" that are appropriate for further investigation and different law enforcement actions. Additionally, taking on a strict crime fighter orientation may lead officers to focus on more "serious, less ambiguous, criminal incidents (i.e. felonies)" rather than more ambiguous reported sexual assault cases (Paoline, 2003, p. 203).

While police officers may share a unique occupational environment which leads to certain shared constraints and coping mechanisms, variation exists across departments and districts, and between individual police officers (Paoline, 2003). Despite organizational

directives and supervisory oversight, individual police officers maintain different styles and

attitudes which may influence their discretionary decision making—what Lipsky (1980) calls

"street-level bureaucrats."

In summary, despite organizational policies and supervisory oversight, police officers

maintain and exercise discretion in their work, which is situated within an organizational culture

with its own norms and values. Often, officers do not have specific guidelines on which cases to

pursue, and which to determine as unfounded.[9] Police officers must exercise discretion in how to

proceed in reported sexual assaults (Lord & Rassel, 2002), and thus can be considered "street-

level bureaucrats" (Lipsky, 1980). Within police organizational culture, individuals also maintain

unique personal traits, attitudes and experiences. These characteristics then influence

attributions within specific sexual assault cases in which officers respond. These attributions, in

turn, influence decision making and case processing.

B.   **Police Perceptions and Definitions of Rape**

A few research studies have focused specifically on the ways in which law enforcement

officials define sexual assault, and often define it in ways inconsistent with legal definitions.

Research indicates that changes made to rape laws have not necessarily changed police

perceptions or definitions of rape. Campbell and Johnson's (1997) exploratory, qualitative study

of police officers in two Midwestern police departments found three clusters of definitions which

focused on: (1) reformed legal factors, such as use/threat of force (19%), 2) penetration and

consent (31%), and (3) mixture of old legal definitions with victim blaming views (51%). This

demonstrates that half of police officers provided definitions of rape that included old legal

definitions with victim-blaming views (e.g., men cannot stop themselves, rape is rough sex, and

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[9] According to the Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook (2004), "unfounded" refers to reports to the police deemed as false or baseless complaints.

women change their minds after they are no longer intoxicated). Ullman and Townsend's (2007) study similarly found that victim advocates describe the perceptions of police officers as blaming the victim.

Other studies have explored the key factors that might influence police officer's perceptions or definitions of rape, which in turn affect police perceptions of victim credibility (Frazier & Haney, 1996; Jordan, 2004). Jordan (2004) analyzed case files of 181 offenders and 166 victims in which the case was closed by the victim of unfounded by the police, and those which police classified and reported but ceased investigating, either because of insufficient evidence or because the complainant withdrew the allegation. Jordan (2004) found that historically pervasive attitudes of mistrust in women's testimony continues to be evident in police processing of rape complaints, including misinterpretation of information and miscommunication between police officers and rape complaints. In a more recent study, Jordan (2008) demonstrated the difficulty that victims of sexual assault, even those considered "ideal victims," experience in being believed and seen as a real victim by the police. Kerstetter and Van Winkle's (1990) study suggests that officers' attitudes and beliefs are communicated to the victim and are experienced negatively by the victim. Frazier and Haney (1996) explored 569 cases of sexual assault involving females ages 16 and older in a Midwestern city and found substantial attrition, with more "severe" cases (e.g., use of a weapon) prosecuted more vigorously. Additionally, about one-third of the cases with an identified suspect did not include questioning of that suspect (Frazier & Haney, 1996). A few studies have examined police perceptions of rape and found that police often do not perceive non-stranger assaults as rape (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985). Additionally, officers tend

to overestimate the percentage of false sexual assault reports (Ask, 2010; Lonsway, Archambault, & Lisak, 2009; Page, 2008).

C.   Police Officers and Rape Myth Acceptance

Studies show that rape myths influence individual's perceptions and understandings of sexual assault, including those of law enforcement officials (Campbell & Johnson, 1997; Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Page, 2008; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). Several studies have looked at police officer attitudes towards rape (Campbell & Johnson, 1997, LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1995). Research shows that law enforcement officials accept a number of rape myths, especially in comparison to others such as rape victim advocates (Campbell & Johnson, 1997). In earlier studies, police officers showed more endorsement of rape myths than members of other professions and the general public (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). More recent research shows wide variability in officer acceptance of rape myths, meaning that those who respond initially to the reporting victim and those who investigate the case may have vastly different opinions and may subsequently interact differently with victims who report (Campbell, 2005). Some have argued that police responses to sexual assault has not significantly changed or improved over the past 30 years (Hodgson & Kelley, 2002; Jordan, 2001; Temkin & Krahe, 2008).

Although recent research specifically on police officer characteristics and rape myth acceptance is still relatively minimal, studies have focused on the role of educational attainment, gender, and sexual assault case experience on rape myth acceptance.   Page (2007, 2008) describes one of the first large-scale studies to test the relationship between demographic characteristics of police officers and their acceptance of rape myths.   Page's (2007, 2008) study of 891 police officers from two states in the southeastern U.S. found a significant difference in

acceptance of rape myths by varying levels of educational attainment and different levels of experience handling sexual assault cases. Although research in the United States (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Ward, 1995) demonstrates that females generally endorse fewer rape myths than males, this may not be the case in settings where gender representation is imbalanced. Jordan (2002) found that rape myth acceptance among female police officers was just as pervasive as that of male police officers. Jordan (2002) argues that organizational culture, socialization, and peer pressure may influence personal attitudes, and in police work, for example, individual attitudes may be more reflective of work group attitudes than those of one's gender. These findings indicate that some officer characteristics may differentiate levels of rape myth acceptance; however, they may also indicate social desirability bias. For instance, officers who work on more rape cases may be even more reluctant than another police officer, or they may receive more normative pressure not to express rape myths. More educated officers are typically in higher positions or may desire to be promoted, which may also influence them to be more cautious about expressing rape myths.

D.   Police Officers and Attributions of Blame

Some research suggests that police officers attribute more blame to the victim in certain crimes. In comparing police perceptions of victims, Bieneck and Krahé (2011) found that more blame was attributed to the victim and less to the perpetrator in sexual assault compared to robbery. Though some argue that police work is data-driven in nature, if sufficient motivation to examine evidence is not available, police may then refer to generalized cognitive schema to interpret information. Bieneck and Krahé's (2011) study demonstrates that reliance on schemata affect perceptions of crime and victim blame, but especially in certain crimes, such as sexual assault. Bieneck and Krahé (2011) refer to this as the notion of special leniency bias.

E. **Individual Police Officer Characteristics and Decision Making**

Studies show mixed results regarding the effect of police officer gender on perceptions of and decision making in sexual assault cases. Bieneck and Krahé (2011) found no gender differences in judgments about the legitimacy of both sexual assault and robbery cases; however, they found that men were more inclined than women to blame the victim. In terms of actual decision making outcomes rather than rape myth acceptance or attributions of blame, Alderden's (2008) study was among the first to insert police officer demographic characteristics into the model testing extralegal and evidentiary characteristics in sexual assault case decision making. Alderden (2008) found no significant difference in decision making between males and females. In further analysis, Alderden and Ullman (2012) concluded that sexual assault cases involving male detectives were more likely to result in arrest.

F. **Normative Beliefs and Normative Frames**

Research on the relative influence of norms on one's own rape myth acceptance or decision making behavior is limited. Normative beliefs about sexual assault may stem from socialization and the broader societal context and cultural definitions of what constitutes sexual assault or "real rape" (Brownmiller, 1975). According to Frohman (1997), law enforcement officials use a set of criteria to make decisions in cases, such as ascribing stereotypical race, class, and gender imagery to victims, which may influence the progression of the case. Belknap (2010) argues that police suspicions of false allegations are wrapped up in "real rape" beliefs and too easily discredit victims.

Police response to sexual assault may parallel police response to domestic violence. In this related field of study, Robinson (2000) points out that police culture has struggled with the law enforcement perspective of what constitutes "real" police work in relation to the social

problem of domestic violence. Studies report that police culture often views domestic violence victims in a negative light (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1993; Belknap 1995; Ferraro, 1989; Davis, 1983, Sinden & Stephens, 1999; as cited in Robinson, 2000). Robinson (2000) argues that because of recent domestic violence policy change, individual police officers along with the entire organization of police culture has been required to adapt a new "domestic violence schemata."

G.   The Social Norm of Rape Myth Acceptance

Because of the role in responding to the crime of sexual assault, police officers may be one of the most important groups to study in terms of their endorsement of rape myths and the extent to which police officers perceive that their peers endorse rape myths. Brownmiller (1975) argues that rape myths can perpetuate male sexual violence against women only to the extent that these rape myths are communicated throughout society in a way that potential perpetrators perceive the endorsement by others. No studies to date explicitly examine the role of perceived norms surrounding sexual assault within police departments; however, the number of studies that focus on "extralegal" factors may point to the role of subjective norms in police decision making.

Although focused on a population other than law enforcement officials, a recent study aims to better understand the influence of perceived norms regarding what constitutes "real rape" on one's own rape myth acceptance (RMA) and subsequent behavior. Bohner, Siebler, and Schmelcher (2006) assess whether men's rape proclivity can be influenced not only by their own endorsement of rape myths (behavioral beliefs and schema), but also by the perceived rape myth acceptance of others. In this study, others' perceived RMA acted as a "social norm" (2006, p.287). Bohner, Siebler, and Schmelcher's (2006) study empirically tested this assumption—that is the role of rape myth as a social norm in endorsing actual sexual violence against women. They found that the perception of other's rape myth acceptance influenced not only the

participant's individual beliefs or rape myth acceptance, but also their own self-reported inclination for committing a sexual assault (Bohner, Siebler, & Schmelcher, 2006).

While Bohner and colleagues' study (2006) assessed the role of other people's rape myth acceptance in promoting rape proclivity, the relationship between the perceived rape myth acceptance of others and one's own rape myth acceptance provides a rationale for studying "subjective norms" in this study. Similar to the Bohner and colleague's study, the perceived attitudes towards rape and rape myth acceptance and the response to reported sexual assault calls of other officers in the department or district may influence the responding officer's understanding of and response to a sexual assault call.

H.   **"Extralegal" Factors in Attributions and Decision Making**

In contrast to individual or cultural factors that influence attitudes towards sexual assault or acceptance of rape myths, a number of studies have examined "extralegal" factors related to the sexual assault itself or the individuals involved that may influence perceptions and decision making. These influential factors may relate to a broader cultural understanding of sexual assault that does not match current legal definitions of sexual assault. These "extralegal" factors include victim and suspect characteristics, credibility factors, and characteristics of the sexual assault itself (Frazier and Haney, 1996). Other researchers have demonstrated that the perceptions and appraisals of rape victims are influenced by a plethora of variables such as provocativeness of the victim's behavior or attire, sex roles, situational factors, rape empathy, and gender (Schneider, Mori, Lambert, & Wong, 2009).

1.   **Victim Substance Use**

Research demonstrates that substance use plays a major role in individual perceptions of sexual assault. Not only does alcohol often correlate with the occurrence of sexual assault, the

presence of alcohol in real and hypothetical sexual assaults influences perceptions of the assault, both among the lay population (Maurer & Robinson, 2008) and among criminal justice personnel (Campbell, 1998; Chandler & Torney, 1981; Frohmann, 1997; Kerstetter, 1990; Schuller & Steward, 2000; Spears & Spohn, 1996). Bieneck and Krahé (2011) found that victim blame increases in cases in which the victim was drunk at the time of the assault. Maurer and Robinson (2008) conducted a survey with a sample of 652 U.S. undergraduate students containing date rape vignettes with varying characteristics and found that the vignette character's attire and alcohol use was associated with victim-blaming attitudes, even though victim blaming was low across participants.

Studies involving the police also demonstrate the effect of alcohol on perceptions and decision making. Schuller and Stewart (2000) explored the impact of victim and perpetrator alcohol consumption on police officers' evaluations of an alleged sexual assault and their reported likelihood of charging the perpetrator. In their study, they presented 212 police officers with a vignette depicting an acquaintance rape in which the beverage consumption (beer, cola) of both the victim and perpetrator was systematically varied and found an effect of perceived intoxication on negative evaluations of the victim.

Alcohol and drug use by the victim also significantly deters case progression, (Campbell, 1998; Chandler & Torney, 1981; Frohmann, 1997; Spears & Spohn, 1996). Campbell (1998) found that victims who were drinking prior to the sexual assault were four times more likely to have their cases dropped during the beginning of the legal process. Spears and Spohn (1996) found that criminal justice system actors viewed victims who had been using alcohol or drugs as less credible. In another study, stranger and acquaintance sexual assaults were less likely to

move forward in cases where the victim had engaged in substance use prior to the assault

(Kerstetter, 1990).

2. Relationship between Victim and Perpetrator

Another important sexual assault case characteristic that may influence case processing

and criminal justice decision making focuses on the relationship between the victim and the

accused perpetrator. Studies show that police often do not perceive non-stranger assaults as rape

(Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985). Prior research suggests that

progression of cases involving a stranger rest largely on identifying the offender and evidentiary

strength of the case, whereas cases involving an acquaintance or known perpetrator rest largely

on assessing the lack of consent through the credibility of the victim (Kerstetter & Van Winkle,

1990).

Although these cases may be approached differently by criminal justice system

personnel, studies exploring the role of victim-perpetrator relationship on perceptions and

decision making show mixed results. Bieneck and Krahé (2011) found that police attributed

more blame to victims when the sexual assault did not involve a stranger. Other studies show

that sexual assault cases are less likely to progress through the criminal justice system if the

victim and alleged perpetrator had some relationship, whether being married, having prior sexual

relationship, or even being acquaintances (Buzawa, Austin, & Buzawa, 1995; LaFree, 1980;

Chandler & Torney, 1981; Kerstetter, 1990). Other studies do not show this effect (Bachman,

1998; Spohn & Horney, 1993; Spears & Spohn, 1996; 1997). Buzawa and colleagues (1995)

conducted a content analysis of official police records of 376 assault cases involving

acquaintances, domestic partners, and strangers, and found arrest more likely as the level of

relationship becomes less intimate. Although arrest is unlikely in all "types" of reported sexual

assault cases, arrest accompanies stranger assaults more than those committed by domestic

partners or acquaintances. Addington's (2008) findings add complexity to these research, with

results from the Uniform Crime Reporting Program's National Incident-Based Reporting System

(UCS NIBRS) which shows higher odds of case clearance (or being solved through arrest) of

sexual assault cases with known, non-intimate perpetrators than sexual assault cases with

strangers. She explains the discrepancy between this result and others, acknowledging that the

NIBRS data are limited to what is reported to police, and already begins with some filtering or

bias (Addington, 2008). Another possible explanation for this finding is that the perpetrator is

known; whereas, in a stranger assault, the perpetrator may not be easily identified. When looking

at prosecutors, Spohn and colleagues (2001) found similar rates of prosecution for both stranger

and acquaintance cases, noting that both types of cases involved victims engaging in

"questionable" behavior (e.g., delayed reporting, engaging in prostitution, walking alone at

night). Interviews with prosecutors also suggested that prosecutors were less likely to warrant

acquaintance cases than stranger cases (Spohn et al., 2001). An Australian study found that

individuals attribute more blame to acquaintance rape victims because they are judged to violate

either gender or rape victim stereotypes (Masser, Lee, McKimmie, 2010).

3.   Victim Resistance

Corresponding to rape myths or "typical" depictions of sexual assault in the broader

culture, studies show that victim resistance influences the processing of sexual assault cases. In

a subsample of 187 women who reported their sexual assault to the police, Du Mont and Myhr

(2000) found that those who did not physically resist were less likely to have cases that resulted

in a charge. Ong and Ward (1999) also describe the role of sex and power schemas as they

interact with victim resistance in individual's attributions of blame towards the victim.

4.   **Victim Age and Race**

Studies show mixed results regarding the influence of victim age and race on criminal

justice decision making in sexual assault cases. Some studies show that cases with younger

victims are more likely to have a suspect charged (Beichner & Spohn, 2005; LaFree, 1981;

Kingsnorth et al., 1999); while other studies show that cases with older victims were more likely

to have a suspect charged prosecuted (Du Mont & Myhr, 2000; Spears & Spohn, 1996; Spears &

Spohn, 1997; Spohn & Horney, 1993). Studies show mixed results regarding the influence of

victim race on suspect criminal charges (Chandler & Torney, 1981; LaFree, 1981; Spohn &

Horney, 1993; Spohn & Holleran, 2001; Spohn & Spears, 1996).

5.   **Victim Behavior and Demeanor**

Research demonstrates that a victim's demeanor may influence police perceptions of the

case and subsequent follow-up. In a study of Swedish police officers and prosecutors who

watched videotapes of sexual assault reports, Ask (2010) found that officers expect crime victims

to react in a stereotypical way. The "emotional victim effect" or expressive and self-blaming

demeanor influences police perceptions of the victim as more truthful (Ask, 2010; Ask &

Landstrom, 2010). Behavior that violates observer's expectancies can trigger suspicion and

deception judgments (the Expectancy-Violation Mechanism). The Affective-Response

Mechanism proposes that an emotional victim has a stronger emotional impact on the observer,

therefore more credibility (Ask & Landstrom, 2010). Failure to account for victim reactions may

result in misinterpretation of victim demeanor (i.e. not showing signs of distress may be

construed as not telling the truth) (Ask, 2010).

Women who conform to ideal expectations for "real victims" and whose accounts

conform to expectations of "real rape" are more likely to report more positive interactions with

police. For instance, those who were assaulted by a stranger rather than someone they know, and those who were injured with a weapon, were more likely to report positive treatment by police (Ask, 2010; Page, 2007). Many combined factors, such as victim substance use, relationship with the suspect, demographic characteristics, and other characteristics of the assault, lead to characterizations as "real" rape or "ideal victims." Jordan (2008) describes an ideal victim as one whose attributes would lead them to be regarded as a legitimate victim. An "ideal victim" is someone who cannot be viewed as "asking for rape." Jordan (2008) analyzed qualitative data from in-depth interviews with women who meet the "perfect victim" parameters and who were victims of a serial rapist and found that they expressed overall positive experiences with police, indicated by being believed, validated, and provided with privacy and safety (Jordan, 2008).

Because those who report a sexual assault in close proximity to the event are experiencing immediate trauma, these behaviors may also influence police officer perceptions of the victim, the case, and what their response should be. Research shows that victims are likely to experience PTSD, rape trauma syndrome, or other anxiety problems (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006; U.S. Department of Justice, 2002). Some argue that the process of reporting the crime and being interviewed by police may resemble the sexual assault incident and may trigger anxiety-related responses, such as avoiding eye contact, inappropriate affect, initial omission of details, or concentration/memory problems (Kaysen, Morriw, Rizvi, & Resick, 2005; Norris & Thompson, 1993). Lonsway and colleagues (2009) point out that police officers may perceived these behaviors as indicators of lacking credibility, fabrication, substance abuse or mental illness.

I.   Perceived Behavioral Control, Evidentiary Factors, and Efficiency Frames

Although stereotypical attitudes towards sexual assault may contribute to perceptions of the credibility of the victim and legitimacy of the case, the role of police officers within the legal

system and their perceived control over decision making and case outcomes may also influence their decision making behavior. Because of the necessity of evidence to substantiate a crime, evidentiary factors play an important role in deciding how to respond initially and how to move the case forward. Prior research analyzing law enforcement case files shows the link between evidentiary factors and progression or lack thereof within reported sexual assaults.

Evidentiary factors influencing decision making may contain considerations of physical or forensic evidence, including injury (Frazier & Haney, 1996; Kerstetter, 1990; Kingsnorth et al., 1999; Spohn & Holleran, 2001; Williams, 1981). Research shows that sexual assault report scenarios with the presence of weapons (Kerstetter, 1990; LaFree, 1989; Spohn and Holleran, 2001) and the presence of witnesses (Frazier & Haney, 1996; Spears & Spohn, 1996; Kingsnorth et al., 1999; Williams, 1981) influences case progression in the criminal justice system. Buzawa and colleagues (1995) found that when arrest of the accused perpetrator occurs, it is more likely when specific situational elements, such as presence of a weapon, are present or more evident. They found that an arrest is 2.5 more likely when a weapon is involved and 2 times more likely when victim injury is serious (Buzawa et al., 1995).

Related to the influence of a weapon or injury, the presence of additional crimes beyond the sexual assault influence police officer's perception of the case as "legitimate" or not. Using data from the National Crime Victimization Survey and the Uniform Crime Reporting Program's National Incident-Based Reporting System, Addington (2008) found that incidents with aggravating circumstances are more likely to be viewed as "real rape." Addington (2008) concludes that police tend to pursue those "real rape" cases with more "solvability" regardless of officers' beliefs about the victim. Crimes that co-occur with sexual assault is one of the strongest predictors leading to arrest (the odds increase by 1.51 compared to solo rape), followed

by use of a weapon (increase the odds by 1.3 for a knife and 1.16 for other weapons) (Addington, 2008).

In order to understand the kinds of justifications investigating officers used for their decisions, Soulliere (2005) conducted a qualitative analysis of 35 sexual assault complaints from Investigation Reports of the Windsor Police Service in 1992. Souilliere's (2005) results describe justifications related to case outcomes, a judgment on low prosecutability or not (based on evidentiary concerns, credibility of complainant, complainant perceived as incompetent witness), and descriptions of rape "typifications," such as descriptions and judgments related to emotional reactions of victims, legitimacy of victims, characterization of suspects, reporting behavior, interaction between victim and perpetrator after the assault. When designating reported sexual assaults as "unfounded," Souilliere (2005) found that police made decisions based on insufficient or contradictory evidence or perceived weak credibility.

Research also demonstrates that police may have unique reactions to certain crimes, such as domestic violence and sexual assault. In a study about police perceptions of domestic violence reports, law enforcement officers view their works as stressful and report frustration with these calls (Gover, Paul, & Dodge, 2011). Officers' frustration includes the amount of time a domestic violence calls take; often two officers are involved for more than two hours, including a lot of paperwork. Additionally, it was noted that officers express disappointment with prosecutorial effectiveness and feel that prosecutors should be more aggressive (Gover, Paul, & Dodge, 2011).

While some of these decisions to not proceed with the investigation or prosecution may be warranted, some evidentiary factors may not actually be necessary for case progression but only confirm law enforcement perceptions that the case is not worth pursuing. In other words,

many of the evidence necessary in the legal system for case progression may confirm and reproduce rape myths both in law enforcement and in society as a whole. On the other hand, the presence or lack of evidence may relate to an officer's perceived behavioral control. For example, if an officer does not believe there is enough evidence to substantiate the occurrence of a CSC, or believes that the evidence is not sufficient for case progression or for the Prosecutor's office, an efficiency frame might be applied. Instead of spending the time and resources on a case with little prospects of a positive outcome, officers may apply an efficiency frame and dismiss the case.

Lack of progression and prosecution in sexual assault cases may also stem from the role of evidence, specifically medical evidence. In response to the disproportionate number of rape cases that are dropped in the prosecution process, Rees (2010) explains that forensic medical examiner reports may play a role. Forensic medical examiners provide opinions on injuries, but there are limitations on injury evidence. Many sexual assault cases present with no injury or if there is injury, it cannot necessarily be determined to be the result of non-consensual sexual activity. FMEs demonstrate concern that this often leads to neutral reports, and subsequently, the reports are only of benefit when there is evidence of injury. This results in the continuation of the "real rape" stereotype and inhibits processing of cases in which expected injury is not evident (Rees, 2010).

J.   Organizational Factors

Perhaps related to efficiency frames, organizational level factors may influence perceived behavioral control. Martin (2005) argues that goals, missions, policies, and procedures play an important role in how legal organizations and their employees socially construct sexual assault and sexual assault-related work. Police decision making has been linked to the perceived

seriousness of the offense, the criminal justice system's overall mission of protecting the community, and the work environment of those making decisions. Research on the role of organizational factors in the processing of sexual assault cases within local law enforcement is limited.

Some studies specific to domestic violence have analyzed organizational factors that may influence decision making. Phillips (2007) utilized a factorial research design to explore variations in the decision making of police officers based on the size of their department. He found that victim injury was significant in arrest; however, agency size was not significant in arrest decision.

K.   Summary of Literature and Gaps in Previous Research

The introduction to the importance of this research study points to the many studies that have described victim experiences with the legal system through the perspective of victims and victim advocates. Additional literature exists on police attitudes and perceptions of sexual assault through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Studies also address police behavior and decision making in reported cases of sexual assault; however, most of these studies use only a retrospective case file or content analysis without attending to law enforcement personnel characteristics or attitudes (Frazier & Haney, 1996; Jordan, 2004; Soulliere, 2005). Some exploratory studies, which begin to understand individual police officer attitudes and definitions of sexual assault, include qualitative interviews with police officers (Campbell & Johnson, 1997).

Research has independently demonstrated the acceptance of rape myths among law enforcement officials and the influence of extralegal and evidentiary factors on decision making in cases of sexual assault. Almost no study has been able to link police officer characteristics

and acceptance of rape myths with the influence of case characteristics, perceived social norms, evidentiary factors, and perceived behavioral control on actual decision making or behavior in reported cases of sexual assault.

Many studies point out this methodological limitation in their inability to triangulate data from a number of sources or to test all relevant variables. For instance, Phillips' (2007) study of organizational factors influencing police decision making in cases of domestic violence acknowledged the limitation in the lack of attitude or qualitative data to supplement the vignettes. A large number of studies end with a suggestion for future research to link beliefs and knowledge with behaviors at key decision making points (Campbell & Johnson, 1997; Frazier & Haney, 1996). Police decision making and the latitude in *initial processing* of sexual assault cases is a crucial factor in the case outcome, however, very few studies have examined the behavior and attitudes of police officers (Frazier & Haney, 1996). More specifically, even fewer have examined the behavior of first responding police officers as opposed to detectives or prosecuting attorneys. Buzawa and colleagues' (1995) study, for instance, presents informative findings related to case decision-making, however, it does not include officer-specific data. The authors encourage further research that would measure whether officer characteristics (e.g., personal beliefs, past experiences, training, gender, race, age, years on the force, etc.) influence differential treatment of cases (Buzawa et al., 1995).

This study provides a more thorough picture of the combination of factors, both evidentiary and discretionary, that influence law enforcement behavior and decision making in reported sexual assault cases. The significance of belief and credibility issues for the victims as well as the cultural acceptance of stereotypical views on rape informs the decision to collect empirical data aimed at determining factors that affect the initial response and decision making.

This study applies a critical, constructive evaluation of police culture (with both its unique socialization and culture and also its replication and reinforcement of broader cultural understandings) and practice in order to enhance the quality of response by police and other first-responder to victim-survivors of sexual violence. The findings hope to provide a context and partial explanation regarding why the majority of reported sexual assault cases do not proceed very far within the criminal justice and legal systems.

L.   <u>**Research Questions and Hypotheses**</u>

The study describes the variety of police officer schema related to sexual assault and the influence of their interpretation of a sexual assault vignette, along with other factors, on police decision making. An important factor that may interact with one's schema and may influence decision making is officers' attitudes or acceptance of rape myths. Specifically, the study hopes to understand the relative influence of case characteristics, specifically victim alcohol use relationship with suspect, rape myth acceptance, attributions of blame, perceived norms regarding sexual assault, perceived control over case processing, and use of decisional frames on the officer's perceptions and decision making in sexual assault cases. Research questions and specific hypotheses include the following:

1. What are police officer's schema related to sexual assault and reported sexual assault cases? Does Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA) play a role in officers' schemas? What additional factors (e.g., case characteristics) appear to play a role? (Qualitative; no hypotheses)

2. Case characteristics will relate to officer perceptions, behavioral intentions, and attitude towards one's behavioral intentions, specifically:

      a. Presence of victim alcohol use will be associated with lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower behavioral intentions, and lower attitudes of the responses being worthwhile.

3. Prior relationship between the victim and perpetrator will be associated with lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower behavioral intentions, and lower attitudes of the responses being worthwhile.

4. Rape Myth Acceptance will be related to officer perceptions, behavioral intentions, and attitudes toward behavioral intentions, specifically:

      a. Higher rape myth acceptance will be associated with lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower behavioral intentions, and lower attitudes of the responses being worthwhile.

      b. Rape myth acceptance will moderate the influence of both vignette characteristics—victim alcohol use and prior relationship between suspect and perpetrator—on perceptions of legitimacy, behavioral intentions, and attitudes toward behavioral intentions.

5. Components of the theoretical framework including concepts from the theory of planned behavioral (i.e. subjective norms, compliance with subjective norms, perceived behavioral control), concepts from attribution theory (i.e. attributions of blame), and concepts from schema theory (i.e. normative and efficiency frames) will be related to police officer perceptions, behavioral intentions, and attitudes towards behavioral intentions.

a. Higher attributions of relative suspect blame will be related to higher perceptions of legitimacy, higher support for behavioral intentions, and more worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.

b. Higher subjective norms will be related to be related to higher perceptions of legitimacy, higher support for behavioral intentions, and more worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.

c. Higher compliance with subjective norms will be related to higher perceptions of legitimacy, higher support for behavioral intentions, and more worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.

d. Higher perceived behavioral control will not have an effect on perceptions of legitimacy, but will be related to lower behavioral intentions and considering behavioral intentions as less worthwhile.

e. Use of efficiency frames will not have an effect on perceptions of legitimacy but will be associated with lower behavioral intentions and considering behavioral intentions as less worthwhile.

f. Use of normative frames will be related to lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower support for behavioral intentions, and less worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.

IV. QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

A.   Research Setting

This study was conducted in a mid-sized city in the Midwestern United States. The police department includes approximately 300 sworn officers; the department personnel are mostly assigned to geographically based service areas, but also include personnel assigned to the investigative division, the support services division, a special response team, and other distinct assignments.

B.   Research Design

This study used a mixed methods approach with data collection in two phases. Phase One of the study included qualitative interviews with sworn officers in order to both develop a richer understanding of their perceptions of sexual assault and police response, and to further develop vignettes and refine measures for the quantitative phase of the study. Phase Two included surveys with a larger sample of sworn officers in order to collect quantitative data including demographic characteristics, perceptions, attitudes, experience and decision making behavior.

C.   Phase 1: Qualitative Methodology

The literature clearly demonstrates the influence of rape myth acceptance on attributions of blame and the ways in which police officers may respond to sexual assault calls based on "extralegal factors," however, only a few studies have tried to capture police officer's sexual assault-related schema. Studies that ask police officers to define sexual assault provide the methodology closest to describing sexual-assault related schema (e.g., Campbell & Johnson, 1997). I used qualitative methods in Phase One to identify the content of police officers' schema related to sexual assault, to develop a better understanding of common terminology and

procedure used by the police department in responding to reported sexual assaults, and to develop and refine the vignettes and measures for Phase Two of the study.

The three-fold goals of the qualitative portion of the study aimed to 1) understand law enforcement officer's content knowledge about sexual assault; 2) understand law enforcement officer's procedural knowledge about sexual assault; and 3) inform vignette development and quantitative measure refinement. First, the qualitative interviews asked broadly about sexual assault. This included open-ended questions about definitions and perceptions of sexual assault—apart from the specific law enforcement role in responding to reported sexual assaults. Then, the interview asked about sexual assault calls reported to the police in order to get at variation in "types" of reports they receive. Schema theory served as a guide for sensitizing concepts in the qualitative interviews with hopes of identifying different schema that officers apply to reported sexual assaults. These findings provided guidance for refining vignettes of hypothetical sexual assault reports which were used in Phase Two, the quantitative portion of this study.

Second, the qualitative interviews aimed to understand law enforcement officers' procedural knowledge about sexual assault and the factors that influence their perception of cases and behavioral intentions (or decision making). The theory of planned behavior served as a guide for sensitizing concepts related to the officer's understanding of police procedure and variations in ways officers would respond to different types of calls. The interview guide contains probes related to schema theory and the theory of planned behavior (Patton, 2002) and asked about the influence of case characteristics, experience, peers and organizational policy on perceptions of the case and decision making.

Third, qualitative interviews in the first phase of the study provided a space in which to better understand police discourse regarding sexual assault and variations in perceptions and decision making in responding to calls. Information gained from these interviews informed measure development for Phase Two. Qualitative interviews also supported the development of vignettes, as well as the refinement of the entire questionnaire and wording of individual items.

1. Sampling Plan

The study includes a combination of purposive and convenience sampling—based on essential characteristics as well as availability. As Padgett (1998) recommends, I sought to maximize acceptance by first finding the gatekeepers and requesting permission and buy-in for this study. This happened formally through requesting approval for the study from the Chief of Police. Additionally, I received informal approval by a well-respected supervisor in the Investigative Division, who then served as the main contact. According to Padgett, "a good deal of charm and gentle persuasion goes a long way to facilitate this process" (1998, p. 53). I met, communicated on a regular basis, and developed rapport with this supervisor in the Investigative Division, who was charged by the Chief of Police to provide assistance in study coordination.

The sampling plan for Phase One sought variation (heterogeneity) based on the following characteristics: rank, position, experience, race or ethnicity, and gender. According to Patton, "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth" (2002, p. 230). Sampling purposively, I aimed to conduct interviews with officers who had responded to at least four sexual assault calls during their time with the police department. Interviews continued until there was saturation and redundancy of themes related to the key factors of reported sexual assaults that influence police officer perceptions and response. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend sample selection "to the point of redundancy…If the

purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary criterion" (p. 202). Padgett (1998) states that "when additional observation, interviews, and documents become redundant and reveal no new information—then data collection can end" (p. 69).

2. <u>Sample</u>

The qualitative sample of 10 officers included variation in individual characteristics and variation in perceptions towards responding to reported sexual assaults. Maximum variation aims at "capturing and describing the central themes that cut across a great deal of variation" (Patton, 2002, p.235). Rank and position of respondents varied with five patrol officers, three detectives, and two sergeants. Years of experience ranged from 11 to 25 years at the police department with both a mean and median of 19 years. The sample included several racial identities, including one African American participant, one bi-racial participant, two Hispanic participants, and six White participants. The sample included three females and seven males.

3. <u>Recruitment</u>

Recruitment of participants and selection for the sample occurred at the police department headquarters. I coordinated with personnel at the Investigative Division to highlight the sampling eligibility inclusion and exclusion criteria. Personnel from the Investigative Division initially identified a list of individuals that may fit the sampling criteria, at which point Investigative Division personnel contacted participants who were on-duty at the time I was scheduled to be on-site. The main contact at the police department gave a brief explanation of the study request and arranged a meeting with me, if the participant was willing to go through the screening. At that point, I met with the potential participant in a private office, went through the eligibility questions, the study information sheet, and asked the officer whether he or she was

willing to participate. This first meeting provided the opportunity for the individual to voluntarily

choose participation or not, given they met the eligibility criteria. Individuals were excluded

from participation in the qualitative interviews if they had a long-term non-"street" assignment

(e.g., desk) and if they had responded to less than four sexual assault calls at the local police

department. Specific screening questions and eligibility criteria and quotas are included in the

Appendix. A final question assessed the individual's willingness to participate in the

approximate 60 minute interview, following a description of the study purpose and procedures.

This screening occurred in-person in a private location within the Investigative Division, and

police supervisors were not informed regarding the participation or non-participation of

individual officers.

### 4.	Data Collection Procedures: Qualitative Interviews

Throughout the course of qualitative data collection, I took great care to consider the

presentation of self in the field. I followed the advice of Bogdan and Taylor (1994) to remain

"truthful but vague" (p. 49, as quoted in Padgett, 1998). This was important when answering

questions about the purpose of the study, or when challenged to state my own opinion or

response to some of the qualitative questions. I also followed the guidance of Padgett (1998, p.

53) who states:

> The qualitative researcher should provide a compelling case for the study, play the
>
> humble role of an eager learner, and respond professionally and maturely to suspicion
>
> and outright rejection. In addition to good interpersonal skills, the researcher is well
>
> advised to exercise political and social savvy—be alert to the sociocultural and political
>
> context of the study.

Recognizing the sensitive nature of the topic and police accountability for responding to reported sexual assaults, as well as defensiveness the topic might raise, I worked very hard to build trust and rapport with participants, and to demonstrate that I truly valued their perspectives, whatever those perspectives may be. I clarified my stance, that I was trying to be a neutral observer; that I am not a police officer; but that I am trying to better understand the perspective of police officers and learn about their thoughts on responding to reported sexual assaults.

The qualitative interviews cover five main areas of questioning. The first section asked broadly about the individual's perceptions or definitions of sexual assault in general, aiming to explore the officer's definition of sexual assault. The second section asked about "typical" sexual assaults or calls that are reported to the police. The interview intentionally explored up to four different "types" of sexual assault calls. After the first couple of interviews, I realized that officers did not respond positively to my question about "types" of calls. They offered the comment that all calls are unique and require individual attention. I made the adjustment to ask about "more typical scenarios you respond to," which did not evoke any negative reaction in subsequent interviews.

After exploring definitions of sexual assault and descriptions of reported sexual assault calls, the interview explored other factors that may influence case decision making, such as ambiguous cases, perceptions of peers' expectations in responding to the case or subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in one's decision making. Next, the interview explored the factors associated with more ambiguous cases, or cases involving questions about the veracity of the victim's story, the credibility of the victim, the lack of evidence, and so forth. The fifth section focuses on the TPB concept of subjective norms and explored the officer's observation regarding the perceptions of the decisions his or her peers in the police department

would recommend. Last, the interview explored the officer's perception of the police department's policy and procedure, the process for interviewing victims, and other factors that might enhance or impede their work in sexual assault cases. Throughout the various sections of the qualitative interviews, additional probes based on the TPB, schema theory, and attribution theory were included (see complete interview guide in the Appendix).

Interviews occurred immediately after recruitment in a private location at the Investigative Division offices. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. I used face sheets to document the date, time, and location of the interview in addition to the responses to eligibility/screening questions (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). I also completed memos after each interview that included my reactions to the interview, my concerns and feelings, as well as ideas to consider in future interviews or analysis. Each transcript was also formulated into a short case summary, which illustrated the main themes and assisted with applying qualitative interview findings to refinement of measures for Phase Two. The case summaries were also helpful in conducting analyses across cases.

5.   Qualitative Data Analysis

Analysis of the qualitative data occurred through several stages, moving from raw data to partially processed data, to individual codes and categories, to larger themes (Padgett, 1998). I used QSR International's NVivo 10 software (2012) to help facilitate organization and management of data files as well as support the representation of coding in a well-ordered manner. In this study, the transcribed interview data and case summaries were transferred into electronic formats in the early stages of the study. They were converted from word format (.doc extension) into rich text file format (.rtf extensions) in order to process them as NVivo document files in the NVivo Document browser.

NVivo provided assistance in managing the process of coding and representing the organization of codes and their relationships in a neat manner. In addition, NVivo enabled me to look at coded segments of data in context, so that it was possible to explore coded passages without separating them from the material before and after. Because of NVivo's coding organization, it was possible to compare coding across cases, identifying themes (parent and child nodes) that were common across cases (or heavily emphasized), and those that were unique to fewer or individual cases. NVivo also provided a means for easy retrieval of quotes reflecting various codes. This helped to automate and speed up many data management and analysis tasks.

With the assistance of NVivo, data analysis occurred through the stages as specified by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and utilized an inductive approach geared towards identifying patterns in the data by means of thematic codes. First, each case transcript was analyzed using open coding, in which interview data was broken down into units, such as initial response to thinking about sexual assault, definitions of sexual assault, attitudes towards sexual assault cases, victims, and perpetrators, classifications of different "types" of sexual assault calls, themes of factors affecting decision making, and descriptions of perceptions of peers and discretion or control in responding to sexual assault. Open coding allowed for the emergence of new codes within each case (Emerson, Fretz, & Saw, 1995). Memos "put in writing the researcher's thoughts and ideas about what is going on in the data" and included a description or definition of each code, which were refined as more cases were analyzed (Padgett, 1998, p. 77, as cited in Emerson, Fretz, & Saw, 1995).

Once initial codes had emerged, the analysis proceeded to a second level of coding, in which themes and patterns between cases were identified (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The second level of coding—axial coding—linked concepts from the data with common features into

categories. After abstracting codes from the raw data, I identified relationships between codes, specifically looking at overlapping codes. In addition, I compared the emerging themes and connections between codes with the study's theoretical model. I ended with a larger picture or understanding of how various factors work together to form schema related to sexual assault calls. These themes "arc across wide swaths of the data and capture patterns of human experience" (Padgett, 1998, p. 83).

6.　　　**Rigor and Trustworthiness**

This study also includes certain methods to enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the data and results (Padgett, 1998; Patton, 2002). These methods include triangulation across data sources within the study and an audit trail of the qualitative data collection and analysis. Because member checking would require documentation of identifying information and because qualitative interviews aim primarily to inform measure development for Phase Two of the study, member checking did not occur (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reliability of the themes and key concepts derived from the qualitative interviews were essentially tested by responses to the questionnaire in Phase Two of the study. I also engaged in efforts to find negative case examples for the patterns and themes that developed (Patton, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Some aspects of the NVivo software helped increase rigor in terms of data management and coding organization, however, the software does not guarantee the validity of the study's findings. Instead, it provides a partial audit trail from the original data source to the development of codes, which are supported by analytic memos and the project journal, stored in NVivo.

Additionally, an audit trail is used to ensure dependability of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Padgett, 1998). The audit trail includes a description of the research steps taken from the beginning of the project's development through the reporting of findings. Lincoln and

Guba (1985) describe categories for reporting information when developing an audit trail. First, the raw data was maintained through audio-recording interviews without recording identifying information or labeling on the transcription file. Second, data reduction and analysis products were stored by writing a summary of the interview as well as summaries of individual reactions and thoughts following qualitative interviews. The audit trail includes notes about how qualitative interviews may relate to the study's theoretical framework. Third, data reconstruction and synthesis products include a description of the development of themes, definitions, and relationships between concepts, which is connected to themes in the existing literature. Finally, the audit trail includes information on instrument development, preliminary data collection schedules, and steps in refining the vignettes and quantitative questionnaires.

D.   Human Subjects Protection: Phase One

The University of Illinois at Chicago Institutional Review Board gave approval for all procedures involved in this study. All procedures for the recruitment and selection of human subjects, consent procedures, assurances of confidentiality and anonymity for this study were reviewed and approved.

This study involved minimal risks to participants and all participation was voluntary. The interview questions and survey items were not expected to create distress in participants. Although sexual assault may be a sensitive topic, responding to reported sexual assaults is a regular part of police officers' job requirements, and therefore, the study does not pose additional psychological risks greater than those encountered regularly in their role as law enforcement officials. This study did not ask participants about their own personal experience with sexual assault outside of their professional role and employment context, and did not ask about real sexual assault cases that they have responded to or talked about with others.

To protect against confidentiality risks, no identifying information was collected in either Phase One or Phase Two of the study. For the qualitative interviews, I was introduced by name to the participant, however, the participant gave a verbal rather than written consent, and I did not record the participant's name anywhere. A signature of informed consent would have revealed the identity of the respondent. Instead, a written information sheet was provided to participants, which documented the research purpose, procedures, benefits and risks, potential costs to the participants, researcher and IRB contact information, and participant rights.

If audio recordings of the qualitative interviews contained information that identifies the law enforcement officials, this information was deleted during transcription. Additionally, the name of the police department was deleted in all transcriptions and reporting. The digital audio recordings were stored in password protected computer and destroyed once recordings were transcribed and their accuracy verified.

For officers deciding whether or not to participate in the study, they may have perceived some risk of perceived coercion from the department to participate; however, all efforts were taken to minimize this risk. The department does not know who decided to complete the qualitative interview. Officers participating in the qualitative interviews met with the research staff in a private location at the district.

V. QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The qualitative results explore and describe police officer schema related to sexual assault, specifically content and procedural knowledge. Content knowledge includes officer descriptions of the definition of sexual assault, what they perceive as typical scenarios, factors related to victim credibility, and descriptions of important evidence. The results also include an explanation of how these factors work together to influence police officer perceptions of the sexual assault. Factors from the conceptual model were explored in order to look at the influence of attitudes, case characteristics, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on perceptions of the case and ultimate decision making. These explanations formed a continuum of initial classifications of a report as "legitimate," "ambiguous," or "false." While these classification systems are not mutually exclusive, and do not "fit" in all scenarios or with all officers, general patterns did emerge from the data. In addition, procedural knowledge includes descriptions of how officers describe their response to different reports, including the different role of patrol officers, detectives, supervisors, and others outside the police department, such as the Prosecutor's Office and the potential jury.

The role of rape myth acceptance (RMA) in officer's schema was explored. Rape myth acceptance consists of beliefs that attribute blame to victims; specifically, that the victim may have lied, may have asked for the assault because of some prior behavior, or may have changed his or her mind after consensual sexual behavior. In addition, rape myths include ideas about elements that one would expect to see in a reported sexual assault, such as clear victim injury, evidence of force, and clear verbal or physical resistance by the victim. Elements of RMA are woven throughout police officer descriptions and explanations of cases. The results also include

statements by officers that challenge the acceptance of rape myths both within the police department and within the broader society.

In this section, I first present findings related to the context in which police personnel respond to reported sexual assaults, including a description of the role of various actors within the criminal justice system and police officer opinion towards those roles. In the second section, I describe the themes that emerged related to the content knowledge of police officer schema, specifically police officer definitions of sexual assault, descriptions of sexual assault scenarios that are considered typical, factors that decrease and increase perceptions of victim credibility and perceptions of important evidence in reported sexual assault cases. In the third section of the qualitative results, I present an integrated model for how a variety of factors, including "type" of scenario, credibility, and evidence work together to influence police officer's immediate perception or classification of a reported sexual assault on a continuum from "false" to "ambiguous" to "legitimate." It is important to note that these "classifications" emerged from the data and do not imply an objective categorization or continuum scheme for sexual assault reports.

A.   Role of Actors within the Criminal Justice System

The criminal justice system is made up of many actors, all of whom have a specific role in responding to crime. In reported sexual assault cases, patrol officers, detectives, supervisors, and ultimately the Prosecutor's office hold unique responsibilities in processing the report and making decisions about the case. Officers describe these roles as well as their opinions on the various roles, including suggestions for improvement.

1. **Role of Patrol Officers**

The main responsibility of patrol officers as the first responding officer includes writing

the initial report, giving the case a title, deciding whether or not to call out a detective

immediately, conducting the initial interview, bringing the victim to get medical forensic

evidence examination and support from the local Nurse Examiner Program, and processing other

evidence.

a. **Write the Report**

One of the main responsibilities of the first responding officer is to write the case report.

In order to write the report, patrol officers generally conduct the initial interview and get the

details of the crime. As one patrol officers described, "We're just story takers and tellers. You

know we write down your story." Another officer explains,

> You're just taking the information. And what happens to it after I take the information
> and put it in a report, no, you can't worry about. I just want to try to, like I said, ask the
> best questions I can. Get it all in there. I give them something to at least start the
> investigation on.

One officer described writing the report as the following:

> Creating a picture…So you, you are actually drawing a picture, creating a picture, giving
> it real life and then determining if that could have occurred… And then you have to go to
> court maybe a year later and you forget the picture, so the picture—write it well and take
> a lot of pictures.

b. **Assign a Case Title**

Patrol officers assign a case title to an incident report based on their perceptions of which

specific type of criminal offense occurred. This often remains the same as what it was originally

classified by dispatch, however, officers have the ability to change the case title. One officer

summarized the role: "I'm the report taker. Um, I call it, I title it whatever it sounds like it is."

Although the patrol officer titles the case, the title can be changed at any time. Officers agree

that the majority of the time, the title remains the same as it came in by dispatch. As one officer

stated, "I would say ninety out of one hundred were, you know, keeping the title the same."

Detectives, however, would be more likely to change the case title. As one officer explained,

"So that's not unusual for the initial report to be changed after it's submitted into the detective

unit." Another officer said that patrol officers and detectives are able to label a case as

unfounded, specifically in cases where someone who's reporting admits that he or she made it

up. In disagreement, another officer pointed out that patrol received word that they are never

supposed to "unfound" a case, but rather that should be left to the detectives:

> Yeah, I guess in the past there used to be officers that would um, be sent to calls where there would be a CSC or what not and they determine that whatever the person was claiming happened didn't happen, so they would title it an unfounded report, and that may have been happening a lot. So we had gotten a notice that um, as patrol officers that we're not to determine the report is unfounded. If you're going there to take a stolen car report, take a stolen car report; submit it to the detective unit. If they see that it's an unfounded report, then they'll change it.

c. Decide to call out Detective

Sometimes patrol officers will decide to call a detective out immediately. This is always

the case when responding to a CSC involving a minor. This decision is often made by the

sergeant who then calls an on-duty or on-call detective to respond. Sometimes the sergeant

communicates with the lieutenant on duty to decide whether or not to call out a detective. One

officer explained, "The ones that are questionable or in depth, we'll get ahold of the supervisor

and let him make all the decisions on that." One detective described some frustration with the

officers' decision of whether or not to call out a detective immediately to the scene,

> Sometimes I wonder like we'll get called out for some things and not other things, and I'm like, well why would we get called out for that? But a lot of that depends on the believability of the patrol officers on the street. Because if they aren't thinking it's that big of a deal, they don't call us in. And I've had cases where I'm like, damn I wish I would have got called in last night because everything's fresh and you can run with it. Whereas you wait, you know, until the next morning, normally the victim will tell

somebody who knows the suspect and they have already been contacted and he's already, you know, coming up with a story.

The first responding patrol officer may call out a detective in order to avoid the questioning and processing of the CSC report him/herself. One officer described this situation,

Every officer's different too though so some, not to throw anybody under the bus, but sometimes you know, officers—people are afraid of the rape cases. I mean they want us there as fast as possible. 'Get us a detective for this!' Cause it's an uncomfortable situation all the way around.

d.   Initial Interview

The first responding patrol officer is charged with conducting the initial interview of the victim. Patrol officers are "what they call the first responders. We'll go there. We'll, you know, determine what kind of report it is. You know, where did it occur? Suspect information." Patrol officers conduct "the preliminary part of it…our part of the investigation is getting what happened, and finding the person." Officers explained that they are responsible for "the victim processing end of it, you got to try to identify the suspect, you've got to get the suspect information out, you got to try to find the suspect, you got to try to interview the suspect." One officer went further to say that officers should collect enough information that the investigation is already underway: "They should have a lot of it. They should have a lot of that investigation, the cases should get to them relatively complete and thoroughly investigated, if they're doing their job right."

e.   Obtain Medical-Forensic Examination and Victim Support

First responding patrol officers also offer to transport and accompany the victim to the local Nurse Examiner Program at the YWCA for evidence collection, victim support and crisis intervention. The police officer will bring the victim to this local center "all the time," unless the reporting victim asks not to go with the police. As one officer said, "more often than not, they're

going to go there. If it happened within the last 72 hours, if it's-you know, if it's involving a kid,

you know, we bring them up there, or find a parent or with, if it's an adult, we bring them up

there."

f. Process Evidence

Patrol officers are also the first to process evidence in the reported sexual assault.

Officers "need to look for physical evidence, so they've got to go either identify that crime scene

or find the crime scene and collect anything that might be there: could be bed sheets, could be

clothing."

g. Importance of Patrol's Role

Some officers discussed their opinion towards the role of patrol officers in responding to

reported sexual assaults. One officer explained that "we have certain officers that are very good

at writing reports; very good at documenting CSCs or just in general, just any case that they do,

they're very, very thorough." A detective described the difficulty that patrol officers may have in

being objective because the cases can be emotional,

> When I go out on the case, I stopped even asking patrol officers what do they think.
> Mhmm because I'll get some that don't believe the victim at all and I don't want to even
> hear that. Or I'll get some that follow that, that when they hear the story are so moved by
> it because it's so emotional that they won't have the blinders on to it, had to have
> happened that way and so I don't even ask. You know I ask them, hey what did they tell
> you, get the initial interview and then I go talk to the victim myself.

Another officer discussed the important role that the first responding patrol officer plays: "You

get the report and you go okay we got a rape here, oh it's five lines. Oh yeah, what am I gonna

do with this?"

2. Role of Detectives

Detectives also play an important role in responding to reported sexual assaults. Detectives are

assigned the case usually after the initial report is written by the first responding patrol officers.

Detectives' primary duty revolves around the investigation. Additionally, detectives can change and decide the final case title. Detectives also present the evidence to the Prosecutor's Office and prepare for trial, when necessary.

a.   Investigate without Forming an Opinion

The primary role of detectives is to investigate the case. As a patrol officer summarized, "I draw the picture, they verify the picture…They verify the picture and the picture is really nice then." Another officer described the distinct role of both patrol and detectives by saying, "All we do is we take the basic information and suspect info—whatever we can and then send it off to the detectives, which is their – that's their forte. They need to do all the digging." Detectives state that they try not to develop a personal opinion on whether something happened or not; they do their best job to collect evidence and present it well to the prosecutor's office. A detective explained this:

> I'm thinking huh, wonder if this is a BS kind of thing, but I, I've gotten to the point now where I just, I don't even try to decide because I know I don't have to. I don't have to decide whether something happened or not, and I try not to ever make that decision. And sometimes when I even go to my prosecutors' office when my case is done, I still try not to make up my mind. I just present the evidence that I gathered, which is really all my job is. It's not my job for me to say I believe this happened or I believed that happened. That's not my job. My job is to gather evidence to look at all possibilities and then present it to a prosecutor to decide if there's enough for charges. And they're the ones that have to actually make the decision if they feel a crime occurred and if it did, if there's enough evidence to charge.

This detective clarified further, saying

> I'm not a victim advocate. That's not my job. I don't have a victim come in here and I fight for them. That's not my job. My job is to get at the truth, be objective, look in at all possibilities and if that means proving the victim lying and that's where an investigation goes, then that's where it needs to go, which is why we, victim advocates and us have a, our relationship's a little bit…

b.   Decide Final Case Title

Detectives have the ability to change the case title from the initial report. A supervisor

explained this decision,

> The officer could title the report a CSC or maybe um, yeah could title it a CSC and it
> comes into the detective unit and they retitle it something else. Um, so that's not unusual
> for the initial report to be changed after it's submitted into the detective unit.

c.   Present Evidence to Prosecutor

The "detectives really send it to the prosecutor." Detectives explain that they will bring

almost all cases to the prosecutor's office, and then the prosecutor's office will actually make a

decision on how to handle the case. A detective described,

> Yes. I mean, all of them for CYA [cover your ass] purposes we take to prosecuting
> attorney…If it's to cover your tail, um, we normally take it there and they will deny it.
> They will say, no, there's not enough evidence and then you can call the victim and say,
> sorry, my job is just to gather the facts. The prosecutor is the one that declined to issue
> charges. So it takes the heat off of you. But, generally anything that might be
> prosecutable, even on a whim; we take over there and have somebody review it.

d.   Prepare for Trial

If the prosecutor's office decides to take a case to trial, the detectives need to prepare to

testify in court. This often occurs a long period of time after the initial report, so the detectives

emphasize how important it is for both patrol to write a thorough report and detectives to do a

thorough investigation, so that they can refer to those documents in preparation for trial.

> And you got to make sure all your evidence is prepped. You got to make sure, you know,
> of course everything, you have everything. You have everything processed, all digital
> recordings are downloaded. Um, defense attorneys have to have copies of everything.
> You've got to study so you know when you get on the stand you know what the heck
> you're talking about because a year later, I don't know... I don't remember that. So you
> got to make sure you document good because you're going to have to get up and testify
> to everything, and yeah make sure you have everything in order…If it doesn't go well it
> comes back on you.

e.   Opinion towards the Role of Detectives

Based on their different assignments and roles, patrol officers and detectives have different opinions about the detectives' work. Officers give credit to detectives for the work they do in responding to sexual assault cases. One officer stated, "You couldn't pay me enough to do it. I don't have the, the….I guess, the patience for it; I guess…It takes a special person." Another officer expressed a similar sentiment: "I can give credit for the detectives, sometimes they you know, they're the ones that have to go to these victims and say 'I'm sorry there's, you know, prosecutor wouldn't issue on this, wouldn't issue a warrant. There's nothing we can do.'"

Officers also discuss the role of opinion in the way that detectives respond to cases. Detectives believe that even though they may have an inclination that a certain case may not move forward, it is not their job to make decisions that would affect the outcome of the case. One detective stated, "My job is to investigate and not to screen out investigations. That's—my supervisor can screen out things that can be screened out, but it's not my job to say, to tell somebody it's a waste of time, leave." Another detective said,

> I could see easily where detectives could steer to not pressing charges because they know it's not going to turn into a warrant; it'd be hard to prove and it's going to take a lot of work. But I think you could really become lazy and you could easily—that's just bad practice.

A detective discussed the procedure of patrol responding initially and the detectives following up. There is a fear that some patrol officers call out detectives immediately because they don't want to write the report or respond to the victim. In contrast, detectives sometimes believe that they should be the ones to respond immediately, both for the benefit of the victim as well as the quality of the investigation itself.

> I know they've toyed about like detectives working different hours and like having some detectives work nights. But the problem is, sometimes when patrol knows a detective is working, they take advantage of that and they want you to come out. And then they're

like, 'OK, so you got this right? So see you later.' And they get out of writing the report, get out of doing all that, which is not necessarily, I mean, like it's their job is to take the initial.

3.   Role of Supervisors

Most officers only briefly commented on the role of supervisors in responding to CSC calls. The two supervisors (sergeants) who were interviewed gave the most input regarding the role of supervisors. In summary, supervisors may respond personally to reported sexual assault calls, mostly to double-check that department procedure is being followed and that a complete report is written by the responding patrol officers.   In special circumstances, the supervisor will actually interview the victim or take the report, however, this is rare.

a.   Double-check and Request Additional Information

Supervisors will sometimes respond to the CSC call in order to give feedback or assistance to patrol officers. An officer described how the supervisor is helpful in making sure all procedures have been followed:

> So if someone gets raped and you're a supervisor you go 'Hey, Sarg, this is what happened,' and he'll say 'okay,' and he then will-since he's in charge, 'Make sure you do this, this, and this.' You know? And just simple stuff you already know…but it's always good to do a check list so that everything is covered….It's more to checklist of things you do and in many procedure there's more like a checklist of-did you call-uh if it's a stranger, has the detective unit been notified? Has the nurse advocate been notified?

One of the supervisors explained, "I guess that's where as a supervisor, you know you ask me what my role is. It's to make sure that um, our procedure's followed and all the questions are asked and that the reports are taken as completely as possible."

b.   Respond to Serious Cases or Special Circumstances

Supervisors only sometimes respond to CSC calls. Officers explain that supervisors are called out when the case is perceived as serious or there are special circumstances. A supervisor described that "there's a call management procedure. You know, if it's this type of call we're

gonna send a supervisor; if it's this type of call we're gonna send two officers or three officers or two officers and a supervisor." Additionally,

> If the victim is adamant that it was a rape, that no ifs, ands, or buts, they, you know, when they're crying, screaming and, you know, and we'll call a supervisor–and a supervisor will make that decision, ultimately. They'll either say, 'Eh, let's lock them up for now and we'll let the detectives finish the rest of the investigation,' but if we have what's called enough probable cause, we'll arrest him.

A supervisor described that because Spanish speakers are sometimes called out to CSC calls to translate:

> The officer that initially arrived there could not speak to her, because he did not speak Spanish. Well I can speak Spanish so I was called basically to translate and I told the officer well instead of me translating for you, I'll take the report. So in those instances I would take the report. I would be the originating officer, reporting officer.

4.   Role of the Prosecutor's Office

Officers agree that the prosecutor's office makes all of the final decisions in responding to reported sexual assault cases. Patrol officers do the initial interview and write the report, detectives do the investigation and present to the prosecutor, and the prosecutor decides if it's a "good" case to prosecute. On one hand, officers express relief that they are not responsible for making this determination; on the other hand, officers (especially detectives) are frustrated by the way the prosecutor's office makes these decisions. Often the decision centers on the ability to win the case, and this is often difficult in "muddy" scenarios, especially involving "he-said she-said" situations. The prosecutor more often is looking for strong evidence (e.g., DNA) and a situation that a jury would deem as a serious crime. Officers point out that they work as a team with the prosecutor's office, and some appreciate that the prosecutor's office is not overzealous. At the same time, detectives express frustration with the lack of willingness to take CSC cases. They point out that the prosecutors are elected political officials who weigh in other factors when making a decision about a case that is presented to them. For instance, one officer gave the

example of a prosecutor moving quickly when the victim was the daughter of someone

prestigious within the community.

In the local setting, "The prosecutor, and our prosecutor's officer there's about forty

assistant prosecutors and three of them are allowed to look at our sexual assaults, only three. So

you get some consistency." As one officer described,

> The thing that's nice about it is, is nobody's going to argue with me that these are, like I said, not important cases. I get all the resources I need to, as far as what I could have as detective anyways. I don't get prosecutors not wanting to, I mean you get, I get to have special ones set aside that have extra knowledge and are consistent um, you know.

a. Make Final Decision on Moving the Case Forward or Not

One of the basic roles of the prosecutor's office is to make a final decision about how to

move forward with the case. The detectives "tell the story again, and then the prosecutor will

make a final decision of all this." Another officer explained, "They will make the ultimate

decision as to what to charge, if they are to charge anything." A detective explained this process

by stating,

> And so we take all that to a prosecutor and then they actually read it and go over everything and decide if there's probable cause to show that a crime existed, you know, a crime occurred. It doesn't have to be beyond a shadow of a doubt or a hundred percent. It has to be beyond, you know, kind of the, um, whatever you call it, the weight of the evidence for the jury.

The prosecutor's office has the final decision making power in cases that are perceived as

ambiguous by both patrol officers and detectives. These cases are "kind of muddy. There's too

much reasonable doubt." One detective explained,

> If there's any doubt in those reports and then as it slowly progresses you're making the case, it's like wow this happened. This guy, this girl did this; this happened. Then you take it over to the next door, I just go next door to the prosecutor's office is right there. Um, and they read it and they start reading it and they go, "hmmm, hmm, this isn't. I don't know, the officers, officer says she didn't seem like she might have been credible there," and then you're like "yeah but wait a minute, look what I found out, read the rest of it." It can be some speed bumps because then they say "well if this goes to court,

what's the defense attorney going to say?" when they say she lied initially or you know that kind of thing so.

The prosecutor sometimes asks detectives to follow-up on the case and to get more information before making a decision of how to proceed.

> What'll happen is the prosecutor who reviews the report will sit there and say, "Well, you know she lied about this and this and this and this. It doesn't look like a very good case. Let's not, you know, jump to conclusions here. Let's get the suspect in; interview them. We'll see what they have to say and then we'll compare it all."

A detective described the difference between the detectives' role and the prosecutor's office:

> It is not my job to make that decision anyways. I can't, you know the prosecutors we go to um don't ask us what do you want. You know what I mean, they're, they're lawyers that make up their own mind. Um, I try to stick with just presenting them with everything as, as you know if they ask me questions try to answer to them objectively and I let them know all of the good and bad about a case…Most of them don't ask for my opinion anyways.

B. **Elements of Police Officer Schema on Sexual Assault Cases: Content Knowledge**

1. **Police Officer's Definition of Sexual Assault**

In response to questions about what comes to mind when officers think about reported sexual assaults and definitions of sexual assault, most officers stressed that sexual assault involves some "unwanted sexual act." Officers also used legal language of Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) One, Two, Three, and Four to differentiate the crime by the age of the victim as well as the type of sexual contact. One patrol officer summarized the definition by saying,

> A true sexual assault is pretty much a um…is what it's titled, an assault in a sexual nature against someone's will and as um—that's pretty scary when you think about it, that someone forces themself upon you for pleasure, their pleasure but your harm, so that's what I think about sexual assault.

a. **Unwanted**

Definitions of sexual assault focus on "any unwanted uh, touch by force or coercion in a sexual nature to either male or female, young or old." Another officer defined as "unwanted

sexual… contact or intercourse with someone that doesn't want it." Unwanted sexual contact lacks consent, which can happen by someone taking advantage of the victim's inability to give consent. As one officer described the crime: "Taking an advantage of a minor – of somebody who's not mentally capable of making decisions like that on their own and obviously, with minors, the deception from the parents." A sexual assault that is unwanted may also involve coercion: "There's either force or coercion used. It doesn't necessarily have to be force."

b. Legal Language

Many officers pointed out the importance of the legal definition. One officer responded, "Well, I would define it by the law." Describing the difference in CSC levels, another officer said, "You could have a sexual assault that's just an unwanted touching of, you know, the private areas of your body. Um… but of course a rape, I mean, when you say rape you could consider it as anything with a penetration." Another officer explained, "CSC one and three are penetrations…two and four are touchings." Another officer said,

> I mean, it's uh, you know, first, second, third or fourth. Um, those are all I guess set in stone. I mean, you have, if it meets the criteria of first, it's a first. It's not my place to argue or think a law is, I'm not into interpretation of them. I do know what they are.

2. Perceptions of Typical Scenarios Reported to the Police

After officers described their initial thoughts about and definitions of sexual assault, they described the more typical scenarios represented in reported sexual assault cases. The "types" discussed in depth predominantly include reported sexual assaults involving 1) strangers, 2) individuals involved in prostitution, 3) individuals with prior or current intimate relationships 4) intoxication or drug/alcohol use, 5) juveniles, 6) acquaintances, and 7) male victims. Other "types" of reported sexual assaults focus on children, a socially delayed or mentally disabled victim, or emphasize the location of the assault (rather than the individuals involved). Although

officers were able to describe "typical scenarios", several officers commented that each case is unique. As one officer summarized,

> Once you start thinking you've seen everything, something will come along, and now I can say I've seen everything, until the next day where something else. I mean, there's no, I don't know if there's a *typical*, I don't know if you can put that on a *typical*, a typical thing, you know, you're always, some, something different is always happening.

Although officers described how often they encountered the various "types" or scenarios, the amount that officers talked about these different "types" during the interview does not coincide with how often officers state that they respond to those types of calls. For instance, even though almost all officers talked about sexual assaults involving strangers and individuals involved in prostitution, all also stated that both of those "types" of reports or scenarios are rare.

a. Strangers

When asked about "types" of cases to which officers respond, almost all mention stranger assaults. What officers describe as "true" stranger sexual assaults they consider the most serious type of case. Sexual assaults by strangers may involve weapons, home invasion, robbery, and a violent attack. Officers agree that stranger assaults are rare, but they tend to be memorable and get a lot of attention both within the police department and in the public at large. One officer commented,

> You know we get the stranger, like the one that was in the news. The stranger assaults, those are really rare. I mean we know just in general stranger sexual assaults are a small, small percentage nationwide, like five percent, somewhere around there, ten percent. And I would say that is definitely reflective here.

Another officer commented on the scarcity of stranger assaults, agreeing that they are "very rare. We do get stranger rapes in here. I think [name of detective] just had one, but they're you know, you get a few a year."

b. Individuals involved in Prostitution

Although most officers agree that reported sexual assaults involving someone in prostitution are relatively rare, almost all talk about these reports extensively. Officers describe the possibility and even likelihood of being sexually assaulted if one is involved in prostitution.

> Your prostitute can be sexually assaulted and you gotta be prepared because they are in the business that you know they're going to get some customers that don't, that want to go too far, or whatever, and you know, they still have the right to say no or whatever.

c. Intoxication

Almost all officers describe reported sexual assaults involving intoxicated individuals. In fact, some officers comment that "most of ours involve alcohol and a bar." Cases that involve intoxication often overlap with other "typical" scenarios, such as those focusing on a location, such as a bar or party, as well as those involving people with a prior or ongoing relationship. Describing the amount of sexual assault cases involving intoxication, a detective noted that "of like the sixty percent say we take to the prosecutors, I guess I would say thirty percent are probably [at a] party, forget what happened last night type calls."

When describing cases involving intoxication, officers often focus on younger victims who were given alcohol or drugs or consumed it by their own choice, but were clearly violated while intoxicated. An officer described this typical scenario:

> Where they've gone to a party and got intoxicated or under the influence of some sort of drug, pass out. They wake up and somebody is obviously committing a CSC on them. I've had them been intoxicated to the point where they're not understanding what's going on—where they've been laying there and all of a sudden, they wake up and somebody's there and after repeated attempts to tell them to stop, they continue to do that.

d. Prior or Current Relationship

Those involving a current or former relationship are described as common. Officers describe cases most often involving a boyfriend/girlfriend, a spouse/partner, or another

undefined past or ongoing relationship. One officer stated concisely, "Probably the most typical I can think is the um, boyfriend-girlfriend type or husband-wife." Another officer agreed, "Another common [report] is a husband, the domestic…where you got a wife and a husband or ex-husband or ex-wife, whatever. That's the most common one."

e. Juveniles

Half of the officers interviewed mentioned responding to reported sexual assaults involving juvenile victims. These cases were sometimes described as those involving what officers perceived as two consensual individuals; however, the victim was under age. In these scenarios, often an adult (e.g., parent, counselor) makes the report on behalf of the underage victim. One officer stated, "Sometimes we'll get, like, a referral from patrol from Child Protective Services where a girl will disclose to a counselor at school or something. And we'll get called directly out to the school." Another officer described a situation where a parent makes the report: "And they'll say that their daughter's been having sex with an older person. They'll usually want to pursue charges." Another scenario that falls within this "type" might include "a 17 year old having sex with his 15 year old girlfriend." One officer acknowledged that what might seem like consensual sex by an underage girl might include elements of coercion, making it a sexual assault by definition.

> Young teens will go to parties, want to be liked, and next thing you know we'll get, like, the train of, especially it's common on inner city parties, we'll have, like, five or six guys will get on one girl. And, um, then the whole group tends to egg him on…And afterwards they tell Aunt Teresa whoever, you know, yeah I was at a party and five guys had sex with me. They immediately call us and say it was not consensual. And so, and sometimes we'll have kids that come in here that says 'I had sex with him. I meant to have sex with him,' and their dads will be like, 'well hell no.'

f. Acquaintances

Officers describe sexual assault reports involving people who have met but are not in a

relationship as quite typical, making up a sizeable proportion of all the sexual assault calls to which they respond. As one officer stated, "You've got associate CSCs, where they know each other. You know? That's definitely a good chunk of them." Sexual assaults by acquaintances often involve alcohol and often include some initial consensual sexual behavior.

> A very common one, we'll start with probably the more, most common one would be a female victim ages 18 to 22 um—a few male in that area if I do get a male victim, it tends to be maybe that age—um, involves alcohol, usually involves a party and it will involve either a friend of a friend or an acquaintance or somebody who's at, I mean, so they're at this party, so they have mutual friends or are friends themselves, and then it involves um, sexual contact occurring and the victim either woke up with the man on top of her or woke up naked next to him, those kinds of things. That's pretty common.

Officers describe situations in which some consensual activity changed into a nonconsensual situation, according to the victim. An officer succinctly summarized this scenario as "someone that they knew and it just kinda started getting out of hand." Another officer further described this scenario:

> Like the date rape, acquaintance rape. Where it goes too far, you know, there's a couple that she finally goes out on a date with a guy and then they end up at his apartment and she's kind of into it, but then when it gets down to the very end, she's like "no, no, no" and he's like "what do you mean no, no, no, no?" That kind of situation we see those. Where I'd call it an acquaintance, date rape type of situation.

g.   Male Victim

Almost half of the officers mentioned sexual assaults involving male victims; although all state that these reports are very rare. As one officer described, "Very rare–I mean, I don't think I remember one or two cases, total, that I had where, they were male victims." Another officer stated,

> I never actually had a case where a guy woke up not remembering having sex with a female and she does, and he made a report. I've never had that, ever. We actually to be honest, I don't think I've ever had a case with a female suspect and a male victim that wasn't an adult-child…I've had a male, two males, but I've never had a male victim with a female suspect as an adult. Um, sure that happens, but that's got to be exceptionally rare.

A couple of officers mention reports involving two male adults. One officer described a recent call that "was about a month ago and it happened in a gay bath house." Another officer said that despite being rare, cases involving male victims are on the rise: "A new one that's up and coming is with the homosexuality going, you know, you have the male and male kind of incidents."

h. Mentally or Socially Delayed Individuals

All of the detectives interviewed mentioned scenarios that involve victims who have a mental illness or disability.

> Because we have mentally incapable which is when you have mental disease and you are cognitively delayed, which we get those cases too by the way. because you get somebody in a nineteen year old body that wants to have sex, but have the mind of the twelve year old, that's underage, and so we get those. Um, and we get a fair share of those. Mentally incapacitated.

Another detective described this type of scenario:

> Socially delayed. Usually, we get cases in here where it's at a home. You know? Where somebody has um some sort of mental illness and either an employee or another person that's in that home takes advantage of the situation. We get-, there's quite a few homes like that in this area, inner city and so we do get those. Elderly, we get elderly, criminal sexual assaults; we've had a few of those unfortunately.

3. Perceptions of Victim Credibility

In addition to describing types of sexual assault scenarios reported to the police, themes emerged related to important elements in the sexual assault report, such as credibility and evidentiary concerns. Officers discussed several factors that decreased perceptions of victim credibility, and a few factors that would increase credibility.

a. Factors that Decrease Perceptions of Credibility

Factors that decrease perceptions of credibility include 1) inconsistencies in the report or lying about elements of the report; 2) victims of "questionable" character; 3) reports involving a

"rehearsed story"; 4) officer experience or intuition; and 5) late reporting.

i. Inconsistencies or Lying about Details

Some officers view a victim as less credible when the account of events continues to change, or important details are omitted. Other officers comment on cases that involve what they deem as outright lies.

> I just had a girl just got up on the stand and lied…I believe the domestic happened and that, but she lied on the stand because she didn't want to admit that she turned a trick in front of her case worker and her dad. So, but then afterward she came off of it, but then she's not credible anymore once you have her on record lying.

Another officer described the types of inconsistencies that might point to lack of honesty, which decreases the credibility of the victim:

> Inconsistencies. Time frames. Locations. Descriptions. You know, it's like that with every crime you deal with. You know, if there are inconsistencies, then you kinda go back and say, 'Well wait a minute, you said this first. Which one is it? Is it this or this?' You know, and you try and get them to clarify.

Other scenarios involve victims who give misinformation to cover up or because they don't think others will believe what really happened. An officer described a case in which the victim told what she thought was a more believable "rape scenario" instead of telling what really happened.

> But it ended up that she had gone to a party and had sex with her boyfriend's friend and then he got a little rough and one of his friends joined in so she played it off that kind of she was sexually assaulted somewhere else but then didn't want to do anything about it. And so it's one of those that by the end you're like, you're totally uncredible.

ii. Victim of Questionable Character

If someone is deemed as questionable in character, their credibility is diminished. For instance, "When it comes down to your word against theirs, you know, you've been arrested, you're a prostitute, you've got drug problems, you have these problems, you have this problem, dadadadah." Another officer argued that certain actions prior to the assault can influence police

officer's perceptions of the victim,

> Somebody continually putting themselves in this situation over and over and over again and then one time it goes a little too far and all of a sudden they're just like "Oh no, they violated me!" You're like, you know, what do you want to do every time there's a burning house and you're running in to see if the fire's hot and one time you get burned you're just like, you can't claim foul. And so you're trying as a police officer to be sensitive to people and to feelings and at the same time you're, you have to be able to take away some of the, just the ridiculousness of people's actions and look, ya know, and try to understand and see what's really going on.

Officers share examples of how victims can be seen as less credible because of their personal characteristics or behavior. One officer recalled a young woman who reported a sexual assault but decided not to move forward with the case: "She didn't follow up with it, she was drunk. You know she wasn't a good witness. She's working at a topless place, you know? Two of the detectives point out that CSCs often happen to women who are already deemed as less credible, such as those involved in prostitution or those with substance abuse problems. As one detective stated, "People pick on easy targets which is the dysfunctional drug mother with two kids, you know, they don't pick on nuns to sexually assault."

iii. Rehearsed Story

In contrast to perceptions of inconsistencies and lying, some officers perceive victims as less credible when they seem to have a very detailed and specific "story" to tell police. Officers comment that the victim seems to have an account they intend to go through from beginning to end, rather than answer the questions of the police.

> But then there's some that are very standoffish, you know, I'm saying the ones that have made it up, and they're very rigid in their story, and they don't want to deviate from their story, so, um… don't want to answer questions directly, but have a hard time, you know, they keep coming back to their story or what they want to say. So, no matter what you ask, they're almost telling you what you–what they want to tell you, they don't really want to listen to the question part, ok? And they–and they do very poorly when they deviate from their story, and then they start to get contradictions, or they don't want to talk about certain segments of the night.

iv.   <u>Experience or Intuition of Officer</u>

Some officers believe that they can sense when a victim is not telling the truth; this may come from experience or intuition. One officer discussed the immediate reaction of thinking certain reports are "bullshit." This officer explained this reaction: "People who aren't telling the truth can't stay with the same story…it always changes a little bit. That's a clue…Just their story doesn't make sense…It's hard to explain. Intuition, I guess?"

v.   <u>Late Reporting</u>

Late reporting also decreases an officer's perception of the victim's credibility. One officer questioned the validity of the report by saying, "You get the ones that you know, this happened last night. But I've seen you all day standing out here. You didn't think about calling before now?..OK." Another officer explained the influence of late reporting on victim credibility:

> Oftentimes we get reports that happen weeks ago, or you know a month ago, so you have to ask questions. Why did you wait so long? What is the, what happened today that made you want to report this? This happened last Friday and now it's Saturday, what caused you to suddenly today call up to want to report this instead of immediately after it happened?

b.   <u>Factors that Increase Perceptions of Credibility</u>

Officers discussed the factors that limit one's credibility far more often than the factors that increase perceptions of credibility. Regardless, certain factors, such as the type or scenario of the sexual assault, the officer's own perception or intuition about the case, and evidence of injury all can increase perceptions of credibility.

i.   <u>Assault "Type" and Victim Behavior</u>

Officers perceive certain "types" of sexual assault and victim characteristics as having no grounds for suspicion about the victim's credibility. For instance, an officer described a case

involving an assault of an older woman by a stranger: We had a little, we had an old lady that was raped in the middle of the night in a more nicer neighborhood kind of thing. You know, number one, what would, why would she be making this up?" The victim's demeanor and reputation can also confirm credibility. As one officer described, "When they're screaming and crying and, you know, and they're half-dressed and, you know, they're saying they got raped down here, then you know. Yeah, pretty obvious that they were." Another officer pointed out the influence of victim "character" on perceptions of credibility, stating,

> In fact, if nuns that get up there and, you know, testify I'd love it but we never have any. We never have any good… I hate for bad things to happen to good people, but I never have, like, the schoolgirl that gets raped, you know.

ii.   Evidence of Injury

Evidence of injury also gives credibility to the victim, even when the case involves a victim whose credibility might usually be questioned. As one officer described, "Usually, they get–they get thumped on…Usually they get beat up, you know, in the process. They'll have a bloody, you know, nose or a fat lip or punch – black eye – something." Describing a case with someone involved in prostitution, this officer described why the victim's credibility was not questioned: "And she was beat up. She had like scrapes and burns, like concrete burns on her."

4.   Evidence in Reported Sexual Assault Cases

When answering questions about processing and making decisions in reported sexual assault cases, officers point out the need for evidence. Officers most commonly discuss the important role of physical evidence in the way that they perceive a case and the way it moves forward with investigation. In addition to physical evidence, witnesses, confession by the perpetrator, and the victim's testimony play a role in how officer's perceive and respond to reported sexual assaults.

a.   Physical Evidence

Officers describe types of physical evidence at length because it is viewed by most officers as the primary evidence in substantiating a report of sexual assault. Officers talk about the important role of DNA and other physical evidence, indicating that bruises, marks, ripped clothing, pulled hair, and other signs of struggle give evidence of a sexual assault. According to officers, the most important type of physical evidence is DNA, followed by evidence of force, injury, and other corroborating evidence at the scene. One officer summarized, "I'd say physical evidence is probably the most important evidence." Physical evidence cannot be questioned in the same way that other evidence can:

> You can't deny if we get DNA from this guy off of this girl, who you were obviously there with her, so that's physical evidence, that's very helpful for us. If there's no physical evidence, it's completely your word against this guy's word or his against, you know.

The nurse examiner plays an important role in collecting evidence, which police officers deem as essential in providing proof to whether or not a sexual assault took place. As one officer stated, "The nurse—that examination is pretty much a lot of times is the key to determine if it was consensual or not consensual. You know, she talks about the tearing in the vagina…" Showing confidence in the examination, another officer stated clearly that "the [name of organization] sexual assault kit will show if something happened. They have to go to the [name of organization] to get the kit done…It's going to show if something happened."

b.   Witness

Officers note that it is unlikely that a witness actually sees a sexual assault occur, but a witness may be able to corroborate events leading to the assault—this can work either in favor or against the victim. According to officers, a witness seems to be more important than even physical evidence; some prosecutors are not taking a case without the addition of witness

testimony. One of the immediate responses of officers to reported sexual assaults is to look for a

witness who can corroborate what the victim is reporting. As one officer stated, "obviously we

scour for witnesses." When a potential witness is identified, "you talk to witnesses, you know, if

the victim talked to a friend after." Witness testimony can consist of "any eye witness

information of seeing, um hearing screams and then seeing a, later a car quickly pull away."

Another officer described the role of a witness,

> Testimony by a witness is helpful. He ended up going to jail because we believed her
> story. They had sex before, um, but based on some of the stuff that was going on, it was-
> and the evidence-his friend was in the other room.

c.   Confession

A confession by the perpetrator serves as ideal evidence of a sexual assault. Once in a

while, someone confesses, either through questioning by a detective, saying something

unintentionally that shows coercion or force, or through a confession or apology to the victim.

Sometimes the perpetrator acknowledges that the victim was incapacitated, which serves as a

confession. An officer described this scenario: "Confession, a guy says 'yeah, you know what?

Yeah, I thought she might be passed out.' We get them every now and then where they-NYPD

Blue. They admit [laughs]." A detective described one method to invoke a confession,

> So I have her doing what's a reverse phone call with him. So she's going to try to call
> him and get him on tape and try and get him to admit that he raped her. And I said that is
> your only saving grace would be if he was on tape and not just saying I'm sorry because
> you could be saying I'm sorry for not taking out the trash, but to say 'Yes I knew you
> were not into this, yes I knew I forced myself on you, I knew.'

d.   Victim Testimony

Officers communicated different perceptions of the role of victim testimony in sexual

assault cases. Some officers express that victim testimony is enough to found the crime of

sexual assault. As one officer described a specific case, "He ended up going to jail because we

believed her story." Other officers describe victim testimony as only circumstantial evidence:

"That would be her testifying that that's the guy that just raped me so that's under circumstantial

evidence." Another officer clarified that although it should be the case that victim testimony is

enough; in reality, this is not how things work. According to this officer, prosecutors seem to be

getting stricter in terms of how much evidence they are requiring beyond the victim's statement,

even though jury instructions have not changed:

> Back ten years ago it was strictly what was good enough for the victim's statement. And
> there's actually a jury law, or jury instruction, that they read to potential jurors that says
> the victim and the victim's word alone is enough evidence for a CSC, and they actually
> like read it to them saying, like literally, if somebody just some girl just got up there and
> said I was raped, that's all we need.

C. **Combination of Factors influencing Perceptions of Cases and Response**

Officer descriptions of sexual assault cases and their initial reaction and subsequent

response indicated patterns in police officer classifications of cases and the factors that influence

those classifications. Throughout the rest of the qualitative results, figures will be included to

provide a visual display of the factors that work in combination to influence police officer

perceptions and behavioral intentions. The figures display the themes that emerged through the

qualitative interviews and how various codes grouped together. These figures do not display

models that are tested in Phase Two, the quantitative section of the study. Instead, these figures

represent a depiction of officer's broader schema of CSC calls, and more specifically, the variety

of factors that work together to influence officers' perceptions and responses. Major elements,

or factors that play a role in perceptions and response, are indicated in brackets below. Aspects

of these influential elements vary by the classification of certain report scenarios. Officers

describe their perceptions of a variety of scenarios or "types" of sexual assault cases that are

reported to the police. These descriptions form a continuum of classifications [Perception or

Classification of Case], from those perceived as false reports to those that are more ambiguous or unclear, to those deemed as legitimate and therefore serious (See Figure 2). A number of factors correspond with or influence these perceptions or classification systems, which are presented in the Figure below. These factors include case characteristics, specifically the "type" or scenario of the sexual assault [Typical Scenario], the perceived credibility of the victim [Credibility], and evidentiary concerns [Evidence]. The factors related to case characteristics also influence how officers interpret the degree of control that they have over the ultimate response and decision making [Perceived Behavioral Control] as well as their perceptions of peers' assessment of the case [Subjective Norms]. These factors influence not only perceptions of the case, but the behavioral intentions or response [Initial Response] by patrol, detectives, and ultimately the prosecutor's office. Most of the factors influencing the police officer perception of cases as false rely on normative frames, meaning that they consist of normative expectations (which includes acceptance of rape myths) of what constitutes a "legitimate" sexual assault. Subsequently, reports of sexual assault that do not include these factors (or include factors that challenge those normative elements), are perceived as false reports or ambiguous cases, unclear as to whether or not a crime occurred. Efficiency frames enter the equation when officers perceive reports of sexual assault as legitimate but either not "serious" or "good," meaning that there is not a lot of evidence, the victim is deemed as less credible, or the case will not be well received by the prosecutor or jury. The following figure shows how these broad factors influence police officer perceptions and responses in reported sexual assault cases.

Figure 2. Model of Factors influencing Officer's Perceptions and Initial Response

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ TYPICAL SCENARIO    │────────┐
└─────────────────────┘         \      ┌──────────────────┐      ┌────────────────────┐
                                 \     │ PERCEPTION or    │─────→│ INITIAL RESPONSE   │
┌─────────────────────┐          ─────│ CLASSIFICATION   │      └────────────────────┘
│ CREDIBILITY         │──────────/    └──────────────────┘
└─────────────────────┘         /
                               /       ┌──────────────────┐
┌─────────────────────┐       /        │ PERCEIVED        │
│ EVIDENCE            │──────→         │ BEHAVIORAL       │
└─────────────────────┘     \          │ CONTROL          │
                             \         └──────────────────┘
                              \
                               →       ┌──────────────────┐
                                       │ SUBJECTIVE       │
                                       │ NORMS            │
                                       └──────────────────┘
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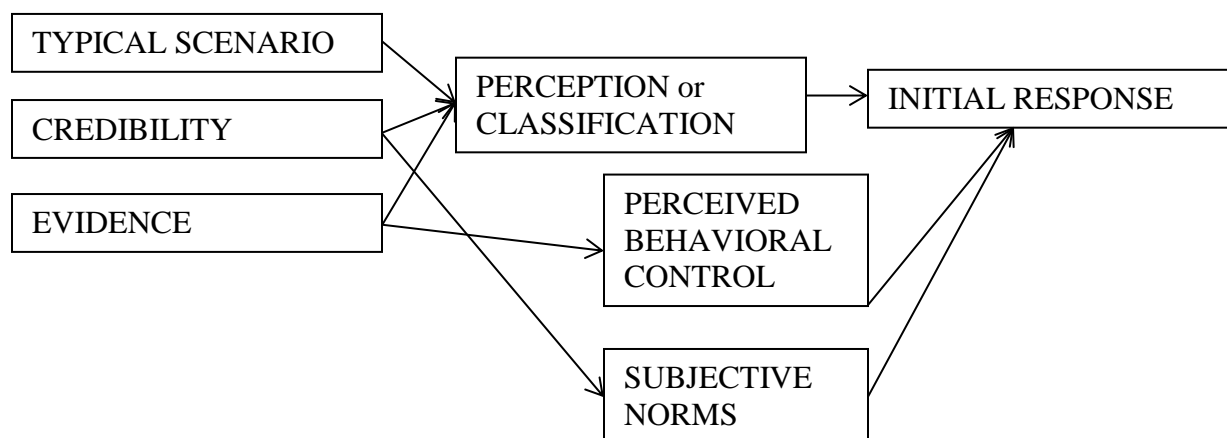
1.   **Perceptions of False Reporting**

     a.   **Amount**

Although not asked directly about false reporting, most officers bring up the experience

of perceiving or finding a CSC report to be false. The perception of the amount of false reporting

varies between patrol and detectives. The patrol officers describe a high proportion of reported

sexual assaults as false reports. Detectives comment on the propensity of officers to think of

reports as false and state their own personal determination to fight the urge to make assumptions

or premature judgments. Officers agree that they tend to remember being lied to, and they recall

false reports more easily and frequently than those perceived as legitimate. For example, one

officer stated,

> And I don't know what percent it would be, but I would say definitely over a third,
> probably approaching you know forty or forty-five percent of the ones that I've been on
> that, um, if not outright recanted by the victim, um, have *very* serious questions of the
> veracity. And there's no other crime that we go on that has those kind of questions.

Two of the detectives noted that conferences or trainings counter their own perception of

frequent false reporting. One detective commented that it seems like false reporting happens

frequently, but training has emphasized that most sexual assaults that occur are not even reported

to the police. The detective stated,

> It doesn't happen as often. It seems like it happens a lot, but when you look at the statistics it's…I forget what the percentage was, but the perception is that all these women are coming in and a lot of them are lying about it and it's not as high as you think.

Another detective described a situation in which law enforcement perceptions about false

reporting is challenged:

> I had a speaker once say, 'Raise'—you know, picture a hundred people in this conference, mixed group, medical professionals, law enforcement, social workers—'How many sexual assaults are false reports?' And you'll hear stuff ranging from 2 percent to a lot of cops will shout out 50, 75, 90 percent, and that's what I mean about this disconnect, the wrong perspective.

b. <u>Combination of Factors that Influence Perceptions of False Reporting</u>

Officers highlight the key elements that taken together lead them to believe that someone

falsely reporting a sexual assault. Officers easily provide explanations for why an individual

would make a false report of sexual assault. The reason most often cited focuses on some sort of

cover up for behavior that is either important to keep secret or is regretted, such as cheating or

being somewhere unknown to a partner. These kinds of explanations occur most in cases

involving those with a current or prior relationship. Specifically, reports involving unclear or

elaborate stories of stranger assault are often a sign of false reporting. Reports of sexual assault

by someone involved in prostitution are also sometimes perceived as false reports because the

sex was consensual but the customer may have failed to pay. Some officers describe reports

involving juveniles who claim sexual assault to cover up for consensual sex that may be

regretted or frowned upon. Others believe that individuals make false reports to seek attention or

because they have emotional issues. All of these explanations give indication of the officers'

perceptions of victim credibility, which influence officers' initial "classification" of the case.

Officers describe their own reaction to responding to these cases with some sensitivities of wasting time and resources.

Although the perception of false reporting may exist, officers explain that they will respond no differently to a report perceived as false, and they will ask questions in order to determine the truth. Although one officer explicitly stated that "it's not like they all follow one pattern," there are some general themes that officers identify as the reasons why individuals make false reports of sexual assault to the police (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Combination of Factors influencing Perception of False Reporting and Response
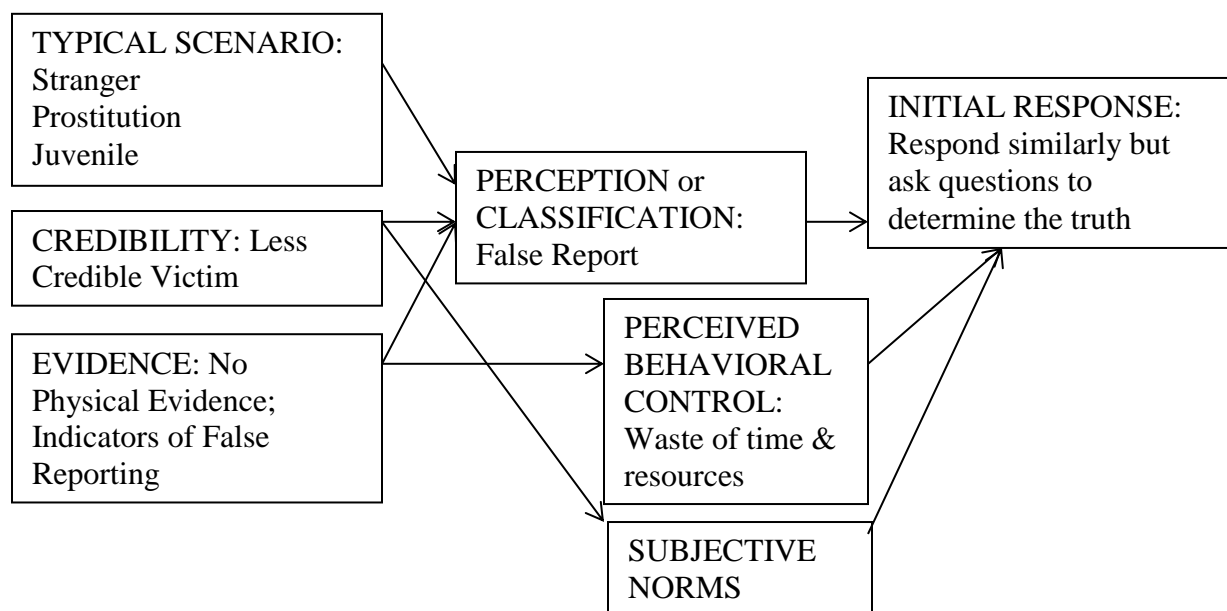
iii.   <u>Typical Scenarios Perceived as False Reports</u>

The typical scenarios that are perceived as false reports, rather than legitimate or ambiguous, include those involving elaborate stories of stranger assault, sometimes reported by individuals trying to cover up something; those reported by someone involved in prostitution; and those reported by juveniles.

a)   Stranger Assault as False

Although officers agree that stranger assaults are rare, they comment that the department

gets more reports of stranger assaults than actually occur because they are used as a cover up.

Officers point out that the stereotypical image of a stranger assault is very rare; in fact, if this

type of stereotypical "stranger behind the bushes" attack is described in the report, it is probably

not true. Officers point out that reports involving elaborate stories of abduction or assault by

strangers are often perceived as false. One officer described an example of a false report:

> And it was a very elaborate story, and our true stranger CSCs are very miniscule in town.
> I mean, I've been on a handful in my career, but for the most part, it's all somebody that
> knows somebody. So, I know she's fighting with her girlfriend, I know I've got this
> elaborate story about, you know – in very sketchy details: black guys, black guys with
> guns.

Officers explain that individuals sometimes describe that they were assaulted by a

stranger as a way to provide a cover up for some behavior. One officer described, "I've

encountered several with a cheating spouse who's been out all night, you know, blah blah blah.

Oh I was, raped." Another officer described the "red flags" for identifying a false report,

> Those are three common things. I mean, there's some sort of discourse with their
> significant other, or they're trying to cover for sexual indiscretion, or for time, you know.
> So those are three red flags, you know. So, if we know they're in the middle of a fight
> with their spouse or with their significant other or we know they're way late to something
> or, you know, I've never really put this to thought before, but these are all common, you
> know. Or if they've been out partying, so to speak. Those are all red flags for what else is
> going on.

b) Cases involving Prostitution as False

When describing sexual assaults reported by someone involved in prostitution,

many officers described the initial reaction to not believe the victim. One officer concluded that

the vast majority of reports by those involved in prostitution are false: "If you deal with just the

prostitutes? If you – just putting them in their own category?...I would say 70 percent."

According to the officers, false reports are made when someone involved in prostitution experienced a sexual interaction that was not agreed upon or bargained for, such as involving the use of a weapon or involving drugs. As one officer described a "typical" case involving prostitution and perceived as a false report, the "prostitute is out soliciting for sex and where somebody picks them up and then purposely rapes them *with a weapon* and not paying them, you know, so against the female's idea of what mood she was expecting." Officers also describe "less legitimate" cases as false reports because they have more to do with a "fail to pay kind of thing" than a sexual assault. For example,

> And the victim then admitted that it had happened up there but that he'd not paid her. So we took her for false report right then…where prostitutes make that all the time. A John'll pimp 'em, won't pay 'em their money. They will claim they got raped, you know? Yeah.

Another officer explained a similar scenario: "That either she had turned a trick and he didn't pay up and so she got mad because she didn't get her twenty bucks. Or it just wasn't true, like she's looking for attention or I don't know."

c) Cases involving Juveniles as False

Officers describe reported sexual assaults involving juveniles as potentially false. Some officers note that juveniles sometimes claim to be sexually assaulted in order to cover up some behavior. One officer described this scenario by saying,

> A lot of times – you know, and I've seen this happen, too – where they claim they were raped and it turns out the father or the mother were calling, "Where are you?" "I'm down," "What are you doing in there?" You know, and they start getting scared and they'll claim they were raped where in actuality, they just had sex with a young man, you know, trying to cover their bases. "I'm late because I got raped."

Another officer described that "you'll have kids that run away that say they were raped and they couldn't get home because they don't want to get in trouble when they get back."

iv. The Role of Credibility in Perceptions of False Reporting

Perceived credibility of the victim plays a large role in officers' perceptions of a report as false. Because reports perceived as false often involve someone who is supposedly cheating or covering up for something, or somehow demonstrates poor character, credibility is diminished. Victims are perceived as less credible when they admit that they lied about an element of the report or the report includes holes. As one officer explained, "Sometime they'll put their head down and 'okay, here's what really happened, I thought I was pregnant and I was worried, I was scared so I told my mom and dad that I was sexually assaulted.'" Another officer described signs of false reporting:

> Lack of ability to point out where it happened or when it happened or what happened or are very on the de– you know, they've got to have details. You know? If my wife or daughter gets raped, they know that they got raped, they know where it was at, they know when it was – you know what I'm saying: just some of the basics.

Victims are also perceived as less credible when they admit that they regret some behavior, which officers perceive as indication of false reporting. One officer described this scenario: "But sometimes, they say, 'Well, you know, actually, this is why, you know, I was mad,' or, you know, 'We were both drunk,' and you know, 'Originally, I said yes, but then I changed my mind,' or you know, something to that effect."

Even when a victim does not admit dishonesty, officers may still perceive a victim to be making a false report because of emotional issues, which might lead them to seek attention or revenge. As one officer stated, "We find that girls utilize the rape card to mess with people…because they use it to get back at a boyfriend or they need attention, they're having a bad week, you know 'if I cry rape my whole family will come to me and I need that.'" Another officer provided a similar synopsis:

> We get calls of sexual assault that never even existed, that are made up. We have calls of

sexual-reports of sexual assaults where you have a victim-mostly female-that is dealing with other emotional mental issues that is seeking attention. Um, you get some really bizarre stuff in that way.

Some of the officers expressed notably strong comments about the propensity for false reports involving someone in prostitution, which can severely limit the victim's credibility both to the police and to those who may be sitting on a jury. Officers note that sometimes individuals involved in prostitution will lie in the course of reporting because they don't want to claim involvement in trading sex when the assault occurred. As one officer described,

> It's just, it's when it comes down to your word against theirs, you know, you've been arrested, you're a prostitute, you've got drug problems, you have these problems, you have this problem, dadadadah.

v. The Role of Evidence in Perceptions of False Reporting

Evidence clearly plays a role in determining or substantiating the occurrence of a crime. Officers describe evidence, such as physical evidence of force, that substantiates the victim's testimony of a crime; when this evidence doesn't exist, it may be a sign of false reporting In addition, the victim's demeanor or other aspects related to perceived credibility suggest false reporting.

a) Physical Evidence and False Reporting

Because officers perceive physical evidence as crucial in determining the legitimacy of a sexual assault, many are suspicious of cases where there is no physical evidence. As one officer expressed confidently, "If there is no physical evidence and you said you got raped, did you get raped?... No." Another officer explained that a "lack of physical evidence on juvenile ones or the stranger-stranger ones is a very telltale sign." Other officers shared this perspective, describing the viewpoint that if there is no physical evidence and no signs of force, then it's not likely to be a sexual assault. One officer described how a lack of strong evidence raises questions about the

crime: "It has to be force or coercion…You're telling me he forced you, but you don't have any marks on you whatsoever. I mean, you don't even have anything, not even red marks, you know, so."

Based on their experience, officers perceive that inconsistencies, lying, and the victim's overall demeanor suggest a false report. One officer noted the obvious differentiation between false and legitimate reports of sexual assault: "If you get opportunity you can read a true report and then you can read a false report and then determine this is like "Wowwww." One patrol officer described a sense that something is not right in the report: "I can't—based on my experience—I can't say you're lying or telling the truth, but based on these elements, something's not right here. So we're not going to send this guy off for 20 years because of this story." This officer summarized, "A lie grows. The truth kinda stops." Another officer highlighted victim demeanor that signals false reporting:

> Their attitude. Everybody's gonna be different, but when you get a, a rape victim that comes in and they're, ah you know it's like, and I look uncertain, that they don't seem not that everybody's gonna be distraught, but very matter of fact about it.

Officers describe the lack of corroborating evidence as a problem. One officer summarized, "If there's absolutely no corroborating evidence anywhere, that's a red flag." Another officer acknowledged how the testimony of other witnesses will undermine the victim's testimony, stating "They'll stick to the story, stick to the story and you might find out through another means that it's not true, by witnesses."

vi.   Police Officer Response to Reports Perceived as False

Officers consistently state that even when they suspect a false report, they respond no differently. Officers will investigate the same way, and they will try to determine the truth. Patrol officers will write the report as a CSC and detectives will follow-up with an investigation.

As part of the regular response, officers will listen carefully and try to determine the truth, sometimes trying to identify inconsistencies, and will conduct a light interrogation. During this questioning, officers often sense that "something is not right," or the case is lacking an important element that is expected in a sexual assault. When asked about how officers might respond to a potentially false report, an officer responded, "Yeah, it's fairly complex, so, I mean, you've got to look at, uh, the victim: the victim's demeanor, the victim's credibility, um, perhaps ulterior motives the victim may have for claiming it."

a)   <u>Investigate Thoroughly</u>

Patrol officers state that even though they might perceive a report to be false, they respond similarly as they do to all calls. All reports deserve a full investigation. An officer explained this response,

> Well you still have to treat it as a CSC because, I mean there still may have been some force involved. So you know, we have to still treat it as – treat them as a victim and again, obtain as much information as we can and let the detectives make the decision. And usually, they'll let us know if they've got a false report for a warrant for somebody.

Other officers express this same attitude towards their response, reminding "That's why you have to uh, like I said, keep it new fresh, and do your investigation to the full, and when you know it's kind of a not true, or if it's-you still investigate everything to the full." An officer described that even if their gut says it's not true, they are "still going to get the phone records…I would love to just be able to can it off my desk today and not waste my time on it, but you can't. You got to make sure you cover everything."

b) <u>Determine the Truth</u>

Officers state that they have a responsibility to conduct the interview of the victim in such a way that the truth is uncovered. One officer believes that the right kind of listening and questioning will inevitably unfold the truth when there are questions about false reporting. This

officer explained,

> It's really putting, it's like [a] puzzle, you get there you don't have any pieces so now you got pieces so you're putting pieces together. And then you're you got some pieces and there's some missing pieces here so you go like, you ask some more questions and there's still some missing pieces, you know, so you're putting this puzzle together and once the puzzle's together you can determine-because you have all the pieces together, you can determine who's lying, who's telling the truth, this didn't happen, that is a lie, you know [laughs].

Other officers believe that the truth can be known by relying on one's professional knowledge and experience and using interviewing techniques to identify inconsistencies in what the victim is saying. A supervisor and a detective talk most extensively about using a light interrogation and other interviewing tools, such as a forensic interview, to uncover the truth. A supervisor expounded,

> Experience based on interviews and interview techniques and, um, I think you build a knowledge base, too, of ones that have turned out to be not true in the past, and you kind of – they – human nature runs kind of a similar course, and human desire to cover up something that's not correct, I think, runs a similar course. It's not like the wheel's been reinvented by each new, uh, victim. That's not to say that you've seen them all before, but some flavor of seeing it before – if that makes sense to you.

A detective described the necessity of a light interrogation when there is suspicion of false reporting:

> So we get some false allegations and unfortunately because of that, this is a very unique, a unique unit because for rape victims we should be able to open armed and we try to be, but, if there's any inclination that there might be another motive we have to-what we call it's kind of a light interrogation. It's a very, you know you've kind of got to ask certain questions. I wouldn't call it interrogation, that's not the right word for it, but you have to ask certain questions to make sure that it's credible and that they're being honest.

vii.   Outside Factors Influencing Perception and Initial Response

Although officers agree that they respond no differently to reports that are suspected to be false, they do express their frustrations of responding to reports that may be false. Officers also

wonder if their response in these cases is a waste of time and resources. One officer expressed

this reaction by stating,

> You get something like that, the first thing that pops into your head is "bullshit."…I don't ever tell them that. I don't, "You know this is bullshit you're lying." No I don't, but in my head, that I-I guess my immediate reaction is…I'm going to investigate-several hours into this that I'll never get back in my lifetime. And it's not going to go anywhere, it's going to be, "You're lying, we'll never be able to prove it. We'll never find the person." Four or five hours out of my life that I'll never see again.

A supervisor explained the dilemma of deciding how much time to put into a case that might be

false:

> We knew there was no physical evidence. We knew this other stuff was going on, we knew the story was real fishy to start with, and yeah. And you lay it out. And then we got to decide, too – I mean, I got to decide on the street supervisor or we got to decide as a department how much resources we want to put into this – how – what's the chances of this one being true, you know?

One officer described a situation in which the officer would explain to the victim that a false

report is a felony, and that responding would expend a lot of resources. This officer explained

this to the victim and then asked the victim how they wanted to proceed.

> So you talk about that, because if what she is telling me is true, we got to dedicate a lot of resources to it…So, if we really got two guys raping people at random, that's a big deal for us, and we're going to investigate it hard, and we're going to have special patrols, and we're talking hundreds of hours, literally, on the police department. So, you sit down, and say "Listen. Here's what we got. We might spend hundreds of hours on it. Right now it's nothing. I'll let you, you know, tell me the truth or, if you don't, here's what we're going to do, here's what our investigation will be." You know? And sometimes they'll recant, and sometimes they won't.

2.   **Perception of Ambiguous Reports**

Officers agree that the majority of reported sexual assaults are considered ambiguous,

meaning that they lack strong evidence of sexual assault, but they are not perceived as clearly

false either. Officers perceive reports as ambiguous when they involve certain individuals (e.g.,

those in a current or prior relationship, acquaintances), and when alcohol or drugs are involved.

Additionally, and similar to factors that lead to perceptions of the report as false, cases are

perceived as ambiguous when the victim's credibility is questioned because of their demeanor or

perceived dishonesty in reporting, and when there is no evidence of nonconsensual sex beyond

the victim's testimony.

a.   Amount

Officers point out that reports of sexual assault are frequently considered unclear.

Needing to determine the legitimacy of the report (or whether or not a CSC occurred) happens

regularly, perceived by some officers as the majority of reported cases. One officer explained the

unique nature of CSC as ambiguous compared to other crimes:

> The majority, I mean, I always say that homicides are easier to investigate than CSCs
> because you know somebody's dead. I mean, you can see it in child abuse. You can see
> it, you know, that there's marks. Sexual abuse, you can't see everything. You know, and
> so it's harder because you just never, you never know. I mean, you hope you're always
> right.

b.   Combination of Factors that Influence Perceptions of Ambiguity

Officers provide reasons why cases are perceived as ambiguous, as opposed to false or

legitimate. Typical sexual assault scenarios considered ambiguous include those involving

intoxication, acquaintances, or those with a current or prior intimate relationship. These "types"

of reports are perceived as ambiguous because they all revolve around the issue of consent, and

whether or not force or coercion was involved. The credibility of the victim may influence an

officer's perception of the report as ambiguous rather than legitimate because of the withholding

of information during the initial interview and subsequent investigation. Physical evidence of

sexual contact between the victim and suspect may be present, but this alone does not indicate

force or coercion, which officers admit is difficult to verify, especially in cases involving

intoxication of either the victim or perpetrator. Officers suggest that evidence of injury may

make the case less ambiguous; however, the case is still unlikely to move forward within the

criminal justice system. Case progression or lack thereof in cases perceived as ambiguous may

be influenced by the Prosecutor's Office and the role of the jury (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. Combination of Factors influencing Perceptions of Ambiguity and Case Response
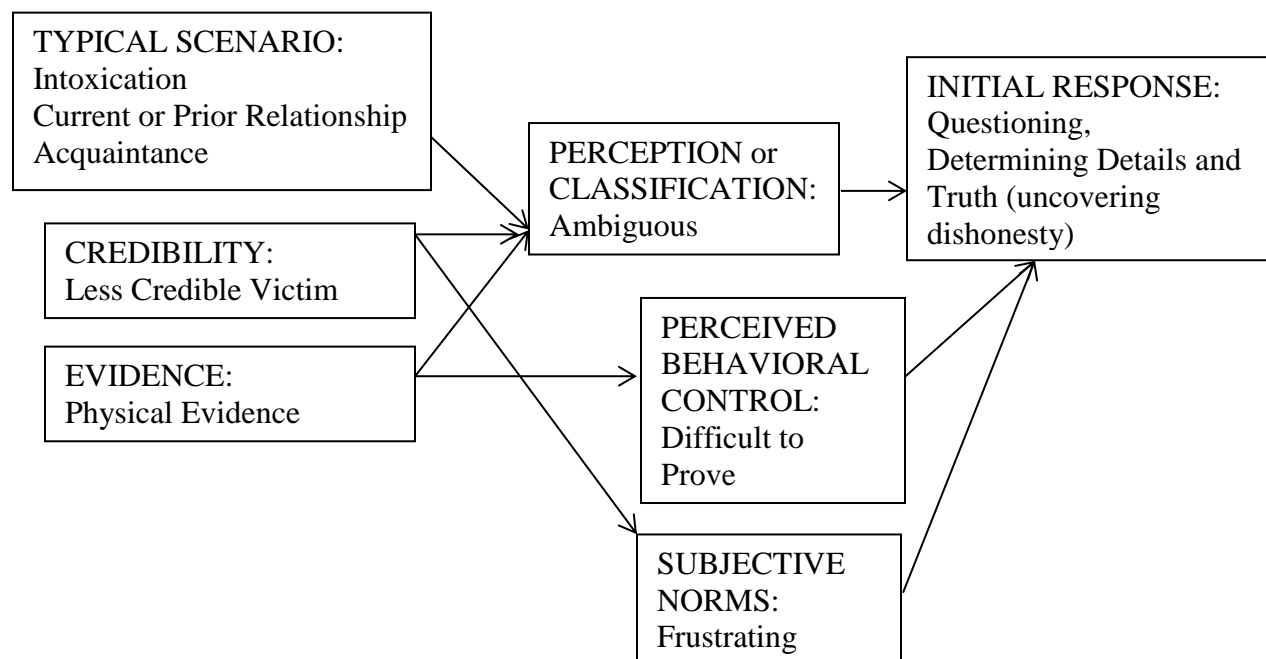
i.   <u>Typical Scenarios Perceived as Ambiguous</u>

The primary reason that police officers view cases as ambiguous is that consent is

unclear; consent is questioned more in particular scenarios, specifically those involving alcohol

or drugs, acquaintances, or current or previous intimate relationships. Because the crime of

sexual assault necessitates that the sexual contact is unwanted, providing evidence of non-

consent is very important and difficult in these "types" of cases. One officer stated, "Well I ask

them if there was consent, that's a big one if, when they're getting ready to have sex if there was,

if the girl, if their girlfriend or whoever they were with consented to it."

a)   Cases involving Intoxication as Ambiguous

Almost all officers describe reported sexual assaults involving intoxicated individuals,

which pose serious questions for determining consent. The scenario often involves a "he-

said/she-said" dilemma where one person argues that they did not consent and the other person

argues that the sexual contact was consensual. These cases are considered ambiguous because

officers acknowledge the possibility that a CSC occurred, but because of lack of evidence and

blurred consent, they are considered unclear. Officers describe this typical scenario:

> Extreme intoxication is also another one where that's where it really comes into play,
> where he says, "Hey, she was drunk, she wanted it." She says, "No, I don't even
> remember last night." …And those, you really don't know. You know, I mean it's very
> difficult, you know. And she woke up with her pants down around her ankles, and really
> didn't – either doesn't remember or didn't want sex or wanted sex and now has changed.
> I mean, who knows?

Another officer described a typical scenario in which the case is ambiguous because the victim

does not remember details of the events due to being under the influence:

> Usually, the younger girls, they'll go to a party and it's usually, you know, in the inner
> city. They like that bad boy attitude and then they'll be, you know, they could be gang
> raped. Those are the difficult ones because normally, they don't know where they were.
> They don't know who they were. They just know him as "B" or "D" or, you know,
> something. But yeah they're very sketchy. I've had a couple of girls that that's happened
> to where they came in, went to a party. They were, you know, given drugs or booze and
> then taken advantage of.

b)   Cases involving a Prior or Current Relationship as

Ambiguous

When a victim reports a sexual assault by someone with whom they know and have had a

relationship, officers perceive these cases as ambiguous. Officers describe their observation of

these scenarios as more ambiguous than other reports, stating, "If it's a stranger it's treated

differently than if it's a uh- had a prior relationship with. Not that either one is worse but it puts a

different light on it. You know- so now we now we have to kind of weigh out who is telling the

truth." Another officer explained, "I mean you have a prior relationship there, so is it true or is it false? You have to kind of determine, determine the-more of the facts of the case. Um, because it's not a stranger."

c) Cases involving Acquaintances as Ambiguous

Reports of sexual assault involving acquaintances are also viewed as ambiguous because of the difficulty in determining whether consent was given, because the sexual contact itself is not denied by the accused perpetrator. An officer described a typical scenario involving acquaintances deemed as ambiguous: "It's not a thing where the violator is denying that he's had relations with her so you've got the um, he's not refuting that he's had sexual relations, he's saying it was consensual." Another officer explained the ambiguity in these cases,

> Where I'm saying "questionable," um, something happened. The question is what happened, you know? Was it consensual? Was it not? I mean, there's definitely some questions in that one…Two people did hook up at a bar, they agree with the whole story until they get to some place, um, at 2 o'clock in the morning, and then the time between 2 o'clock in the morning and when we get the call at 5:30 or 6 is very fuzzy.

ii. The Role of Credibility in Reports Perceived as Ambiguous

Perceived credibility plays a major role in considering a case to be ambiguous rather than legitimate. Because of the scenarios described above (those involving acquaintances and previous or current partners), and the tendency for reported sexual assaults to involve alcohol, victims may be seen as less credible. Victims are viewed as less credible when their report includes lies or they withhold information. As one officer described,

> Yeah our biggest thing with like ambiguous-once somebody's credibility, that's the hard part. I mean they'll lie about the littlest things because they don't want—I'm trying to think, not even about the sexual assault—but they'll just lie about, you know, where they were. You know, find out it happened somewhere else and you're like, how do I know that you're not lying about it? I mean, and some of them you'll know that they're not, but it's like how do I overcome this?

Another officer described the difficulty in responding to cases perceived as ambiguous. This

officer pointed out, "You just have to work through it, I think. Because, like I say, from the job

you know that just because they're trying to hide A and B doesn't mean C didn't occur, but yeah

it does have you questioning whether you're being lied to."

iii.   The Role of Evidence in Reports Perceived as Ambiguous

Reports are perceived as ambiguous because what is deemed as strong evidence of sexual

assault is not present. Usually the suspect does not deny that there was a sexual encounter.

> Because like I say with the consensual stuff or whether it was consensual, the guy's not disputing you know the facts of the DNA and the semen and all of that stuff is going to be present. He's not disputing that so um that evidence isn't really helpful to you.

The disagreement between the suspect and victim centers on consent. Because it is difficult to

verify a victim's testimony of nonconsensual sex, cases are perceived as ambiguous. Officers

described the lack of strong evidence by saying,

> A lot of times, sometimes it's her word against his word or if it's two girls or two guys his against his, I mean it's you know it's just sometimes there's not a lot of evidence, sometimes it's pure speculation on what two people are saying, you know?

Officers comment on the lack of corroborating evidence, specifically physical evidence that

demonstrates the use of force, which may substantiate the victim's testimony.

> Just take that situation at face value: two drunk people in a room all by themselves, no corroborating evidence, it's never going to reach the standard of reasonable doubt. It just isn't going to happen.

> You got two people alone in a room and one says it was consensual and one says it doesn't. They go have an exam done. There's indication of penetration, but no nurse examiner can say it was force…you gotta think about the burden of proof we have which is beyond a reasonable doubt. It's not gonna be there.

Physical evidence can sometimes play a significant role even when a case is perceived as

ambiguous at the onset. A detective described what might be considered an ambiguous case

involving acquaintances that moved forward because the perpetrator denied the sexual contact,

and his DNA was found on the victim. Another officer described a case which seemed

ambiguous at first because of intoxication, but developed into a clear case with supporting

evidence:

> She calls her sister up a couple days later of course and you know she's so, she doesn't know if she should report this or not and says "Hey your ex-boyfriend from five years ago gave me a ride home and I was really drunk and he left me on the curb there by the house, but I could have sworn he was having sex with me on the way home, but I might have been dreaming it, but I swear I woke up and he was having-she goes "well we need to report this." So they come in and report it, long story short, I interview him, he's like, 'She's crazy. She was drunk, she was throwing up. I wasn't-, I didn't touch her. What is she talking about? I didn't touch her, I didn't touch her." Sure enough, four months later, which is about how long the DNA takes, state police lab called me and say his DNA was found in an area it shouldn't have been, where if you're having sex with somebody, and then I called him and I said, "hey you know remember when you gave her a ride home? You sure, you never touched her right? You never even touched her, put your-." "No, all I did was scooped her up to put her in the car" and then, I ended up getting a warrant for him, for criminal sexual assault and he, he plead and is in prison right now. So, yeah, so that's like that scenario, that perfect scenario where he says he didn't touch her, uh, you know, DNA was found and the lab was very happy with that. And then she, I just got a nice card from them. It's one of those cases that was clean. Where we don't get a lot of those, but because all they have to say was "yeah it was consensual. She was all drunk and wanted me and you know always had a crush on me and so." And then her friends would say "yeah she was drunk throwing up, but she was awake." She reports it three days later, how do you ever prove that it wasn't consensual?

iv.   <u>**Initial Response to Reports Perceived as Ambiguous**</u>

Officers point out that cases perceived as ambiguous may be legitimate; however, they

are cases that won't move forward within the criminal justice system because of the assault

"type" or scenario, the individuals involved, or the lack of corroborating evidence. When a case

is perceived as ambiguous, the response process for patrol officers and detectives involves

determining the truth and assessing the seriousness of the case, which has implications for

further investigation. Ambiguous cases involving those with a prior or current relationship are

treated differently than stranger assaults starting with the initial response and even throughout

the investigation in order to determine who is telling the truth. One officer explained the

response to late reporting involving those with a prior relationship: "Now some of these where

they call you two weeks later and say, "Hey, you know, my ex-boyfriend did this, and…" You

know, they don't generate hundreds of tips, and they're not investigated the same way."

Officers state that even when a case is perceived as ambiguous, they respond thoroughly.

A detective warned against the tendency to assume there wasn't malicious intent by the suspect,

even when officers may assume the sex was consensual. This detective said, "You still gotta

watch out for signs of guys purposely, you know because the consent defense is the defense

now." Many others comment that they don't think cases perceived as ambiguous move forward;

most are not prosecuted.

> You want to interview both parties. A lot of times, you have just one side of the story, so we're going to get called, and we'll get that first side of the story. We'll be very complete in our investigation of that first side of the story. There's a second side to there, you know, and that second side a lot of times you got to hunt down…You start adding those stories up, and you – what makes sense? You know, so you've almost got to listen to both stories – what makes sense – you almost got to re-interview at that point to start sorting stuff out. And, again, we still do a complete investigation on these, but I'm guessing most of these don't go anywhere, you know. I don't think prosecutors are writing these. I've never been to a, uh, court case on any of these.

v.   <u>Outside Factors influencing Response to Ambiguous Reports</u>

The cases that are perceived as ambiguous are often described as difficult to prove, or

those that will not move forward within the criminal justice system because of the prosecutor's

office and the role of jury perceptions. Officers describe these cases as frustrating because the

scenario is unclear and because the police department cannot do much beyond the initial

response, which often does not involve arrest or prosecution. One officer described cases in

which both parties knew each other and concluded, "And my guess is those don't go anywhere

once they, you know, get here to the department. I'm guessing on those. Where I'm seeing it's

50/50 in my mind, I'm sure the prosecutor doesn't write those warrants."

a)   Ambiguous Cases are Difficult to Prove

Officers, specifically detectives, talked extensively about cases perceived as ambiguous as difficult to prove. One officer stated simply that they are "hard and difficult because…you know when you have blackout situations and they're tough to prove." Another officers stated, "She reports it three days later, how do you ever prove that it wasn't consensual?" Detectives describe a sense of frustration when responding to cases that are unclear or lack strong evidence. They also highlight the standard of evidence of beyond a reasonable doubt and how difficult this is to deliver in sexual assault cases. One detective explained the difficulty in providing evidence that meets the law's standard:

> Where ours would have to be under physically helpless which basically would mean you'd have to show that they were unconscious. I mean you'd basically have to prove that that person was just so out of it and that it was obvious and clear to the suspect.

One detective made the comment that cases are especially frustrating when the victim is perceived as credible; having no reason to make up the report, but the case still lacks sufficient evidence to demonstrate that a sexual assault occurred.

> It happened a month ago and it was an acquaintance rape and she goes "you're not gonna be able to prove this" and she was crying and she was just cute as can be and she's gonna go to law school. Real nice girl, has no reason to say what happened happened, and she this really happened and I said, "You know it's gonna be really hard unless I get a confession from this guy. I probably won't be able to prove it. I have to be completely honest with you."

b) Ambiguous Cases are Frustrating

Both patrol officers and detectives describe their frustration in responding to sexual assault reports that they perceive as ambiguous. One officer described this frustration by stating,

> Usually the victims are, is self-medic—is self, you know making herself helpless. Yeah, so you can't even put anything on that the bad guy that's swooping in at the last second and then he just says "I thought we had a good night." And um, I mean those are darn near impossible. Yeah, which is, those are frustrating, when you get a lot of those in a row, they get frustrating because then you end up with no answers. And the victims are

upset I can't get charges, and it's just, those frustrating. You know the bad guy's getting away with it, well you know.

Officers also acknowledge the frustration that victims may feel when the report a crime and the case does not move forward. As one officer reflected,

> It's tough, it becomes, at which, like I say which would be so aggravating for a victim to know that it really happened and there's nothing that anyone can uh you know do about it. But it's like he's says it's consensual. She said it wasn't.

A detective also shared the frustration with victims who may not have made their unwillingness clear. Although this detective considered these ambiguous cases "that gray area," they are frustrating because of the difficulty in proving intent when the victim does not express a "no." This officer expounded,

> That's a good question because if a girl is with a guy and she doesn't want to be with him, but she doesn't tell him "no" or she's passed out so obviously that's a 'no.' Passed out is a 'no.' Uh, she's incapacitated. Then, then how does he know? How does the suspect know?...And then the guy comes in and I interview them…and they say "Well uh, I didn't know she didn't want to do it. She didn't say no. Uh, she was drunk, but so was I. We were having fun" and that kind of thing. So sometimes there's that. Again that gray area, that in the girl's mind, she was sexually assaulted, but you have to, again you have to have intent there and prove it.

3. Sexual Assault Reports Perceived as Serious and Legitimate

a. Amount

Officers describe the serious, legitimate cases as occurring far less often than those perceived as ambiguous or false. Although officers point out that they respond to these cases rarely, they are some of the most important to which they respond. One officer clearly demonstrated this sentiment:

> I'd say the least common is probably the complete stranger and a violent act of aggression or assault….It occurs and then, it's those—that's why I became a police officer to catch, you know—those are the true evil in this world of men.

b. **Combination of Factors that Influence Perceptions of Legitimacy**

Officers perceive reports as legitimate when they involve certain individuals or scenarios (e.g., strangers), when another crime is involved, and when the victim's credibility is not questioned. Victims are seen as more credible because they present certain emotional indicators, they are perceived as honest, and they are not of questionable character. Officers perceive cases as legitimate and serious when the report is supported by strong evidence; strong evidence consists of obvious violence or personal injury, physical evidence such as DNA, and the presence or threat of a weapon during the assault.

Figure 5. Combination of Factors influencing Perceptions of Legitimacy and Response
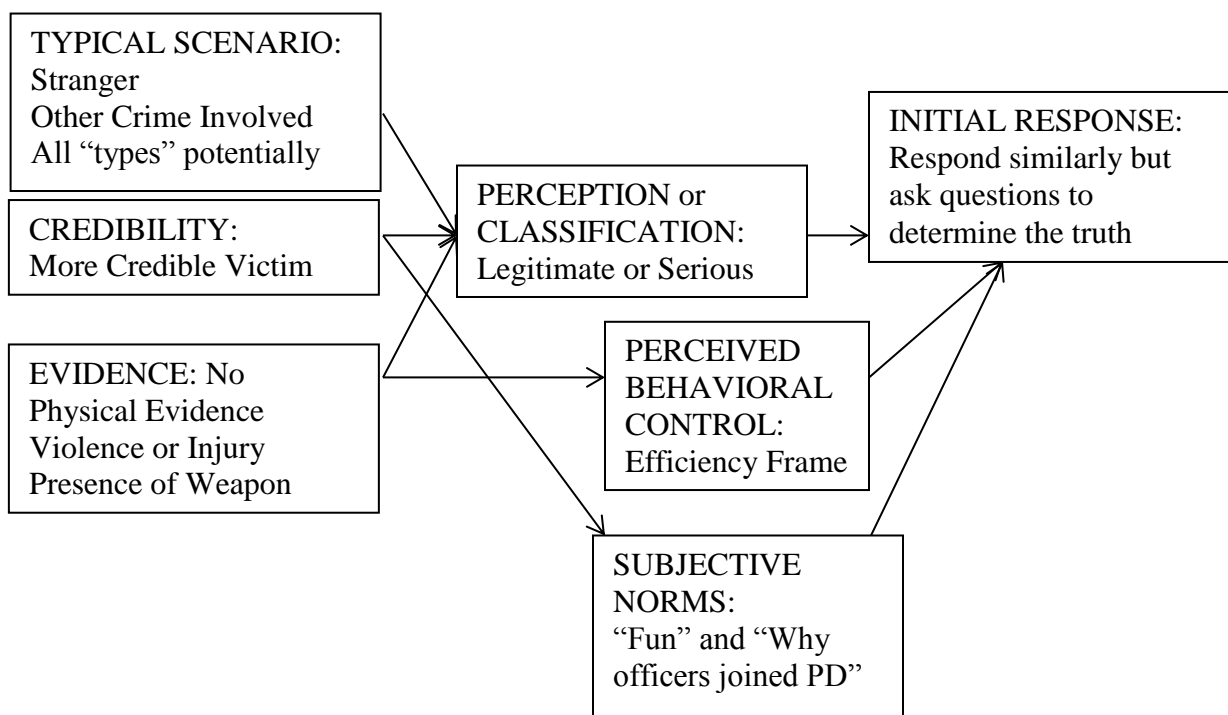
i. **Typical Scenarios Perceived as Serious and Legitimate**

Officers perceive cases as legitimate when they involve strangers (and it's clearly not used as a cover-up as discussed in the False Reporting section), and when another crime is

involved. All scenarios reported to the police are potentially serious and legitimate, but certain "types" are viewed as serious and legitimate from the onset.

a) Stranger Assaults as Serious and Legitimate

Officers describe reports of sexual assault as real or serious when the perpetrator is a stranger. As one officer indicated, "If you got a complete stranger that has took advantage of you, then that's serious. You know, that's one of the really, that's one of the most serious, stranger." A stranger attack is more serious because it can happen when one is least expecting it, and often involves violence and a weapon, compounding the perceived seriousness of the assault. This same officer continued, "The serious one is the stranger…Okay, with a gun, with a knife, in the bushes. You know, people get raped like that." One officer challenged the question about what makes an assault by a stranger more serious than others. This officer said:

> I want you to put yourself in the picture because you're a female, you're minding your own business, you're just coming from the police department doing this fantastic interview, someone grabs you, uh, covers your mouth, throws you on the ground, rape you in the parking lot, how serious is that? You don't know this person, period. Is that serious? That's a total invasion. Differently than if your boyfriend did the same thing, you know, not the same where he grabs your mouth, but you know, you had sex, you didn't want to, but you did anyway and then now you're saying, "I don't want that, I'm calling rape." [laughs]

b) Assaults of those involved in Prostitution as Serious and Legitimate.

Although reports involving prostitution may be perceived as false (as described previously), some officers argue that is entirely possible for someone involved in prostitution to experience a serious CSC. Certain factors in the report give indication that a legitimate sexual assault occurred, such as injury and demeanor of the victim. When describing factors that increase or decrease one's perception of legitimacy, officers comment that someone is perceived

as a more genuine victim when there is obvious injury or fear. One officer described this by saying,

> Most – if you talk to most of the hookers on the street, they will tell you that they've been raped many times and have not reported it. You know, they just take their losses and leave. But the ones that are usually – that are assaulted in the process or beat up and stuff, those are the ones that usually make the reports.

ii.   The Role of Credibility in Reports Perceived as Legitimate

When a victim is perceived as showing the expected emotions or demeanor, the case is considered real or serious. Officers expect a legitimate victim of sexual assault to be traumatized, indicated by panic, being shaken, expressing fear, and less specific indicators that officers can sense. One officer described the expected victim demeanor by saying "And her response, she was more shaken. I mean, it's like, she wasn't faking it. Something did happen." Another officer said, "I don't want to say you know it when you see it, but a real CSC with a real victim looks different than the other ones. You know, just at first glance."

Another officer described the role of victim demeanor in addressing reported sexual assaults involving strangers. This officer described the specific details of a home invasion sexual assault by a stranger, saying it usually happens in one's home during the middle of the night, and involves injury and other tactics to instill fear and vulnerability. The victim is "usually very traumatized. You know, crying. You know, in disbelief, shock, you know?"

The timing of the report also influences some officer's perceptions of the victim's credibility and the subsequent legitimacy of the report.

> Within twenty four hours you get a closer time frame of reporting to the actual event in those, because you have a real victim. You have somebody that's been truly just innocently walking down, minding their own business when they're attacked and assaulted.

Even in cases involving prostitution (deemed in some situations as clearly false), victim credibility, determined by honesty and demeanor, can lead officers to perceive the case as legitimate and serious. Those involved in prostitution can be legitimate victims of sexual assault, but this is only obvious when there are clear indicators, such as "true fear." As one officer stated confidently, "You can tell. When they're screaming and crying and, you know, and they're half-dressed and, you know, they're saying they got raped down here, then you know. Yeah, pretty obvious that they were."

iii. The Role of Evidence in Reports Perceived as Legitimate

Strong physical evidence, most importantly DNA, along with additional clear signs of violence and injury provide officers the information to initially perceive a case as legitimate and potentially serious.

a) Physical Evidence: DNA.

The role of DNA looms large in reported sexual assault cases. As one officer put it directly, "Yeah, DNA. [laughs] DNA's always a wonderful thing." In addition to collecting DNA evidence from the victim, DNA is also collected from the suspect. One officer stated that they will do "penile swabs of the guys. Like if a guy denies ever having sex with her. I've had probably about three or four come back positive, like her DNA is on his penis." According to one officer, even if DNA evidence is not available, there may be other physical evidence of a sexual assault.

> You know, if they've not taken a shower –there still might be evidence of forced intercourse, which is, you know, the tearing and the injuries caused…if it happened a week ago and you got into the [medical examiner program], there's probably still – could potentially be physical evidence that could still be recovered.

In addition to DNA and evidence of injury on the victim's body, evidence at the scene can also validate the victim's testimony. One officer described how they "comb the scene for

any evidence, and we try to look for, well you look for anything that could have the suspects DNA. You try to find anything that looks like a crime scene to corroborate that something happened there. "Anything from the scene as far as like bedding, um, clothing, if it's ripped or that kind of thing" also helps substantiate the report of sexual assault.

b)   Violence or Injury

In addition to DNA, evidence of force and presence of injuries also help to corroborate a reported sexual assault. One officer stated succinctly, "It's violent." Officers most frequently discuss the role of violence or injury when perceiving a case to be a legitimate sexual assault, and ultimately a serious crime. A sign of struggle and physical indicators of injury, such as "bite marks, belt marks, hair pulled out," that give evidence that the crime is serious. The following quotes demonstrate what officers view as evidence of a serious assault:

> We look at their demeanor. We look at what's going on, you know, how they're dressed, you know, if their clothing is ripped or bite marks, scratches, anything to indicate that it was forced upon them.

> Looking at the bedroom, the bedroom is in disarray showing you that a struggle ah had ensued, um the victim's clothing is uh either ripped or mangled, um she's obviously very distraught and hysterical, um obviously I'm picturing the perfect incident here. She's got ah redness to her wrist or arms obviously we know those are uh extremities that are obviously forced down.

Considering cases involving prostitution specifically, officers describe as believable when extensive injury takes place. As one officer states, "Usually, they get – they get thumped on…Usually they get beat up, you know, in the process." Another officer said, "And she was beat up. She had like scrapes and burns like concrete burns on her. Um, she ended up finding her underwear like in her shirt when she put it back on because he'd like ripped her clothes off, per her version."

Reports of sexual assault are perceived as more serious when an additional crime is

involved, such as a robbery or break-in.

> I'm picturing like a burglary where someone uh uses physical force to get into the residence. Looking at the bedroom, the bedroom is in disarray showing you that a struggle ah had ensued, um the victim's clothing is uh either ripped or mangled, um she's obviously very distraught and hysterical, um obviously I'm picturing the perfect incident here.

iv. Initial Response in Reports Perceived as Legitimate and Strong

When the police department does receive reports of sexual assault by strangers, the cases tend to include distinguishing elements that lead officers to perceive and respond differently. As one officer stated, "If it's a stranger it's treated differently than if it's a uh- had a prior relationship with." Officers comment that these cases can be the most serious, "good cases," and the most "fun to work." One officer explained, "The street does a lot of the work and if it's-if there's really a serious, serious rape, the detectives who are in charge, like Sergeant [*name*] will come out with his crew of detectives and they'll go a little bit deeper." Another officer described the process of responding to a "legitimate" CSC:

> I've had, you know, total strangers where break-ins, home invasions occur. The victim will be raped and then, you know, not knowing who the suspect was, you know, maybe you've got a possible description of that suspect but the only thing we rely on, then, is evidence. I've helped on cases where the victim was – it was a break in; victims was raped, her vehicle, credit cards, you know, purse was stolen. I recovered the vehicle – this was back when I was in autos. I found the vehicle. Luckily, I interviewed some people around the car that had been there when the car was dumped. They gave me the name of the suspect so I – yeah, and we made a good case on that one.

v. Outside Factors influencing Response in Legitimate Reports

One of the detectives describes stranger sexual assaults as more "fun" and easier to work because it involves "finding the bad guy":

> So I spend my time trying to find the bad guys, stranger ones which is kind of the fun ones you know you think of composites um or if the victim can't do a composite if they think they can ID um, you know try to get photos together to show them. You know canvasing. Our officers out there know a lot of people. They know, they typically know

the criminals in the area um, you have to decide a lot of times the stranger ones you put out the media um, but those are so rare, but they are fun to work.

4.   **Perception of "Good" Cases**

Separate from a judgment of the legitimacy, officers sometimes referred to reported sexual assaults as "good cases." These cases were labeled as "good" because of being deemed serious by details of the report, such as stranger, evidence to investigate, and because of "good victims." Describing "good" cases by the scenario, one officer said, "One of our guys, I think you talked to him the other day, he had that really good rape, that stranger rape with the two guys. That was a good one." Another officer stated, "But most times – I mean, you know, those early-morning ones are usually pretty good ones, you know, in they're – it's obvious that something has occurred." Presence of evidence may also determine whether or not it is a "good" case: "So that the detective can determine-this is this is a good case, this is not a good case."

The credibility of the victim and the outcome of the case also determine whether or not a case is perceived as a "good" case.

> And a good case for us is like a true victim and somebody we can sink our teeth in, you know, I mean, so it's terrible to wish that bad things happen to good people but when you get a good case then it makes it worth it to do all the crappy ones and then you get back to a good one.

> And I hate to, I call those a good case, and I, I, we shouldn't use that, but it's a good case when you don't have a victim who's lying who makes you feel cynical. To me that's a good case. When you have a victim who is telling you the truth and you find out they're telling you the truth and I think most detectives will call those good cases. Just because um…you know even if whether you, whether there's enough evidence to go to court and win, we don't even use good as in good like as far as we have a lot of evidence as good, as in I've got a good victim.

Sometimes unrelated to the scenario or perception of credibility, a case that moves forward and a perpetrator is charged are described by some officers as "good" cases. One officer described, "And so you get cases like that that are actually good. Those are good ones to get.

Ones to remind you weird things happen." Another officer described a "good" case:

> Occasionally we get stranger rapes but it's the drunk bar things are way more common than the stranger rapes. One of our guys, I think you talked to him the other day, he had that really good rape, that stranger rape with the two guys. That was a good one.

D.   Summary of Qualitative Results

The qualitative results demonstrate that while officers express unique perspectives, based on personal characteristics, experience and role in the department, there are common themes regarding the way in which cases are perceived. A set of factors influence police officer perceptions of cases as either false, or ambiguous, or legitimate. Officers explain that their response is similar in all cases of reported sexual assault, however, there are slight differences in how the calls need to be handled based on the scenario. For instance, a report of an assault by a stranger might involve a pursuit of the suspect, whereas a report of an assault by a partner might involve intensive questioning with both the victim and the suspect. It is clear that elements of rape myth acceptance still exist within officer definitions and perceptions of what constitutes a "legitimate" sexual assault and a credible victim. Officers find what they deem as ambiguous cases the most frustrating because they feel the truth is hard to uncover, and there is little they can do to pursue justice.

Throughout the qualitative interviews, officers made suggestions about what could be improved within the procedural response to reported sexual assaults so that reports are well written, interviews are conducted sensitively, and evidence can be collected in order to progress the case. These suggestions, as well as implications of qualitative findings for policy, training, and practice will be incorporated in the discussion section.

The qualitative results demonstrate patterns in police officer schema related to sexual assault. Officers share similar definitions of sexual assault and describe similar "types" of

scenarios to which they respond. Additionally, when describing these different scenarios and their perceptions of the case and subsequent response, themes emerged related to the factors related to those various perceptions and response, such as credibility of the victim and the influence of peers. While patterns emerged between "types" of scenarios, credibility factors, evidentiary factors and perceptions of the case, these "models" of relationship are not tested explicitly in Phase Two, the quantitative phase of the study. Because of the flexibility of qualitative research, officers could describe a vast array of typical scenarios, evidentiary factors, and a variety of additional factors that may influence perceptions and response, all of which are not included in the survey for Phase Two. Therefore, the combination of factors that influence perceptions and response found in the qualitative findings suggest possible models to test in the future. However, in the current study, the analyses follow the hypotheses originally set forth and proposed by the conceptual framework.

VI. QUANTITATIVE METHODS

The quantitative methodology includes a summary of how the qualitative interviews informed research design decisions for Phase Two, as well as a description of the final research design, data collection methods and procedures, sampling methods, measures, data analysis procedures, and human subjects considerations.

A.   Qualitative Interviews Informed Phase Two Methods

The qualitative interviews from Phase One informed the refinement of methods for Phase two, the quantitative portion of this study. First, case summaries were written for each of the ten qualitative interview transcripts, which helped to identify information useful for refining the methods and measures for Phase Two of the study. The qualitative interviews provided clarification on the procedures involved in responding to reported sexual assaults, confirmation on terminology used by officers, clarification on the role of various actors within the police department, a description of "typical" scenarios or reported sexual assault case examples, and an understanding of various factors that make a case seem like a false report, an ambiguous case, or a legitimate and strong case, in addition to factors that influence perceptions of the victim.

A better understanding of procedure and decision making roles helped to clarify the study's dependent variables in Phase Two. Although officers have the ability to change the "title" of the case from Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) to something else, findings indicate that this rarely or never happens. Instead, there are more variations in how officers initially perceive or classify a report as false, ambiguous, or legitimate. There is also variation in perceived seriousness of the case. Additionally, officers perceive that they don't have any real discretion or decision making power; that their job is not to determine whether or not a sexual assault really happened, but to collect and present evidence to the detectives and ultimately the Prosecutor's

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Office. Regardless of "real" decision making power or not, officers described the effect of their response on processes and outcomes in the case. Perceptions of credibility and legitimacy, as well as characteristics of the case, can influence report writing, which can then influence the detective's work, and ultimately the decision of the Prosecutor to take the case or not. Because of these findings, the dependent variables were adjusted to reflect these nuances in perceptions and decision making (or decision making intentions) in reported sexual assault cases. The concept attitude towards the behavior, or the extent to which officers perceive certain cases as worthwhile, was added as a dependent variable, rather than a predictor, since one's attitude about the response may more accurately reflect one's behavioral intentions.

Findings from the qualitative interviews also influenced revisions of the vignette. Because officers described cases involving alcohol and a known suspect, these two factors remained the manipulated variables in the vignette. Additionally, the revised vignette incorporated details (e.g., time of night) when patrol officers (the largest portion of the Phase Two sample) are most likely to respond to reported sexual assaults when detectives are not on-duty. This offers the possibility of asking officers whether or not they would call in a detective, reflecting perceived seriousness of the case.

Qualitative interviews confirmed the use of the proposed measures within Phase Two of the study, such as the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale and the Attributions of Blame Scale. Interviews helped to develop a better understanding of various roles within the police department, and subsequently provided verification on how to ask demographic and police experience questions. Because officers commented on the complexity of responding to reported sexual assaults, I added comment boxes within the survey in order to give officers an opportunity to explain their choices and survey responses. Because many of the participants in the

qualitative interviews expressed frustration with the crime itself and with a lack of tangible outcome within many cases, I added two open-ended questions at the end of the survey. I wanted to provide an opportunity for officers to express their own views on what could improve the response to CSC cases. These questions included the following: "Finally, if one thing could be done to help you in your work responding to CSC cases, what would it be?" and "If one thing could be done to ensure justice in CSC cases, what would it be?"

B.   Quantitative Methodology

The second phase of the study includes a self-administered online survey with a larger sample of sworn police officers. The survey was developed and administered through Qualtrics (2012) survey software. The survey itself includes a vignette to which officers respond, as well as all attitudinal and decision making constructs within the study. The following section presents the research design used to maximize response rate and completion.

1.   Research Design

The study incorporated many features to maximize response rate and full survey completion. In order to recruit and engage participants, I incorporated elements of Dillman and colleague's (2008) "tailored design," which involves "using multiple motivational features in compatible and mutually supportive ways to encourage high quantity and quality of response" (p. 16). Tailored design is developed from a social exchange perspective on human behavior, and suggests that motivations influence response or non-response. Tailored design builds in strategies to increase rewards and decrease costs of responding (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2008). The study's design included the following strategies to increase rewards, reduce perceived costs, and establish trust with potential respondents.

a.   <u>Increasing Rewards</u>

In order to increase rewards, the researcher showed positive regard for potential respondents by attending patrol briefings at different shifts throughout the course of a week in order to introduce the research study. During this introduction, I asked for the assistance of police officers, appealing to helping tendencies or norms of responsibility (Groves, Cialdini, & Couper, 1992). This seemed particularly important in recruiting personnel from the police department, and the request referred to their authority in the research topic area. In addition, I showed positive regard and a tangible reward or token of appreciation in advance by providing refreshments and saying "thank you in advance."

All communication was tailored to the survey population, appealed to shared values, and emphasized the study's usefulness to their work (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2008). After the initial survey invitation by e-mail, I used the phrase "the important questionnaire I sent to you recently" in follow-up e-mail reminders. The e-mail reminders also provided social validation by stating that other personnel in the police department had already completed the survey, which can influence participation (Groves et al., 1992). In addition, the online survey was easily accessible from any computer with Internet access, was intentionally allowed on the police department's computer system in the headquarter offices and patrol cars, and included a number of features for ease of understanding.

b.   <u>Decreasing Costs</u>

In addition to increasing rewards, tailored design suggests decreasing the costs to survey response. In this study, efforts to make response more convenient included Department permission to complete the survey while on-duty, access to the survey link from patrol cars and other work computers, and a link within emails that took respondents directly to the survey. In

addition, respondents were allowed to return to the survey at a later time, at which point it brought the respondent to the place where he or she left off. The survey itself minimized requests to obtain personal information and utilized easy-to-answer formats for questions and answer responses (Dillman, Sinclair & Clark, 1993).

c. Establishing Trust

As an outsider to the police department, the research method included strategies to build trust. First, I obtained sponsorship by the legitimate authority, the Chief of Police, along with the Captain of Support Services and the Sergeant Lieutenant in the Detective Division. These individuals are well-respected within the Department and helped to provide credibility to me as a researcher and to support respondent participation. Attending patrol briefings in person was another attempt to establish trust, introducing myself to potential participants, explaining the study purpose, and showing a token of appreciation in advance. This was also an occasion to explain how confidentiality and security of information would be maintained. Follow-up emails were kept brief and less formal than the initial recruitment email. Three follow-up emails were sent, approximately one week apart (Dillman et al., 2008).

2. Sampling Plan

The sampling for the quantitative survey occurred through a convenience sample in which all personnel in the sampling frame were invited to participate. The sampling frame included all sworn officers and was provided by the Captain of Support Services at the police department. The list contained 294 email addresses with no names or other identifying information. The 294 email addresses reflect all current sworn officers in the department at the time of the study. According to Dillman and colleagues (2008), with a population size of 300 and a 5% confidence level, a sample should be at least 164. A statistical power analysis

provided additional information on the number of police officers for the necessary sample size for the quantitative survey based on the final number of variables included in the analysis. Assuming 30 cases per vignette cell in the 2x2 design, analysis requires 120 respondents. Based on this algorithm, recruitment aimed for inviting all 294 sworn officers and ending with at least 120 completed questionnaires. A power analysis for regression using an alpha level of 0.05, 8 predictors, a moderate effect size of 0.15 and a desired statistical power level of 0.8, requires 108 respondents.

3. <u>Vignette Methodology</u>

A key element of the research design incorporates the use of vignette methodology, in which a vignette of a hypothetical sexual assault report is presented to the study participant. According to Sleed and colleagues, most research addressing issues of victimization and violence, such as date rape, has used written vignettes (Sleed, Durrheim, Solomon, & Baxter, 2002). Vignettes include short descriptions of a person or a scenario that contains factors considered important to decision-making or judgments of the respondent. Based on the literature review and incorporation of qualitative interview findings, vignettes mirror hypothetical situations (albeit with much less detailed description and information) and incorporate important factors that differentiate or initiate the way in which officers perceive and respond to the sexual assault report (Alexander & Becker, 1978; Sleed et al., 2002). In this study, the vignettes include manipulation of key case characteristics, specifically the use of alcohol by the victim-survivor and the relationship between the victim-survivor and the accused perpetrator in order to determine the relative influence of those factors on police officer perceptions and decision making. Police officers respond to the vignette, indicating their initial perception or classification

of the case, along with responses to other factors that may influence their perceptions and decision making.

Vignettes allow the presentation of a scenario in a concrete, detailed, context-specific, and standardized way. Vignettes are particularly useful in situations which prompt "it depends" responses (Torres, 2009). Alexander and Becker (1978) argue for the appropriateness of vignettes: "Rather than allowing or requiring respondents to impute such information themselves in reacting to simple, direct, abstract questions about the person or situation, the additional detail is provided by the researcher and is thereby standardized across respondents" (p.94). Even more useful is the ability to systematically vary characteristics in the scenario description to analyze the effects of those characteristics on respondent's judgments and decision making. The "systematic variation of characteristics in the vignette allows for a rather precise estimate of the effects of changes in *combinations* of variables as well as individual variables on corresponding changes in respondent attitude or judgment" (Alexander & Becker, 1978, p.95).

Vignettes pose both strengths and possible limitations. Some argue that through contextualization and standardization, vignettes provide a more valid and reliable measure of opinions than "simpler" and more abstract questionnaires. Literature that critically assesses the strengths and limitations of vignette methodology suggests that vignettes are particularly helpful when the research question concerns a sensitive or potentially difficult topic (Torres 2009). In contrast, vignettes are only a snapshot of reality, and so they can never convey the real complexity in life. Despite some limitations, many studies use vignettes in understanding responses to sexual assault (Maurer, & Robinson, 2008; Schuller, & Stewart, 2000; Schneider, Mori, Lambert, & Wong, 2009; Taylor & Sorenson, 2005).

In this study, a basic vignette was used with the two key characteristics inserted or deleted (noted in brackets), which produced four distinct versions of the vignette. Each respondent was presented one version of the vignette preceded by the instruction: "Please read the following scenario carefully. The next few pages of questions will ask about how you would respond to this hypothetical scenario." The vignette included the following language:

> At 3:00 in the morning, a call came in from dispatch stating that a young woman had reported a sexual assault. You respond to the call by going to the alleged victim's apartment. Upon arriving, the woman states that she had been at a party the night before for her friend's birthday. While she was at the party she [had / had not] been drinking and [met a guy / ran into her ex-boyfriend]. [The guy she met / Her ex-boyfriend] said she should go over to his apartment to talk more and have coffee. The woman reports that she agreed to go to his apartment but that [the guy she met / her ex-boyfriend] had sexual intercourse with her even after she asked him to stop.

4.   **Measurement and Instrumentation**

Measures are derived from the theoretical framework of this study that organizes and frames key concepts from schema theory, TPB, and attribution theory. Through the identification of key concepts in these theories in conjunction with the findings from the qualitative phase of the study, quantitative measures cover the main dependent and independent variables specified in this modified TPB/schema/attribution model. Measures will explore the dependent variable of intentional behavior from TBP, or the intention to write the report as a CSC and continue the investigative process. Measures will also assess variables stemming from attribution theory, such as credibility, legitimacy, responsibility, and attributions of blame. Independent variables fitting TPB and schema theory, such as the role of individual behavioral beliefs and attitudes; external factors, such as individual officer characteristics; subjective norms or compliance with subjective norms; use of normative and efficiency frames; and perceived behavioral control will also be measured in the quantitative portion of this study. Multiple items measure each concept in the theoretical framework. Measures from published scales and

measures created based on the theoretical framework will be tested for possible scale creation

and reliability. Scales are used in the final analysis when there is sufficient reliability.

a. Measurement of Dependent Variables

Dependent variable measures include items for (1) immediate perception of the case, (2)

intention to classify the case as a Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) and recommend that the

victim receive a medical examination and social support from the YWCA, and (3) intention to

call out a detective immediately and arrest the suspect, if identified (measuring perceived

seriousness), and (4) attitudes towards one's behavioral intentions.

Immediately following the vignette, officers responded to an open-ended question that

asked them to briefly list additional information they would need, or additional questions they

would ask. After the open-ended question, a series of questions assessed the extent to which the

officer considers the scenario to be a legitimate crime. Officers responded to the following three

questions on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 represents "not at all" and 7 represents "very much". First,

"To what extent do you consider this to be a legitimate sexual assault or CSC?" Second, "To

what extent do you consider this to be a credible victim? Third, "To what extent do you consider

this to be a 'strong' case?" These three items were combined to form a global measure of one's

initial perception or classification of the case. Following these rating questions, the

questionnaire includes an open-ended question, "What would be the most important information

you would need to determine if the victim's report is legitimate in this case?" The open-ended

questions in this section were coded for themes and are presented in the results section.

Officers were then asked four questions regarding behavioral intention, which were

labeled as the "Recommendation for Response" and were introduced with "Considering the

scenario again, what is the likelihood that you would recommend the following." These

questions were answered on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "not at all" and 7 means "very much." These questions include the following: "Would you recommend writing the report as a CSC?" Second, "Would you recommend that the alleged victim go to the YWCA?" Third, "Would you recommend that a detective respond immediately?" Fourth, "Would you recommend arrest of the suspect if identified?" These items were combined to form two measures of behavioral intention.

Additionally, one's attitude towards these behavioral intentions, a proxy for the extent to which an officer would actually carry out the behavioral intention, was measured through three items, later combined to a scale. According to Ajzen (2006), measuring attitudes towards the behavior will ideally use about four evaluative items following a single 'stem' which defines the behavior under investigation. Because of this, participants responded with ratings on a scale of 1 to 7 about how they feel about a variety of responses, where 1 means "useless" and 7 means "worthwhile". The first item assessed the extent to which the officer believes writing the report as a CSC is useless or worthwhile. Additional items assessed the extent to which going to the YWCA and arrest of the suspect is worthwhile or useless.

b. Independent Variables

Independent variables fitting TPB, schema theory, and attribution theory were also included. These include internal factors, such as officer experience, race, gender, rape myth acceptance, and attributions of blame; and external factors, such as, subjective norms or normative frames and compliance with subjective norms; and perceived behavioral control and efficiency frames.

i.   <u>Sexual Assault Scenarios or Vignettes</u>

As described previously, two factors—relationship status and victim substance use—were manipulated within a scenario which involves a generic "young woman" reporting the sexual assault, resulting in four possible combinations (See Table I). Each respondent was randomly assigned to read one of four vignettes. The two factors were dummy coded to indicate the presence or absence of victim alcohol use, and the presence or absence of a prior relationship.

TABLE I
VIGNETTE RANDOMIZATION

Vignette 1	Vignette 2
Drinking / Met a Guy	Not Drinking / Met a Guy
Vignette 3	Vignette 4
Drinking / Ex-Boyfriend	Not Drinking / Ex-Boyfriend

ii.   <u>Rape Myth Acceptance</u>

Police officer attitudes and acceptance of rape myths will be measured by a scale developed from both the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale-Short Form (IRMA-SF; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994) and the Subtle Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (McMahon & Farmer, 2011). Because of concerns about the language used in the IRMAS, McMahon and Farmer (2011) developed a slightly revised version of the IRMAS, the Subtle Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. This scale eliminates potentially biased or strong language (e.g. caught having an illicit affair) and replaces with more common vernacular (e.g. caught cheating). Additionally, the Subtle Rape Myth Acceptance Scale uses the word "girl" rather than "woman." This current study used a combination of wording from both the IRMAS and the Subtle Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, in that the survey items use the more common vernacular but still use the term "woman" rather than "girl" throughout. For example, one item included on the rape myth acceptance scale is the

following: "A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems." Because the Subtle Rape Myth Acceptance Scale is only a slight refinement of the IRMAS, studies on the validity and reliability of IRMAS will be presented next.

The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was formulated after a review of the literature and tested extensively. Lonsway and Fitzgerald's (1994) review of the rape myth literature identified 24 different instruments designed to assess rape myth acceptance, all of which varied significantly in their definitions of the construct and representation of the content domain. Because of this, Payne and colleagues (1999) developed items for a revised scale through an extensive literature review, discussions with experts, and pretesting with student samples. A series of six studies were conducted to explore the structure underlying rape myths and to develop the 45-item IRMAS as well as the 20-item IRMAS-SF.

Payne and colleagues (1999) demonstrated the IRMA's theoretical basis as well as its construct or content validity by high correlations to measures of traditional gender role stereotypes, adversarial sexual beliefs, and attitudes towards violence. Construct validity of the IRMA and IRMA-SF was examined in a series of three studies, all using different samples, methodologies, and analytic strategies. Study 1 included 604 undergraduate students, divided into Sample A (160 women and 142 men) with a mean age of 19.0 years ($SD = 3.0$) and Sample B (160 women and 142 men) with a mean age of 18.6 years ($SD = 2.4$) at a large Midwestern university. This study conducted exploratory and confirmatory multivariate analyses revealing a structure consisting of both a general myth component, or total score, and seven subcomponents: "She asked for it," "It wasn't really rape," "He didn't mean to," "She wanted it," "She lied," "Rape is a trivial event," and "Rape is a deviant event."

Additional studies confirm the construct validity and reliability of the IRMA (Payne et al., 1999). A second study by Payne and colleagues replicated Study 1 but used a new sample and paired comparisons methodology. The new sample consisted of 24 men and 23 women, with an average age of 25.5 ($SD = 10.8$), 31 as part of an introductory psychology course requirement and 16 university employees recruited for the study. Study 3 details the development procedures for the IRMA and presents statistics demonstrating psychometric properties of the IRMA and the IRMA-SF using a pool of 604 university students with a mean age of 18.9 years ($SD = 2.2$). Finally, studies 4-6 support the construct validity of the IRMA.

The IRMA-SF is designed to possess an adequate alpha (i.e. greater than 0.80), provide an accurate representation of rape myths, and meet the criteria for the full 45-item scale. Scale development psychometrics included an alpha for IRMA-SF of .87, with corrected item-to-total correlations ranging from .34 to .65. The uncorrected correlation between the full 45-item IRMA scale and the 20-item IRMA-SF scale is $r(602) = 0.97, p<.001$, indicating that IRMA-SF is a more than sufficient proxy for the IRMA when assessing only general rape myth acceptance.

iii.   Attributions of Blame

Bieneck and Krahé's (2011) attribution of blame scale was used, which consists of eight items that ask respondents to evaluate aspects of victim and suspect responsibility and blameworthiness. These questions use a seven-point rating scale where 1 represents "not at all" and 7 represents "very much." The attribution of blame scale is divided into two subscales: suspect blame and victim blame, each consisting of four items. An example of an item measuring victim blame includes the following: "Do you think the victim is to blame for the incident?" An example of an item measuring suspect blame includes the following: "Do you think the suspect should be held criminally liable for a sexual assault/CSC?" From these two

scales, a measure of relative suspect blame was created by subtracting a respondent's victim blame score from the respondent's suspect blame score.

iv.   Subjective Norms Measures

Subjective norm measures will ask about the expectations of important referent groups and individuals. These important references will include peers, one's supervisors, and other police officers more generally. Normative beliefs will be measured by police officer perceptions regarding the extent to which "most officers" would respond. Officers responded to two items, "Most police officers I know would classify as a CSC" and "Most police officers I know would consider this a legitimate sexual assault or CSC," both answered on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means "definitely not" and 7 means "definitely will."

v.   Compliance with Subjective Norms

Motivation to comply with these subjective norms was measured through an additional two items assessing the importance of approval by peers and supervisors. These included "The approval of my peers about how I handle this case is important to me," and "My supervisor's approval of how I handle this case is important to me," both measured on a 7 point- scale with 1 as "not at all" and 7 as "very much."

vi.   Perceived Behavioral Control

Control beliefs give rise to "perceived behavioral control," which refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behavior. Perceived behavioral control was assessed by the following items: perception of department policy requirements, perception of CSC reports limiting ability to respond to more important calls, and perception of the importance of information from victim in the quality of the report. These items were measured on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 7 means "strongly agree."

vii.   Decisional Frames

Two items were included to assess the decisional frame that was endorsed. The first item assessed the endorsement or operation of the *efficiency frame*: "My primary goal is to handle this case in a way that will cause me the fewest hassles." The next item assessed the *normative frame*: "My primary goal is to determine who is to blame in this case." Both questions were measured on a 7 point- scale where 1 means "not at all" and 7 means "very much."

c.   Control Variables

i.   Social Desirability Scale

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale-Short Form C (M-C Form C) was included as a control variable (Reynolds, 1982). The Marlowe-Crowne scale is often used as an adjunct measure to assess the impact of social desirability on self-report measures. The 13-item M-C Form C has demonstrated strong psychometric properties, both reliability and validity. The Short Form C consists of 13 items that are answered by selecting either "True" or "False." An example is "No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener." Indicating "True" on this response would score as higher social desirability bias. Necessary items were reversed and computed to form the scale measure. These items were included as the last set of measures on the survey.

ii.   Police Officer Characteristics

In addition to measures of officer attitudes and intended behavioral response, this study also measured other police officer characteristics. These include demographic characteristics, such as officer age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level; and police experience, such as number of years in law enforcement, number of years at the study police department, position

and area of assignment, experience responding to sexual assault cases, and experience with specific training regarding sexual assault.

5.   Open-ended Questions about Response to Sexual Assault Reports

At the end of the survey, there were two additional open-ended questions that provided officers a space to make add comments about their response to CSC calls. These questions were added out of respect for officers, so that they were given an additional chance to explain their responses, state suggestions for response improvement, and state their own opinions about the topic. The two questions asked include the following: 1) Finally, if one thing could be done to help you in your work responding to CSC cases, what would be it? 2) If one thing could be done to ensure justice in CSC cases, what would it be?

6.   Data Collection Plan: Online Survey

Phase Two data collection involved an online survey with police officers, incorporating the language and key concepts from the qualitative interviews into the measures as described in the previous section. A number of design and administration considerations were made before administering the online survey using Qualtrics (2012) software.

a.   Survey Development and Pretesting

The survey went through two phases of pretesting. First, a hard copy version of the questionnaire was pre-tested thoroughly with three retired police officers, two of whom had previously worked at the study police department. These individuals were chosen because of their specialized knowledge and experience as police officers. This included going through the survey and answering questions, as well as making note of questions that were confusing or perceived as problematic. The pre-test included a discussion with the researcher afterward on the experience of taking the survey, along with reviewing specific suggestions for improvement.

The survey was revised in the following ways based on this feedback: 1) adjustment to vignette (more specificity suggested); 2) slight change in RMA measure from IRMAS-SF to combined IRMAS-SF and Subtle Rape Myth Acceptance Scale; 3) refined dependent variables; 4) eliminated redundant questions; 5) utilized less suggestive wording (e.g., the accused perpetrator, the alleged suspect, the alleged victim) rather than wording that implied that a crime had occurred (e.g., "the rape"); 6) eliminated several open-ended questions that added unnecessary length; and 7) selected a different Attributions of Blame Scale (Bieneck & Krahé, 2011). The attributions scale used on the pre-test was perceived as overly judgmental, and distracted the officers from the rest of the survey. Detail added to the vignette included information on the reported time of the sexual assault, and clearly indicated that the suspect proceeded to have "sexual intercourse" after the victim "asked him to stop." Additionally, the location of the assault was added.

After revisions were made to the survey based on the initial pre-test with three retired police officers, it was created in Qualtrics and pretested again, this time with eight individuals. This larger group was recruited because of their specialized knowledge in survey design, measure development, questionnaire quality, or previous police experience. This pre-test gave a better estimate of survey length of completion, questions that were confusing, and feedback on survey look and feel. This pre-test was also used to be able to test the data download. Feedback to this second pre-test came through modified cognitive interviews of the complete questionnaire in order to identify wording, question order, visual design, and navigation problems (Dillman et al., 2008; see p. 224 for a description of this process).

b. **Online Survey Design**

The researcher intentionally designed the online survey to increase rewards and decrease costs. A lightly shaded background was used because it may create a region in which respondents can focus attention, it allows for the use of white answer spaces, and black font text can easily be perceived (Dillman et al., 2008). Dillman and colleagues (2008) suggest repeating the title from the opening page and choosing a graphic that respondents will identify with; this may encourage participation by focusing attention on respondents. Thus, the screen format emphasized the respondent by including "[name of police department]" as a header with the title of the study "Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Cases" as a footer.

In order to avoid unintended "cognitive-based" or "normative-based" order effects or priming, branching techniques were utilized within the Qualtrics survey (Dillman et al., 2008). According to Dillman and colleagues, "the effects of earlier questions on answers to later questions are referred to as question order effects" (2008, p. 160). To reduce possible order effects, the rape myth acceptance scale section and the section with the vignette and vignette response questions were counterbalanced. This counterbalance allowed half of the participants to answer the RMAS first and then questions about the sexual assault scenarios, while the other half of participants answered the survey questions in the opposite order. In addition, RMAS items were randomized so the order of scale questions appeared different for each respondent.

c. **Online Survey Data Collection Procedures**

The survey was a self-administered online survey using Qualtrics software. Before the survey went "live", the researcher attended patrol line-ups at different shifts to give a brief introduction, explaining the purpose of the study and informed consent, and alerting officers that they would be receiving an email requesting their participation. In addition, a lieutenant in the

Support Services Division and a lieutenant in the Investigative Division sent emails to all sworn

officers alerting them to the upcoming research study request. Collecting data through a self-

administered online questionnaire potentially provided some level of distance for officers from

the place of employment, supervisors, and peers when answering sensitive questions. While the

topic itself is sensitive and may be apt to social desirability bias, the use of an anonymous, self-

administered survey was deemed ideal in order to get the most accurate responses and minimize

social desirability bias if possible.

7. **Quantitative Data Analysis**

a. **Data Cleaning**

Data for this study were entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0. All variables were examined for missing values, outliers, and

distributions. First, cleaning of the data file identified cases that only responded to the first page

of the online survey. Second, univariate analysis on all measures helped to describe responses to

individual items and scales, including a determination of whether assumptions were met for

various bivariate and multivariate statistics and if transformation were needed.

b. **Scale Statistics**

Multiple items used for concepts in the model (e.g., attitudes towards the behavior,

subjective norms, perceived behavioral control) were analyzed for internal consistency and the

possibility of creating a scale with the items included in each concept. Analysis included item

and scale analyses on items forming published scales (i.e. RMA, Attributions of Blame,

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Bias Scale) as well as original scales to establish internal

consistency. Cronbach's alpha was used to test scale reliability. Individual items were summed

to create the composite variables for the direct measures of important concepts when there was

good reliability. Individual items were reversed when necessary to create scales. Additionally,

all scales were created using both listwise deletion and mean imputation for missing values (item

mean imputation and vignette group mean imputation). In order to test for the randomness of

missing values, a dummy variable was created for every scale or item used in hypothesis testing,

in which "0" represented no missing and "1" represented any missing. T-tests were performed to

compare the dependent variables with all dummy variables indicating missing values. Because

none of these differences were significant, there was sufficient justification to use mean

imputation in scale creation. During the mean imputation process, a rule existed to not include a

case in mean imputation if it was missing more than 20% of the items on a given scale (see

Bono, Doublas, Kimberlin, & Bruce, 2007; Downey & King, 1998). It is important to note that

the group mean (based on vignette group assignment) was used for items referring to the vignette

and the sample mean (or item mean) was used for items not referring specifically to the vignette.

c.   <u>Univariate Analysis</u>

Categorical variables were described using frequencies and percentages. Continuous

variables were described using the mean, standard deviation, and range. Tests of normality and

kurtosis were performed on all continuous variables, including individual items and scales used

in hypothesis testing.

d.   <u>Bivariate Analysis</u>

Correlation matrices using Pearson's r were conducted on all predictor, control, and

dependent variables in this study that were at the ordinal, interval or ratio level. When the

dependent variable was skewed, Spearman's rho was conducted to look at correlations.

Independent samples t-tests and One-way ANOVAS were used to determine if predictor

variables and control variables that were measured at the nominal level significantly differed on

the three main dependent variables. Because two dependent variables were transformed from an interval level variable to a dichotomous variable, bivariate tests utilized chi-square, t-tests, and one-way ANOVAS.

e. Multivariate Analysis

Finally, in order to determine the relative contribution of each predictor while controlling for the effects of other predictors and control variables, data analysis includes hierarchical multivariate regression models. Hierarchical regression models were performed separately for each of the three dependent variables. Hierarchical procedures were chosen because it allows the researcher to decide the order in which controls and predictors are entered into the model. Control variables were always entered as the first block and subsequent blocks followed the theoretical framework for proposed relationship between variables. This also allowed for the exploration of possible mediation effects. Each dependent variable was entered in a model with the measures of attitude (rape myth acceptance), vignette alcohol variable, vignette relationship variable, behavioral beliefs, subjective norms, compliance with subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, attributions, and decisional frames as predictor variables. A linear hierarchical regression was used for the first dependent variable, perceptions of the case as legitimate, credible, and strong (hereafter referred to often as *perception of a "good" case*). A logistic regression was used for the second dependent variable, behavioral intention to write the report as a CSC and recommend that the victim go to the YWCA (hereafter referred to often as *behavioral intention 1—Write CSC & Refer to YWCA*), as well as the dichotomized attitude toward the behavior variable. A linear hierarchical regression was used for the third dependent variable, behavioral intention to call out a detective immediately, or arrest the suspect, if identified (*hereafter referred to often as behavioral intention 2—Call Detective & Arrest).* A

more specific description of hierarchical models will be included in the subsequent results section. Tests for multicollinearity were included and reviewed for all regression models.

Several ordinal level variables are treated as interval level when included in regression models. While the use of correlation and multiple regression procedures assumes interval data, Jaccard and Wan summarize that "for many statistical tests, rather severe departures (from intervalness) do not seem to affect Type I and Type II errors dramatically" (1996, p. 4).   The 7-point Likert scales gives additional justification for treatment as interval.

8.   <u>Human Subjects Protection: Phase Two</u>

A number of procedures were put in place in order to minimize risks for potential research participants. If a respondent felt uncomfortable or distressed during survey completion, they were allowed to skip questions or withdraw participation at any time without any consequence. Additionally, the response burden was intended to be low with an approximate length of survey completion at 20 minutes or less. To protect against confidentiality risks, no identifying information was collected in Phase 2. The spreadsheet with officer email addresses for the online survey did not include any identifying information other than the email address. The survey itself included an informed consent on the front page of the survey, in which officers were required to select either "I Disagree" or "I Agree" at the end of the consent language. If someone selected "I Disagree," the survey automatically closed and thanked the potential respondent for their time. A participant could only proceed to survey completion by clicking "I Agree."

Efforts to eliminate any perceived coercion from the Department to participate were taken. For the quantitative survey, I communicated directly with potential participants in-person at roll calls and through email messages. Survey completion could occur anywhere the

participant had access to the internet, either at work or elsewhere. At recruitment or introduction of the survey at roll calls and by email, I emphasized that participation was voluntary, would not impact their employment in any way, and that whether or not they chose to participate would not be reported to anyone at the department.

Because survey items cover the sensitive topic of sexual assault which may also be related to their job performance, officers were told that they are free to not answer questions or they may stop completing the survey at any time. An ID was assigned to each survey once completed, but due to anonymity, there is no possibility that individual identifying information will be included in the dataset or any final reports.   Survey data was stored in SPSS on a password-protected computer.

VII. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

This section describes the results of Phase Two of the study, and includes a more thorough description of data collection and cleaning, a brief explanation of how missing data was handled, a description of scale statistics, the univariate and bivariate results, as well as decision rules and results from the multivariate regression models.

A.   Data Collection and Cleaning

Data collection and recruitment for the quantitative phase of the study occurred for a period of four weeks, between September 7 and October 6 of 2012. The initial email was sent on September 7, with reminder emails sent on September 12 and 19. On October 3, a follow-up email with "last call" was sent to the participants who had not completed the survey. The survey link was sent to 294 potential participants, and 198 minimally opened the survey link. Of those, 23 (11.6%) only completed the first page of the survey which asked about police officer role and experience. One person opened the survey link but did not agree to participate; therefore, a total of 174 respondents completed the majority of the survey.

B.   Comparison of Survey Completion and Non-Completion

Table II displays a comparison of characteristics between those who completed the survey and those who opened the survey without completing more than the first page of the survey. Because demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey, limited demographic data is available for those who opened the survey but did not complete it. In total, there were 23 potential participants who answered questions about their role and experience in law enforcement, but failed to complete the rest of the survey, including all dependent and independent variables in the survey. Table II demonstrates that there were no obvious

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differences in police characteristics between those who opened the survey and did not complete it and those who completed the entire survey.

In comparing the proportion of officers to supervisors who completed the survey or not (sergeants, lieutenants, and captains), there was no systematic variation by rank ($\chi^2 = 0.401$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.572$). There was also no association between area assignment and completing the survey or not ($\chi^2 = 1.74$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.419$). There was no relationship between whether someone had training on sexual assault and whether they completed the survey ($\chi^2 = 0.000$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.991$) (See Table II).

TABLE II

COMPARISON OF EXCLUDED CASES BY FINAL SAMPLE: POLICE ROLE

	Deleted Cases (N = 23) n (%)	Final Sample (N = 174) n (%)
Area Assignment	n = 18	N = 174
Patrol	11 (61.1)	116 (66.7)
Detective	6 (33.3)	37 (21.3)
Other	1 (5.6)	21 (12.1)
Rank	n = 19	N = 174
Officer	14 (73.7)	139 (79.9)
Captain, Lieutenant, or Sergeant	5 (26.3)	35 (20.1)
Training on Sexual Assault	n = 19	N = 174
Yes	14 (73.7)	128 (73.6)
No	5 (26.3)	46 (26.4)

Additionally, there was no difference in mean years in law enforcement overall ($t = -1.06$, $df = 190$, $p = 0.293$), mean numbers of years at local police department ($t = -1.43$, $df = 189$, $p = 0.153$) and mean number of sexual assaults that the officer had responded to ($t = 0.697$, $df = 187$, $p = 0.486$) (See Table III).

TABLE III

COMPARISON OF EXCLUDED CASES BY FINAL SAMPLE: EXPERIENCE

		N	M (SD)
Total years at local police department	Final Sample (Analysis File)	172	15.87 (5.6)
	Deleted Cases	19	17.82 (5.4)
Total years in law enforcement	Final Sample (Analysis File)	173	17.53 (6.1)
	Deleted Cases	19	19.08 (5.6)
Approximate number of CSC's responded to in past year.	Final Sample (Analysis File)	171	7.67 (21.9)
	Deleted Cases	18	4.06 (3.1)

C.   Comparison of Sample with Population

The final sample of sworn officers ($N = 174$) roughly mirrors sworn officers in the police department as a whole. Table IV displays a comparison of characteristics between those who completed the survey and the police department as a whole.

TABLE IV

COMPARISON OF FINAL SAMPLE WITH POLICE DEPARTMENT STATISTICS

	All Sworn Officers (N = 292) n (%)	Final Sample (N = 174) n (%)
Area Assignment		N=175
East Service Area	41 (14.0)	21 (12.1)
West Service Area	43 (14.7)	19 (10.9)
South Service Area	47 (16.1)	28 (16.1)
North Service Area	39 (13.4)	25 (14.4)
Investigation	50 (17.1)	40 (23.0)
Special Response Team	19 (6.5)	10 (5.7)
Internal Affairs	2 (0.07)	1 (0.06)
Rank	n = 291	n = 169
Captain, Lieutenant, or Sergeant	53 (18.2)	30 (17.2)
Officer	238 (81.5)	139 (79.9)
Racial/Ethnic Identity	n = 292	n = 163
White	255 (87.3)	140 (85.9)
Black/African American	11 (3.8)	4 (2.4)
Hispanic	11 (3.8)	6 (3.6)
Asian	--	2 (1.2)
Native American	6 (2.1)	1 (0.6)
Other	9 (3.1)	2 (1.2)
Prefer not to answer	--	10 (6.1)
Gender	n = 292	n=163
Male	258 (88.4)	134 (82.2)
Female	34 (11.6)	19 (11.7)
Prefer not to answer	--	10 (6.1)

Note. Because the n was small on some area assignment positions, not all categories are included in order to not identify individual officers. This is why there is no total n for Area Assignment in the second column. Additionally, chief of police is not entered as a category in order to avoid identifying study participation or not.

D. <u>**Characteristics of the Sample**</u>

The majority of respondents identify as White. Respondents' ages range from 26 to 58 with a mean of 41.3 (SD = 5.8). Respondents are predominantly male (82.2%). The majority of respondents hold a 4-year college degree (58.8%), with an additional 14% with a graduate degree and 15% with an Associate's degree (See Table V).

TABLE V

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FINAL SAMPLE

	(N = 174)
	n (%)
Age	*n=155*
Under 20 years old	0 (0.0)
20 to 29 years old	3 (1.9)
30 to 39 years old	52 (33.5)
40 to 49 years old	89 (57.4)
50 to 59 years old	11 (7.1)
60 years and older	0 (0.0)
Racial/Ethnic Identity	*n=163*
White	140 (85.9)
Black/African American	4 (2.4)
Hispanic	6 (3.6)
Asian	2 (1.2)
Native American	1 (0.6)
Other	2 (1.2)
Prefer not to answer	10 (6.1)
Gender	*n=163*
Male	134 (82.2)
Female	19 (11.7)
Prefer not to answer	10 (6.1)
Educational Level	*n=165*
High school diploma/GED	1 (0.6)
Associates Degree	25 (15.2)
Some College	13 (7.9)
College Degree	97 (58.8)
Graduate Degree	23 (13.9)
Prefer not to answer	6 (3.6)

E.   **Missing Data**

Missing data analyses consisted of reviewing survey items and case-level data. The

tables below demonstrate total percent missing on all control, independent, and dependent

variables used in hypothesis testing, as well as the number of cases in which mean imputation

was used, leading to the final analysis sample total for each measure. There was no imputation

of missing values on the three dependent variables in this study. Mean imputation was used for

predictor variables that are multiple item scales (e.g., RMA); however, individual item variables

(e.g., perceived behavioral control, decisional frames) were not imputed. Missing values on the

scale items were only imputed if a case was missing less than 20% of scale items (See Tables VI

– IX).

TABLE VI

MISSING VALUES ON DEPENDENT VARIABLE

		Perception of Case	Behavioral Intention 1: Write the Report and Go to YWCA	Behavioral Intention 2: Call out Detective and Arrest suspect	Attitude towards the Behavioral Intention
$N = 174$	Valid	169	166	166	164
	Missing	5 (2.9)	8 (4.6)	8 (4.6)	10 (5.7)

TABLE VII

MISSING VALUES ON CONTROL VARIABLES: BLOCK ONE

		Gender	At least college graduate	Training on Sexual Assault	Total years in law enforcement	Social Desirability
$N = 174$	Original Valid	153	159	174	173	145
	Missing	21 (12%)	15 (8.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.06)	29 (16.7)
	Imputed	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (4.6)
	Analysis Sample	153	159	174	173	153

TABLE VIII

MISSING VALUES ON INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: BLOCKS TWO AND THREE

		RMA	Victim Alcohol Use	Prior Relationship
$N = 174$	Valid	151	174	174
	Missing	23 (13.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Imputed	15 (8.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Analysis Sample	166	174	174

TABLE IX

MISSING VALUES ON INDEPENDENT VARIABLES: BLOCK FOUR

	Suspect Blame	Victim Blame	Subjective Norms	Compliance with Subjective Norms	Perceived Behavioral Control	Effic. Frame	Norm. Frame
$N = 173$ Valid	155	157	161	165	161	163	162
Missing	19 (10.9)	17 (9.8)	13 (8.1)	9 (5.2)	13 (8.1)	11 (6.3)	12 (6.9)
Imputed	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.06)	2 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Analysis Sample	155	157	162	167	161	163	162

Individual survey items appear to be missing at random (MAR), except for patterns of missing data towards the end of the survey, most likely due to survey fatigue or time constraints when completing the survey. Visual inspection of the data along with the Qualtrics report on "Finished" surveys identified cases in which variables are missing abruptly, indicating that the respondent chose to stop completing the survey, or did not return to it at a later time. This visual and descriptive analysis demonstrates that the items and scales with the highest percent missing all occurred towards the end of the survey (e.g., gender, Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, Attributions of Blame, etc.). Additionally, because half of the participants completed the RMA scale at the beginning of the survey (before the vignette), and half completed the RMA scale at the end of the survey in order to control for potential priming effects, it is possible to compare missing values by location of questions in the survey. Of those who responded to the

RMA scale at the beginning of the survey, only 10.4% had any missing items on the 25-item scale, compared with 16.7% of those who encountered the RMA at the end of the survey.

In order to further test MAR assumptions, all variables included in the regression models were dummy coded so that 0 = no missing and 1 = any missing. These dummy variables were compared against the three dependent variables using independent samples t-tests. The vast majority of tests showed no statistically significant differences, however, there was one statistically significant difference in mean perception of the case as legitimate, credible, and strong ("good" case) between those who had no missing values or some missing values on the victim blame scale (($M = 14.12$, $SD = 3.5$) versus ($M = 11.3$, $SD = 3.7$) respectively, $t = 2.235$, $df = 167$, $p = 0.027$). This demonstrates that those with some missing values on the victim blame items had higher levels of support for perceiving the case as legitimate, strong, and credible. It is possible that because these participants were more supportive of deeming the case as legitimate, they found victim blaming statements problematic and did not respond to all of them.

Because the results of testing missing values overwhelmingly did not show any statistically significant differences, and because the overall amount of missing values is small or most likely due to survey fatigue or incompletion, strategies for mean imputation were used on a very minimal number of cases and variables, slightly increasing the sample size and statistical power for analysis and model testing. Consequently, the following rules were used to impute data: First, individual survey items included in the model (control and predictor variables) were not imputed and were included in analyses using listwise deletion. Second, missing data on individual items that comprised overall scales or composite measures were imputed given that they were not missing more than 20% of the scale's items (see Bono, Doublas, Kimberlin, & Bruce, 2007; Downey & King, 1998). If the measure was based on a response to the vignette,

the vignette group mean for that item was imputed for the missing variable. If the measure was attitudinal (such as rape myth acceptance) and not related to the vignette specifically, the sample item mean was imputed. These imputation methods brought the N from 116 using listwise deletion to 125 using minimal mean imputation. In addition, all bivariate and multivariate hypotheses tests were run using both listwise deletion and the mean imputation described above. Results were compared to see if there were any statistically significant and meaningful differences. Because no significant differences were found, all scale statistics, item and scale descriptives, and subsequent analysis presented include results using imputed data unless indicated otherwise.

Finally, because the final analysis sample (those with full cases or all variables included in the model, $N = 126$), was smaller than the original sample ($N = 174$), one additional level of missing data analysis was conducted. All cases were dummy coded so that 1 = some missing values across model variables and hence excluded from multiple regression analyses and 0 = included in final regression analyses (complete cases). T-tests were compared on all dependent variables and predictors to look for potential differences in characteristics or responses by those cases who are included in the final analyses (complete cases), and those who are not. Additionally, a t-test compared average number of years in law enforcement and the social desirability scale by this dummy variable. No statistically significant differences were found, giving additional justification for the imputation methods chosen.

F.   Scale Statistics

The reliability coefficients for all independent, control, and dependent variables at the interval level were computed. Using Cronbach's alpha, most scales were in the good to excellent range of alpha above 0.70 and others were in the acceptable range (see Table X). Scales in the

acceptable range (between 0.60 and 0.70) were included because the Social Desirability measure

was almost 0.70 ($\alpha = 0.695$) and important to include as a control. Both behavioral intention 2—

Call detective and arrest suspect ($\alpha = 0.637$) and compliance with subjective norms ($\alpha = 0.629$)

are comprised of only two items, making a slightly lower Cronbach's alpha score expected.

TABLE X

RELIABILITY FOR ALL SCALE VARIABLES

Variable	Reliability (α)	Number of Items
Dependent Variable Scales		
Perception of the case as a Legitimate Crime, a Credible Victim, and a Strong Case	0.847	3
Behavioral Intention 1:Recommend Writing the Report as a CSC and Sending the Victim to the YWCA	0.721	2
Behavioral Intention 2: Recommend Calling out a Detective Immediately and Arresting the Suspect	0.637	2
Attitudes towards the Behavior	0.806	2
Independent Variable Scales		
Rape Myth Acceptance	0.912	25
Attributions: Suspect Blame	0.837	4
Attributions: Victim Blame	0.727	4
Subjective Norms	0.759	2
Compliance with Subjective Norms	0.629	2
Control Variable Scale		
Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale	0.695	12

G.   Data Transformations

Because two dependent variables (behavioral intention 1 and attitude towards the behavior) and two predictor variables (perceived behavioral control, efficiency frame) were highly skewed, transformations were performed, such as logarithm and square root. These transformations did not sufficiently correct the skewness; therefore, the skewed variables were recoded into dichotomous variables. Two different transformation methods were performed for these four variables. Because these four variables are badly skewed and the sample size is relatively small, a more middle breaking point, such as the median split, would not be possible.

In summary, the first data transformation method split the categories into two groups with the first group including those with the extreme response to the scale (e.g. a response of "14" on the scale comprised of two 7-point items), with the second group being all responses above/below (depending on the item direction) that cut point (e.g. a response less than "14" on the scale comprised of two 7-point items). For instance, the dependent variable *behavioral intention 1—write CSC & refer to YWCA* was recoded so that the highest response (or Full Support) for both survey items comprising the scale became one category and all responses below that became the second group (Not Full Support).

The second dichotomizing option split the variables into two groups so that one category included those with the most extreme response and also those immediately next to that extreme response (e.g. a response of "12," "13," or "14" on a scale comprised of two 7-point items). The other group included all responses above/below that more extreme although not entirely extreme response (e.g. a response less than "12" on a scale comprised of two 7-point items).

All regression models for each dependent variable were run twice, using both of these options. There was a very slight difference in results, in that more variance was explained by the

first option. Additionally, it is logical that there is a substantive difference in unequivocally endorsing total support (or in some cases absolutely no support) for all items comprising a scale, and the responses that demonstrate some hesitation in showing total support or an extreme response. Because the dichotomous split using the first option is ultimately used and presented in the multivariate results, these dichotomized variables will also be described in the univariate results.

H.   Univariate Statistics

1.   Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables

Dependent variables were measured by the immediate perception or classification of the case as a legitimate sexual assault, the victim as credible, and the case as strong. In addition, behavioral intentions and attitudes those behavioral intentions were reported through the intentions and attitudes about classifying the case as a Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC), recommending the victim go to the YWCA, calling out a detective immediately, and arresting a suspect, if identified (See Table XI). The following section reports the descriptive statistics for both the overall scales as well as the individual items that comprise dependent variable scales. Items comprising each scale and any transformations that were performed are also described.

TABLE XI
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ALL DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Dependent Variables	N	M (SD)	Min	Max	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Perceptions of a "Good" Case	169	13.98 (3.6)	5.00	21.00	0.11	0.19	-0.46	0.37
Behavioral Intention 1	166	13.27(1.5)	5.00	14.00	-2.72	0.19	8.79	0.38
Behavioral Intention 2	166	6.95(3.1)	2.00	14.00	0.19	0.19	-0.72	0.38
Attitude toward Behavioral Intentions	164	12.31 (2.4)	3.00	14.0	-1.89	0.19	3.55	0.38

a.   Perception of a "Good" Case

A series of three questions answered on a 7-point scale assessed the officer's initial

perceptions of the case in terms of legitimacy, credibility, and strength, which comprise the scale

"Perception of a 'Good' Case." Perceptions of legitimacy ($M = 4.99$, $SD = 1.3$) and victim

credibility ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.3$) are higher than perceptions of the scenario as a "strong case" (M

$= 3.92$, $SD = 1.5$) (See Table XII).   These three items assessing the legitimacy of the CSC, the

credibility of the victim, and perceptions of the strength of the case were combined to form a

global measure of the immediate perceptions or classification of the case as a "good" case.

TABLE XII

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS COMPRISING PERCEPTIONS OF A
"GOOD" CASE

	N	M (SD)
To what extent do you consider this to be a legitimate sexual assault or CSC?	169	4.99 (1.3)
To what extent do you consider this to be a credible victim?	169	5.07 (1.3)
To what extent do you consider this to be a strong case?	169	3.92 (1.5)

Note. 1=Not at All, 7=Very Much

b.   Behavioral or Decision Making Intention

Two measures will be used in subsequent hypothesis testing for the concept *behavioral*

intention: 1) Behavioral Intention 1—Write CSC & Refer to YWCA (indicating immediate

response) and 2) Behavioral Intention 2—Call Detective & Arrest Suspect (indicating perceived

seriousness). These two dependent variables will be used in order to analyze factors that

influence one's immediate response or behavioral intention.

i.   Behavioral Intention 1—Write CSC & Refer to YWCA

The behavioral intention of officers on average strongly supports writing the report as a

CSC and recommending that the victim go to the YWCA, the SANE program (See Table XIII).

TABLE XIII

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON INDIVIDUAL ITEMS THAT COMPRISE BEHAVIORAL
INTENTION 1—WRITE CSC & REFER TO YWCA

	N	*M* (*SD*)
Writing the report as a CSC	166	6.63 (0.8)
That the victim goes to the YWCA.	167	6.64 (0.9)

Note. 1=Not at All, 7=Very Much

These two items were combined to form a global measure of the first *behavioral
intention*, indicating the intention to classify the report as a sexual assault and recommend
evidence collection by the forensic nurse examiner. As presented in Figure 6 and Table XIV, this
measure was negatively skewed, with most officers showing very much (or total) support for
both items. Two transformations—Logarithmic (log10) and Square Root (sqrt)—were attempted
before dichotomizing the final measure into two options: 1) Full Support and 2) Not Full Support
(or less than "very much" support on both items) (See Table XIV).   The original scale (shown
below) was recoded where 2-13 = "Not Full Support" and 14 = "Full Support" (see original
distribution in Figure 6).

Figure 6. Histogram of Original Behavioral Intention One Variable
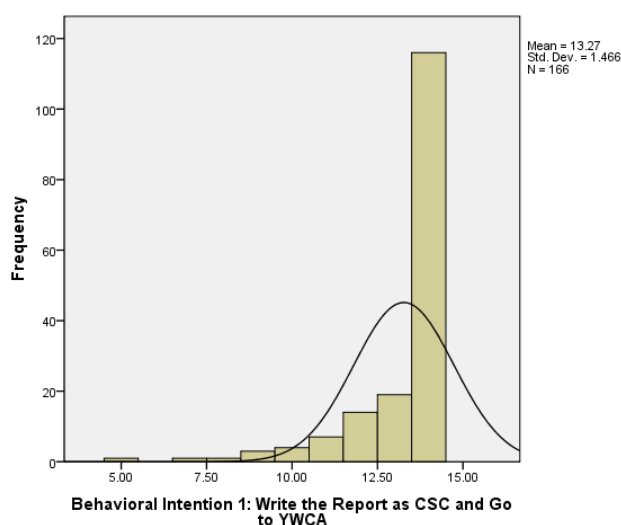
TABLE XIV

FULL SUPPORT OR NOT FOR BEHAVIORAL INTENTION 1—
WRITE CSC & REFER TO YWCA

		N	%	Valid Percent
Valid	Not Full Support	50	28.7	30.1
	Full Support	116	66.7	69.9
	Total	166	95.4	100.0
Missing	System	8	4.6	
Total		174	100.0	

All models including this second dependent variable are run both with the original scale as well as the recoded binary variable. Allison (1999, p. 130) provides justification for this choice:

> The only variable that is assumed to have a normal distribution is the disturbance term μ, which is something we can't observe directly. The *x* variables can have any kind of distribution. Because *y* is a linear function of both the *x*'s and the μ, there's no requirement that *y* be normally distributed either.

As a matter of caution, and because the normality assumption becomes more critical as samples get smaller, analysis was run on the dependent variable as its original scale form and as the recoded binary variable.

ii. Behavioral Intention 2—Call Detective & Arrest Suspect

Behavioral intention to call out a detective immediately and arrest a suspect if identified were combined to form a global measure of the second *behavioral intention.* Compared to the intention to classify as a sexual assault and recommend that the victim go to the YWCA, officers express less support for immediate response by a detective and the arrest of the suspect if identified (See Table XV). These two items were combined to form a global measure of the second behavioral intention.

TABLE XV

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON INDIVIDUAL ITEMS THAT COMPRISE BEHAVIORAL
INTENTION 2—CALL DETECTIVE & ARREST SUSPECT

	N	*M* (*SD*)
That a detective responds immediately.	167	3.62 (1.8)
The arrest of the suspect if identified.	166	3.33 (1.8)

Note. 1=Not at All, 7=Very Much

c. <u>Behavioral Beliefs or Attitude towards the Behavior</u>

On average, officers state that writing the report as a CSC and recommending that the

alleged victim go to the YWCA is mostly worthwhile, while arresting the suspect if identified as

less worthwhile (See Table XVI).

TABLE XVI

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON INDIVIDUAL ITEMS COMPRISING ATTITUDES
TOWARDS THE BEHAVIOR

	N	*M* (*SD*)
Writing the report as a CSC.	163	6.11 (1.3)
Alleged victim going to the YWCA.	163	6.21 (1.3)
Arresting the suspect if identified	166	1.80 (3.6)

Note. 1=Useless, 7=Worthwhile

Items assessing feelings towards writing the report as a CSC and the alleged victim going

to the YWCA were summed to form a scale, measuring attitudes towards behavioral intentions.

Because this measure was extremely negatively skewed (See Figure 7), two transformations—

Logarithmic (log10) and Square Root (sqrt)—were attempted before dichotomizing the final

measure into two categories. The original scale was recoded where 2-13 = "Not Very (or not

totally) Worthwhile" and 14 = "Very (of totally) Worthwhile. Forty-six percent of respondents

responded with complete support, indicating that all of the behavioral intentions were very or

completely worthwhile, while 53.7% responded with somewhat less than completely worthwhile

(See Table XVII).

Figure 7. Histogram of Original Attitude towards Behavioral Intention Variable
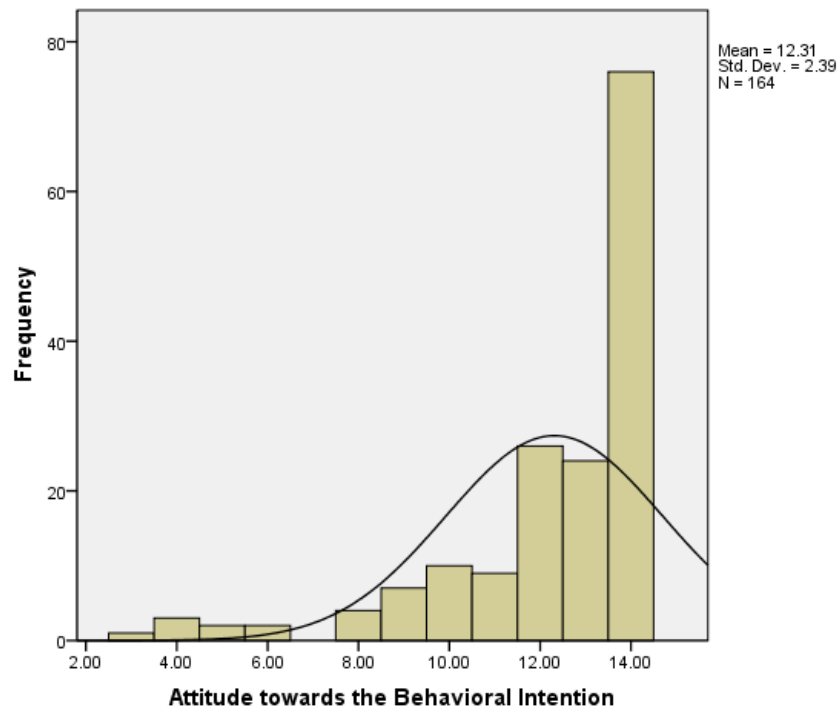
TABLE XVII

FULL SUPPORT OR NOT FOR ATTITUDE TOWARDS BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS

		N	*%*	Valid Percent
Valid	Less than Totally Worthwhile	88	50.6	53.7
	Very (or Totally) Worthwhile	76	43.7	46.3
	Total	164	94.3	100.0
Missing	System	10	5.7	
Total		174	100.0	

2. <u>Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables</u>

Independent variables include those that stem from schema theory, attribution theory, and the theory of planned behavior. These include rape myth acceptance, attributions of blame, subjective norms, compliance with subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, efficiency frames, and normative frames. Additionally, independent variables include victim alcohol use

and prior relationship with the suspect in the vignette. Independent variables consist of

dichotomous individual items (e.g., victim alcohol use or not), and ordinal and interval-level

scales. Descriptive statistics for ordinal and interval-level scales are presented in Table XVIII.

Because perceived behavioral control and efficiency frames were skewed, transformations are

presented.

TABLE XVIII

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR PREDICTOR SCALES

	N	Min	Max	M (SD)	Skewness		Kurtosis	
						Std.		Std.
					Statistic	Error	Statistic	Error
RMA	166	28.0	114.0	61.48 (17.8)	0.26	0.19	-0.38	0.38
Relative Suspect Blame	152	-13.0	24.0	4.20 (8.1)	0.23	0.20	-0.40	0.39
Subjective Norms Scale	161	4.0	14.0	10.64 (2.3)	-0.61	0.19	-0.26	0.38
Compliance with Subjective Norms	165	2.0	14.0	7.59 (3.5)	0.13	0.19	-0.91	0.38
Perceived Behavioral Control	161	1	7	6.05 (1.4)	-1.99	0.19	4.05	0.38
Efficiency Frame	163	1	7	1.62 (1.2)	2.38	0.19	5.45	0.38
Normative Frame	162	1	7	4.33 (2.6)	-0.24	0.19	-1.69	0.38

a.   Victim Alcohol Use and Prior Relationship with Perpetrator

Respondents were randomly assigned to read one vignette, in which both victim alcohol

use and prior relationship with the suspect were manipulated, creating four distinct vignette

possibilities. The vignette characteristics were dummy coded into two variables: 1) alcohol use

or not, and 2) involving a prior relationship or not (See Table XIX).

TABLE XIX

SEXUAL ASSAULT VIGNETTE RANDOMIZATION AND DUMMY CODING

Vignette	Scenario Description	n (%)
1 (Q13)	Drinking/Acquaintance	56 (32.0)
2 (Q14)	No Drinking/Acquaintance	40 (22.9)
3 (Q15)	Drinking/Ex-Boyfriend	42 (24.0)
4 (Q16)	No Drinking/Ex-Boyfriend	37 (21.1)

b. Rape Myth Acceptance

Officers demonstrate varying levels of rape myth acceptance ($M = 61.48$, $SD = 17.8$).

Summed rape myth acceptance scores could range from 25 (i.e. "Strongly Disagree" for all RMA

items), to 175 (i.e. "Strongly Agree" for all RMA items). Table XX provides the mean RMA

scores for all individual items.

TABLE XX

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF ITEMS COMPRISING RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE

N = 166	*M* (*SD*)
If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.	2.40 (1.4)
Women who are caught cheating sometimes claim that it was rape.	5.17 (1.2)
A lot of times, women who say they were raped agreed to have sex and regret it.	3.82 (1.5)
If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape.	1.63 (0.8)
When women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they are just asking for trouble.	2.50 (1.5)
Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.	3.47 (1.3)
A rape probably didn't happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.	1.64 (0.8)
If a woman goes home with a man she doesn't know, it is her own fault if she is raped.	2.15 (1.3)
If the accused rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it a rape.	1.32 (0.5)
When a woman is a sexual tease, eventually she is going to get into trouble.	3.36 (1.6)
A lot of times, women who say they were raped often led the man on and then had regrets.	3.17 (1.5)
A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems.	2.78 (1.4)
If a woman doesn't physically resist sex--even if protesting verbally--it can't be considered rape.	1.75 (1.2)
If a woman initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex.	3.65 (1.7)
When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.	2.04 (1.1)
A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex.	2.01 (1.1)
A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date is implying that she wants to have sex.	2.27 (1.3)
If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously.	1.60 (0.7)
If a woman doesn't say "no" she can't claim rape.	2.64 (1.7)
When men rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.	2.38 (1.3)
Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.	2.46 (1.4)
Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.	2.12 (1.3)
If a man is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.	1.93 (1.2)
It shouldn't be considered rape if a man is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.	1.45 (0.6)
If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.	1.78 (1.0)

Note. 1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree

c.   **Attributions of Blame**

Attributions formed two scales—1) attribution of blame towards the suspect and 2)

attribution of blame towards the victim. Because attributions of suspect blame and attributions

of victim blame are moderately negatively correlated and in order to eliminate issues of

multicollinearity, a measure of relative suspect blame was created and is used in subsequent

analysis. The victim blame score was subtracted from the suspect blame score to create one's

relative suspect blame.

i.   **Suspect Blame**

On the attributions of suspect blame scale, officers have the highest level of agreement

with "The suspect is responsible for the incident" and "The incident meets the legal definition of

CSC" (See Table XXI).

TABLE XXI
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR SUSPECT BLAME SCALE ITEMS

	N	M (SD)
Do you think the suspect is responsible for the incident?	161	5.09 (1.4)
Do you think the suspect should be held criminally liable for a sexual assault or a CSC?	156	4.87 (1.4)
How certain are you that the incident meets the legal definition of a CSC?	159	5.13 (1.6)
If you were a member of a jury, how certain are you that you would convict the suspect of sexual assault?	156	3.87 (1.6)

Note. 1=Not at All, 7=Very Much

ii.   **Victim Blame**

Officers have the highest scores on thinking that "the victim could have avoided the

incident" but low scores on "the victim is to blame for the incident" (See Table XXII).

TABLE XXII

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR VICTIM BLAME SCALE ITEMS

	N	M (SD)
Do you think the victim is to blame for the incident?	160	2.57 (1.3)
Do you think the victim could have avoided the incident?	162	5.11 (1.7)
Do you think the victim had control over the situation?	160	3.96 (1.7)
Do you feel sorry for the victim? (Reversed)	159	4.87 (1.6)

Note. 1=Not at All, 7=Very Much.

iii. Relative Suspect Blame

Because results showed a strong negative correlation between suspect blame and victim blame, a measure of relative suspect blame was created. This measure was created in order to avoid multicollinearity issues in multiple regression models. Relative suspect blame was calculated by subtracting a respondent's victim blame score from the suspect blame score. All subsequent results are presented using the relative suspect blame scale score.

d. Subjective Norms Measures

On average, officers perceive that most police officers they know would classify the case as a CSC, with slightly lower perceptions of most officers believing the case is a legitimate CSC (See Table XXIII). These two items were combined to form a global measure of subjective norms.

TABLE XXIII

SUBJECTIVE NORMS INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

	N	M (SD)
Most police officers would classify this case as a CSC.	162	5.85 (1.2)
Most police officers would consider this a legitimate sexual assault or CSC.	161	4.80 (1.3)

Note. 1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree

e. Compliance with Subjective Norms

On average, officers consider their peers' approval not very important and their

supervisor's approval somewhat important (See Table XXIV). These two items form a scale of

compliance towards subjective norms.

TABLE XXIV

COMPLIANCE WITH SUBJECTIVE NORMS SCALE INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

	N	*M* (*SD*)
The approval of my peers about how I handle this case is important to me.	166	2.87 (2.0)
My supervisor's approval for how I handle this case is important to me.	166	4.69 (2.1)

Note. 1=Not at All, 7=Very Much

f. Perceived Behavioral Control

On average, officers strongly agree that the department policy requires the CSC title and

that the quality of the report or investigation depends on information provided by the victim.

Officers are more neutral and leaning towards disagree that working on the case limits the ability

to respond to more important calls. The third item below has more face validity in measuring

one's feeling of control over the outcome of the behavioral intention. Because of that, the third

measure of perceived behavioral control will be used in hypothesis testing (See Table XXV).

TABLE XXV

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL ITEMS

	N	*M* (*SD*)
The department policy requires that I keep the CSC title in this case.	160	6.45 (1.1)
Working on this CSC report or case limits my ability to respond to more important calls.	160	2.44 (1.6)
The quality of this report or investigation depends on victims providing information for the report.	161	6.05 (1.4)

Note. 1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree

Because "the quality of this report or investigation depends on victims providing

information for the report" was negatively skewed, it was dichotomized into two categories: 1)

Strongly Agree (response = 7) and 2) Less than Strongly Agree (response = 1 – 6). Almost equal proportions of respondents responded with strongly agree (49.7%) or less than strongly agree (50.3%).

g. Decisional Frames

On average, officers have lower levels of support for efficiency frames than normative frames (See Table XXVI).

TABLE XXVI

ITEM DESCRIPTIVES FOR DECISIONAL FRAMES

	N	M (SD)
Efficiency Frame: My primary goal is to handle this case in a way that will cause me the fewest hassles.	163	1.62 (1.2)
Normative Frame: My primary goal is to determine who is to blame in this case.	162	4.33 (2.6)

Because endorsement of the efficiency frame was positively skewed, it was dichotomized into two categories: 1) Some efficiency frame endorsed and 2) No efficiency frame endorsed. Those who were categorized as "some efficiency frame endorsed" (28.2%) had scores ranging from 2 to 7, whereas those with "no efficiency frame endorsed" (65.5%) responded with "1" or "Not at all."

3. Control Variables

Tables XXVII and XXVIII present the control variables for the multivariate regression models. These consist of measures of officer demographic characteristics, law enforcement experience, and social desirability. Descriptive statistics for some of the control variables were presented in the study sample description; however the tables below include a description of how data was transformed and included in multivariate analysis.

TABLE XXVII

CONTROL VARIABLE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variable Description	Code	n (%)
Gender (*n* = 153)	0 (female)	19 (12.4)
	1 (male)	134 (87.6)
Education (*n* = 174)	0 (less than college graduate)	46 (26.4)
	1 (at least college graduate)	128 (73.6)
Training on SA (*n* = 159)	0 (no)	39 (24.5)
	1 (yes)	120 (75.5)

TABLE XXVIII

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON CONTROL VARIABLE

	N	Min	Max	*M* (*SD*)	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Total years in law enforcement	173	0.0	35.0	17.53 (6.1)	-0.23	0.19	0.36	0.37
Marlowe-Crowne S-F	153	13.0	24.0	19.49 (2.5)	-0.45	0.20	-0.30	0.39

I.   Bivariate Statistics

Bivariate statistical analysis is presented by dependent variable.

1.   Perceptions of a "Good" Case

a.   Correlations between Control, Independent Variables and Case Perception

Rape myth acceptance is negatively correlated with perceptions of the case as legitimate, credible and strong. Relative suspect blame, subjective norms, and social desirability are all positively correlated with perceptions of the case (See Table XXIX).

TABLE XXIX

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CONTROL, PREDICTOR VARIABLES AND PERCEPTION
OF A "GOOD" CASE

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Perception of Case							
2. RMA	-0.31***						
3. Relative Suspect Blame	0.78***	-0.51***					
4. Subjective Norms	0.53***	-0.26**	0.50***				
5. Compliance with Subjective Norms	0.09	-0.05	0.18*	0.10			
6. Normative Frame	-0.06	0.07	-0.02	-0.10	0.07		
7. Years in law enforcement	-0.03	0.05	0.02	0.05	-0.07	-0.16*	
8. Social Desirability	0.21**	-0.21*	0.22**	0.12	0.06	-0.11	-0.09

$*p < .05. **p < .01. *** p < .001.$

b. Differences in Means between Control, Independent Variables, and Perceptions of a "Good" Case

Independent and control variables that were either measured at the nominal level or transformed to dichotomous variables were compared with the dependent variable using independent samples t-tests. Attitudes towards the behavior, use of efficiency frames, and prior training on sexual assault were all significantly related to one's perception of the report as legitimate, with a credible victim, and a strong case. Perceptions of the case as "good" did not significantly differ by perceived behavioral control, victim alcohol use, prior relationship, gender, or educational level.

Those who operated some efficiency frame, stating at least some intention to respond in a way that minimized hassles showed lower levels of perceiving the case as "good" ($M = 13.08$, $SD = 3.4$) compared to those who operated no use of an efficiency frame ($M = 14.53$, $SD = 3.5$) ($t(160) = -2.430$, $p<.05$). Those who had some previous sexual assault-related training showed higher levels of perceptions of the case as "good" ($M = 14.36$, $SD = 3.6$) compared to those with no sexual assault-related training ($M = 12.98$, $SD = 3.3$) ($t(167) = -2.253$, $p<.05$).

2. __Behavioral Intention 1—Write CSC & Refer to YWCA__

a. __Correlations between Control, Independent Variables and Case__

__Perception__

Because behavioral intentions to classify the report as a sexual assault, along with

intentions to recommend that the victim go to the YWCA, were overwhelmingly high

(negatively skewed), correlations were run against this dependent variable using Spearman's rho.

Rape myth acceptance was negatively correlated with the behavioral intention to classify the

report as a sexual assault, along with intentions to recommend that the victim go to the YWCA.

Relative suspect blame and subjective norms were positively associated with this behavioral

intention (See Table XXX). As described previously, additional analysis testing this second

behavioral intention will test relationships using both the original scale, and the scale

dichotomized into a binary variable, indicating either the highest possible or total support, or less

than total support.

TABLE XXX

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CONTROL, INDEPENDENT, AND BEHAVIORAL
INTENTION 1—WRITE CSC & REFER TO YWCA

Spearman's rho ($N = 166$)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Behavioral Intention 1							
2. RMA	-0.16^*						
3. Relative Suspect Blame	0.24^{**}	-0.49^{***}					
4. Subjective Norms	0.33^{**}	-0.28^{**}	0.50^{**}				
5. Compliance with Subjective Norms	0.14	-0.04	0.21^*	0.13			
6. Normative Frame	0.15	0.06	0.02	-0.14	0.08		
7. Total years in law enforcement	-0.15	0.06	-0.02	0.03	-0.10	-0.17^*	
8. Social Desirability	-0.05	-0.19^*	0.20^*	0.14	0.06	-0.08	-0.05

$^*p < .05.$ $^{**}p < .01.$ $^{***}p < .001.$

b.   **Relationships between Control, Predictors, and Behavioral Intention**

1—Write CSC & Refer to YWCA

In order to look at the relationship between nominal or dichotomous predictor and control

variables in relation to the dichotomous behavioral intention showing either total support or less

than total support for classifying the case as a sexual assault and recommending that the victim

go to the YWCA, a series of Chi-square tests were conducted. Victim alcohol use, relationships

with the suspect, perceived behavioral control, and efficiency frames were not significantly

related. Additionally, none of the control variables (e.g., gender, education level, and training)

were significantly related.

3.   **Behavioral Intention 2—Call Detective & Arrest Suspect**

a.   **Correlations between Control, Predictors, and Behavioral Intention 2**

Rape myth acceptance is negatively correlated with behavioral intentions to call out a

detective immediately and arrest the suspect, if identified. Relative suspect blame and subjective

norms are positively correlated with behavioral intention (See Table XXXI).

TABLE XXXI

ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN CONTROL, PREDICTORS, AND THE BEHAVIORAL
INTENTION 2—CALL DETECTIVE & ARREST SUSPECT

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Behavioral Intention 2							
2. RMA	-0.26^{**}						
3. Relative Suspect Blame	0.48^{***}	-0.51^{**}					
4. Subjective Norms	0.44^{***}	-0.26^{**}	0.50^{***}				
5. Compliance with Subjective Norms	0.11	-0.05	0.18^{*}	0.10			
6. Normative Frame	-0.01	0.07	-0.02	-0.10	0.07		
7. Total years in law enforcement	-0.14	0.05	0.02	0.05	-0.07	-0.16^{*}	
8. Social Desirability	0.22^{**}	-0.21^{*}	0.22^{**}	0.12	0.06	-0.11	-0.09

$*p < .05. **p < .01. *** p < .001.$

b.   **Differences in Means between Control, Predictors, and Behavioral**

          Intention 2

Independent and control variables that were either measured at the nominal level or transformed to dichotomous variables were compared with this dependent variable using independent samples t-tests.   Victim alcohol use was significantly related to one's behavioral intention to call out the detective immediate and arrest the suspect, if identified. This behavioral intention did not significantly differ by perceived behavioral control, use of efficiency frame, victim and suspect's prior relationship, officer gender, educational level, or having received sexual assault-related training. Officers who responded to a vignette that included victim alcohol use on average had lower intentions to call out a detective and arrest the suspect ($M = 7.54$, $SD = 3.0$) compared to those where the victim had not been drinking ($M = 6.46$, $SD = 3.1$) ($t(164) = 2.258$, $p<.05$).

4.   **Attitude toward Behavioral Intentions**

      a.   **Correlations between Control, Predictors, and Attitude toward**

                Behavioral Intentions

Because attitude toward behavioral intentions were skewed, correlations were run against this dependent variable using Spearman's rho. Rape myth acceptance is negatively correlated with considering one's response as more worthwhile. Relative suspect blame and subjective norms are positively correlated with considering the behavioral intentions as more worthwhile (See Table XXXII).

TABLE XXXII

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CONTROL, PREDICTORS, AND ATTITUDE TOWARD BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Attitude toward Behavioral Intentions							
2. RMA	-0.29^{**}						
3. Relative Suspect Blame	0.46^{**}	-0.49^{**}					
4. Subjective Norms	0.39^{**}	-0.28^{**}	0.50^{**}				
5. Compliance with Subjective Norms	0.15	-0.04	0.21^{*}	0.13			
6. Normative Frame	0.09	0.06	0.02	-0.14	0.08		
7. Total years in law enforcement	-0.01	0.06	-0.02	0.03	-0.10	-0.17^{*}	
8. Social Desirability	-0.00	-0.19^{*}	0.20^{*}	0.14	0.06	-0.08	-0.05

$*p < .05.$ $**p < .01.$ $***p < .001.$

b. **Associations between Control, Predictors, and Attitude toward Behavioral Intentions**

In order to look at the relationship between nominal or dichotomous predictor and control variables in relation to the dichotomous attitude toward behavioral intentions, a series of Chi-square tests were conducted. Victim alcohol use, relationship with the suspect, perceived behavioral control, and efficiency frames were not significantly related. Additionally, most of the control variables (e.g., gender, education level) were not significantly related. Whether the officer had training on sexual assault, however, showed a significant association with one's attitude towards the behavioral intention ($\chi^2 = 5.377$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.020$). Of those who had who thought their behavioral intention was very (or totally) worthwhile, 82.9% had training on sexual assault, compared to only 17.1% who thought the behavioral intention was totally worthwhile but did not have training on sexual assault.

J. **Multivariate Results**

Each of the following hypotheses was tested for each of the dependent variables: (1) perception of the case as legitimate, credible, and strong, (2) behavioral intention to classify the

case as a CSC and recommend that the victim go to the YWCA, (3) behavioral intention to call out a detective immediately and arrest the suspect, if identified, and (4) attitude toward behavioral intentions. Interaction effects of vignette manipulated characteristics (i.e. victim alcohol use, and prior relationship with suspect) were tested and found not to be significantly related to any of the dependent variables. Therefore, in subsequent model testing, individual vignette characteristics will be entered into the models, but an interaction term will not. Additionally, interactions between RMA and vignette characteristics were included in model testing and found not to be significantly related to any of the dependent variables. Therefore, those interaction terms will not be included in the regression results. The following hypotheses were tested with each of the dependent variables:

1. Case characteristics will relate to officer perceptions, behavioral intentions, and attitude towards one's behavioral intentions, specifically:

   a. Presence of victim alcohol use will be associated with lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower behavioral intentions, and lower attitudes of the responses being worthwhile.

2. Prior relationship between the victim and perpetrator will be associated with lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower behavioral intentions, and lower attitudes of the responses being worthwhile.

3. Rape Myth Acceptance will be related to officer perceptions, behavioral intentions, and attitudes toward behavioral intentions, specifically:

   a. Higher rape myth acceptance will be associated with lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower behavioral intentions, and lower attitudes of the responses being worthwhile.

b. Rape myth acceptance will moderate the influence of both vignette characteristics—victim alcohol use and prior relationship between suspect and perpetrator—on perceptions of legitimacy, behavioral intentions, and attitudes toward behavioral intentions.

4. Components of the theoretical framework including concepts from the theory of planned behavioral (i.e. subjective norms, compliance with subjective norms, perceived behavioral control), concepts from attribution theory (i.e. attributions of suspect and victim blame), and concepts from schema theory (i.e. normative and efficiency frames) will be related to police officer perceptions, behavioral intentions, and attitudes towards behavioral intentions.

a. Higher attributions of relative suspect blame will be related to higher perceptions of legitimacy, higher support for behavioral intentions, and more worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.

b. Higher subjective norms will be related to be related to higher perceptions of legitimacy, higher support for behavioral intentions, and more worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.

c. Higher compliance with subjective norms will be related to higher perceptions of legitimacy, higher support for behavioral intentions, and more worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.

d. Higher perceived behavioral control will not have an effect on perceptions of legitimacy, but will decrease both behavioral intentions and one's attitude toward behavioral intentions.

    e.   Use of efficiency frames will not have an effect on perceptions of legitimacy but will decrease both behavioral intentions and one's attitude toward the behavioral intentions as worthwhile.

    f.   Use of normative frames will be related to lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower support for behavioral intentions, and less worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.

The next section presents results from several hierarchical regression procedures. This method was chosen because it allowed entry of blocks of control and predictor variables entered in the order suggested by the theoretical framework. Control variables were always entered as the first block and subsequent blocks followed the theoretical framework for proposed relationship between variables. All regression models were run in two sets, with two different sets of blocks. The first set included the following blocks: 1) Control Variables, 2) RMA, 3) Vignette Characteristics, 4) Vignette Interactions (substance use and prior relationship), 5) RMA interactions with substance use and prior relationship), 6) all additional variables from schema theory, attribution theory, and the TPB. The second hierarchical regression model included only 4 blocks because it eliminated the interactions from block 4 and 5 above. Additionally, these two sets of blocks were run twice on all dependent variables, using both dichotomizing options for skewed variables, as described previously. Only the final results are included here.

    5.   **Factors Influencing Perception of a "Good" Case—Legitimate, Credible, and Strong**

In Model 1, results show that control factors, such as having training on sexual assault and having a higher social desirability score influence higher levels of perceptions of a "good case," ($R^2 = 0.11$) (See Table XXXIII). When rape myth acceptance is added in Model 2, there is

no effect of social desirability, but the effect of training remains. Rape myth acceptance is significant, with 19% of the variance explained. Adding vignette characteristics in Model 3 does not further explain perceptions of the case ($R^2 = 0.19$). In the final model, when controlling for all variables, RMA and training is no longer significant, however, suspect blame, attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms are significant ($R^2 = 0.52$). A one unit increase in relative suspect blame was associated with a 0.55 unit increase in perceptions of the case as a "good" case. For every one unit increase in subjective norms (thinking that other officers would consider this a legitimate sexual assault), there is a 0.22 increase in perceptions of the case as legitimate, credible, and strong. In the final model, 58% of the variance is explained by the combination of variables, with a significant F change of 12.8 (See Tables XXXIII AND XXXIV).

TABLE XXXIII

MODEL SUMMARY RESULTS FOR PREDICTING PERCEPTIONS OF A "GOOD" CASE
(N =126)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
R^2	0.11	0.19	0.20	0.52
F for change in R^2	2.92*	12.29**	.54	12.8***

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

TABLE XXXIV

SUMMARY OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION RESULTS FOR PREDICTING PERCEPTIONS OF A "GOOD" CASE (N=126)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	B	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Gender	-1.27	1.00	-0.11	-0.80	1.00	-0.07	-0.77	0.96	-0.07	0.01	0.77	0.00
Education Level	-0.22	0.75	-0.03	-0.46	0.72	-0.06	-0.52	0.73	-0.06	-0.09	0.58	-0.01
Training	1.73	0.69	0.22*	1.45	0.66	0.18*	1.39	0.67	0.17*	1.21	0.55	0.15*
Years in Law Enforcement	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.02	-0.02	0.04	-0.04
Social Desirability	0.31	0.12	0.22*	0.20	0.12	0.15	0.20	0.12	0.14	0.11	0.10	0.08
Rape Myth Acceptance				-0.06	0.02	-0.30**	-0.06	0.02	-0.30**	0.01	0.02	0.04
Victim Alcohol Use							-0.12	0.62	-0.02	-0.10	0.51	-.01
Prior Relationship							-0.64	0.62	-0.09	-0.30	0.49	-.004
Relative Suspect Blame										0.24	0.04	0.55**
Subjective Norms										0.34	0.12	0.22**
Compliance with Subjective Norms										-0.06	0.07	-0.06
Perceived Behavioral Control										0.56	0.53	0.08
Efficiency Frame										0.24	0.59	0.03
Normative Frame										-0.10	0.10	-0.07

Predictors: (Constant), Social Desirability, Training on Sexual Assault (1=Yes), Gender (1=Male), Total years in law enforcement, Education Level (1=At least College Graduate), Rape Myth Acceptance, Prior Relationship, Victim Alcohol Use, Relative Suspect Blame, Subjective Norms, Compliance with Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control (1=Complete Support), Efficiency Frame (1=No Efficiency Frame), Normative Frame.

$*p < .05. **p < .01. *** p < .001.$

6.   Factors Influencing Behavioral Intention 1—CSC & Refer

In the logistic regression, neither model one, two, or three significantly explain this behavioral intention to write the report as a CSC and recommend that the victim go to the YWCA (See Table XXXV). Control variables in Model 1, RMA in Model 2, and vignette characteristics in Model 3 do not significantly explain this behavioral intention (See Table XXXVI).

TABLE XXXV

MODEL SUMMARY RESULTS FOR PREDICTING BEHAVIORAL INTENTION 1—
CSC & REFER (N=128)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Hosmer and Lemeshow test	$\chi^2 = 7.60$, $df =$ 8, $p= 0.474$	$\chi^2 = 11.54$, $df =$ 8 , $p=0.173$	$\chi^2 = 10.502$, $df = 8$, $p= 0.232$	$\chi^2 = 7.215$, $df = 8$, $p= 0.514$
-2 log likelihood chi-square test	152.19	150.413	148.880	139.94
Cox & Snell R Square	0.063	0.076	0.087	0.149
Nagelkerke R Square	0.088	0.106	0.122	0.208
Percentage Correct	69.5	68.8	71.1	71.1

TABLE XXXVI

SUMMARY OF LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR VARIABLES PREDICTING BEHAVIORAL INTENTION 1—
CSC & REFER (N = 128)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	SE	Odds Ratio	B	SE	Odds	B	SE	Odds Ratio	B	SE	Odds Ratio
Gender	-0.73	0.71	0.48	-0.62	0.71	0.54	-0.69	0.73	0.50	-0.57	0.77	0.57
Education Level	-0.02	0.47	0.98	-0.07	0.47	0.93	-0.03	0.47	0.97	-0.11	0.50	0.90
Training	0.71	0.42	2.04	0.65	0.42	1.92	0.60	0.43	1.82	0.58	0.46	1.78
Years in Law Enforcement	-0.05	0.03	0.95	-0.06	0.04	0.95	-0.05	0.04	0.95	-0.06	0.04	0.95
Social Desirability	-0.09	0.08	0.91	-0.12	0.08	0.88	-0.12	0.08	0.89	-0.14	0.09	0.87
Rape Myth Acceptance				-0.02	0.01	0.99	-0.02	0.01	0.99	-0.01	0.02	0.99
Victim Alcohol Use							-0.50	0.41	0.60	-0.48	0.45	0.62
Prior Relationship							-0.03	0.41	0.97	-0.01	0.44	1.00
Relative Suspect Blame										0.01	0.04	1.01
Subjective Norms										0.18	0.10	1.20
Compliance with Subjective Norms										0.09	0.07	1.10
Perceived Behavioral Control										0.10	0.47	1.10
Efficiency Frame										0.47	0.50	1.60
Normative Frame										0.08	0.09	1.08

Predictors: (Constant), Social Desirability, Training on Sexual Assault (1=Yes), Gender (1=Male), Total years in law enforcement, Education Level (1=At least College Graduate), Rape Myth Acceptance, Prior Relationship, Victim Alcohol Use, Prior Relationship, Relative Suspect Blame, Subjective Norms, Compliance with Subjective Norms , Perceived Behavioral Control (1=Complete Support), Efficiency Frame (1=No Efficiency Frame), Normative Frame.
$*p < .05. **p < .01. *** p < .001.$

7.   <u>Factors Influencing Behavioral Intention 2—Call Detective & Arrest Suspect</u>

In Model 1, results show that social desirability has a positive effect on the behavioral

intention to call out a detective immediately and arrest the suspect, explaining 10% of the

variance (See Table XXXVII). When rape myth acceptance is added in Model 2, it is significant

and there is no longer a social desirability effect ($R^2 = 0.14$). Adding vignette characteristics in

Model 3 does not further explain perceptions of the case ($R^2 = 0.17$). In the final model, when

controlling for all variables, RMA is no longer significant, however, victim alcohol use, suspect

blame and subjective norms are significant ($R^2 = 0.33$). When the victim has been using alcohol,

there is a 0.11 decrease in the behavioral intention to call out a detective and arrest the suspect, if

identified. For every one unit increase in attributions of relative suspect blame, there is a 0.34

increase in the intention to call out a detective and arrest the suspect, if identified. For every one

unit increase in perceiving that other officers would consider the scenario a legitimate sexual

assault, there is a 0.34 increase in the intention to call out a detective and arrest the suspect, if

identified (See Table XXXVIII). In the final model, 33% of the variance is explained by the

combination of variables, with a significant F change of 4.6.

TABLE XXXVII

MODEL SUMMARY RESULTS FOR BEHAVIORAL INTENTION 2—CALL DETECTIVE
& ARREST SUSPECT (N =127)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
R^2	0.10	0.14	0.17	0.33
F for change in R^2	2.74*	5.14*	2.4	4.6***

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

TABLE XXXVIII

SUMMARY OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR VARIABLES PREDICTING BEHAVIORAL
INTENTION 2—CALL DETECTIVE & ARREST (N=127)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*B*	*SE*	*β*
Gender	-1.19	0.83	-0.13	-0.97	0.83	-0.10	-1.03	0.82	-0.11	-0.54	0.76	-0.06
Education Level	-0.32	0.65	-0.04	-0.46	0.64	-0.06	-0.39	0.64	-0.05	-0.21	0.56	-0.03
Training	0.92	0.59	0.13	0.77	0.59	0.11	0.58	0.59	0.08	0.39	0.55	0.06
Years in Law Enforcement	-0.05	0.05	-0.09	-0.06	0.05	-0.11	-0.05	0.05	-0.09	-0.07	0.04	-0.13
Social Desirability	0.26	0.11	0.21*	0.19	0.11	0.16	0.21	0.11	0.17	0.15	0.10	0.13
Rape Myth Acceptance				-0.03	0.02	-0.20*	-0.03	0.02	-0.19*	0.00	0.02	0.03
Victim Alcohol Use							-1.17	0.54	-0.19*	-1.21	0.52	-0.19*
Prior Relationship							-0.30	0.54	-0.05	-0.10	0.50	-0.02
Relative Suspect Blame										0.11	0.04	0.28**
Subjective Norms										0.34	0.12	0.25**
Compliance with Subjective Norms										-0.00	0.07	-0.00
Perceived Behavioral Control										0.17	0.54	0.03
Efficiency Frame										0.28	0.60	0.04
Normative Frame										-0.07	0.11	-0.05

Predictors: (Constant), Social Desirability, Training on Sexual Assault (1=Yes), Gender (1=Male), Total years in law enforcement, Education Level (1=At least College Graduate), Rape Myth Acceptance, Prior Relationship, Victim Alcohol Use, Relative Suspect Blame, Subjective Norms, Compliance with Subjective Norms , Perceived Behavioral Control (1=Complete Support), Efficiency Frame (1=No Efficiency Frame), Normative Frame.
*p < .05. **p < .01. *** p < .001.

8.   <u>**Factors influencing Attitude toward Behavioral Intentions**</u>

In the logistic regression, having training on sexual assault remains a significant effect on one's attitude towards behavioral intentions throughout all models. In the final model, having training on sexual assault increases the odds of considering one's response as completely worthwhile by 3.24. Rape myth acceptance has a statistically significant effect in Models 1, 2, and 3, however, the effect is reduced when relative suspect blame is added to the model. In the final model, higher relative suspect blame increases the odds of considering the behavioral response as worthwhile by 1.13. Not utilizing any efficiency frame increases the odds of considering the response worthwhile by 4.15 (See Tables XXXIX and XL).

TABLE XXXIX

MODEL RESULTS FOR PREDICTING ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE BEHAVIOR (N= 126)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Hosmer and Lemeshow test	$\chi^2 = 3.26$, $df = 8$, $p= 0.917$	$\chi^2 = 9.12$, $df = 8$, $p=0.332$	$\chi^2 = 5.14$, $df = 8$, $p=0.743$	$\chi^2 = 18.35$, $df = 8$, $p=0.019$
-2 log likelihood chi-square test	168.07	158.92	158.12	129.52
Cox & Snell R Square	0.05	0.12	0.12	0.30
Nagelkerke R Square	0.07	0.15	0.16	0.40
Percentage Correct	60.3	65.1	64.3	78.6

TABLE XL

SUMMARY OF LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR VARIABLES PREDICTING ATTITUDE TOWARD BEHAVIOR
(N= 126)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	*SE*	*Odds Ratio*	*B*	*SE*	*Odds Ratio*	*B*	*SE*	*Odds Ratio*	*B*	*SE*	*Odds Ratio*
Gender	-0.13	0.57	0.88	0.09	0.59	1.10	0.07	0.59	1.07	0.34	0.65	1.43
Education Level	-0.13	0.44	0.88	-0.29	0.46	0.75	-0.27	0.47	0.76	-0.19	0.55	0.83
Training	1.00	0.42	2.71*	0.92	0.43	2.51*	0.86	0.44	2.37*	1.17	0.52	3.24*
Years in Law Enforcement	-0.01	0.03	1.00	-0.02	0.03	0.98	-0.02	0.03	0.99	-0.02	0.04	0.99
Social Desirability	-0.00	0.07	1.00	-0.06	0.08	0.94	-0.06	0.08	0.94	-0.10	0.09	0.90
Rape Myth Acceptance				-0.03	0.01	0.97**	-0.03	0.01	0.97**	0.00	0.02	1.00
Victim Alcohol Use							-0.35	0.39	0.70	-0.18	0.47	0.84
Prior Relationship							-0.04	0.40	0.96	-0.01	0.46	0.99
Relative Suspect Blame										0.12	0.04	1.13**
Subjective Norms										0.05	0.11	1.06
Compliance with Subjective Norms										0.07	0.07	1.08
Perceived Behavioral Control										0.67	0.50	1.99
Efficiency Frame										1.42	0.56	4.15*
Normative Frame										0.11	0.10	1.11

Predictors: (Constant), Social Desirability, Training on Sexual Assault (1=Yes), Gender (1=Male), Total years in law enforcement, Education Level (1=At least College Graduate), Rape Myth Acceptance, Prior Relationship, Victim Alcohol Use, Prior Relationship, Relative Suspect Blame, Subjective Norms, Compliance with Subjective Norms , Perceived Behavioral Control (1=Complete Support), Efficiency Frame (1=No Efficiency Frame), Normative Frame.
$*p < .05.$ $**p < .01.$ $***p < .001.$

K. **Summary of Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Relationships**

Police officers show the most variation in their perceptions of the case as a "good" case in terms of being a legitimate CSC, as having a credible victim, and as being a strong case. Officers also show variation in behavioral intentions, specifically their intentions to call out a detective and arrest the suspect, indicating different levels of perceived seriousness. There was much less variation overall on the behavioral intention to write the report as a CSC and recommend that the victim go to the YWCA, indicating that there is more uniformity in procedural response than individual perceptions of sexual assault reports.

Without controlling for other factors, rape myth acceptance and attributions of blame show the strongest correlations with all dependent variables. The higher the rape myth acceptance, the lower the perceptions of the case as legitimate, and the lower behavioral intentions to write the case as a CSC and call out a detective immediately will be. Higher attributions of suspect blame is associated with higher levels of support for perceived legitimacy, and more support for both behavioral intentions. Additional factors, such as whether the officer has received training on sexual assault, subjective norms, and efficiency frame are related to perceptions of the case.

Social desirability bias did have an effect on perceptions of the case as "good" and behavioral intentions to call out the detective and arrest the suspect; however, the effect went away when controlling for other factors in the multiple regression models. All of the multivariate regression results should be interpreted in light of controlling for this possible bias in responses.

Case characteristics, including victim alcohol use and prior relationship with the suspect, were not found as hypothesized. Victim alcohol use was only significantly related to the second

behavioral intention, indicating that alcohol use by the victim decreases officers support for calling out a detective immediately, or arresting the suspect, if identified.

L.   Summary of Multiple Regression Models

1.   Factors that Explain Perceptions of the Case

When controlling for other factors, the extent to which a police officer blames the suspect has the largest effect on perceptions of the case as a "good case" in terms of being legitimate, with a credible victim, and with strength. The extent to which the officer believes that other officers will consider the scenario a legitimate sexual assault also has an effect on the individual officer's own classification of the case as legitimate, demonstrating the effect of peer norms. In initial models, rape myth acceptance has a significant effect that was no longer present when additional variables were added in the final model. It is possible that one or more of the added variables, such as attributions of suspect blame and subjective norms, mediate the relationship between RMA and perceptions of the case.

2.   Factors that Explain Behavioral Intentions and Attitudes towards those Behavioral Intentions

Behavioral intentions, such as showing support for writing the report as a CSC, recommending that the victim go to the YWCA, calling out a detective immediately, and arresting the suspect, are best explained by just a few factors. There are no significant predictors for explaining one's behavioral intention to write the report as a CSC and refer the victim to the YWCA, indicating that there is overall little variation in that response, and no strong patterns in what may influence that small amount of variation. When controlling for other factors, subjective norms and relative suspect blame have the most significant effect on the behavioral intention to call out a detective immediately and arrest the suspect. Perceiving that other officers

would consider the scenario a legitimate sexual assault increases this behavioral intention as well. While very little explains officer's intentions to write the report as a CSC and refer the victim to the YWCA, a more thorough understanding of these perceptions stems from looking at one's attitude towards behavioral intentions. When asked the extent to which these behavioral intentions are useless to worthwhile, a number of factors explain that attitude. For instance, training, blaming the suspect, and not operating an efficiency frame increases perceptions of the response as worthwhile.

Table XLI displays a summary of the results by hypothesis and dependent variable. When the table includes a "Yes and No" response, this indicates that the variable is significantly related to the dependent variable, but it no longer has an effect when controlling for other variables in the regression model.

TABLE XLI

SUMMARY OF RESULTS BY HYPOTHESIS

	Perception of the Case	*Behavioral Intention 1*	*Behavioral Intention 2*	*Attitude toward Behavior*
1. Case characteristics will relate to officer perceptions, behavioral intentions, and attitude towards one's behavioral intentions.				
a. Presence of victim alcohol use will be associated with lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower behavioral intentions, and lower attitudes of the responses being worthwhile.	*Not supported*	*Not supported*	*Yes and No*	*Not Supported*
b. Prior relationship between the victim and perpetrator will be associated with lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower behavioral intentions, and lower attitudes of the responses being worthwhile.	*Not supported*	*Not supported*	*Yes and No*	*Not Supported*

TABLE XLI (CONTINUED)

SUMMARY OF RESULTS BY HYPOTHESIS

	Perceptions of the Case	Behavioral Intention 1	Behavioral Intention2	Attitude toward Behavior
2. Rape Myth Acceptance will be related to officer perceptions, behavioral intentions, and attitudes toward behavioral intentions.				
a. Higher rape myth acceptance will be associated with lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower behavioral intentions, and lower attitudes of the responses being worthwhile.	*Yes/No*	*Yes/No*	*Yes/No*	*Yes/No*
b. Rape myth acceptance will moderate the influence of both vignette characteristics—victim alcohol use and prior relationship—on perceptions of legitimacy, behavioral intentions, and attitudes toward behavioral intentions.	*Not supported*	*Not supported*	*Not supported*	*Not Supported*
3. Components of the theoretical framework including concepts from the theory of planned behavior, attribution theory, and schema theory will be related to police officer perceptions, behavioral intentions, and attitudes towards behavioral intentions.				
a. Higher attributions of relative suspect blame will be related to higher perceptions of legitimacy, higher support for behavioral intentions, and more worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.	*Yes*	*Yes/No*	*Yes*	*Yes*
b. Higher subjective norms will be related to be related to higher perceptions of legitimacy, higher support for behavioral intentions, and more worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*
c. Higher compliance with subjective norms will be related to higher perceptions of legitimacy, higher support for behavioral intentions, and more worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.	*Not Supported*	*Not Supported*	*Not Supported*	*Not Supported*
d. Higher perceived behavioral control will not have an effect on perceptions of legitimacy, but will decrease both behavioral intentions and one's attitude toward behavioral intentions.	*Not Supported*	*Not Supported*	*Not Supported*	*Not Supported*
e. Use of efficiency frames will not have an effect on perceptions of legitimacy but will decrease both behavioral intentions and one's attitude toward the behavioral intentions as worthwhile.	*Yes/No*	*Yes/No*	*Not Supported*	*Yes*
f. Use of normative frames will be related to lower perceptions of legitimacy, lower support for behavioral intentions, and less worthwhile attitudes towards the behavior.	*Not Supported*	*Not Supported*	*Not Supported*	*Not Supported*

M.   **Open-ended Survey Question Responses**

In response to the vignette, officers wrote narrative responses on additional questions they would ask the victim. In order of frequency, these responses focused on 1) Determining consent, 2) Getting more specific narrative of the incident, 3) Finding injury and other physical evidence, 4) Identifying witnesses, 5) Uncovering more detail about the amount of drinking or intoxication, 6) Asking about the relationship with the suspect, 7) Asking about the victim's response to the incident, 8) Her current relationship status, and 9) the history of both parties (See Table XLII for quotations and Appendix for more thorough descriptions of all open-ended question coding). Officers were then asked what information would be the *most important* to determine if the victim's report is legitimate. Officers responded very similarly with the following themes: 1) Narrative of incident (46), 2) Physical evidence (44), 3) Consent (38), 4) Witnesses (18), 5) Victim's response (17), 6) Drugs/alcohol (9), 7) History of both parties (6), 8) Suspect's response (6), 9) Relationship with suspect (3), 10), Current relationship status (1), and 11) Other (20). Additionally 58 officers responded with either no answer or a statement that it is not their job to determine legitimacy or not. As one officer describes clearly,

> I feel it is not my responsibility as an Officer to determine if this case is legitimate or not. If I am a Patrol Officer I will take the report without bias and follow protocol. I will assume it is legit and conduct myself in that matter.   If I am a Detective I also will assume this is legit but ask questions in a standard manner. Ultimately it is the Prosecutor's decision to charge the suspect or not charge him.

TABLE XLII

THEMES AND QUOTES FOR QUESTIONS TO ASK HYPOTHETICAL VICTIM

Theme	*n*	Example
Was it consensual?	64	"The important issue here is if the women in the scenario gave a clear and consistent message. This means, did she say "no," or physically indicate "no." She cannot say "no," and then touch the ex-boyfriend sexually."
Narrative of incident	57	"Party witnesses, a good statement from the victim, has she seen the suspect before, who else knows the suspect, what exactly occurred, statements made by suspect, was there a rape kit done."
Physical evidence of the incident	54	"Either party injured? Any witnesses to assault? Any contact with suspect prior to party? Social media contact? Physical evidence (body fluids, condom, etc.), as much suspect information as possible."
Are there witnesses?	36	"Were there any witnesses that saw him there or with you? Was there anyone else at the apartment?"
Were there drugs or alcohol involved?	31	"How much she had to drink? What he had to drink? Were they alone?"
What is your relationship with the suspect?	30	"Have you ever met this person before? Did any of your friends know this person?"
What was the victim's response to the incident?	27	"What took so long to call the police?" "What is the demeanor of the both the victim and the suspect during police interview, both verbal and nonverbal behavior?"
How did the suspect respond?	10	"What type of conversation were they having before the act? I would need more detail on the act itself, such as when and how did she communicate to the suspect that she didn't want to have sex."
Current relationship status	9	"Is the victim currently involved in a dating relationship?"
History of both parties	5	"Was he ever assaultive to you before? What led up to the assault? Did you try to leave?"
Other	93	"Basic info names of victim, suspect, witnesses, location it occurred, date/time, injuries, etc. Ask for a full narrative of the evening and once she provided the "full story", ask more questions to fill in the blanks."

N. **Narrative Responses of Suggestions for Improving Response**

Officers also provided comments about what would help them in their work responding

to CSC cases. Although a smaller number of officers answered this question, the most

predominant themes focused on changing the procedure of responding to CSC calls and the need

for more training (See Table XLIII for themes and examples; see Appendix for more thorough

description of codes).

TABLE XLIII

THEMES AND QUOTES FOR THINGS THAT WOULD HELP IN RESPONSE TO CSCS

Theme	*n*	Example
Improve or change procedure	26	"Have qualified detectives handle the entire incident from the initial report on to avoid repeatedly asking the victim to go through the incident over and over."
More, or more consistent training	19	"To be able to discern between the lies and the truth."
Nothing	13	"A crystal ball...truth is, we don't always get it right and that is irksome. We truly want justice for the victim - even if that happens to be the man who was falsely accused."
Better knowledge of the situation	13	"Get complete, accurate, honest information about the incident."
A desire for more resources	13	"Interview skills / experience / covering procedural requirements."
More false reporting charges	6	"Victims need to be charged more often with making a false police report when it can be proven they lied and wasted police time and resources."
More education	4	"More victim education for prevention."

O. **Narrative Responses of Ways to Ensure Justice in CSC Cases**

Officers also commented on their thoughts about how to ensure justice in CSC cases.

Many officers (*n* = 82) did not answer this question, or stated that there are too many different

things that could be done. Other common responses focused on cooperation between all parties

involved and more honesty by the victim (See Table XLIV).

TABLE XLIV

NARRATIVE RESPONSES ABOUT ENSURING JUSTICE IN CSC CASES

Theme	*n*	Example
Cooperation and honesty by the victim	27	"Victim must be cooperative and completely honest, even with difficult questions. It will go to their credibility at trial." "Always charge women with a felony if they lie about an assault. If no woman ever lied, you wouldn't need to conduct a survey assessing my attitude toward CSC complaints. These false reports create significant problems for not only the men falsely accused, but also for women who are true victims."
Harsher punishments for offenders	14	"Stop prosecutors from pleaing cases down. I see too many registered sex offenders registering for offenses that are pled down from the violent crimes they originally committed."
Thorough investigation	12	"Without physical evidence it is very difficult to convict anyone based on uncorroborated verbal testimony. We either have to get better at finding and preserving physical evidence or get the courts to authorize and allow lie detector test and interrogations as evidence."
Other	9	"Let the victim decide the punishment if the suspect is convicted in court."
Not sure or I don't know	8	"Too many factors with each case being so different."
Education of officers, courts and juries	7	"Continued (or some) training for Officers taking the initial report. Training on interviews, policy, and legal updates...we have very little training in this area, and unless the Officer keeps up in this on their own, our reports and investigations, quite frankly, suck."
Objective investigation	4	"Try to be as objective as possible and conduct complete investigation even if you personally believe victim making a false claim." "Everyone to have an open mind about the case and not make a judgment based on broad facts like, alcohol or drug use, race, social class and other stereotypical things."
More detectives	3	"More detectives-so that we are able to spend quality time investigating each one."
Care for the victim	2	"Make sure the victim understands that just because his/her rape accusation is/isn't supported criminally, it does not mean (emotionally) she/he has not been raped."
Impossible, nothing would help	2	"There are way too many variables for this to ever be an absolute. Unless all victims carried around a recording device at all times."
Nothing, they are prosecuted fairly	1	"I think they are prosecuted fairly. You can't make up witnesses and evidence."

VIII. DISCUSSION

The findings provide a more comprehensive understanding of police officer schema related to sexual assault. The findings demonstrate some common themes about factors that influence perceptions and decision making, however, there is a great deal of variation in officer attitudes, perceptions, thoughts about important and relevant information, and suggestions for improvement. This section will review the major study findings, discuss interpretations in light of theories, suggest implications for various systems and stakeholders, acknowledge study limitations, and highlight areas for further research.

It is my hope that these findings will ultimately benefit victim-survivors of sexual assault. A better understanding of police definitions and factors influencing perceptions of sexual assault points to areas for training, which could potentially translate to more reporting, a more sensitive response and interviewing process, and a more just outcome within the criminal justice system. The study's findings may specifically benefit law enforcement officials, which may gain insight on training recommendations around attitudes, interviewing techniques, and appropriate responses. Others such as rape victim advocacy groups, medical and legal advocacy, and those who work with survivors of sexual assault, such as social workers and mental health counselors, will benefit from an increased understanding of the ways in which law enforcement officials perceive and make decisions in these cases. Specifically, those who work with survivors may be better equipped to assist survivors in preparing for questioning, and advocate for a fair and sensitive response by the criminal justice and legal systems. This research has specific implications for social work, both in its advocacy efforts and direct practice with victim-survivors of sexual assault. A greater understanding of law enforcement decision making can

assist social workers in assisting victims of sexual assault in their coping and in pursuing a criminal justice response if desired.

A.   Summary of Major Findings

1.   Case Classifications as False, Ambiguous, or Real and Elements of Rape Myth Acceptance

Common themes emerged in the qualitative interviews around content of police officer schema on sexual assault, however, individual differences within qualitative interviews, and wide variability in perceptions of cases in survey results speaks to the complicated combination of factors that influence police officer schema related to sexual assault. While some officers warned against early judgments of legitimacy and victim credibility, and earnestly challenged themselves to investigate everything with full vigor, the topic of false reporting was ever-present, and components of the "real rape" and "ideal victim" myths permeated interviews and narrative responses within the survey.

Descriptions of the most obviously "legitimate" cases of sexual assault included stereotypical images of sexual violence, such as strangers, use of weapon, and injury. The expectation of sexual assault by a stranger that includes elements of unambiguous violence and injury, and use of a weapon does not accurately reflect typical real-world rapes (Lonsway et al., 2009). Instead, characterizations of "types" of sexual assaults perpetuate the stereotypes, or myths, about sexual assault in our society. These factors that influence officers' perceptions of cases as legitimate and subsequent response decisions are based more on stereotypes than on legal definitions of the crime.

Perceptions of large proportions of ambiguous cases points to the uniqueness of sexual assault as a crime, in that it often occurs in private and involves elements of fear, coercion, and

exercise of power. These characteristics inherent to the crime do not lead to the availability of "strong" evidence often necessary for a satisfactory criminal justice and legal system response. The role of evidence in the current criminal justice system, and the propensity for jurors, judges, and prosecutors to emphasize DNA evidence in reported sexual assaults, limits the cases that can move forward within the system. Even when DNA evidence is present, it is not helpful in the many cases that revolve around issues of consent. Victim testimony itself does not lend to officer perceptions of believability and confidence that a crime occurred. This relates to Jordan's (2004) findings that historically pervasive attitudes of mistrust in women's testimony continue to be evident in police processing of sexual assault reports.

"Classifications" of cases as false, ambiguous, or real, along with factors that explain these classifications, emerged in a relatively small qualitative sample, pointing out the tendency to categorize crimes and crime victims. Skolnick points out that "it is the nature of the policeman's situation that his conception of order emphasize regularity and predictability. It is, therefore, a conception shaped by persistent suspicion" (1994, p.46). While schema can help officers be efficient and perform their job well, it can also mentally categorize certain reports and certain victims prematurely. Paoline points out that "part of reading people and situations is manifested through the sorting of clientele. Officers learn to sort citizens into categories (suspicious persons, assholes, and know-nothings)" (2003, p. 202). These sorts of categorizations are evident in the study's findings.

2. The Influence of Rape Myth Acceptance and Attributions of Blame

The study's findings show wide variability in acceptance of rape myths. Qualitative interview findings contained components of rape myth acceptance, such as beliefs that false reporting is prevalent, and real or serious rapes involve strangers, injury, and weapons, as

opposed to acquaintances and incapacitated or under-the-influence victims. Even though these elements helped officers to identify cases as legitimate, or at least less ambiguous, officers were careful to acknowledge the seriousness of the crime and the importance of responding to each report similarly, without making premature judgments.

Research explains that attributions of blame may affect someone's emotional reaction and willingness to help the victim. A study by Clarke and Lawson (2009) found that higher attributions of fault toward the victim were associated with greater negative affective reactions of anger, disgust and decreased feelings of sympathy. These reactions included a decreased desire to help the victim. Alternatively, attributions of fault toward the perpetrator were associated with greater feelings of sympathy for the victim, lower expressions of negative affect, and an increased desire to help the victim. These findings suggest that training and interventions for those likely to come into contact with victim-survivors should focus on addressing victim-blaming myths and emphasize that sexual assault is a crime for which only the offender is to blame (Clarke, & Lawson, 2009). The study's results showed a consistent effect of attributions of suspect blame on perceptions of a "good" case and behavioral intentions. Training on the definition of sexual assault could lead to more inferences of responsibility and attributions of blame towards the suspect, even when the report includes elements of what officers might have deemed as "red flags" or causal responsibility, such as "improper" or risk-taking behavior on the part of the victim leading up to the sexual assault.

3. The Influence of Victim and Case Characteristics

This study finds mixed results on the influence of victim alcohol use and relationship between the victim and perpetrator. Qualitative interviews point out that intoxication and having a prior relationship clearly identify the report as ambiguous, not clearly legitimate or

automatically false. However, the survey results did not show an effect of victim alcohol use and prior relationship between the suspect and victim on perceptions and behavioral intentions. Without controlling for other factors, case characteristics did have some influence on perceptions of the case and behavioral intentions, but when attitudinal and external variables were added to the model, the effect of victim and case characteristics diminished.

An explanation for this discrepant finding between qualitative and quantitative results may relate to the use of dichotomous variables and the vignette methodology. Beichner and Spohn (2012) criticize the use of dichotomous variables that attempt to reflect the presence of any risky behavior or moral character issue. Instead, they argue that a combination of factors in stranger cases and a combination of other factors in nonstranger cases affect charging decisions. Specifically, charging decisions in stranger cases are largely determined by legally relevant factors. Decisions in nonstranger cases are affected by several legally irrelevant victim characteristics: whether the victim had a prior criminal record, whether the victim had been drinking alcohol prior to the assault, and whether the victim invited the suspect to her residence (Beichner & Spohner, 2012). The lack of details in this study's vignette (intended for vagueness) about how much the victim was drinking, along with other information not included (e.g., suspect alcohol use), may have influenced a lack of effect. In qualitative interviews, alcohol use (i.e. specifically intoxication) combined with others factors (e.g., prior relationship) did affect perceptions of the case.

These findings taken together suggest that victim alcohol use and prior relationship probably do have an influence on reported sexual assaults, but the effect happens in real encounters with people and later in case progression—at the Prosecutor's Office and charging decision, rather than the initial perception or decision making by the patrol officers, detectives,

or supervisors. Officers perceive cases with victim alcohol use and prior relationship as ambiguous because they know that the case is unlikely to progress in the criminal justice system. Instead, these factors guide prosecutor's charging decisions, which often incorporate specific victim behaviors and background characteristics into the decision (Beichner & Spohner, 2012). Research clearly shows that alcohol and drug use by the victim significantly deters case progression, often by criminal justice system personnel dropping the case (Campbell, 1998; Chandler & Torney, 1981; Frohmann, 1997; Spears & Spohn, 1996).

Findings related to prior relationship between the victim and suspect is similar. While qualitative interviews classified cases involving acquaintances, partners, or those previously in a relationship as either ambiguous or false, there was no effect of the prior relationship in the vignette. One explanation is that the vignette itself included either an "ex-boyfriend" or "a guy she met" at a bar. Because the vignette did not include a "complete stranger," there may have been less of a difference in perceptions and behavioral intentions between two "known" suspects. Additionally, the victim in the vignette agreed to go to "his" apartment, implying a different sort of scenario than a "stranger assault." This is consistent with other research, in which officers attribute more blame to victims when the assault does not involve a stranger (Bieneck & Krahé, 2011; Buzawa et al., 1995; LaFree, 1980; Chandler & Torney, 1981; Kerstetter, 1990). Again, there may not be an effect on police officer intentions, but the effect may come later in prosecutorial decision making (Addington, 2008; Spohn et al., 2001).

4.   **Perceptions versus Behavioral Intentions**

An interesting finding relates to the relationship between perceptions of the case and behavioral intentions or initial response. In both the qualitative interviews and survey results, there is variation in perceptions of case legitimacy and credibility of the victim, however, the

results demonstrate a lack of variation in intended behavioral response. In the qualitative interviews, officers agree that they will respond similarly to any report—in fact, they will ask the most basic questions—what, when, where, why, and how. In the survey results, the majority of officers responded with full support for writing the report as a CSC and recommending that the victim go to the YWCA. This indicates that police officers—even when acknowledging different attitudes and perceptions of reports—perceive their response as similar across all "types" or scenarios of sexual assault, all "types" of victims in terms of credibility, and all characteristics of the report. It is also possible that one's attitude toward behavioral intentions is a better proxy of actual behavior. There were significant effects on one's attitude towards the behavior based on the extent of relative suspect blame and the extent to which peers would deem the report as legitimate.

However, there is evidence of the exercise of discretion or differential responses by officer's perceived seriousness of the report. When asked about support for calling out a detective immediately or arresting the suspect, if identified, there was much more variation in this response, with some officers expressing very little support and others expressing very much support. Because detectives work regular day shifts with on call availability after hours in this department, officers exercise discretion in determining whether a case deserves immediate attention by the detective. It is possible that officers only call out detectives (who are on-call after their regular shift) when the report includes elements of the "real rape." Because officers may take on a strict crime fighter orientation, this may lead them to focus on more "serious, less ambiguous, criminal incidents (i.e. felonies)" rather than more ambiguous reported sexual assault cases (Paoline, 2003, p. 203). This may also be the case when the identity of the perpetrator is unknown and there is a need for an immediate search.

In general, officers were less supportive of arresting the suspect. This survey item received less support than both writing the report as a sexual assault and calling out a detective to respond. Research on interpersonal violence has shown that incidents including injury and weapon use were associated with higher probability of arrest (Dichter, Marcus, Morabito, & Rhoes, 2011).

Results demonstrate that attributions have the strongest effect on perceptions and behavioral intentions, however, elements of TPB also further explain these variations. Results demonstrate that attribution of blame towards the suspect and victim has the strongest effect on perception and behavioral intentions. Attributions of blame, the combination of responsibility and affective response to the scenario) most strongly influence variations in officers' responses, even more so than general rape myth acceptance. How an officer feels about his or her response, as well as how officers view their peers' perceptions and response, has an effect on both perceptions of the case and behavioral intentions.

B.   Implications of Study Findings on Theory

While the study did not seek to test any singular theory directly, the findings suggest implications for the use and applicability of several theories in helping to understand police officer decision making in reported sexual assault cases. While schema theory acknowledges flexibility and pragmatism in content and procedural knowledge, the theory of planned behavior assumes a more systematic decision making process. The findings most directly support attribution and schema theories, demonstrating that the extent to which officers hold the suspect responsible is the most significant predictor of perceptions of the case and behavioral intentions. Additionally, elements of the theory of planned behavior provide a more thorough understanding of outside factors that influence perceptions and decision making, namely the influence of peers.

The findings clearly demonstrate the influence of the expectation of peers, and a desire to respond similarly to peers, corresponds with attribution and schema theory.

C.   **Police Officer Education, Training, and Procedure**

      1.   **Challenging Rape Myth Acceptance and Attributions of Victim Blame**

Attitudes such as rape myth acceptance and attributions of blame and responsibility significantly affect perceptions of reported sexual assaults as legitimate and perceptions of victim-survivors as credible. Because attitude appears to play a crucial role in differentiating officer perceptions and behavioral intentions, education and training to address these beliefs should be a priority.

The study's findings on the effect of officer training along with previous research demonstrate the effectiveness of education and training specifically on sexual assault. Research suggests that responding police officers need specific, intensive education about sexual assault in order to decrease their RMA and victim blaming perceptions. Educational efforts appear to have a corrective influence on these beliefs (Ask, 2010). Ask (2010) states that it is critical that crime victims are treated with consideration of their needs; otherwise, their well-being could be adversely affected (secondary victimization) and their willingness to cooperate may be diminished.

Recent research demonstrates that rape myth acceptance is malleable and strategically motivated and not intrinsic in nature (Chapleau & Oswald, 2013). Although limited in scope, Currier and Carlson's (2009) study found that explicit education with college students on violence against women had an effect in changing negative attitudes.

Most importantly, victim-survivors of sexual assault emphasize the importance of being believed, validated, and provided with privacy and safety. Jordan's (2008) study with "ideal"

victims gave evidence that police respond positively and with great support when the victim is "believable" based on characteristics of the victim, the perpetrator, and the assault itself. This study suggests that training may assist officers in considering a wider array of victims as credible and assault scenarios as legitimate.

Specific recommendations for training include mandatory training at the Police Academy on definitions of sexual assault, characteristics of most common sexual assaults, clarification on expectations for victim demeanor, and interviewing skills. Additionally, police departments, local mental health organizations, and sexual assault crisis centers should collaborate to provide on-going training and in-service opportunities.

2. <u>**Challenging Expectations for Victim Behavior and Demeanor**</u>

The study's findings suggest that police officers predominantly expect certain "types" of crime scenarios and certain reactions by victims. Previous research demonstrates that sexual assault victims are likely to experience secondary victimization when reporting to the police, which can be exacerbated when the police officer communicates that he or she does not believe the victim. Police officers receive training on how to identify indicators of doubtful credibility and substance use and may receive no training on how to interact with crime victims (Milne & Bulle, 2007; Roberg, Crank, & Kuykendall, 2004). Jordan (2001) argues that police training on identifying dishonesty doesn't work in sexual assault reporting. In fact, a negative behavioral feedback loop can take place between the victim and the police officer (Jordan, 2001).

In addition, victims may value procedural justice just as much as legal justice. Recent research suggests that experiencing sexual trauma is related to a higher preference for procedural justice, such as demonstration of respect, fair treatment, and allowing the victim to express his or her own voice (Laxminarayan, 2013). This finding points to the idea that in addition to case

progression through investigation, arrest, and sentencing, victim-survivors of sexual trauma especially value the way in which they are treated throughout the criminal justice system process.

Police training on trauma may help police officers to understand unexpected victim behavior or demeanor, which sometimes lead officers to perceive the report as false. Research shows that police perceive victims as more truthful when they include the "emotional victim effect" or expressive and self-blaming demeanor (Ask, 2010; Ask & Landstrom, 2010). Because all victim-survivors will respond differently, it is important that officers receive training on responses to trauma. Training on trauma may give police officers a better understanding of expressive differences in victims of trauma, and may help them to use some of the procedural justice elements described above. Campbell (2012) provides an extremely helpful discussion on recent research on the underlying neurobiology of traumatic events, its emotional and physical manifestations, and how these processes can impact the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault reports. Campbell (2012) describes the discrepancy between police officer expectations and the real effect of sexual trauma on victim cognition, affect, and demeanor (Campbell, 2012). Training of police officers responses to trauma, memory processes and tonic immobility would help to explain victim response during and after the assault, as well as victim demeanor and cognitive processing during the interviewing (Campbell, 2012). An understanding of trauma would potentially influence less frustration by police officers when interacting with a victim they perceive to be lying or making up details of the assault. When most officers expressed a certain expectation about victim demeanor, one officer indicated the effect of training, stating,

> They cover signs of deception, and they're for suspects, but a victim of sexual assault is
> going to show those exact same signs. And so you get a lot of investigators think my

victim's lying, and you get a lot of victims who do lie or omit certain aspects of what

happened, but not necessarily, it's not a false report.

Campbell (2012) describes the effect of trauma on memory, indicating the real possibility that

pieces of memory will be disorganized or not remembered until a later time. Training on the

effects of trauma could counter some of police officer's interpretations of sexual assault reports.

For example, one officer described the elements that make a case appear ambiguous or false:

Inconsistencies in their stories. 'Cause they'll tell the officers one thing on the scene and

then when they come in here and we're interviewing them, we read the report extensively

and then we interview them and within one day or two days, there's all these other little

things that you would, like ah, you didn't tell the officer that. 'Oh yeah, I forgot about

that part.'

3. **Adapting Interview Techniques in Sexual Assault Report Writing and Investigating**

Officers value procedure and systematic responses to crime. When asked about what

officers would do step-by-step through the processing of a sexual assault report, officers quickly

stated that they would follow procedure and ask the same questions that they ask in any crime.

Although the report itself may be lengthier than other crime reports, the essence of the

questioning and report writing is the same as any other crime. Because of the ways in which

victim-survivors and victim advocates describe interactions with law enforcement officials, the

research suggests disconnect between victim needs and police procedure. Rich and Seffrin

(2012) argue that police officer skill in responding to reported sexual assaults is important for

several reasons. First, it can affect the victim's willingness to cooperate with the criminal justice

system personnel. This in turn affects the quality of the report. In addition, police officer

interviewing can have either a positive or negative effect on the propensity for secondary trauma in victims by the reporting process (Rich & Seffrin, 2012).

Because law enforcement organizations are organized by hierarchy and tend to be male-dominated, skills for developing rapport with females and subordinates is not emphasized in the police role (Dodge, Valcore, and Klinger, 2010; Gregory & Lees, 1999). Although survivors may prefer being interviewed by females in the police department, research has shown inconsistent results on female police officer rape myth acceptance, and there is a lack of research that women possess better skills at interacting or interviewing sexual assault victim-survivors (Martin, 1997; Jordan, 2002). Additionally, because "crime fighting" or identifying criminals is the primary task of police work, taking reports is viewed as more subsidiary and less training is dedicated to it (Milne & Bull, 2007). Epstein and Langenbahn (1994) found that police officers use a quick and direct interviewing style that does not allow victims to elaborate. This method may leave more ability to be emotionally detached from the interview or the scenario as well as avoid stress (Epstein & Langenbahn, 1994; Gover, Paul, & Dodge, 2011; Jordan, 2001; Norris & Thompson, 1993).

Additionally, some research suggests that heavy-handed tactics by police to generate witness testimony and evidence sometimes produces false evidence or discourages involvement by the victim (Thompson, 2012). Officers underestimate the distress victims experience during interviews (Campbell, 2005) and may engage in questioning that demoralizes victim-survivors (Campbell, 2006; Jordan, 2001). Thompson's (2012) study discusses the way that officers perceive victims as changing his or her story or being inconsistent in the details of the report. Standard interviewing techniques by police officers may actually influence the tendency of victims to produce false evidence, especially when those in question are particularly vulnerable,

as many sexual assault victims are, as suggested by the police interviews. Rich and Seffrin (2012) argue that police officers lack skills for interviewing crime victims, and rape myth acceptance is significantly related to knowledge of how to interview victims who are reporting a sexual assault. This research points to the need to allow a slower disclosure process by victims and training with police officers on RMA.

Police officer training should focus specifically on sexual assault, combined with interviewing techniques. Sexual assault training, rather than general education, is a significant predictor of rape myth acceptance, attributions of blame, perceptions of the case, and behavioral intentions. Additionally, training on sexual assault is a significant predictor on interviewing skill, even though police training usually only includes a small proportion of training on victim interviewing (Milne & Bull, 2007). Rich and Seffrin (2012) provide a helpful discussion and review of literature on what training is most likely to succeed. They report that there are contradictory findings on whether attitudinal change is necessary to improve interviewing skills, or whether behavioral changes (i.e. interviewing skills improvement) may actually lead to attitudinal change (Jaccard & Blanton, 2005; Lonsway, Welch, & Fitzgerald, 2001).

Although research suggests that RMA is malleable, attitudes take time to change. The study's findings suggest that officers who are detectives show lower RMA, making them better suited to conduct the interview and investigation. However, because there is so much variation in patrol RMA and they are charged with being the first-responders and writing the initial report, it is possible that certain officers are primed or better equipped to be the first-responders to reported sexual assaults. Rich and Seffrin (2012) also recommend intentional selection of certain police officers to conduct victim interviews. A similar model of specialized training and response is provided through the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for police officers, which

focuses on appropriate responses to persons with a mental illness (Compton, Bahora, Watson, & Oliva, 2005). Because the number of sexual assaults that are actually reported to the police is relatively small in proportion to the prevalence, it seems feasible to train a sub-set of officers to be trained in Sexual Assault Response.

4.   Responding to Late Reporting

Officers frequently cite late reporting as either indication of false reporting, or a factor that leads to ambiguity and inability to respond effectively by the criminal and legal justice systems. Strategies to encourage earlier reporting and sensitive response by the criminal justice system need to be developed so that evidence can be collected, the case can progress, and the victim is treated with care. Research points to the need for adaptations within the criminal justice system to account for late reporting. Ahrens, Stansell, and Jennings (2010) describe the process of disclosure for sexual assault survivors, explaining that some individuals never disclose, some disclose very slowly, others disclose during crises, and others disclose ongoing. Because sexual assault disclosure to anyone may be slow, disclosure to the police may happen sometime after the event. Police officers need to respond to late disclosures in the same manner that they respond to other victims of crime, even if they know deadlines for physical evidence may have passed. Social workers, victim advocates, and mental health professionals should work together to develop a system of response that responds sensitively to the ongoing physical and psychological trauma (Lonsway et al., 2009).

D.   Implications for the Legal System

This research suggests implications for the legal system, specifically the role of the jury and the prosecutor's office.   In the qualitative interviews, officers frequently commented that particular cases would never be taken or believed by a jury. Because the prosecutor's office

makes a judgment about expectations of the judge or the jury, certain "types" of cases or cases without sufficient evidence, are deemed as not prosecutable. Some research suggests that certain testimonies might help to substantiate the victim's testimony and render jurors more favorable towards the victim (Wasarhaley, Simcic, & Golding, 2012). Wasarhaley and colleagues (2012) recently found that jurors were more likely to render guilty verdicts in sexual assault cases when a SANE gave a testimony rather than a Registered Nurse. This finding suggests the important role of not only collaboration between the Nurse Examiner program, the local hospitals, the criminal justice and legal systems, but emphasizes the importance of SANE education and training on legal testimony. These findings point to the need to further explore the standard for evidence and expert testimonies in sexual assault cases (Holleran, Beichner, & Spohn, 2010; Jordan, 2010).

E. **Implications for Social Work Practice**

Actions taken by the police and social service providers that protect the victim and offer the victim support should alleviate the mental health consequences of sexual violence. Because sexual violence is pervasive within society, social workers are frequently working with victim-survivors of sexual assault in a variety of settings, whether intentionally focusing on the trauma or not (Macy, Giattina, Parish, & Crosby, 2010). Macy (2007) states that the lack of research in social work on revictimization, the trauma experienced by stigmatizing responses to victims by police or others following the sexual assault itself "is more than unfortunate because social work professionals are often the first, and frequently the only, human service providers that victim-survivors encounter" (p.635). Sexual assault victims are more likely to suffer from their victimization and require treatment than other victims of crime (Kaukinen & DeMaris, 2009).

Social workers can play an important role in building community relationships that will develop a better system that responds collaboratively and justly to victims of sexual assault. Woody, Beldin, and Kerry (2012) describe the tension between rape crisis service programs and mental health professionals and provide recommendations for dialogue and improved service delivery. Campbell, Greeson, Bybee, and Fehler-cabral (2012) present findings that demonstrate the effectiveness of community relationships in improving prosecution rates for perpetrators of sexual assaults against adolescents. They found that adolescent cases that were involved with either a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) or Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) had 40% prosecution rates, higher than is typical. They suggest that the allocation of community resources can have a significant effect on outcomes (Campbell et al., 2012).

Social workers should also speak into culturally appropriate help-seeking strategies for victim-survivors of sexual assault. Kennedy, Adams, Bybee, Campbell, Kubiak, and Sullivan (2012) explore a model of sexually victimized women's process of attaining effective formal helping over time. Additionally, Sabina, Cuevas, and Schally (2012) explain differences in formal and informal help-seeking among victimized Latino women, pointing out the variety of ways that social workers can and will be involved in addressing the needs of sexual assault victim-survivors.

F.   **Implications for Advocacy and Policy**

In many ways, police officer attitudes and attributions of blame mirror those of the general population. Internalized rape myth acceptance even influences victims and their reporting and treatment decisions. Leisenring (2012) provides anecdotal information about sociology student perceptions of particular "types" of sexual assault, noting problematic definitions and interpretations of behavior and credibility on judgments and interpretation of

consent. Although police work and organizational culture contains unique characteristics, police attitudes and thoughts regarding sexual assault are intrinsically connected to broader cultural knowledge and perceptions about sexual assault. With legal reform over the past several decades, public opinion has not shifted in line with policy changes.

The debate about consent remains, and more advocacy and awareness needs to happen around non-consent and sexual assault law. Decker and Baroni (2011) provide a comprehensive examination of the subject of consent and sexual assault, and conclude that there are variations by state. State laws fall into three classifications: 1) "true non-consent states," 2) "contradictory non-consent states," and 3) "force states." Some legal definitions contain expectations to provide evidence of "non-consent" rather than evidence *of consent*. The authors conclude that "No" still means "Yes" unless there is proof of communicating "No" beyond the victim's testimony, which most agree is difficult to do (Decker & Baroni, 2011).

G.   <u>Study Strengths and Limitations</u>

The current study fills a gap in the literature on police officer perceptions and decision making in sexual assault cases. The current study triangulates both qualitative and quantitative data on police officer perceptions, attitudes, and responses to sexual assault. Concerning the political nature of law enforcement, social desirability bias or political correctness may be expected in the measures of rape myth acceptance or even response to the hypothetical vignette. Because of this, this study included a measure of social desirability, as indicated as a limitation of previous studies (Rich & Seffrin, 2012). Additionally, many previous research studies comment on the need for more qualitative research on officers' perspectives, which would help to develop more effective training protocols (Rich & Seffrin, 2012).

The current study includes limitations related to the source of data, the measurement, and the lack of generalizability beyond the local police department. Although obtaining a sample from all sworn officers in a single police department seeks to minimize sampling bias, caution is warranted regarding any generalizations that can be made to police departments as whole or individual law enforcement officials. Without a random sample of police officers, generalizability of the findings is limited. In addition, because this study describes sexual assault-related schema and decision making within one urban police department, there may be unique characteristics specific to the particular police department that may help to understand and explain this study's findings which cannot be applied elsewhere. Cross sectional design limits the ability to make inferences about the changes in police officer's schema or decision making over time.

Another potential limitation concerns measurement used in the study. Many of the measures (e.g., subjective norms, attitudes towards the behavior, decisional frames) were adapted specifically for this study and have not been tested in other empirical studies. It is possible that the lack of effect of these concepts has more to do with their measurement than the effect of those constructs on police officer perceptions and decision making. Further research should study the use of social desirability measures with law enforcement officials. Additionally, use of a hypothetical vignette does not reflect the complexity of real reports that officers respond to in their daily work.

Efforts to minimize survey burden may have led to missing data. Even though 60% of all sworn officers responded, many officers who started the survey did not complete the entire survey. It is impossible to know whether this was due to time constraints, frustration with the questions, or certain characteristics that might have influenced responses and subsequent results.

Although 60% is considered a good response rate, there may be self-selection bias within the sample and among those who completed the entire survey or not.

H.   Conclusion

The study findings, along with an acknowledgement of study limitations, lead to a greater understanding of the factors that influence police officer perceptions and decision making in reported sexual assaults. This study builds on a gap in the literature by adding the influence of the first responders, both attitudinally and through outside factors that may influence initial perceptions and decision making in cases of reported sexual assault. Additionally, the study triangulates data from both in-depth qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. Future research should continue to link victim-survivor experiences with initial response and decision making and the progression or lack thereof for sexual assault cases based on police perceptions and decision making. Because of the prevalence of the crime and the substantial case attrition, it is important to continue uncovering ways in which justice can be realized.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS)
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (MC 672)
203 Administrative Office Building
1737 West Polk Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612-7227

Approval Notice
Initial Review – Expedited Review

July 29, 2010

Rachel Venema, BSW,MSW
Jane Addams School of Social Work
1040 W Harrison St
M/C 309
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: (616) 634-2054

RE: **Protocol # 2010-0625**
       "Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Cases"

Dear Ms. Venema:

Members of Institutional Review Board (IRB) #2 reviewed and approved your research protocol under expedited review procedures [45 CFR 46.110(b)(1)] on July 27, 2010. You may now begin your research.

Your research meets the requirements for review under expedited review procedures [45 CFR 46.110] Category: 6, 7

> (6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes,
> (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Please remember to submit a letter of support from the [name] Police Department prior to recruiting or enrolling subjects, or accessing data, at that site. A copy of the letter of support must be accompanied by an Amendment form when submitted to the UIC IRB.

Please note that only Phase 1 of this research has been reviewed and approved by the UIC IRB. Kindly submit all materials for subsequent phases of the research, accompanied by an Amendment form, prior to engaging in research activities beyond Phase 1.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: July 27, 2010 - July 26, 2011
Approved Subject Enrollment #:   20
Additional Determinations for Research Involving Minors: These determinations have not been made for this study since it has not been approved for enrollment of minors.
Performance Site: UIC
Sponsor: None
Research Protocol:

    a) Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Cases

Recruitment Material:

    a) Recruitment Screening Script; Version 1; 07/15/2010

Informed Consents:

    a) Study Information Sheet, Phase 1 (no footer)

    b) A waiver of documentation has been granted under 45 CFR 46.117 for Phase 1 of this research (subjects will be given information sheet with all elements of consent, minimal risk research, signed consent would be only document linking subjects to research)

Please note the Review History of this submission:

Receipt Date	Submission Type	Review Process	Review Date	Review Action
07/16/2010	Initial Review	Expedited	07/27/2010	Approved

Please remember to:

→ **Use only the IRB-approved and stamped consent document(s) enclosed with this letter when enrolling new subjects.**

→ Use your **research protocol number** (2010-0625) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

→ Review and comply with all requirements of the,
 "**UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects**"

Please note that the UIC IRB has the right to ask further questions, seek additional information, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the OPRS office at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 996-2014. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,

Sandra Costello
Assistant Director, IRB # 2
Office for the Protection of Research

Subjects

Enclosures:
  1. **UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects**
  2. **Informed Consent Document:**
      a) Study Information Sheet, Phase 1 (no footer)
  3. **Recruiting Material:**
      a) Recruitment Screening Script; Version 1; 07/15/2010

cc: Amy Watson, Jane Addams School of Social Work, M/C 309
       Creasie Finney Hairston, Jane Addams School of Social Work, M/C 309

APPENDIX B

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET: Phase One
University of Illinois at Chicago
Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Cases

Why is this research being done?

You are being asked to participate in this research study about how police officers think about
and make decisions in reported sexual assault calls. Specifically, the study will aim to:
- Understand various "types" of reported sexual assaults
- Understand perceptions of police procedure in responding to sexual assault
- Describe the factors that make a case more ambiguous
- Describe the factors that influence how police officers make decisions in forwarding the
  case to the Investigative Division

Why am I being asked?

The study is being conducted by Rachel Venema, a PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at
Chicago. You have been asked to participate in the research because you are a police officer at
the [Name] Police Department and may be eligible to participate. I ask that you read this form
and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the research.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will
not affect your current or future relations with the University of Illinois at Chicago, nor will it in
any way impact your employment relationship with [name] Police Department. If you decide to
participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting these relationships.

What procedures are involved?

If you do choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview with
the principal investigator, Rachel Venema, which will take approximately 60 minutes. This
interview will ask you about your perceptions of sexual assault, common types of calls you
might receive, and how you make decisions about how to respond to these calls. With your
permission, we would like to tape record the interview. Approximately 20 [Name of departmen]
police officers may be involved in this phase of the study.

Approximately 300 [Name of department] police officers may be involved in the study overall.
The second phase (which you are not being asked to participate in at this point) will include a
self-administered questionnaire with a larger number of patrol officers.

APPENDIX B (continued)

What are the potential risks and discomforts and how will they be addressed?

I do not expect the questions to cause you any discomfort; however, you are free to skip a question, or discontinue participation in the interview or study at any point. There is low risk involved in participating in the interview related to any stress you may typically feel discussing your job or the types of calls that you respond to. Since I am not requesting identifying information during the interview or during the informed consent, there is little risk of breach of confidentiality. You will not be identified by name on the recording or interview transcripts. Any identifying information inadvertently provided while being taped will be removed during the transcription process. Audio recordings will be destroyed once they have been transcribed and proofed. Thus, there will be nothing that links your name or other identifying information to the data you provide. I will not report your decision to or not to participate to ANYONE in the [Name] Police Department. No one else will have access to the data and all data will be reported in the aggregate.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. However, this study will help us better understand the different types of sexual assault calls and how [Name of Police Department] personnel think about and make decisions in these calls. This may inform training and police department policies and procedures that support officers in responding to sexual assault calls.

What other options are there?

You may choose not to participate in this research. Your decision to participate or not will in NO way affect your employment.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

The only person who will know that you are a research subject is the principal investigator. Additionally, the principal investigator will not request any identifying information from you and will not record identifying information. If you include identifying information during the interview, this will be removed from the transcription of the interview and the audio tape will be destroyed once the transcription is completed and checked for accuracy.

Only the principal investigator will have access to your transcription, which will be stored in locked file cabinets and password protected computers.

Will I be paid for my participation this research?

You will not be reimbursed or paid for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX B (continued)

<u>**Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?**</u>

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

<u>**Who should I contact if I have questions?**</u>

You may contact the principal investigator, Rachel Venema, PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago by telephone at 616 526-8741 or by email at <u>rvenem2@uic.edu</u>. You may also contact the professor overseeing this study, Amy Watson, PhD, Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, by telephone at 312 996-0039 or by email at <u>acwatson@uic.edu</u>.

<u>**What are my rights as a research subject?**</u>

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 312 996-1711 (local) or 1-866-789-6215 (toll-free) or e-mail OPRS at <u>uicirb@uic.edu</u>.

Remember: Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University or the Grand Rapids Police Department. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting these relationships.

You will be given a copy of this form for your information and to keep for your records.

APPENDIX C

Screening/Eligibility Script: Phase One

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Cases

Hi, my name is Rachel Venema and I'm from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). With the department's permission I am conducting a study to learn about [Name] Police Department officers' experiences working on the streets and responding to reported sexual assaults. Participation involves a 60 minute interview. I would like to invite you to answer a few brief questions to determine if you are eligible to participate. Do you mind if I ask you these questions?

If yes, ask the questions below—

If no, ask if there are other questions they have before we proceed with determining eligibility. If no questions, and still do not want to proceed with screening questions, thank them for their time.

Screening Questions

1. What is your current assignment at [Name of Police Department]?_____

   *exclude if non "street" (e.g., desk, Community Policing Office, Tactical)

2. In the course of your time at [Name of Police Department], have you responded to 4 or more sexual assault calls?

   *exclude if responded to less than 4 sexual assault calls

3. What is your rank?

   a. Patrol _____(at least 4)

   b. Supervisor _____(at least 2)

   c. Detective _____(at least 3)

   d. Other _____

4. To what area or division are you assigned? _____

5. What is your race or ethnicity? _____

   *at least 2 that are not non-Hispanic White

6. Have you responded to a reported sexual assault involving prostitution? _____

   *at least 2 who respond "yes"

If respondent has responded to 4 or more reported sexual assaults and fits the sampling criteria, ask if she or he wants to participate in interview; if yes, proceed to location for interview and conduct interview. If respondent has responded to less than 4 sexual assault calls or does not have the characteristics to fill the sampling criteria cells, thank them for their interest.

APPENDIX D

Police Qualitative Interview Guide: Phase One

Interviewer Instructions: In bold or italics, do not read aloud.

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. As I indicated earlier, I am interested in learning about sexual assault from the perspective of police officers.

PART A:
First, I just want you to tell me what comes to mind when you think about sexual assault.
………..

While it's the legislators that make the laws and decide on punishments related to convictions, you are actually in the community, dealing with victims and criminals. Based on your work as a police officer, how do you define sexual assault or rape?
………..

PART B: Types of Sexual Assault Calls

I am interested in the different types of sexual assault calls <u>that police officers encounter in the course of their work</u>. I am going to ask you to tell me about the types of sexual assault calls that [Name of Police Department] gets, and how you might assess the situations and make decisions about how to file and report them.

I would like you to take a minute to think about a typical sexual assault call that [Name of Police Department] might get.
…….

Okay? Go ahead and tell me about the call you thought about. I can help with some questions if you get stuck. (*If officer indicates there are several types, ask him/her to pick one and say we will talk about the others next.)*
……..

Probes:
> How does the person/situation come to your attention?
> If you receive the call from dispatch, what information do you get?
> Where does the assault occur? When?
> What is happening?
> How would you describe the victim? How would you describe the alleged perpetrator?
> Who else is involved?

Walk me through what you would do in this call.

Probes:
> What would you ask in the interview? What would you ask first?
> What do you look for? Pay attention to? What information do you need?
> What are your options? How do you decide what to do? Why do you pick that option over others?

About what proportion of sexual assaults calls would you estimate fall in this category or type?

Are there other "types" of sexual assault calls that you encounter in the course of your work?
Now, can you think about or picture another type of sexual assault call? Okay? Tell me about that.

(Repeat above for up to 4 types.)

APPENDIX D (continued)

PART C: Ambiguous Cases or Cases involving more Discretion

Now I want to ask you specifically about more ambiguous sexual assault cases that are reported to the police. Think of a case where the validity of the victim's story was questionable.

Can you tell me about that case? *(If officer has a hard time thinking of difficult or ambiguous cases, use the following probes to identify variations in police response.)*

> **Probes:**
> Think of a case where you didn't write the report and send to the detective. *(Ask probes below)*
>
> Have you ever responded to a call where you wondered whether what you heard from the victim was true? Can you tell me about that case? *(Ask probes below)*
>
> Have you ever responded to a call involving a male victim? Can you tell me about that case? *(Ask probes below)*
>
> Have you ever responded to a call involving someone involved in prostitution? Can you tell me about that case? *(Ask probes below)*

………

Probes:
> How does the person/situation come to your attention?
> If you receive the call from dispatch, what information do you get?
> Where does the assault occur? When?
> What is happening?
> How would you describe the victim? How would you describe the alleged perpetrator?
> Who else is involved?
> What do you look for? Pay attention to? What information do you need?
> How do you interview the victim? What do you ask first?
> What are your options? How do you decide what to do? Why do you pick that option over others?
> Is this about…credibility? Evidence? Presence of a weapon? Resistance? Risk-taking behavior?
> Relationship between the victim and perpetrator?

About what proportion of sexual assaults calls would you estimate is this category or type?

(Repeat above for up to 4 types.)

APPENDIX D (continued)

PART D: Subjective Norms or Informal Norms

When you've responded to sexual assault calls, have you talked with others officers about how to make the decision to write the report and send to the Detective Division?

Among fellow officers, what have you heard about sexual assault cases that raise suspicion or raise concern about the legitimacy of the case? What raises concern about the credibility of the victim or the victim's story?

What have you heard from fellow officers about the difficulties of investigating sexual assault?

What have you heard from fellow officers about the difficulties of obtaining convictions in sexual assault cases?

PART E: Perceived Behavioral Control

What is the Department's procedure for handling sexual assault calls?

    What do you think about it?

What is the role of the State's Attorney in your decision making?

That's all the questions I have for you at this time. Is there anything else that you'd like to add that you think is important for me to know about your work responding to sexual assault calls?

Thanks for your willingness to participate.

APPENDIX E

Recruitment Script: Phase Two

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Cases

Hi, my name is Rachel Venema and I'm a PhD student at the University of Illinois at Chicago and a professor in the Department of Sociology & Social Work at Calvin College. With Chief [Name] and the Department's permission, I am working with the support of Sergeant [Name] and Captain [Name] to conduct a research study with officers at [Name of Police Department]. I hope to learn about officers' experiences and perceptions of responding to reported sexual assaults. If you are an officer who is regularly assigned to active duty, you will soon be receiving an email that includes a link to an online survey. I would like to invite you to complete the survey, which will take about 15-20 minutes. The department has given approval for you to complete this on your work computer while you are on duty, however, please note that [Name of Police Department] is not conducting the study, nor will they know whether or not you decide to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary, and no identifying information will be collected. This means that neither I or the department, or anyone else will know if you decide to participate or not. This also means that your responses will remain completely confidential, and will never be linked to your name. My hope is that the findings from the research will help you and the department in your important work in this city, including your responses to reported sexual assaults. I also hope that this research will help others who work with victims of sexual assault to better understand the reality of your work as police officers, and the complexity of responding to a variety of situations. If you have any questions about the study, or about the survey specifically, please feel free to contact me.

Rachel Venema

616.526.8741 (office phone)

rvenem2@uic.edu or rvenem68@calvin.edu (email)

APPENDIX F

Recruitment Script—1ˢᵗ Follow-up Email

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Cases

Dear [Name of City] Police Officer,

I wanted to send a quick reminder of the important questionnaire I sent you recently. Many officers have already responded, and I'd like to invite you again to complete the online survey about police response to reported sexual assault cases. If you have already started the survey, the link below will take you to the place where you left off. And just as a reminder, I am working with [Name of Police Department] under the support of Chief [Name], Sergeant [Name], and Captain [Name]. As a PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago, I *really* appreciate your help with this project.

The introduction to the survey will further explain the purpose of the study as well as your rights as a researcher. The survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete and will remain completely confidential. Know that if you do not have time to finish the survey in one sitting, you can come back to it at a later time.

I want to thank you in advance for your help. I hope that the research will be useful to the Department, and to you personally in your work.   If you have any questions about the study or about the survey specifically, please feel free to contact me.

Please click the link below to complete the survey.

Rachel Venema

616.526.8741 (office phone)

rvenem2@uic.edu or rvenem68@calvin.edu (email)

APPENDIX G
Officer Survey: Phase Two

Experience

To begin, please answer a few questions about your work as a police officer.

How many years have you worked at the [name] Police Department (in any position)? _____

What is your *current* position? _____

To what area are you currently assigned? (Check all that apply)

       [ ] Patrol Division
           [ ] East Service Area
           [ ] North Service Area
           [ ] South Service Area
           [ ] West Service Area
       [ ] Investigative Division
       [ ] Support Services Division
       [ ] Special Response Team

How many years have you been in law enforcement (including employment outside of [Name of police department])? _____

Did you ever receive specific training on sexual assault or Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC)?

       O_1 Yes O_2 No

       If Yes, approximately when did you receive that training? (check only one)

           O_1 Within the past month
           O_2 Within the past year
           O_3 Within the past 2-5 years
           O_4 Over 5 years ago

       If Yes, who sponsored that training? _____

What are the chances you will be directly involved with a sexual assault (CSC) call in the next year?

        O_1 0%
        O_2 1-25%
        O_3 26-50%
        O_4 51-75%
        O_5 76-99%
        O_5 100%

Approximately how many sexual assault calls (CSC cases) have you been involved in since becoming a police officer?

        O_1 0
        O_2 1-5
        O_3 6-10
        O_4 11-20
        O_5 21+

APPENDIX G (continued)

Approximately how many sexual assault calls (CSC cases) have you been involved in during the _past year_? _____

Please read the following scenario.

At 3:00 in the morning, a call came in from dispatch stating that a young woman had reported a sexual assault. You respond to the call by going to the alleged victim's apartment. Upon arriving, the woman states that she had been at a party the night before for her friend's birthday. While she was at the party she had [been drinking/not been drinking] and [met a guy / ran into her ex-boyfriend]. [Her ex-boyfriend/The guy she met] said she should go over to his apartment to talk more and have coffee. The woman reports that she agreed to go to his apartment but that [her ex-boyfriend/the guy she met] had sexual intercourse with her even after she asked him to stop.

Initial Evaluation of the Case
Based on the information in the scenario and your experience as a police officer, please answer the following questions as best as you can.

First of all, how would you handle this call?

Would you need additional information or questions asked?
O_1 Yes O_2 No

If Yes, what additional information would you need, or what additional questions would you want to ask?

We realize there is a small amount of information in the scenario and you would seek additional information if you were working on this case, but please answer the following questions the best you can. If you feel like you need to explain your responses, feel free to use the comment boxes provided, although this is not expected of you.

Based on the information provided and your experience as a police officer, please respond to the next questions on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "Not at all" and 7 means "Very Much."

	Not at All					Very Much	
To what extent do you consider this to be a *legitimate* sexual assault or Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC)?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
To what extent do you consider this to be a *credible victim*?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
To what extent do you consider this to be a *"strong"* case?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7

Comments:

APPENDIX G (continued)

What would be the <u>most important</u> information you would need to determine if the victim's report is legitimate?

To what extent would the following information increase your certainty that a CSC occurred? Please respond on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "Not at all" and 7 means "Very Much."

	Not at all						Very Much
The victim was threatened with the use of a weapon.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
A witness corroborated the testimony of the victim.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
The victim did <u>not</u> physically resist.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
The victim waited more than 72 hours to report.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7

Recommendations for Case Response

Considering the scenario again, please respond to the following questions on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "Not at all" and 7 means "Very Much."

Would you recommend…	Not at All						Very Much
… writing the report as a CSC?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
… the alleged victim go to the YWCA?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
…that a detective respond immediately?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
… the arrest of the suspect if identified?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7

Rate how you feel about responding to this scenario on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "Useless" and 7 means "Worth-while."

	Useless						Worth-while
Writing the report as a CSC.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Alleged victim going to the YWCA.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Arresting the suspect if identified.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7

APPENDIX G (continued)

Rate how you feel about writing the CSC report or conducting the investigation in the scenario on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means "Not at all" and 7 means "Very Much."

	Not at All						Very Much
I will feel that I am doing something positive for the victim.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
It will cause a lot of headache for the victim.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
It will cause a lot of headache for me.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
The approval of my peers about how I handle this case is important to me.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
My supervisor's approval for how I handle this case is important to me.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7

Rate the following items on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means "Definitely Not" and 7 means "Definitely Yes."

In this particular scenario…	Definitely Not					Definitely Yes	
Most police officers would classify as a CSC.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Most police officers would consider this a legitimate case.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7

Rate the following items on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "Strongly Disagree" and 7 means "Strongly Agree."

In this particular scenario…	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
The department policy requires that I keep the CSC title.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Working on the CSC report limits by ability to respond to more important calls.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
The quality of the report depends on victims providing information for the report.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7

APPENDIX G (continued)

Reaction to the Case

Considering the scenario again, please respond to the following statements on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "Not at all" and 7 means "Very Much."

In this particular scenario…	Not at All						Very Much
Do you think the suspect is responsible for the incident?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Do you think the suspect should be held criminally liable for rape?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
How certain are you that the incident meets the legal definition of rape?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
If you were a member of a jury, how certain are you that you would convict the suspect of rape?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Do you think the victim is to blame for the incident?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Do you think the victim could have avoided the incident?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Do you think the victim had control over the situation?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Do you feel sorry for the victim?	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7

APPENDIX G (continued)

On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means that you "Strongly Disagree" and 7 means that you "Strongly Agree," please respond to the following statements about your perceptions towards sexual assault in general.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Women who are caught cheating sometimes claim that it was rape.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
A lot of times, women who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
When women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they are just asking for trouble.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
A rape probably didn't happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
If a woman goes home with a man she doesn't know, it is her own fault if she is raped.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
If the accused rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it a rape.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
When a woman is a sexual tease, eventually she is going to get into trouble.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
A lot of times, women who say they were raped often led the man on and then had regrets.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
If a woman doesn't physically resist sex—even if protesting verbally—it can't be considered rape.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
If a woman initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date is implying that she wants to have sex.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
If a woman doesn't say "no" she can't claim rape.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
When men rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7

APPENDIX G (continued)

Men don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
If a man is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
It shouldn't be considered rape if a man is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7
If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.	O_1	O_2	O_3	O_4	O_5	O_6	O_7

Demographic Characteristics
Please answer the following demographic questions about yourself.

In terms of race, how do you identify yourself? **(Check all that apply)**

O_1 White/Caucasian

O_2 African American

O_3 Hispanic

O_4 Asian

O_5 Native American

O_6 Pacific Islander

O_7 Other: Could you specify how you identify yourself in terms of race? _____

O_8 Prefer not to answer

What is your age?_____

What is your gender?

O_1 Male O_3 Transgender

O_2 Female O_4 Prefer not to answer

What is your highest level of education?

O_1 High school diploma/GED O_4 College Degree

O_2 Associates Degree O_5 Graduate Degree

O_3 Some college O_6 Prefer not to answer

APPENDIX G (continued)

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally.

Please respond to the following statements with either "True" or "False."	
○True ○False	It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
○True ○False	I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
○True ○False	On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
○True ○False	There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
○True ○False	No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
○True ○False	There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.
○True ○False	I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
○True ○False	I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
○True ○False	I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
○True ○False	I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
○True ○False	There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
○True ○False	I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.

Finally, if one thing could be done to help you in your work responding to CSC cases, what would it be?

If one thing could be done to ensure justice in CSC cases, what would it be?

That's all the questions I have for you.   Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

APPENDIX H
Qualtrics Survey Screen Shots

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

Please read through the following to understand the purposes and procedures involved in this study. If you are willing to participate by completing the survey, select the "I AGREE" option at the bottom of this page.

STUDY INFORMATION and CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION
University of Illinois at Chicago
Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Cases
Research Protocol # 2010-0625

Why is this research being done?

You are being asked to participate in this research study about how police officers think about and make decisions in reported sexual assault calls. Specifically, the study will aim to understand perceptions, attitudes, experience and decision making behavior of police officers in a hypothetical sexual assault case.

Why am I being asked?

The study is being conducted by Rachel Venema, a PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago. You are eligible to participate in this study if you are currently employed as a sworn police officer at the Grand Rapids Police Department and have active duty experience.

What procedures are involved?

If you agree to participate, you will complete an online survey. The survey includes questions about your perceptions of and response to a hypothetical sexual assault scenario. You will also complete general questions about your work experience and demographic questions about yourself. It is estimated that completing the survey will take about 15 - 20 minutes. Approximately 300 Grand Rapids police officers may be involved in the study overall.

What are the potential risks and discomforts and how will they be addressed?

To the best of my knowledge, answering the survey questions presents no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life, or that you would experience when discussing your job. However, you are free to skip a question, or discontinue participation in the study at any point.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. The results of the research may contribute to a better understanding of how GRPD personnel think about and make decisions in sexual assault calls. This may inform training and police department policies and procedures that support officers in responding to sexual assault calls.

Will I be paid for my participation?

You will receive no payment for your participation.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

Participation in this research is anonymous. Anonymity will be maintained by recording your responses directly into a secure password-protected web-based database through Qualtrics software. Researchers will not know who chooses to participate and who does not. IP addresses will not be recorded by the survey software. Anonymity of personal information will be maintained by the use of Transport Layer Security (TLS) and encryption (HTTPS). There will be no way to link your identity to your responses. Because of this, presentations or reports that emerge from this study will not identify specific individuals, and will be reported in the aggregate. You will not be identified by name, nor will it be possible to report your decision to participate or not to ANYONE in the Grand Rapids Police Department.

What are my rights as a research subject?

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Illinois at Chicago, nor will it in any way impact your employment relationship with Grand Rapids Police Department. If you volunteer to be in this study at this time, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

You may contact the principal investigator, Rachel Venema, PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago by telephone at 616 526-8741 or by email at rvenem2@uic.edu. You may also contact the professor overseeing this study, Amy Watson, PhD, Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, by telephone at 312 996-0039 or by email at acwatson@uic.edu. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 312 996-1711 or 1-866-789-6215 (toll-free) or e-mail OPRS at uicirb@uic.edu.

By clicking the "I AGREE" button below, you indicate that you have read the above information about your rights as a research participant, the procedures of the study, and agree to participate. Clicking "I AGREE" will automatically direct you to the beginning of the survey.

○ I AGREE
○ I DO NOT AGREE

Grand Rapids Police Department

Survey Powered By Qualtrics   >>

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

Are you a sworn officer at GRPD?

○ Yes
○ No

Grand Rapids Police Department

Survey Powered By Qualtrics   <<   >>

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

Experience

To begin, please answer a few questions about your work as a police officer.

How many *years* have you worked at the Grand Rapids Police Department (in any position)?

[ ]

To what *area* are you *currently* assigned? (*Check all that apply*)

☐ Patrol Division   ☐ Investigative Area
☐ East Service Area   ☐ Support Services Division
☐ West Service Area   ☐ Special Response Team
☐ South Service Area   ☐ Internal Affairs
☐ North Service Area   ☐ Other [   ]
☐ Watch Commander

What is your *current* assignment at GRPD?

[   ]

What is your *rank*?

○ Officer
○ Sergeant
○ Lieutenant
○ Captain
○ Chief

How many *years* have you been in law enforcement (including employment outside of GRPD)?

[ ]

Did you *ever* receive training on sexual assault or Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC)?

○ Yes
○ No

Grand Rapids Police Department

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

What are the chances you will be directly involved with a sexual assault (CSC) call in the next year?

0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-99%	100%
○	○	○	○	○	○

Approximately *how many* sexual assault (CSC) calls have you responded to *since becoming a police officer*?

0	1-5	6-10	11-20	21+
○	○	○	○	○

Approximately *how many* sexual assault calls (CSC cases) have you been involved in during the *past year*?

[   ]

Grand Rapids Police Department

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means that you "Strongly Disagree" and 7 means that you "Strongly Agree," please respond to the following statements about your thoughts towards sexual assault in general.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It shouldn't be considered rape if a man is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A lot of times, women who say they were raped often led the man on and then had regrets.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a man is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
If a woman goes home with a man she doesn't know, it is her own fault if she is raped.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A lot of times, women who say they were raped agreed to have sex and regret it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When men rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When a woman is a sexual tease, eventually she is going to get into trouble.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
When women go around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they are just asking for trouble.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When men rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A rape probably didn't happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A lot of times, women who say they were raped agreed to have sex and regret it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a woman doesn't say "no" she can't claim rape.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A lot of times, women who say they were raped often led the man on and then had regrets.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If the accused rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it a rape.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

(Optional) Comments:

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Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

Please read the following scenario carefully. The next few pages of questions will ask about how you would respond to this hypothetical scenario.

Vignette

At 3:00 in the morning, a call came in from dispatch stating that a young woman had reported a sexual assault. You respond to the call by going to the alleged victim's apartment. Upon arriving, the woman states that she had been at a party the night before for her friend's birthday. While she was at the party she had not been drinking and met a guy. The guy she met said she should go over to his apartment to talk more and have coffee. The woman reports that she agreed to go to his apartment but that the guy she met had sexual intercourse with her even after she asked him to stop.

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Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

Initial Evaluation of the Case

Based on the information in the scenario and your experience as a police officer, please answer the following questions. There is no right or wrong answer. We are just interested in understanding your approach and concerns.

We also realize there is a small amount of information in the scenario and you would seek additional information if you were working on this case, but please answer the questions the best you can. If you feel like you need to explain your responses, feel free to use the comment boxes provided, although this is not expected of you.

Because the next few pages of questions ask about your response to the hypothetical scenario you just read, you can go back to the vignette page to read again if necessary.

First, briefly list additional information you would need, or additional questions you would ask.

Based on the information provided and your experience as a police officer, please respond to the next questions on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "Not at all" and 7 means "Very Much."

	Not At All (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Very Much (7)
To what extent do you consider this to be a legitimate sexual assault or CSC?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you consider this to be a credible victim?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
To what extent do you consider this to be a strong case?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

What would be the *most important* information you would need to determine if the victim's report is legitimate in this case?

Indicate how much each of the following things would *increase or decrease your certainty of sexual assault or CSC having occurred* in this case.

	Very Much Decrease Certainty	Somewhat Decrease	Slightly Decrease	No Influence	Slightly Increase	Somewhat Increase	Very Much Increase Certainty
The victim was threatened with the use of a weapon.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A witness corroborated the testimony of the victim.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The victim did not physically resist.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The victim waited more than 72 hours to report.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Grand Rapids Police Department

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

Recommendations for Response

Considering the scenario again, what is the likelihood that you would recommend the following. On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means "Not at All" and 7 means "Very Much," would you recommend...

	Not at All (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Very Much (7)
Writing the report as a CSC.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
That the victim go to the YWCA.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
That a detective respond immediately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The arrest of the suspect if identified.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Rate how you would feel about responding to this scenario on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means "Very Useless" and 7 means "Very Worthwhile."

	Very Useless (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Very Worthwhile (7)
Writing the report as a CSC.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Alleged victim going to the YWCA.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Arresting the suspect if identified.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Rate how you would feel about writing the CSC report or conducting the investigation in this scenario on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means "Not at All" and 7 means "Very much."

	Not at All (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Very Much (7)
I will feel that I am doing something positive for the victim.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It will cause a lot of headache for the victim.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It will cause a lot of headache for me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The approval of my peers about how I handle this case is important to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My supervisor's approval for how I handle this case is important to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

(Optional) Comments:

Grand Rapids Police Department

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

Rate how other officers would respond to this case on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means "Definitely Not" and 7 means "Definitely Will."

In this particular scenario...

	Definitely Not (1)	Almost Definitely Not (2)	Probably Not (3)	Don't Know (4)	Probably Will (5)	Almost Definitely Will (6)	Definitely Will (7)
Most police officers would classify this case as a CSC.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Most police officers would consider this a legitimate sexual assault or CSC.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Respond to the following items on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means "Strongly Disagree" and 7 means "Strongly Agree."

In this particular scenario...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Strongly Agree (7)
The department policy requires that I keep the CSC title in this case.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Working on this CSC report or case limits my ability to respond to more important calls.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of this report or investigation depends on victims providing information for the report.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Reaction to the Case

Considering the scenario again, please respond to the following statements on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "Not at all" and 7 means "Very Much."

In this particular scenario...

	Not at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Very Much (7)
Do you think the suspect is responsible for the incident?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Do you think the suspect should be held criminally liable for a sexual assault or a CSC?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How certain are you that the incident meets the legal definition of a CSC?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If you were a member of a jury, how certain are you that you would convict the suspect of sexual assault?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Do you think the victim is to blame for the incident?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Do you think the victim could have avoided the incident?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Do you think the victim had control over the situation?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Do you feel sorry for the victim?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

In this particular scenario...

	Not at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Very Much (7)
My primary goal is to handle this case in a way that will cause me the fewest hassles.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My primary goal is to determine who is to blame in this case.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

(Optional) Comments:

Grand Rapids Police Department

[<<] [>>]

Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

Demographic Characteristics

Please answer the following demographic questions about yourself.

What is your race? (Check all that apply)

☐ White/Caucasian
☐ African American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Asian
☐ Native American
☐ Pacific Islander
☐ Other
☐ Prefer not to answer

What is your age?

What is your gender?

○ Male
○ Female
○ Transgender
○ Prefer not to answer

What is your highest level of education?

○ High school diploma/GED
○ Associates Degree
○ Some College
○ College Degree
○ Graduate Degree
○ Prefer not to answer

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Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assault Calls

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally.

	True	False
It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.	◎	◎
I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.	◎	◎
On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.	◎	◎
There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.	◎	◎
No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.	◎	◎
There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.	◎	◎
I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.	◎	◎
I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.	◎	◎
I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.	◎	◎
I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.	◎	◎
There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.	◎	◎
I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.	◎	◎

Based on your experience, what percentage of reported sexual assaults do you think are false? (Write a number between 0 and 100)

Finally, if one thing could be done to help you in your work responding to CSC cases, what would it be?

If one thing could be done to ensure justice in CSC cases, what would it be?

That's all the questions I have for you. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Grand Rapids Police Department

APPENDIX I
Open-ended Survey Question Coding, Descriptions, and Examples
What questions would you ask?

Theme	Count	Description	Example
Was it consensual?	64	This includes questions about how the victim said "no" (e.g. Did you say no? When did you say no? How did you say no? Did you try to leave?). It also includes questions about force used (e.g. Was there violence? How did he force you? Was there a weapon involved? Were there threats?)	"The important issue here is if the women in the scenario gave a clear and consistent message. This means, did she say "no," or physically indicate "no." She cannot say "no," and then touch the ex-boyfriend sexually after that and consider her "no" to be consistent. "Clear," means it was not just the thoughts in her mind, but she did need to express them to the ex-boyfriend."
Narrative of incident	57	This includes any narrative or statement of what happened (including possible suspect confession). A big part of this code is what kind of contact happened (e.g. was there penetration?, what does the victim mean by intercourse?, was a condom used?, etc.)	"Party witnesses, a good statement from the victim, has she seen the suspect before, who else knows the suspect, what exactly occurred, statements made by suspect, was there a rape kit done, go to the hospital, do we know where the scene is."
Physical evidence of the incident	54	This code mainly includes questions about any physical evidence that may be remaining (e.g. Where are the clothes you were wearing? Has the victim showered?). It also includes questions about if the victim is willing to be examined. Another large component is physical evidence of force/injuries.	"Either party injured? Any witnesses to assault? Any contact with suspect prior to party? Social media contact? Physical evidence (body fluids, condom, etc.), as much suspect information as possible. A little more detailed statement, but not as detailed as a detective will get."
Are there witnesses?	36	This code includes questions about witnesses, who was present at the time, and who the victim was with. It also includes if anyone else knew anything about the incident (e.g. Did anyone else know that the victim was going to meet the suspect?)	"Were there any witnesses that saw him there or with you? Was there anyone else at the apartment?"

APPENDIX I (continued)

What questions would you ask? (continued)

Were there drugs or alcohol involved?	31	This code includes mention of which parties were drinking (e.g. suspect, victim, both, etc.). It also includes if the victim thinks he/she was impaired but wasn't sure	"How much she had to drink? What he had to drink? Were they alone? Exact events that led up to assault, what her response was, their former relationship, etc.?"
What is your relationship with the suspect?	30	This includes defining past relationships with the suspect (e.g. ex-boyfriend, have had sex in the past, etc.) and if the victim knew the person from before.	"Have you ever met this person before? Did any of your friends know this person?"
What was the victim's response to the incident?	27	What did the victim do right after the incident? Who saw the victim right after the incident and can report on his/her behavior? Why didn't she report the incident before now? Did the victim tell anyone about the incident? Has the victim had/does the victim need medical attention?	"What took so long to call the police?" "What is the demeanor of the both the victim and the suspect during police interview, both verbal and nonverbal behavior? Are there any other witnesses so it's not just one person's word against another?"
How did the suspect respond?	10	How did the suspect respond to resistance? What was the suspect's demeanor after the incident?	"What type of conversation were they having before the act? I would need more detail on the act itself, such as when and how did she communicate to the suspect that she didn't want to have sex."
Current relationship status	9	Does the victim have a current significant other (boyfriend, husband, etc.)?	"Age of both subjects. Any marks, scars, or injuries. What the victim's action immediately after were? Is the victim currently involved in a dating relationship?"
History of both parties	5	Have either the suspect or victim had any prior contact with the police? This could include the suspect's history of criminal activity/violence or victim's history of abuse or contact with the police.	"Was he ever assaultive to you before? What led up to the assault? Did you try to leave?"
Other	93	This includes general questions of what happened, where, at what time. A large portion of code is "what happened before the incident?" This includes suspect information (name, age, residence, etc.). This includes questions about what was said during the incident.	"Basic info names of vic, susp, witnesses, location it occurred, date/time, injuries, etc. / Ask for a full narrative of the evening and once she provided the "full story", ask more questions to fill in the blanks."

APPENDIX I (continued)

What would be the most important information?

Code		Description	
Not Answered	58	Includes things equivalent to no response. Not my job to determine.	"I feel it is not my responsibility as an Officer to determine if this case is legitimate or not. If I am a Patrol Officer I will take the report without bias and follow protocol. I will assume it is legit as conduct myself in that matter. If I am a Detective I also will assume this is legit but ask questions in a standard manner. Ultimately it is the Prosecutors decision to charge the suspect or not charge him."
Narrative of incident	46	A major part of this code is any mention of a victim or suspect statement (especially suspect confession). It also included any mention of comparing victim/suspect.	"Getting a statement from the suspect and any possible other witnesses to get the bigger view and to get all sides of the story. It NEVER fails that after getting one side of a story, no matter how compelling, I end up talking to others and find out the other side so I try very hard not to accept the first story I hear as gospel... There are always two sides to a story and in the middle is the truth..."
Physical evidence of the incident.	44	This code mainly includes questions about any physical evidence that may be remaining (e.g. Where are the clothes you were wearing? Has the victim showered?). It also includes questions about if the victim is willing to be examined. Another large component is evidence of force/injuries. Also included here is any mention of evidence non-specific to physical evidence.	"Physical evidence to corroborate the statement, as of right now it is a he said she said and even if the reporting officer believes the victim, the prosecutor and jury would also have to believe them to get a conviction."

APPENDIX I (continued)

What would be the most important information?(continued)

Was it consensual?	38	This includes questions about how the victim said "no" (e.g. Did you say no? When did you say no? How did you say no? Did you try to leave?). It also includes questions about force used (e.g. was there violence? How did he force you? Was there a weapon involved? Were there threats?)	"Again, if she gave a clear and consistent message at the time of the sexual contact, it falls under the Statute and is a crime. That by definition makes it legitimate; however, this scenario will have issues with prosecution. It will not stop me from investigating it thoroughly though. The prosecution is the responsibility of the prosecutors, not the police."
Are there witnesses?	18	This code includes questions about witnesses, who was present at the time, and who the victim was with. It also includes if anyone else knew anything about the incident (e.g. Did anyone else know that the victim was going to meet the suspect?)	"I would get as many names as possible from being at the party to obtain their statements to what happened at the party i.e. whether she was drinking or not. Trying to confirm the validity of her statement or whether she is untruthful."
What was the victim's response to the incident?	17	This includes references to the victim's credibility and a lot of references to whether or not she said no. Is she going to press charges? Are there other motives for reporting assault (non-specific to relationship status)? What did the victim do right after the incident? Who saw the victim right after the incident and can report on his/her behavior?	"She reported the incident, within a short time." "Demeanor, past truthfulness or lack of, signs of injury, ETC."
Were there drugs or alcohol involved?	9	This code includes mention of which parties were drinking (e.g. suspect, victim, both, etc.). It also includes if the victim thinks he/she was impaired but wasn't sure (e.g. Does the victim think she was drugged?)	"How intoxicated victim was during the assault."
History of both parties	6	Have either the suspect or victim had any prior contact with the police? This could include the suspect's history of criminal activity/violence or victim's history of abuse or contact with the police.	"History of victim as well as suspect." "Past history of victim reporting incidents/CCH. Past history of suspect involved in incidents/CCH. Statements from witnesses at the party. Statement of victim in CSC. Statement of suspect involved in CSC."

APPENDIX I (continued)

What would be the most important information?(continued)

How did the suspect respond?	6	Includes how the suspect responded to resistance and to questioning/interview. How did the suspect respond to resistance? What was the suspect's demeanor after the incident?	"That she had told him to stop and what his actions were after that."
What is your relationship with the suspect?	3	This includes defining past relationships with the suspect (e.g. x-boyfriend, have had sex in the past, etc.) and if the victim knew the person from before.	"Was there any prior sexual talking/touching prior to this night? How long was she there before the assault occurred? What was their conversation about prior to the assault and how long was she there before the assault occurred?"
Current relationship status	1	Does the victim have a current significant other (boyfriend, husband, etc.)?	"When was the last time you had consensual sex with the suspect? When was the last time you had consensual sex with anyone? Were there any witnesses? What is he going to say about what happened?"
Other	20	This includes general questions of what happened, where, and at what time. A large portion of this code is "what happened before the incident?" This includes suspect information (name, age, residence, etc.). Another part of this code is what was said before and during the incident (by both parties). One response mentioned the mental health of victim.	"What words and actions had taken place at the residence once they had arrived there?"

APPENDIX I (continued)

Finally, if one thing could be done to help you in your work responding to CSC cases, what would it be?

Theme	Count	Description	Example
Improve/change procedure (of how to respond to CSC cases)	26	This code included anything that could be considered an improvement to current procedure (e.g. better communication between patrol and detectives) or a change in procedure. One of the most common themes was having detectives respond directly to the scene. Other suggestions included mandatory polygraphs for victims/suspects, faster DNA processing, allowing interviews of children, having female medical personnel respond to the scene as well, having female officer/detectives question the victim, and "smoother YWCA call-outs" [quoted].	"Have qualified detectives handle the entire incident from the initial report on to avoid repeatedly asking the victim to go thru the incident over and over."
More/consistent training	19	This includes any mention of more training, including a desire for more training in interrogation/interviewing skills	"To be able to discern between the lies and the truth."
Nothing	13	This is mostly responses that said the current process is very good and doesn't need changing. There was one response that said it is impossible to always get it right so nothing would help.	"A crystal ball...truth is, we don't always get it right and that is irksome. We truly want justice for the victim - even if that happens to be the man who was falsely accused."
Better knowledge of the situation	13	This code includes any mention of better understanding of the situation. This includes truthful statements and better cooperation on behalf of all parties (victim, suspect, etc.) would help. This code could reflect "victim blaming" attitudes because it involves the honesty of the victim.	"Get complete, accurate, honest information about the incident."

APPENDIX I (continued)

Finally, if one thing could be done to help you in your work responding to CSC cases, what would it be? (continued)

A desire for more resources	13	Respondents expressed a desire for more resources, including more detectives to respond to cases and more experience (not training).	"Interview skills / experience / covering procedural requirements."
More false reporting charges	6	This code includes responses that mentioned following up on false reports. More charges should be made for false reports and the consequences should be harsher.	"'Victims' need to be charged more often with making a false police report when it can be proven they lied and wasted police time and resources."
More education	4	This includes a need for better education on behalf of the public, mainly victims but also suspects. Not coded very often but this includes responses that could lead to "victim blaming" attitudes.	"More victim education for prevention."
Not sure, I don't know	4		
Other	4	Any response that did not fit into any of the above categories. Includes banning consumption/sale of alcohol, creating a national DNA database of everyone in the country, and more physical evidence of the incident.	

APPENDIX I (continued)

If one thing could be done to ensure justice in CSC cases, what would it be?

Theme	Count	Description	Example
(Not answered)	82	Not answered, includes "Too many factors to consider during the investigation, so one specific thing doesn't stand out"	
Cooperation /honesty	27	Mentions better cooperation of all parties involved (suspect and victim) but primarily the honesty and cooperation of the victim. Includes harsher punishments for false reports and an increased use of polygraph.	"Victim must be cooperative and completely honest, even with difficult questions. It will go to their credibility at trial." "Always charge women with a felony if they lie about an assault. If no woman ever lied, you wouldn't need to conduct a survey assessing my attitude toward CSC complaints. These false reports create significant problems for not only the men falsely accused, but also for women who are true victims."
Harsher punishments for offenders	14	This includes responses calling for prison time or harsher punishments for offenders.	"Strictly enforce the punishments." "Stop prosecutors from pleaing cases down. I see too many registered sex offenders registering for offenses that are pled down from the violent crimes they originally committed."
Thorough investigation	12	Mentions "professional" or more thorough investigations including collecting more information/evidence	"Without physical evidence it is very difficult to convict anyone based on uncorroborated verbal testimony. We either have to get better at finding and preserving physical evidence or get the courts to authorize and allow lie detector test and interrogations as evidence."
Other	9	Other responses that do not fit into the above category. Some have to do with more (timely) reporting and actions of the prosecutors involved.	"I think the prosecutor's office should issue more warrants." "Let the victim decide the punishment if the suspect is convicted in court."
Not sure, I don't know	8		"Too many factors with each case being so different."

APPENDIX I (continued)

If one thing could be done to ensure justice in CSC cases, what would it be?(continued)

Education of officers, courts and juries	7	More training of the public, courts, juries, and for officers	"Continued (or some) training for Officers taking the initial report. Training on interviews, policy, and legal updates...we have very little training in this area, and unless the Officer keeps up in this on their own, our reports and investigations, quite frankly, suck."
Objective investigation	4	Any mention of being as objective as possible throughout the investigation. Leave personal opinions or preconceived notions out of the investigation.	"Try to be as objective as possible and conduct complete investigation even if you personally believe victim making a false claim." "Everyone to have an open mind about the case and not make a judgment based on broad facts like, alcohol or drug use, race, social class and other stereotypical things."
More detectives	3	More detectives (in general) and more detectives to respond to these types of cases.	"More detectives- so that we are able to spend quality time investigating each one."
Care for the victim	2	This code focuses on the needs of the victim. Includes making the investigation process easier on victims and helping the victim emotionally.	"Make sure the victim understands that just because his/her rape accusation is/isn't supported criminally, it does not mean (emotionally) she/he has not been raped."
Impossible, nothing would help	2	It is impossible for them to be prosecuted fairly. It is what it is.	"There are way too many variables for this to ever be an absolute. Unless all victims carried around a recording device at all times."
Nothing, they are prosecuted fairly	1		"I think they are prosecuted fairly. You can't make up witnesses and evidence."

VITA

RACHEL MARIE VENEMA

EDUCATION

2013   Ph.D., Social Work, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.
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2005   M.S.W., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.
Policy and Evaluation with Communities and Social Systems Concentration
Minor in Management of Human Services

2004   B.S.W., Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI.
Minor in Political Science

INTERESTS

Violence and Victimization
Criminal Justice System Responses to Violence against Women
Social Work Program Evaluation
Cross-Cultural Partnerships and International Social Work

HONORS AND AWARDS

2012   Alice Dan Dissertation Award, Center for Research on Women and Gender, University of Illinois at Chicago

2007-2011   University Fellow, University of Illinois at Chicago

2013, 2008   Deur Award, Dept. of Sociology & Social Work, Calvin College

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2009 - current   Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Calvin College.
Social Work Field Seminar (Social Work 380)
Social Research (Sociology and Social Work 320)
Social Science Statistics (Sociology and Social Work 255)
Vulnerable Populations: Programs, Policies, and Practice (Social Work 373)
Global Issues and Perspectives (Social Work 260)
Diversity and Inequality (Sociology & Social Work 250)
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Development in Jamaica (Interdisciplinary W47)

January 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009
> Guest Professor, Mother Patern College of Health Sciences, Stella Maris Polytechnic Institute in Monrovia, Liberia.
> Community Development (Social Work 102)

2007
> Instructor, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Calvin College.
> Social Research (Sociology and Social Work 320)

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Phillips, S.D., Venema, R., & Roque, L. (2010). The unmet need for mental health services among probationers' children. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 49*(2), 110-125.

Hugen, B., & Venema, R. (2009). The difference of faith: The influence of faith in human service programs. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 4, 405-429.

PEER- REVIEWED PRESENTATIONS

Venema, R., & Meerman, J. (March 9, 2013). "Student Response to Community-Based Research." Workshop presented at the Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors Conference. Myrtle Beach, SC, March 6-10.

Venema, R., & Meerman, J. (March 17, 2012). "Community partnerships in the BSW research course." Workshop presented at the Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors Conference. Portland, OR, March 14-18, 2012.

Venema, R. & Kuilema, J. (October 29, 2011). "Exploring student perceptions of cross-cultural, collaborative classroom experiences in Liberia." Paper presented at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education. Atlanta, GA, October 27-30, 2011.

Venema, R. & Hugen, B. (2010). "Exploring the role of faith in different sectors of service provision." Paper presented at the North American Association of Christians in Social Work Annual Convention. Raleigh-Durham, NC, November 11-14, 2010.

Venema, R., & Kuilema, J. (2009). "Generals to generalists: Student perceptions of social work in Liberia." Paper presented at the North American Association of Christians in Social Work Annual Convention, Indianapolis, IN, October 28-31.

Kuilema, J., & Venema, R. (2009). "Student perceptions of social work in Liberia." Presented at the International Social Work Conference. Jersey City, NJ, July 10-12, 2009.

Venema, R. (2008). "A content analysis of Black press responses to Progressive Era 'White Slavery.'" Presented at the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Annual Program Meeting, October 31, 2008.

Venema, R., Richards, S., & DeJong F. J. (2007). "Clients shape services through integrated evaluation." Poster presented at the SAMHSA CSAT Treatment for Homelessness Annual Technical Assistance Conference. Baltimore, MD, February, 2007.

Venema, R., Hugen, B., & DeJong, F. (2006). "Faith makes a difference: The influence of faith on program theories of change and outcomes." Paper presented at the North American Association of Christians in Social Work Annual Convention, October, 2006.

DeJong, F., Hugen, B., & Venema, R. (2006). "Faith makes a difference: The influence of faith in human service programs." Paper presented at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council for Social Work Education, February, 2006.

DeJong, F., Venema, R., & Andrews, S. (2006). "Development of a web-based substance abuse outcomes tool." Poster presentation at SAMHSA Treatment for Homelessness Grantee Annual Meeting, February 2006.

Hugen, B., DeJong, F., Venema, R., & Andrews, S. (2005). "Faith makes a difference: The influence of faith in human service programs." Paper presented at the North American Association of Christians in Social Work Annual Convention. Grand Rapids, MI, October, 2005.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

February 21, 2013. "Developing an Evaluation Plan." Professor Gail Brusseau, MSW, Grand Valley State University, Grant Writing Course.

February 16, 2009. "A Content Analysis of Black Press Responses to Progressive Era 'White Slavery.'" Professor Jerry Cates, Ph.D., Jane Addams College of Social Work, Practice II Course.

November 25, 2008. "Media Power—Constructing Gender and Difference in the World." Professor Patricia O'Brien, Ph.D., Jane Addams College of Social Work, Social Work with Women Course.

POST-MSW EXPERIENCE

Research and Evaluation Experience

2013   *Principal Investigator,* "Women's Well-being in the Church and the Community." Grand Rapids, MI.

2007-2009   *Research Assistant,* University of Illinois at Chicago
                "A study of the unmet need for mental health services among children in Cook County whose parents are mandated to Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC)." Principal Investigator: Susan Phillips, PhD.

2008   *Research Specialist*, University of Illinois at Chicago
                National Institute of Mental Health: "Testing a systems level intervention to improve police response to persons with mental illness: CIT in Chicago." Principal Investigator: Amy Watson, PhD.

2007 – 2008   *Research Assistant*, University of Illinois at Chicago
                SOROS Foundation: "Evaluation of National Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents Project." Principal Investigator: Susan Phillips, PhD.

2006 – 2009   *Research and Evaluation Consultant*, Third Sector New England, Inc., Center for Addiction Recovery, MA.

2006 – 2007   *Fidelity Assessor*, Michigan Fidelity Assessment and Support Team (MIFAST).

2004 – 2008   *Research Associate*, Acton Institute, Grand Rapids, MI.

2005 – 2007   *Research and Evaluation Project Manager*, Network 180 of Kent County, MI. Evaluation of 1) StreetReach: Integrated Dual Disorder Assertive Community Treatment, SAMHSA grant evaluation, 2) Client Outcomes in Substance Abuse, and 3) Family Engagement Program.

2005 – 2007   *Research and Evaluation Project Manager*, Touchstone innovaré, Grand Rapids, MI. Michigan Mental Health Evidence Based Practices (Medication Algorithms Project).

2005 – 2006   *Grant Writer,* Contractual, Touchstone innovaré. Grand Rapids, MI.

Pre-MSW Policy and Community Organizing Experience
2004 – 2005   *Community Organizer and Policy Coordinator* (Part-time Intern), Southwest Counseling and Development Services. Detroit, MI.

2003 – 2004   *Project Assistant* (Full-time Intern), Special Assistant to the Mayor on Homelessness, Chicago Department of Human Services. Chicago, IL.

Pre-MSW Clinical-Related Experience
2004 – 2005   *Child and Family Life Specialist*, Mott Children's Hospital. Ann Arbor, MI.

2000 – 2003   *Therapeutic Recreation Assistant*, Hope Network, Grand Rapids, MI.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Community Service
2011 – current   Board Member, Kuyper College Social Work Advisory Board.
2010 – current   Sexual Assault Prevention Team, Calvin College.
2009 – current   Member, Calvin College Social Work Advisory Committee
2010 – 2011   Member, Calvin College Interim Term Committee
2008 – 2009   Graduate Student Council Representative, University of Illinois at Chicago.
2008 – 2009   Volunteer, The Warming Center, New Community Church, Chicago, IL.
2007 – 2009   Volunteer, The Justice Project Against Sexual Harm, Chicago, IL.
2006 – 2009   Board Member, E.S.T.H.E.R.S Children, Clarkston, MI and Recife, Brazil.
2006 – 2007   Mentor, Project Mentoring, YMCA of Grand Rapids, MI.
2006 – 2007   Madison Girls Leader, Madison Square Church, Grand Rapids, MI.
2002 – 2003   Mentor, East Town Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI.
2001 – 2002   Daycare Assistant, Baxter Community Center, Grand Rapids, MI.
2000 – 2001   Day Program Assistant, Heartside Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI.

Professional Organizations

Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD)

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

Graduate Scholarships and Honors

2004-2005   National Recognition, School of Social Work Michigan Scholar Program

2004-2005   University of Michigan School of Social Work Merit Scholarship

Undergraduate Scholarships and Honors

2000-2004   Calvin College Dean's Scholarship

2001-2004   Calvin College Academic Achievement Award

2002-2003   Gezon Baker Scholarship for Academic Excellence in Sociology and Social Work

2003-2004   VanderPloeg-Edgerly Social Work Scholarship