

**Reporting Sexual Assault to the Police: Victim Experiences and the Potential for  
Procedural Justice**

BY

KATHERINE LORENZ

B.S., Central Michigan University, 2012  
M.A., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2013

DISSERTATION

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Criminology, Law, and Justice  
in the Graduate College of the  
University of Illinois at Chicago, 2017

Chicago, Illinois

Defense Committee:

Sarah E. Ullman, Chair and Advisor, Department of Criminology, Law, and Justice  
Dennis P. Rosenbaum, Department of Criminology, Law, and Justice  
William McCarty, Department of Criminology, Law, and Justice  
Lisa Frohmann, Department of Criminology, Law, and Justice  
Megan Alderden, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

This dissertation is dedicated to all those affected by sexual violence.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my dissertation committee – Dr. Sarah Ullman, Dr. Dennis Rosenbaum, Dr. Megan Alderden, Dr. Bill McCarty, and Dr. Lisa Frohmann – for their support and guidance. Each of you contributed greatly to this dissertation by asking important questions, lending expertise, and pushing me to pursue excellence. You have each taught me important lessons that I will take with me as a researcher. I would especially like to thank Dr. Ullman for her assistance and shared knowledge throughout the dissertation process. I am greatly appreciative of the opportunities Dr. Ullman has offered me that shaped my development as a scholar.

I cannot express enough gratitude to Dr. Dennis Rosenbaum and Robert Boehmer for inviting me to be the researcher on this project. I have truly enjoyed the entire process and learned a great deal from the opportunity to develop a project from the ground up. You two have taught me invaluable lessons about the research process, including the importance of conducting research that can be translated to practice. Thank you both for your guidance, support, and patience throughout this process. Similarly, I would like to thank the members of the Center for Excellence (CFE) research team who assisted with this project.

Of course, this research would not have been possible without the support and commitment of the local sexual assault advocacy agencies and police department. It would not have been feasible to reach so many survivors willing to participate in this research without cooperation from these organizations. Thank you for being open to this research and accommodating my questions and requests during data collection. To the individuals who completed surveys, thank you for taking the time to share your experiences. Your responses greatly contributed to the strength of this project. I am also appreciative of the 28 individuals

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** (continued)

who participated in interviews, who each taught me something new about the aftermath of sexual assault. My hope is that these stories will influence positive change in the legal response to sexual assault for future survivors.

A special thank you is owed to Dr. Rebecca Hayes, who unknowingly changed my life in her classroom at Central Michigan University. Your dedication as a professor led you to not only recognize my potential, but help me to recognize it as well. Thank you for exposing me to the social and systemic injustices experienced by survivors of sexual violence. I will never forget the eye-opening lessons learned in your victimology course that sparked my passion for sexual violence research and activism. I greatly appreciate you taking me under your wing as a mentee, and am glad we retain that relationship (and friendship) today. I would not be at this point had you not provided continual encouragement of pursuing my academic dreams.

On a more personal note, I cannot express enough gratitude to my parents, Nancy and Jeff Lorenz, who have always shown confidence in me and been extremely supportive in every way possible. Thank you for always believing in my abilities, encouraging me to do my absolute best, and providing me such a solid foundation. Similarly, I want to thank my sister Valerie Melchert for playing such a significant role in my life. To my partner, Adam Hussain, thank you for your unwavering encouragement and support, which helped me to get through those times when I felt most overwhelmed. Your presence in my life helped me place everything into perspective. A special shout out goes to my fellow graduate students who clocked countless hours working with me at various establishments throughout the city. Our fun and productive work sessions made this process all the more enjoyable.

KPL

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Dissertation Overview .....	2
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
A. Reporting Sexual Assault.....	4
B. Victim Experiences Reporting to Police.....	11
1. Influential factors in police treatment of victims .....	12
2. Victim perceptions of treatment by police .....	16
3. Reporting experiences and recovery .....	22
C. The Procedural Justice Perspective.....	26
1. Procedural justice in sexual assault investigations.....	29
2. Victim-centered practices.....	33
D. Rationale for Current Study .....	36
III. CURRENT STUDY.....	41
A. Primary Research Aims .....	41
B. Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	43
IV. METHODS.....	50
A. Mixed Methods Research (MMR): Triangulation Design.....	50
B. Secondary Analysis of the CFE Project Data .....	53
1. Sample.....	54
2. Recruitment .....	54
3. Procedures .....	56
C. Survey Measures.....	59
1. Independent (predictor) variables .....	59
2. Dependent (outcome) variables.....	62
3. Control variables .....	64
D. Interview Protocol.....	65

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)**

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
E. Analysis .....	67
1. Quantitative analysis .....	67
2. Qualitative analysis .....	73
V. RESULTS .....	80
A. Descriptive Statistics of Survey Participants .....	80
B. Descriptive Statistics of Interview Participants .....	84
C. Preliminary Bivariate Results .....	85
D. Research Question 1: Reporting to the Police .....	86
1. Qualitative results.....	86
2. Summary .....	94
E. Research Question 2: Demographic Differences between Different Reporting Groups.....	95
1. Quantitative results.....	95
2. Summary .....	99
F. Research Question 3: Satisfaction with the Reporting and Investigation Process	100
1. Quantitative results.....	100
2. Qualitative results.....	104
3. Summary .....	116
G. Research Question 4: Cooperation with the Investigation.....	117
1. Quantitative results.....	117
2. Qualitative results.....	118
3. Summary .....	129
H. Research Question 5: Views of the Police.....	132
1. Quantitative results.....	132
2. Qualitative results.....	134
3. Summary .....	144
I. Research Question 6: Willingness to Report Future Crimes .....	145
1. Quantitative results.....	146
2. Qualitative results.....	147

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)**

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
3. Summary .....	158
J. Research Question 7: Recovery .....	159
1. Quantitative results.....	160
2. Qualitative results.....	161
3. Summary .....	171
K. Research Question 8: Recommendations from Victims .....	172
1. Qualitative results.....	172
2. Summary .....	187
VI. DISCUSSION.....	188
VII. CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH.....	217
A. Contributions .....	217
B. Limitations .....	219
C. Practical Implications and Directions for Future Research .....	225
VIII. CONCLUSION.....	240
CITED LITERATURE .....	241
APPENDICES .....	262
Appendix A.....	262
Appendix B.....	265
Appendix C.....	266
Appendix D.....	269
VITA .....	271

## LIST OF TABLES

<u>TABLE</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
I.	ITEM CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE SEXUAL ASSAULT-SPECIFIC JUDGMENTS OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE SCALE.....	62
II.	CODING FREQUENCY AND AGREEMENT RATE.....	79
III.	ASSAULT CHARACTERISTICS BY REPORTING GROUP.....	83
IV.	CHI-SQUARE TEST OF VICTIM AGE AND REPORTING GROUP.....	96
V.	CHI-SQUARE TEST OF VICTIM RACE AND REPORTING GROUP.....	97
VI.	CHI-SQUARE TEST OF GENDER IDENTITY AND REPORTIN GROUP.....	98
VII.	CHI-SQUARE TEST OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION BY REPORTING GROUP.....	99
VIII.	REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE DETECTIVE INTERACTION.....	102
IX.	REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING MODERATION EFFECT OF SATISFACTION WITH THE DETECTIVE INTERACTION.....	103
X.	REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INVESTIGATION.....	118
XI.	REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE.....	133
XII.	REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING WILLINGESS TO REPORT FUTURE CRIMES TO THE POLICE.....	147
XIII.	REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING REPORTING-RELATED RECOVERY .....	161
XIV.	TOP RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS.....	186
XV.	VARIABLE CODING USED IN QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS.....	262

**LIST OF TABLES (continued)**

<u>TABLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
XVI. FULL LIST OF SURVEY ITEMS TO MEASURE JUDGMENTS OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE.....	265
XVII. CODES USED IN QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS.....	266

## LIST OF FIGURES

<u>FIGURE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1. Triangulation design of a mixed methods research model.....	52
2. Moderation model for present study.....	72
3. Moderation effect of judgments of procedural justice and previous legal system involvement on satisfaction with the detective interaction.....	104

## SUMMARY

Sexual assault is a largely underreported crime (Bachman, 1998). Fear of mistreatment by the legal system – especially the police – deters many victims from reporting (Campbell, 2006, 2008). Victims who report to police often cite negative experiences during the reporting and investigation process (Filipas & Ullman, 2001). Negative experiences during the investigation may be harmful to post-assault adjustment (Campbell, 2005) and reduce willingness to provide information during the investigation (Patterson, 2011). Non-reporting victims will not receive legal justice or tangible aid, while those who do report face potential secondary victimization. This paradox may explain why so many sexual assaults are unreported and under-investigated. The procedural justice perspective suggests that for crime victims in general, satisfaction with police encounters influence views toward the police and outcomes related to the investigation of crimes (Parsons & Bergin, 2010). Such a dynamic has not been studied specifically for sexual assault victims.

This study used a mixed-methods design of survey and semi-structured interviews of community sexual assault victims to explore the relationship between victims' experiences with detectives during the investigation and several outcomes including satisfaction with the detective, cooperation with the investigation, views of the police, future reporting, and recovery. Data from interviews explored victims' recommendations for improving the police response to victims who report. This study also examined victims' reasoning for not reporting, and demographic differences between victims who reported and victims who did not report.

The quantitative survey sample for this study included 414 sexual assault victims. Of the 414 total participants, 214 did not report to the police (52%), 104 reported to the police but did

## SUMMARY (continued)

not interact with a detective (25%), and 93 reported to the police and interacted with a detective (23%). Qualitative data for this study included 28 interview participants. Of interview participants, 24 reported to the police (87%) and 21 reported to the police and interacted with a detective (75%).

Qualitative results suggest that pre-existing views of the police are a contributing factor in the decision to report sexual assault to the police. While results showed that victims considered several factors in the decision to report, victims who expressed concerns of mistreatment and expressed negative views of the police tended to not report the assault. Results from bivariate analyses showed significant differences in reporting (victims who did not report to the police, victims who reported to the police but did not interact with a detective, and victims who reported to the police and interacted with a detective) based on gender and sexual identity, but not race or age. Results from regression analyses showed that procedural justice during detective-victim interactions significantly predicts victims' satisfaction with the detective, cooperation with the investigation, positive views of the police, willingness to report future crimes, and recovery. Quantitative findings reiterate the power of process-oriented investigations and highlight the benefit of adopting a procedural justice approach to sexual assault investigations. Qualitative analyses explored these relationships, finding partial support for the application of the procedural justice perspective to sexual assault investigations. While qualitative results underscored relationships between the quality of detective-victim interactions and the positive outcomes identified in the quantitative results, qualitative findings revealed that some of the outcomes associated with procedural justice are more complex than anticipated when looking specifically at detective interactions with sexual assault victims. Qualitative results

## **SUMMARY** (continued)

reveal a need for a nuanced approach to procedural justice when working specifically with sexual assault victims that is inclusive of empathy as an extension of procedural justice. Applying procedural justice to sexual assault investigations also calls for special consideration of how neutrality is conceptualized in the procedural justice model. Together, qualitative and quantitative results suggest that the quality of detective-victim interactions are important in creating better outcomes for both the victim and the police. This can be achieved through incorporation of the procedural justice perspective to detective-victim interactions, though minor changes need to be made. Implications for practice and directions for future research in light of these findings are discussed, including recommendations made by interview participants on improving the police response to victims who report.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Fear of mistreatment by the police deters many sexual assault victims<sup>1</sup> from reporting (Campbell, 2008). For victims who report, many regard their reporting experiences as hurtful (Filipas & Ullman, 2001). Experiencing a sexual assault can result in psychological distress and physical health consequences (Campbell, Dworkin, & Cabral, 2009), but how police respond to victims during the investigation likely accounts for some of this distress (Campbell, Wasco, Ahrens, Sefl, & Barnes, 2001). Some victims perceive police behavior as upsetting, while others do not (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). The procedural justice perspective emphasizes the power of interpersonal dynamics and process-oriented investigations. Research on procedural justice suggests that for community members and crime victims in general, satisfaction with police encounters can influence views toward the police and outcomes related to the investigation of crimes (Parsons & Bergin, 2010). This may also apply to sexual assault victims. The treatment victims receive during the investigation may influence victims' emotional well-being, as well as the quality of the investigation itself. For example, increasing victims' willingness to cooperate with the investigation can result in more prosecutions (Patterson, 2011), allowing for greater public safety. Thus, positive interactions may result in better outcomes for both the victim and the officer. This has been exemplified in the procedural justice research for community members and crime victims in general, but has not been examined specifically for sexual assault victims. This dissertation sought to bridge this gap by exploring sexual assault victims' experiences with the investigation process through a procedural justice framework. This study used survey and interview data of a sample of community sexual assault victims to explore the relationship

---

<sup>1</sup> This dissertation uses the term "victim" to reflect the violent nature of sexual assault crimes and the language used in much of the criminal justice literature. This terminology is not intended to take away from the obstacles those victimized by sexual assault face in the aftermath of assault.

between the quality of victims' interactions with detectives and several outcomes the procedural justice literature has previously linked to quality interactions among community members and crime victims in general. This study also included victims who did not report, and examined their reasoning for not doing so, as well as their demographic differences with victims who did report. This research has several potential contributions to the academic and practitioner worlds including additions to the literature on the characteristics and decision making of victims who do not report to police and further insight into victims' experiences with reporting and investigations. Further, this study can contribute a greater understanding of the veracity of procedural justice in policing and implications for sexual assault detective training.

#### A. **Dissertation Overview**

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the relevant literature. The literature review discusses extant research on the reporting of sexual assault, victim experiences with reporting to the police, and the procedural justice perspective. The literature review concludes with a discussion of the gaps in current research and how the present study fills these holes. Chapter 3 provides the overarching aims of this study and the specific research questions and hypotheses that guided this research. Chapter 4 details the methods of this study, including the concurrent mixed-methods design of this research as part of the Center for Excellence project. Chapter 4 also includes information on the survey measures and interview protocol, as well as the analyses used to address the research questions and test the hypotheses. Chapter 5 presents the qualitative and quantitative results of this study. The results are organized by presenting each research question, followed by the method-specific results that pertain to each question. Chapter 6 includes an integrated discussion of the qualitative and quantitative results. Chapter 7 addresses the potential

contributions of this study, the limitations of this study, and recommendations for future research. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes this dissertation.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The reporting experiences of sexual assault victims is a pervasive issue in our legal system because of the negative impact it has on victim recovery (Campbell, 2008). Negative reporting experiences can impede the quality of the investigation and likelihood of prosecution (Patterson, 2011). Thus, it is important to understand how victims perceive the interpersonal interactions that occur with police during the reporting and investigation process to learn how police officers can respond to victims in a positive way that facilitates a better experience for victims. This literature review discusses research relevant to: a) the reporting of sexual assault; b) the experiences of victims who report; and c) the procedural justice perspective as applicable to sexual assault investigations. Finally, this review exposes the gaps in the current state of knowledge on sexual assault victims' reporting and investigation experiences and discusses the need to conduct further research in this area.

### **A. Reporting Sexual Assault**

Most sexual assault victims do not tell anyone about their assault immediately after the incident, still, approximately two-thirds eventually tell someone (Orchowski, 2010; Ullman & Filipas, 2001). This concept is known as disclosure (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Several factors are associated with the decision to disclose, including the need for support, and the belief that receiving support will be beneficial (Liang, Goodman, Tummala-Narra, & Weintraub, 2005). Research documents low reporting rates for sexual assault (Bachman, 1998). Generally, less than one-third of victims tell the police about their assaults (Ullman & Filipas, 2001a). For college students this rate is even lower: only about two percent of assaults are reported to the police and five percent are reported to campus authorities (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003). These rates make sexual assault the most underreported of all violent crimes (Rennison, 2000, in Sit,

2015). Victims tend to rely on informal support sources such as friends and family, and tend to turn to informal support sources when deciding to report to the police.

Victims often first disclose to informal support sources to decide whether to interpret the event as a crime and to determine if it would be helpful to disclose to another source (Greenberg & Ruback, 1992; Kilpatrick, Resnick, Ruggiero, Conoscenti, & McCauley, 2007; Liang et al., 2005; Littleton, Axsom, Breitkopf, & Berenson, 2006). Thus, victims who report to police are often those who also disclose to an informal source (Fisher et al., 2003; Starzynski, Ullman, Filipas, & Townsend, 2005). How an informal source reacts to a victim can either reduce or reinforce feelings of uncertainty about whether the victim's experience qualifies as sexual assault, and calls into question the effectiveness of future disclosures (Ahrens, 2006). Negative social reactions (e.g., blame) may discourage subsequent disclosures and reporting due to fear of further negative reactions (Starzynski et al., 2005; Weiss, 2010) or because of imposed feelings of shame or guilt by the person told (Liang et al., 2005). Thus, while receiving a positive reaction after disclosing to an informal source can encourage the decision to report, receiving a negative reaction can be discouraging of this decision. Encouragement by informal sources to report leads to greater likelihood that victims will report (Paul, Zinzow, McCauley, Kilpatrick, & Resnick, 2013; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). Victims are more inclined to report if they believe that certain informal sources would want them to report (e.g., if victims feel his/her parents would encourage reporting; Feldman-Summers & Ashworth, 1981). This suggests the influence informal support sources can have on the decision to report.

In their review of the help-seeking literature, Liang and colleagues (2005) proposed that several individual-level factors influence the decision to report, including demographic characteristics of the victim. Several studies examined demographic differences in reporting

decisions. Using data from the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS), Chen and Ullman (2014), found that older victims are more likely than younger victims to immediately report to the police. They also found that immediate reporting is more likely for White victims than their non-White counterparts. Yet, African American women are more likely to report overall (Bachman, 1998; Fisher et al., 2003). Du Mont and colleagues (2003) speculate that this is because women who have been traditionally marginalized and viewed as hesitant to seek police services may feel more entitled to turn to police for justice. Non-White college victims are more likely than White victims to not report due to fear of blame and not wanting the police involved (Thompson, Sitterle, Clay, & Kingree, 2007). The authors argue that racial discrimination influences reporting, which explains lower reporting among ethnic minority college women. Research is conflicted regarding education and marital status. Some research shows that women with a college degree are less likely to report than women with some high school education (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). Research using a sample of victims from Ghana found that victims with more education are more likely to report to police (Boateng, 2016). These two studies were also conflicted in their findings regarding marital status, where one study found no association between marital status and reporting (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011) and the other found unmarried victims are less likely to report (Boateng, 2016). Though, differences in these samples may be due to sample characteristics, as one study used a sample of victims outside of the United States. Men are less likely than women to disclose and report (Ménard, 2005), often due to fear of being judged as gay (Sable, Danis, Mauzy, & Gallagher, 2006). Other research concludes no significant differences in reporting based on demographic characteristics (Campbell et al., 2001). Individuals from different backgrounds may be more or less likely to

report, and have different experiences in the reporting and investigation process. However, this research is mixed and in need of further study.

Another individual-level factor that may influence the decision to report is the psychological state of the victim. Victims who experience behavioral self-blame are less likely to label their experience as assault and file a report (Orchowski, Untied, & Gidycz, 2013). Victims may engage in self-blame because they did not resist, or feel they did something to precipitate the assault. Victims who engage in avoidance coping strategies are also less likely to report (Walsh & Bruce, 2014). Victims who actively avoid dealing with the assault may be less likely to engage in help-seeking because help-seeking requires victims to relive their experience when relaying it to others. Furthermore, discussing the details of the assault can be intimidating, especially when it involves telling this information to figures of authority (e.g., police), which can result in a greater reluctance to report. Victims experiencing more adverse psychological outcomes are less likely to disclose soon after the assault (Ullman, 1996b). Conversely, victims who disclose their assault sooner (Ullman, 1996b), and who disclose on an ongoing basis (Ahrens, 2006) are more likely to report to the police. As such, victims who disclose to multiple sources over many occasions likely receive more supportive reactions that encourage reporting.

Another contributing factor in the decision to report to the police are the circumstances of the assault itself and how well these circumstances align with the “classic rape” scenario (Weis & Borges, 1973; Williams, 1984). The general public (Burt, 1980; Feild, 1978) and the police (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980) hold stereotypical notions about rapists, rape, and victims, like that of the “classic rape” scenario. This “classic rape” scenario is one which involves a stranger perpetrator and violent attack, fueling societal views of what constitutes a “real” rape that is serious enough to be labelled a crime and reported. Yet, assaults that occur under other

circumstances are disregarded as bad sex or miscommunication. These stereotypic views are termed rape myths and are widely accepted in society (Grubb & Turner, 2012). Although victims generally adhere to rape myths less than the general public, these attitudes appear to be relevant in their acknowledgement status as a victim (Bondurant, 2001), the decision to informally disclose (Ahrens, Stansell, & Jennings, 2010), and the decision to report to the police (Heath, Lynch, Fritch, & Wong, 2013; Ménard, 2005). For example, victims are more likely to report assaults perpetrated by strangers than those perpetrated by a known person (Campbell et al., 2001; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011), which has remained consistent for decades (Estrich, 1987). Victims are also less likely to report assaults that involve alcohol or drug use (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011), perhaps due to stereotypes of what constitutes as “rape”. These findings suggest that victims may be aware of what characteristics of the assault they might be blamed for or mistreated because of, resulting in a reluctance to report. Victims inadvertently reinforce the same stereotypes that defined their assault in the first place by neglecting to report assaults that occur outside of the “classic rape” scenario.

The rational choice perspective argues that victims weigh the costs and benefits when deciding whether to report their assault to the police (Ménard, 2005). When victims perceive that the benefits (e.g., justice, ability to get services) associated with reporting are greater than the costs (e.g., shame, stigma, blame), they are more likely to report (Block, 1974; Clay-Warner & Burt, 2005). In a national study, the largest barrier to reporting was fear of reprisal from the perpetrator (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). This may suggest an underlying distrust in law enforcement to offer ongoing protection. Ahrens and colleagues (2010) found that victims who delay reporting (i.e., “slow starters”) are less likely to report to the police, and speculated that this may be because victims who delay disclosure may be more selective in choosing disclosure

recipients that will not react negatively (see Petronio, Flores, & Hecht, 1997). This suggests that victims are aptly aware of the potential of harmful treatment by the police. Logan and colleagues (2005) found that fear of blame or mistreatment by police is a large inhibiting factor in the decision to report to the police (Logan, Evans, Stevenson, & Jordan, 2005). Victims are more apt to report when they feel they are not to blame for their victimization and when informal support providers interpret the crime as serious enough to report. Victims who are concerned police will blame them are likely also concerned about the amount of assistance police will provide.

Reluctance to report occurs when victims feel that reporting will not result in a positive outcome (e.g., justice, support, service referral). In a qualitative study of why victims chose not to report to police, victims stated that they felt the system could not help them. Additionally, victims felt that not reporting was a form of self-protection against system personnel and a process that may be hurtful (Patterson, Greeson, & Campbell, 2009). Others who had negative experiences with the police shared that they would have not reported in the first place if they knew what their reporting experience would be like (Logan et al., 2005). As a result, victims such as these who had a negative first reporting experience may be reluctant to report later victimization experiences (Sit, 2015), or advise others to not report. Together, these reasons for not reporting may reflect victims' views of police. A study by James and Lee (2014) shows that college victims with positive and satisfactory views of the police are more likely to report. This may also be the case for those in the non-student community. Research to date evidences that victims consider a variety of advantages and disadvantages to reporting, most striking of which are fear of blame and mistreatment.

Several factors may facilitate the decision to report sexual victimization to the police. Victims may turn to formal support sources when they need help, but do not have informal

supporters available (Sit, 2015). Victims may also report when they need tangible aid. For example, women with children seek support from informal and formal sources more often than childless women (Ullman & Filipas, 2001a), conceivably because mothers need to take advantage of services available to them that enable them to better care for their children. Others may report because their informal support sources encouraged them to do so (Greenberg & Ruback, 1992). Informal support providers who have favorable views of police or who have had previous positive interactions with police may encourage victims to report. Altruism is also a facilitating factor, as victims may see benefit in reporting their assault to aid in the prevention of future crimes (Wolitzky-Taylor, et al., 2011). Thus, there are several potential benefits to reporting that, unfortunately, are often eclipsed by the potential negative outcomes associated with the reporting and investigation process.

Victims who do not report are missing the opportunity to receive legal justice and tangible aid, and assist in the possible prevention of future crime (Campbell & Adams, 2009; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). While there are several factors that weigh into victims' decisions to report, fear of blame or mistreatment by police should not be one of them. The factors that are influential in victims' reporting decisions, such as characteristics of the victim (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, etc.) or the assault (e.g., alcohol use, relationship to perpetrator) may also influence how police treat victims. Making strides to increase victim satisfaction with the reporting and investigation process may lead to more victims who are willing to report, encourage others to report, and cooperate with the investigation. Thus, it is important to understand why sexual assault goes unreported, and if views of the police are influential in the decision to report. For those who do report, it is important to ensure that such reporting experiences are positive and do not result in feelings of secondary victimization. The

following section reviews literature relevant to sexual assault victims' experiences with reporting to the police in two parts: victim perceptions of treatment by police and the influence of reporting on recovery.

## **B. Victim Experiences Reporting to Police**

Experiencing sexual assault can result in psychological distress and physical health consequences (Campbell et al., 2009). Though these post-assault experiences are likely related to the assault itself, some of this distress may be a result of negative interactions with the police (Campbell et al., 2001). Some victims have negative experiences with the police while others do not (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). How victims perceive their treatment by police may have a substantial influence on victims' emotional well-being, the quality of the investigation, and victims' willingness to cooperate with the subsequent stages of the legal process. External factors such as the goals of police work and the legal system itself can affect the treatment victims receive during the investigation (Martin, 2005). Societal attitudes toward rape and rape victims (Burt, 1980; Jordan, 2004; Page, 2010), including how well the assault aligns with stereotypical views of rape can be influential on the treatment victims receive as well. These contextual factors can influence police officers' assessments of credibility, and in turn, affect how police respond to victims who report. Simply stated, an officer who holds negative attitudes toward victims or views certain victims as not credible may treat them less favorably (e.g., skepticism, disbelief) than victims the officer perceives as credible. While it is important to understand how victims perceive the treatment they receive by police, it is also important to understand the factors that influence such treatment. This section discusses the influential factors in police treatment of victims, victims' experiences with reporting to police, and the influence of such experiences on post-assault adjustment.

## 1. Influential factors in police treatment of victims

Sexual assault victims and their cases are not treated equally by the legal system (Campbell, 2008). How police perceive and treat victims is likely shaped by factors such as the attitudes and focal concerns of the legal organization itself (Martin, 2005; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998), societal attitudes toward rape and rape victims (Burt, 1980; Jordan, 2004; Page, 2010), and individual officer characteristics (Campbell & Johnson, 1997; Page, 2008; Rich & Seffrin, 2012; Wentz & Archbold, 2012). The following section presents the research related to these factors.

Police officers<sup>2</sup> are accorded a considerable amount of discretion with regard to case processing and investigation. Police officers are essentially tasked with deciding if a crime did or did not occur in the eyes of the legal system (Frazier & Haney, 1996). Officers can choose whether to take a report, how much time to dedicate to the investigation, whether the incident constitutes a legitimate assault, and whether a suspect should be arrested (Alderden & Ullman, 2012). The decisions police officers make in sexual assault cases can affect how the case progresses (i.e., whether the case is thoroughly investigated, resulting in formal charges; Alderden & Ullman, 2012). The legal system orients police to view and treat victims as sources of information to help them build a good case (Martin, 2005), and consider their emotional well-being as secondary to the investigation (Barrett & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2013). Some officers describe issues of trying to maintain balance between the investigation and welfare of the victim, arguing that pragmatism is often interpreted as mistrust (Barrett & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2013). Research shows that officers make judgments of victims' credibility based on assault and victim characteristics, and tend to have negative attitudes toward sexual assault victims in general

---

<sup>2</sup> The terms "police officer" and "officer" are used interchangeably throughout the literature review, referring to the law enforcement community.

(Jordan, 2004; Patterson, 2008; Page, 2007; Page, 2010; Rich & Seffrin, 2012). For example, through case studies of police files, one factor found to influence officers' judgments of credibility is the presence of discrepancies in victims' statements (Alderden & Ullman, 2012). Such attitudes and judgments of disbelief may surface during the police-victim interactions, which helps explain why so many victims regard their reporting experience negatively.

Martin (2005) argues that the cause of unresponsive or poor treatment of victims is not only a result of biased or insensitive workers. Rather, negative treatment is a byproduct of the legal organization and the situational contexts that influence police (and legal personnel in general), regardless of their personal beliefs about rape. Martin and Powell (1994) explain that legal organizations have frames of activity that influence their members' views and practices relative to rape. Their research suggests that the state and community shape the legal organizations' processing, policies, and goals. This overarching influence of society plays an important role in how criminal justice personnel (i.e., police, prosecutors) socially construct sexual assault and their response to victims. Societal views of sexual assault and sexual assault victims shape the views or frames of the legal organizations, and in turn, the individual views of the personnel within these organizations, and subsequently the responses personnel provide to victims. Unfortunately, societal views tend to promote victim-blaming (Martin, 2005) and legal organizations and personnel often respond to victims in a way that reflects these negative attitudes toward victims (Martin & Powell, 1994). This suggests that the negative experiences victims tend to have within the legal system are not simply a result of harsh judgments by police, prosecutors, and other legal personnel, but by a broader victim-blaming rape culture that dictates how institutions respond to victims.

The progression of an investigation and the police response to victims may reflect the downstream pressure police receive from judges and prosecutors to weed out cases that are not guaranteed to move forward through the legal system (Frohmann, 1991). “Focal concerns” theory lends explanation to the decision-making of legal system practitioners. Steffensmeier and colleagues (1998) contend that legal system personnel have three focal concerns when making sentencing decisions: 1) suspect blameworthiness and harm done to the victim; 2) protecting the community from the suspect; and 3) the practicality of the sentences imposed in terms of both the working relationships between legal system practitioners and considerations given to the individual suspects. Consideration of these concerns is complex, resulting in a “perceptual shorthand” when making decisions (Steffensmeier et al., 1998). This shorthand is based on readily available attributes and those that are stereotypical to groups rather than individuals (e.g., race, age, gender), but is also based on legally relevant factors. Police officers have their own “perceptual shorthand,” by which they determine cases worthy of investigation with consideration of what they believe prosecutors will deem legitimate. Frohmann (1997) described this as “downstream orientation” by which prosecutors attempt to forecast the likelihood that a case would proceed through the legal system. In consequence, police officers attempt to predict the cases for which prosecutors will file charges. In this “perceptual shorthand”, officers also perceive what constitutes real rape, credible victims, and culpable suspects. When considering their own perceptions, officers also must consider the goals of the organization. Thus, police and other legal system personnel must focus on the cases that are “winnable” and must determine the legitimacy of the victim to make the decision whether the legal system should be involved in such a case. Police must scrutinize victims to determine their credibility rather than responding to their needs because the organization they work for *requires* them do so, just as other

organizations require its members to care for victims (i.e., rape crisis centers). Unfortunately, the cases that are typically accepted for prosecution are those that occur under circumstances that fit the mold of the “classic rape” scenario. For example, the police often do not view victims as credible if they delayed reporting, knew the perpetrator, or engaged in substance use preceding the assault (Jordan, 2004).

While the organizational goals of the legal system orient police to treat victims in a way that reflects the larger rape supportive social climate, individual-level factors such as officer characteristics may also influence attitudes toward victims and the treatment victims receive. Societal attitudes toward sexual assault do not influence all individuals in the same way and individuals do not adhere to rape myths to the same degree. So, it is necessary to consider what role individual factors play in officers’ attitudes and treatment of victims during the investigation. Yet, research is generally mixed with regard to how officer gender (Rich & Seffrin, 2012; Wentz & Archbold, 2012), education (Page, 2008; Rich & Seffrin, 2012; Wentz & Archbold, 2012), and experience in the field (Page, 2007; Rich & Seffrin, 2012; Sleath & Bull, 2012) influence an individual officer’s attitudes toward sexual assault victims. Some research indicates positive attitudes toward victims for female officers (Rich & Seffrin, 2012), officers who have higher levels of education (Page, 2008), and officers with more experience (Page, 2007; Rich & Seffrin, 2012), but other studies contradict these findings. Mixed results may be due to differences in samples or data collection methods, but nonetheless illustrate a need to consider the potential influence of officer characteristics on treatment of victims during the investigation.

Several factors contribute to the treatment of victims during the investigation process. Personal biases of the individual police officers do not alone drive poor treatment of victims, but

the organizational goals and downstream orientation that influence such attitudes and treatment. The larger rape culture that blames and stigmatizes victims based on their personal characteristics and the circumstances of the assault contribute to these organizational goals (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). These factors likely shape the treatment victims receive during the investigation process. For example, an officer may treat a victim perceived as credible better (and be more apt to investigate the case) than a victim who is not perceived as credible (Jordan, 2004). But it is also necessary to consider how the victim perceives their interactions with officers, and the different factors that influence these perceptions. The following section discusses how victims perceive the treatment they receive from police officers.

## 2. **Victim perceptions of treatment by police**

When victims report an assault, different police responses may shape how victims perceive these interactions. These responses include positive reactions (e.g., belief, emotional support) that may be positive or neutral in their effects on victims. In contrast, negative social reactions (e.g., blaming, disbelief) often have negative effects on victims (Ullman, 1999). Victims often report negative or unhelpful reactions from police (Ahrens, Campbell, Ternier-Thames, Wasco, & Sefl, 2007; Campbell, 1998; Filipas & Ullman, 2001; Ullman, 1996a), termed “secondary victimization”. The term secondary victimization refers to insensitive, victim-blaming treatment, and negative victim experiences at various stages of the legal process (Campbell, 2006, 2008; Holmes, 1980; Madigan & Gamble, 1991; Orth, 2002). Such insensitive and harsh treatment is likely a function of the social stigma regarding claims of sexual assault and preferential treatment for “good” victims who act in a certain way with a certain demeanor (Ask, 2010; Campbell, 1998; Madigan & Gamble, 1991) or whose victimizations fit the societal mold of legitimate sexual assault (Campbell, 1998).

Roughly one-half of victims report being at least somewhat satisfied with the treatment they received by police during an encounter (Monroe et al., 2005; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). However, this means many victims report dissatisfaction with aspects of their experience with police, such as the amount of information and attention received (Frazier & Haney, 1996). Being dissatisfied with the amount of information or attention received is not surprising, as victims may expect information and tangible aid from formal support sources like police (Filipas & Ullman, 2001). A lack of information leaves victims in the dark about what to expect from the investigation and legal process, and unprepared for other stages of the process. Victims may be unable to access other forms of necessary support such as mental health or victim advocacy services if they do not receive tangible aid (e.g., service referrals). A qualitative study of victim experiences with community service providers by Campbell and colleagues (2001) shows that 52% of victims perceived their experience with the legal system as being hurtful. They also found an association between victims who felt hurt by the legal system and victims whose cases were not prosecuted. This is possibly due to the lack of legal justice received, suggesting that victims are more likely be secondarily victimized by the legal system when their cases are dropped. This could be indicative of the treatment victims receive when police do not find their case compelling enough to pursue, which in turn causes victims to feel revictimized, regardless of the outcome of their case. Though it is unclear what exactly led victims in Campbell and colleague's (2001) sample to experience secondary victimization by the system, their findings nonetheless reveal an issue in victims' experiences with the investigation process for a substantial proportion of victims who report.

Campbell and colleagues (1999; 2001; 2006) have repeatedly found through research with community women that most victims experience feelings of secondary victimization

following interactions with police officers. Specific negative experiences include blame and distraction (Ullman, 1996a). Some victims report that police officers discouraged them from reporting (Campbell & Raja, 2005), talking about the assault (Ullman, 1996a), or were told that their case was not serious enough to file a report (Campbell, 2006). Many victims report that the questions asked by police touch on issues that are reflective of rape myth acceptance, such as what they were wearing and their sexual history (Campbell, 2006; Campbell & Raja, 2005; Campbell et al., 2001). Victims consider these questions traumatic (Campbell & Raja, 2005), and perceive the police as insensitive and skeptical (Felson & Pare, 2008). Others report receiving negative social reactions based on the timing of reporting in relation to when the assault took place (i.e., delayed reporting; Ahrens et al., 2010). Victims also report threats of police filing charges against them if during the investigation, doubt emerges regarding the accuracy of their claims (Logan et al., 2005). This treatment may simply be police adhering to the goals of the legal system by gathering facts and making judgments of credibility in assessing whether the case should be forwarded for prosecution. Police are conditioned to value rational thinking, look for holes in stories, and not trust the motivations of the individuals they interact with – for all crimes, not just sexual assault. Yet, this process is perceived as traumatizing by so many sexual assault victims who pursue this path because of the harmful treatment they receive from the police. While this harmful treatment may be perceived as adhering to the goals of the legal system, negative treatment is also likely a reflection of negative attitudes toward sexual assault victims.

Demographic characteristics of the victim likely influence the treatment by police during the investigation and victims' perceptions of this treatment. Police often expect victims' assaults to align with stereotypical notions of rape (Jordan, 2004). The majority of officers stated in

research that any woman can be raped, but this varies based on the demographic characteristics of the victim (Page, 2010). For example, officers say that they would be reluctant to believe certain victims, including prostitutes and male victims, but would almost always believe a virgin or professional woman (Page, 2008). These results indicate that it is common for officers to uphold stereotypical notions of rape, and tend to base their perceptions of victims on the “kind” of person claiming victimization. In particular, ethnic minority women are most likely to experience difficulty when seeking post-assault services (Campbell et al., 2001). Police often decide when a victim’s story is credible based on the victim’s age, race, and socioeconomic status (Frohmann, 1991). Not being viewed as credible by officers can translate to negative treatment by police during questioning and investigation (Patterson, 2008). In a study of mental health professionals’ perceptions of treatment by social system personnel, therapists who work with lower income clients and ethnic minority women agreed that community professionals (including police) engage in harmful practices when providing services to victims (Campbell & Raja, 1999). Though underreported, victims of certain sexual orientations (LGBT) are also subject to negative or biased treatment by police (Briones-Robinson, Powers, & Socia, 2016). This suggests that members of stigmatized or disadvantaged groups (i.e., non-White, lower socioeconomic status) receive worse treatment by police and the legal system.

Many victims who report their assault to the police feel mistreated by the officers they report to, which may result in reluctance to participate in the legal system or regrets about reporting in the first place. In a qualitative study, Logan and colleagues (2005) conducted six focus groups with thirty victims who were receiving services at rape crisis centers in rural and urban counties. Some mentioned positive experiences with police, but many regarded their experience with the legal system as “dehumanizing” (p. 603). Victims in this study felt

interrogated, intimidated, and blamed by the police because of their accusatory tone of questioning. This shows that the negative effects of officer interactions can be due to the delivery of questioning (i.e., harsh, accusatory tone) as well as the content (i.e., victim-blaming questions). Participants in the focus group concluded they would have not reported in the first place, had they known the reporting experience would be a negative one (Logan et al., 2005). Rape victim advocates also regard the police as cold and unsupportive during their interactions with sexual assault victims (Logan et al., 2005; Maier, 2008). This research sheds light on victims' negative perceptions of treatment by police, but also the *impact* of this treatment on their decision to report crimes.

Despite negative police-victim interactions for many victims, some victims report positive experiences when reporting. For example, victims sometimes describe the police as courteous and helpful (Logan et al., 2005). Further, victims sometimes report feeling that they were viewed as credible and respected (Frazier & Haney, 1996). Some victims take pride in the opportunity to tell what happened to them, despite the frustrations and distress associated with the legal process (Konradi, 2007). Several reasons may account for differences in perceptions of treatment. How victims perceive their treatment may in part be due to what they expect from the interaction. Victims who anticipate a negative experience may be pleasantly surprised by one that is better than expected. Conversely, victims who expect a positive experience but receive negative treatment by the police could be traumatized even further. Yet, researchers have not studied this. Ahrens and colleagues (2007) found in their qualitative study of 102 sexual assault victims that victims perceive their treatment by police as positive when police officers initiated the interaction. This suggests that the context of the report plays a role in perceptions of treatment. Victims may perceive their interactions with officers based on feelings of recovery or

the length of time elapsed since the assault occurred. Greenberg and Ruback (1992) found that at two months post-assault, victims rated the police as concerned and courteous. Ashworth and Feldman-Summers (1978) reported generally positive experiences by victims, but found that victims perceived police as less effective six to twelve months post-assault. More recently, Barrett and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2013) concluded that victim welfare is of little interest to police after the medical examination has taken place. Thus, the perceptions of the interaction may vary based on the point of the investigation process or the amount of time elapsed since the initial report. Treatment may also vary based on an individual officer's disposition – some officers may be more focused on victim welfare than others, resulting in positive experiences for some victims but not others.

Campbell (2005) examined whether there is agreement in how victims and police perceive their interactions. In her study, she administered a verbal checklist to 81 victims in the emergency room and 22 police officers to determine the interrater reliability between accounts of the different parties, and found total agreement for behaviors between victims and police. When a victim encountered (or did not encounter) a specific secondary victimization-invoking behavior (i.e., negative treatment), the detective would also report that this behavior did (or did not) occur. Yet, there was significantly less agreement on *feelings* of secondary victimization. Victims and police officers agreed on what happened (i.e., the provision of services and how police treated the victim) but did not share a similar view of how victims might feel about these interactions. Victims would state that they felt distressed, but officers did not think victims felt this distress (Campbell, 2005). These findings suggest that victims' accounts of their experiences are accurate, but that police tend to underestimate the effect that they have on victims' emotional state.

Victims often report feelings of secondary victimization because of the treatment received by police during the investigation process. Research on victims' experiences with police cite aspects of the interactions that negatively affect victims emotionally, such as perceptions of harsh and intrusive questioning, disbelief, and lack of support. Officers tend to assess the credibility of victims prior to the interview, which influences how they question and treat victims (Patterson, 2008). Both adult and adolescent victims want police to allow them to take their time to answer questions, ask for (rather than demand) information, acknowledge their emotions, and talk about other things first (i.e., build rapport) before asking about the assault (Greeson, Campbell, & Fehler-Cabral, 2014; Konradi, 2007; Patterson, 2011). Victims stress the need to be believed, validated, and reassured of safety and privacy. Achieving these needs can counter the negativity and degradation of being victimized (Jordan, 2008). Thus, victims know what causes feelings of poor treatment, as well as what they would like to get out of their interactions with police. Negative treatment may be interpreted as adhering to the goals of the legal system, but this may not be the most effective strategy to build a strong investigation and help victims recover from the crime that has taken place. Minor adjustments to improve treatment can be made without compromising the goals of the legal system. Positive treatment of victims and good policework should not be mutually exclusive. These experiences are important to study and improve upon, as they influence victims' post-assault adjustment.

### **3. Reporting experiences and recovery**

Several studies have examined sexual assault victims' perceptions of treatment by police and revealed that victims generally do not have positive experiences. Victims feel they are not treated well when they report their victimization (Felson & Pare, 2008; Logan et al., 2005). Many victims experience feelings of secondary victimization as a result of reporting, impeding

the recovery process (Campbell, 2008). It is important to understand how the decision to report affects recovery in order to develop and implement changes that improve the reporting experience for victims. Research links experiences of secondary victimization after interactions with police to increased post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms (Campbell et al., 2001). Victims who rate their contact with police as hurtful exhibit higher psychological and physical health distress (Campbell et al., 2001). Victims report feeling bad about themselves, depressed, nervous, anxious, disappointed, violated, and also engaging in self-blame after interacting with police during the investigation (Campbell, 2005; 2006). If victims are able to receive the services they need and be treated in a supportive manner, interactions with police could help facilitate recovery (Campbell, 2008). This research underscores the significance of experiences with police on post-assault adjustment.

Research suggests that reporting to police may increase risk for secondary victimization (Campbell, 2006). Studies examining social reactions to assault disclosure show that negative social reactions tend to have more of an effect on recovery than positive ones (Ullman & Filipas, 2001a). More specifically, a study examining the effects of informal and formal social reactions on recovery shows that negative reactions from formal support sources appear to be particularly detrimental to victims' recovery (Filipas & Ullman, 2001). Receiving negative reactions from authority figures, such as police, may be particularly detrimental, as crime victims expect protection and guidance from police (Filipas & Ullman, 2001). Yet, one study revealed that victims who *do not* disclose their victimization at all experience more symptoms of post-traumatic stress and depression than victims who disclose or report (Ahrens et al., 2010). However, the authors of this study discussed that disclosing and receiving negative reactions may negate the potential positive effects of disclosure. Together, these studies highlight the

detriment suffered from negative social reactions that contribute to depression, post-traumatic stress, and physical health outcomes, particularly when these reactions come from formal support sources.

Negative experiences with police can be particularly harmful for victims. Research suggests that victims are quite distressed after their contact with legal personnel (Campbell, 2005). When professionals, such as police officers, doubt them, hold them responsible, or refuse to provide assistance, victims may then question both the effectiveness of such services and the usefulness of reaching out to anyone at all (Ahrens, 2006). This may result in reluctance to seek further help (Campbell, 2005, 2006) or reluctance to report future victimizations. Following interviews with victims, Ahrens (2006) described how many victims were “silenced” – or stopped talking about their victimization to anyone at all – after negative encounters with police. Silencing can reinforce feelings of powerlessness. Thus, victims must be selective in who they disclose or report to, otherwise they risk receiving a social reaction that is hurtful to their recovery.

Two studies concluded that social reactions from formal sources – such as the police – are not as predictive of recovery outcomes as other studies concluded. Through analysis of criminal sexual conduct cases from 1991, Frazier and Haney (1996) found that post-assault distress was not related to victims’ experiences with police. Specifically, they found that neither attitudes nor case outcomes were associated with victims’ post-assault recovery. Victims reported that the detectives perceived them as credible and were respectful of them, but were less satisfied with the amount of information and attention they received. Frazier and Haney (1996) suggested that other intrapersonal factors, such as causal attributions and coping strategies, may be more significantly related to recovery than detective interactions. In surveys of female college

students comparing the impact of formal versus informal social reactions, Borja, Callahan, and Long (2006) found that the social reactions received from formal support providers did not influence post-assault distress as much as reactions from informal sources. They found that only negative informal social reactions were associated with negative recovery outcomes. Yet positive support from both informal and formal sources were beneficial to recovery. Findings from these studies may be due to the time of data collection or be specific to college samples, but still provide interesting contrast to other research on the influence of police treatment on post-assault adjustment.

Fear of experiencing secondary victimization or additional stress may deter victims from reporting to the police (Cluss, Boughton, Frank, Stewart, & West, 1983). Research shows that victims who chose not to report their victimization, make this decision out of self-preservation. Not reporting out of self-preservation means avoiding risk of further harm, distress, and blame (Patterson, Greeson, & Campbell, 2009; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). If police reject stereotypical beliefs about sexual assault and treat all victims with respect, victims might be more inclined to seek help from formal support sources (Starzynski et al., 2005). Decreased feelings of secondary victimization may have important long-term benefits for victims (Campbell, 2006), including better psychological adjustment. While a successful investigation should produce important information, it should also leave the victim feeling good about their interaction with the officer, and minimize the potential for secondary victimization. Given the prevalence of negative police-victim experiences, it is likely that many victims already perceive the police in a negative light or fear secondary victimization. Thus, many victims do not report in the first place. For those who do, their perceptions of treatment and interactions with police may influence their decision to cooperate with the investigation.

### C. The Procedural Justice Perspective

The procedural justice literature links quality interactions between law enforcement and crime victims to positive outcomes, including a stronger investigation and satisfaction for the victim. Yet, this has not been wholly studied in the context of sexual assault crimes. Recently, training efforts to improve the police response to sexual assault victims has been framed from a trauma-informed lens rather than through the procedural justice perspective. After providing background on the procedural justice perspective, this section discusses what is known about procedural justice in sexual assault investigations, and how the procedural justice perspective and victim-centered approaches (e.g., trauma-informed interviewing) interrelate.

Martin (2005) posits that the organization of the legal system and the goals of police work is not to care for the emotional well-being of victims but to collect evidence and solve the case. Martin (2005) highlights the necessity of victim cooperation, stating, “a victim’s *good account* helps build a *good case*” (p. 51). Police work does not focus on appealing to the emotional needs of victims, however qualitative research by Patterson (2011) asserts that treating victims in a positive way can elicit cooperation and greater provision of information. That, in turn, can improve and strengthen the investigation, a primary goal of police work. This approach to policing may also fare better for victims’ emotional well-being. For crime victims in general, research links satisfaction with the legal system to willingness to participate in the legal process (Erez, 1999), regardless of the case outcome (Ptacek, 1999; Skogan, 2005). Research indicates that satisfaction with the police is based on perceived effort put into an encounter (e.g., response time, listening, investigation) and how police treat victims (Skogan, 2005; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Herman (2005) found through interviews with sexual assault victims that legal justice is not always the primary desired outcome for victims, but rather they value acknowledgement,

validation, and vindication from others. This suggests the power of process-oriented investigations rather than outcome-oriented investigations. The procedural justice perspective may offer an approach to police-victim interactions that can achieve this goal. Procedural justice encompasses several concepts that research links to victims' perceptions of positive law enforcement experiences (Parsons & Bergin, 2010).

Generally, research suggests four important elements in procedurally fair treatment: voice, respect, neutrality, and trustworthiness (Tyler, 2006). These elements may be applicable to police interactions with sexual assault victims during the investigation process as well, but this has not yet been explored. *Voice* refers to people's desire to know that authority figures listened and gave credence to their side of the story. Allowing participants to have a voice in the decision-making process engenders feelings of process control (Tyler, Rasinski, & Spodick, 1985). This is particularly important when interacting with sexual assault victims, as sense of control can allow for greater recovery and possible satisfaction with the process (Walsh & Bruce, 2011). Rosenbaum and colleagues (2017) argue that this is more than letting people talk, but engaging in active listening, which can demonstrate compassion – something that is repeatedly found as lacking in sexual assault victim experiences with law enforcement (Campbell, 2005; 2006). *Respect* refers to individuals' desires to be treated as though they are worthy of respect (Tyler, 2006). This involves treating people in a courteous manner, which is a necessity for sexual assault victims who may be feeling vulnerable. *Neutrality* involves having no preconceived biases or opinions and making decisions based on facts (Tyler, 2005, 2006). Neutrality is particularly important within the legal system because the judicial system is designed to assess facts independently as an unbiased party (Burke & Leben, 2007). Unbiased treatment is typically not the case in sexual assault investigations, as police officers tend to

assess victims' credibility before the interview and treat victims based on these preconceived assessments rather than facts (Jordan, 2004). *Trustworthiness* is an assessment of the character of the decision-maker (Tyler, 2006). Specifically, *motive-based trust* suggests people are making an assessment of whether the decision-maker is acting in good faith, and thus can be trusted to make decisions that are fair (Tyler, 2003). Rosenbaum and colleagues (2017) propose that empathy is an important extension of the procedural justice perspective because it shows that the officer understands their point of view, feelings, and circumstances. This can be particularly important for individuals who recently experienced a traumatic event and are looking for comfort and reassurance. While research typically associates these elements of procedural justice to police interactions with community members and crime victims in general, such concepts may also apply to interactions with sexual assault victims. When these elements are present during police-victim interactions, several positive outcomes may occur for both the victim and law enforcement.

The procedural justice perspective posits that how police interact with citizens in the community can have a significant influence on the level of trust and confidence in law enforcement. When the elements associated with procedural justice are present during such interactions, individuals perceive their experience as satisfactory and are more likely to cooperate with the preventing, reporting, and investigating of crimes (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 1990). This suggests that the interpersonal dynamics that occur during police-victim interactions may influence the gathering of good evidence that can result in the charging and prosecution of perpetrators, as well as positive experience for the victims who reported. Crime victims in general place a substantial value on procedural justice contacts with police (Elliott, Thomas, & Ogloff, 2012). Perceptions of fair treatment make victims feel that the officer is

sympathetic to their victimization and is doing his or her best to solve the case. Thus, a procedural justice style of policing in sexual assault cases may improve victim perceptions of treatment and experiences with the investigation process. Research that applies the procedural justice perspective specifically to sexual assault victims is limited and does not examine the specific interactional elements of police-victim interactions in the context of procedural justice.

### 1. **Procedural justice in sexual assault investigations**

Several studies link sexual assault victims' feelings about their interactions with police to outcomes such as cooperation, recovery, and future reporting. However, this research is rather piecemeal and is not examined through a procedural justice framework. To date, a handful of studies have explored the association between reporting and experiences with police. Using a quantitative sample of sexual assault victims in Ghana, Boateng (2016) found that victims' assessments of police fairness predicted reporting sexual assault to the police. This finding, though outside the U.S., suggests that views of the police matter in the decision to report sexual assault, and that favorable attitudes toward the police result in citizens' voluntary cooperation with the police in the form of crime reporting. Findings by Boateng (2016) also illustrate sexual assault victims' desires to be treated fairly by the police when reporting the assault. National quantitative research indicates that victims who are at least somewhat satisfied with the treatment they received by police are more likely to report in the future should a similar incident occur (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). Qualitative research on victims formal help-seeking decisions indicates that negative treatment could deter victims from seeking help and pursuing legal justice in the future (Patterson et al., 2009). Together, these studies suggest an underlying association between experiences with the police and willingness to report crimes. Examining these

relationships through a procedural justice framework provides further evidence to support the importance of police behavior in the reporting of sexual assault.

Three studies link negative treatment by police to a decreased likelihood of victim cooperation. Spohn, White, and Tellis (2014) note that interactions with law enforcement have an effect on whether the victim chooses to further cooperate with police. When a victim experiences negative responses from police, he or she may engage in self-protective behavior by withholding details about the incident (Patterson, 2011). Interviews with adult sexual assault victims reveal that victims engage in a number of agentic processes to shape their experiences with the legal system (Greeson & Campbell, 2011). One of these agentic processes is engaging in noncompliance with the system as a form of self-protection. If a victim perceives their experience with police as potentially harmful to their recovery, he or she will retract their degree of participation. This can be problematic when pursuing an investigation, as police rely on victim cooperation to build the investigation. These findings suggest that police could possibly increase cooperation by behaving in a manner that creates an inviting environment for victims to share their story and actively participate in the investigation.

Greeson and colleagues (2014) examined how perceptions of treatment by police influence victims' well-being and subsequent legal system engagement in a qualitative study of 20 adolescent sexual assault victims. The researchers found that when police engage in behaviors that victims perceive as caring, compassionate, and personable (compared to uncaring, intimidating, and insensitive), there is a positive effect on victims' emotional well-being and legal system engagement. Thus, when police treat victims in a positive way, victims are more willing to cooperate in the investigation process. Though this study utilized an adolescent sample, many of the behaviors victims perceive as helpful are like those of adult victims, which

align with a procedural justice model of policing. After conducting interviews with victims of violent personal crime and property crime, Elliott and colleagues (2012) suggest that police treating victims as important individuals, rather than simply sources of information, can alleviate feelings of secondary victimization. Behaviors as simple as addressing concerns victims may have about safety, asking about victims' emotional well-being, and offering options to reduce emotional harm (e.g., allowing friends or family to be present, time to discuss the assault, etc.) can make a great difference in how victims perceive their interactions with police (Elliott et al., 2012). Police are likely accustomed to seeing many people flow through the system as both offenders as victims, so it may be easy to trivialize matters that a victim may view as a critical incident in his/her life. Thus, some form of acknowledgement of the significance of the event could be helpful for victims' emotional well-being. The sample in the above study was not exclusively sexual assault victims, but findings still suggest that minor changes in treatment of victims can improve the reporting experience without compromising the goals of police work.

One study examined the complexity of police-victim interactions, linking the quality of interactions to the amount of information provided to detectives. Patterson (2008) found through interviews with 20 sexual assault victims who reported their assault to the police, that detectives determined if the victim was credible prior to the interview. The detective's determination of credibility influenced whether the detective questioned the victim in a compassionate manner or harsh manner. Patterson's (2008) research also found that manner of victim questioning had an influence on the amount of information that victims were willing to provide about the assault. Patterson's (2008) research establishes a link between perceptions of treatment and the provision of information necessary to conduct a thorough investigation. Improving interactions and

treatment of victims could lead to more details being provided during the investigational interview, possibly leading to a stronger investigation and greater prosecutions.

Using the same qualitative sample, Patterson (2011) identified that manner of questioning and communication of belief during police-victim interactions can affect the likelihood of a case resulting in prosecution. In cases that resulted in prosecution, victims reported that the detective began the interview by consoling them and building rapport rather than jumping right into questioning, allowing the victim to feel comfortable and safe. Additionally, the detectives allowed the interview to go at the victim's pace, rather than "demanding" answers. By contrast, participants whose cases were not prosecuted described the detective's questioning as rapid and forceful, with no attempt to build rapport. Regarding feelings of belief or disbelief, victims in cases that resulted in prosecution reported that they felt the officer believed them. Some participants with non-prosecuted cases reported detectives using verbal communications of disbelief (Patterson, 2011). Differential treatment may be attributed to views of credibility (i.e., victims viewed as more credible by the criminal justice system experienced better treatment and had their case prosecuted; Patterson, 2011). Victims who had positive experiences with detectives had greater levels of engagement during the interview and greater feelings of comfort in sharing their story. Feeling comfortable led to victims disclosing more information to the detective. Thus, traditional requests by detectives for "just the facts" run the risk of missing the facts by not acknowledging the needs of the victim. Findings from Patterson's (2011) study show the need to understand and consider the influence of officer attitudes and assessments of credibility when evaluating victim perceptions of treatment. Understanding the positive and negative dynamics of police-victim interactions is paramount, as these experiences can influence the quality of the investigation itself and the outcome of the case. The relational criteria of

procedural justice can provide a conceptual framework for enhancing police response to victims of crime and improved investigation outcomes. Thus, a response to victims that adheres to the components of procedural justice may be an approach that can benefit both the victim and the police.

## 2. **Victim-centered practices**

Law enforcement agencies are making progress in moving toward practices that emphasize care and compassion for victims of trauma in an attempt to minimize secondary victimization associated with the criminal justice process. For example, several agencies in the U.S. have adopted a Start by Believing response to sexual assault victims (End Violence Against Women International, 2017). In 2013, the Human Rights Watch published a report on improving the police response to sexual assault by promoting a victim-centered approach. A victim-centered approach stresses the importance of caring for victims during the investigation to ensure victims' ability to cope with the emotional effects of the assault (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Specific components of a victim-centered approach include interview techniques that facilitate a non-judgmental environment, provide a resource referral, and do not discuss the possibility of a false report. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies that utilize a victim-centered approach emphasize accountability, transparency, leadership, and encouragement of reporting by officers (Human Rights Watch, 2013). A victim-centered approach in sexual assault investigations also requires an understanding of the trauma victim's experience.

An additional element to victim-centered practices is training officers to understand the effects of trauma. Trauma-informed Care and Practice (TICP) is now used in a range of healthcare settings, operating with the understanding that victims of trauma experience various negative outcomes. As such, practitioners should intervene with sensitivity when assisting

victims of traumatic events (Bateman, Henderson, & Kezelman, 2013). According to the National Crime Victim Resource Center, trauma-informed care includes six core principles: safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural competence (NCVSR, 2013). This approach has expanded to the law enforcement setting as well. For example, Illinois passed legislation in 2016 that outlines a trauma-informed approach. The trauma-informed approach recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the effects of trauma by focusing on the needs of victims while providing services (Sexual Assault Incident Procedure Act of 2016). Trauma-informed practices involve practitioners approaching victims with a level of sensitivity by which their current difficulties are understood through the context of experiencing trauma (Knight, 2015). In sexual assault investigations, this includes elements such as delaying the follow-up contact by two sleep cycles when possible to provide the victim time to process the recent events (Human Rights Watch, 2013). Thus, trauma-informed practices involve education for officers on the neurobiology of trauma to understand the cognitive and emotional effects of trauma including confusion, irrational behavior, and issues with memory recall (Campbell, 2012). Victim-centered and trauma-informed practices stress the need for care, sensitivity, and an understanding of trauma from police when conducting sexual assault investigations through specific interviewing techniques.

Both the procedural justice perspective and victim centered approaches incorporate sexual assault research to highlight a need for specific training for officers to respond to sexual assault victims. Each approach emphasizes that police treat sexual assault victims with sensitivity, care, trust, and acknowledgment. While there is overlap in procedural justice and victim-centered approaches to sexual assault investigations, there are noteworthy differences. First, the goals of a trauma-informed approach conflict with the goals of policing. Trauma-

informed services identify recovery as the primary goal (Elliott, Bjelajac, Fallot, Markoff, & Reed, 2005), whereas the goal of policing is to build a strong investigation (Ménard, 2005). While detectives should consider recovery during the investigation, the victim's emotional well-being is not the primary goal of conducting the investigation. In sexual assault investigations, recovery – along with building a strong investigation – are possible outcomes of procedural justice-based interactions. Several police agencies have adopted a trauma-informed approach to policing, but procedural justice was established through a policing lens to achieve better police-citizen interactions and may be applicable to sexual assault investigations as well. Second, where victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches focus on specific practices when interviewing victims, the procedural justice perspective emphasizes the quality of police-victim interactions throughout the investigation process. The procedural justice perspective suggests that crime victims perceive interactions with police more positively when the interactions include the four elements of procedural justice – voice, respect, trustworthiness, and neutrality – thus, resulting in better outcomes for both parties. Victim-centered approaches assume these four elements in training practitioners to interact with victims. Trauma-informed interviewing trains officers to understand that trauma can result in difficulty in memory recall and therefore suggests officers delay follow-up interviews. The procedural justice perspective stresses the need for quality interactions *throughout* the investigation, regardless of the victim's mental state. One possible outcome is the victim feeling comfortable contacting the officer with more information as he/she recalls information and working with the officer throughout the investigation to build a stronger case. Though the outcomes of trauma-informed approaches and the procedural justice perspective may be similar, the motives of the two approaches are different where procedural justice emphasizes the quality of interpersonal interactions throughout the duration of the

investigation to build the strongest investigation possible. Procedural justice is relational, focusing on police-victim interactions, whereas victim-centered approaches are informed from a neurobiological standpoint, focusing on recovery. Thus, the two approaches may overlap in some respects, and each could likely benefit from borrowing elements from one another, but generally differ in aim and focus.

#### **D. Rationale for Current Study**

The literature reviewed above indicates the following. First, hundreds of thousands of sexual assaults occur each year in the U.S., yet only a small proportion of victims ever report their assaults to the police (Truman & Langton, 2015). Although there are several reasons victims may choose not to report their assaults, fear of negative treatment by police and fear of secondary victimization appear to be the most common (Campbell, 2008). Second, victims who do report their assault to the police often regard their reporting experiences negatively (Logan et al., 2005) and cite a variety of behaviors as revictimizing (Campbell, 2005). Third, less than half of victims aid in the prosecution of cases (Anders & Christopher, 2011). Aiding in the prosecution of cases is something that is critical in the progression of cases and is associated with the arrest and prosecution of cases (Alderden & Ullman, 2012). Thus, police must engage in behaviors that encourage victims to participate and cooperate in the investigation and legal process to get perpetrators prosecuted. Fourth, the procedural justice perspective enumerates several relational elements that crime victims generally view positively during interactions with police. The presence of these elements during police interactions with crime victims result in a variety of positive outcomes, including trust in police, positive attitudes toward police, and willingness to report future crimes (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2007). For crime victims in general, interactions rooted in procedural justice can be a “win-win” for both parties. Procedural

justice in sexual assault investigations has not yet been wholly studied, and has not been studied in interactions with detectives who generally have the most contact with victims.

Research suggests that sexual assault victims perceive their reporting experiences differently. While some victims regard their police interactions as upsetting and revictimizing, others evaluate their experiences positively. The attitudes police have toward victims appear to influence how police treat victims. By contrast, victims' attitudes toward police may influence their willingness to report and/or willingness to encourage *others* to report. Yet the studies that established these relationships either did so over a decade ago (Greenberg & Ruback, 1992) or did so among a less generalizable college sample (James & Lee, 2014). For those who report, victims' perceptions of treatment and experiences with police influences victims' emotional recovery and possibly the quality of the investigation itself. The few studies to date suggest that the treatment victims receive can affect the amount of information provided to police and willingness to cooperate in the investigation. The research related to procedural justice in sexual assault investigations adds to the literature but is piecemeal in evidencing the potential for procedural justice in sexual assault investigations. For example, Patterson (2011) contributed to extant literature by qualitatively examining the relationship between quality of interactions, provision of information, and prosecution of cases. She concluded that how victims are treated during the investigation interview influences the amount of information victims are willing to provide to the detective. In Patterson's (2011) study, stronger investigations and more prosecutions came from cases in which the victim was treated well, felt comfortable, and was willing to share information. Greeson and colleagues (2014) established a relationship between victims' perceptions of treatment by the police, emotional well-being, and subsequent legal system engagement among adolescent victims. They found that when victims perceived the

treatment by the detective as positive, they fared better emotionally and had greater legal system involvement. While Patterson's (2011) study was groundbreaking in establishing the power of detective behaviors during interactions with sexual assault victims on cooperation and the strength of the investigation, her study did not explicitly test for behaviors consistent with the procedural justice perspective, but her conclusions evidenced the potential benefits of procedural justice in sexual assault investigations. Greeson and colleagues' (2014) work was similarly instrumental in establishing relationships between perceptions of positive treatment by police and positive outcomes (i.e., recovery, legal system engagement), but did not test this among adult victims or through a procedural justice framework. Orth (2002) examined satisfaction with the legal system through a procedural justice framework but only 35% of the sample were sexual assault victims. Elliott and colleagues (2012) conducted in-depth interviews to examine satisfaction with police through a procedural justice framework but less than 10% of their sample were victims of sexual assault. Thus, the bulk of studies examining detective-victim interactions do not use a complete sample of sexual assault victims, or use solely qualitative methods. No study to date has used a mixed methods approach to examine these relationships. The present study adds to previous research by examining the relationships between procedural justice in detective interactions and several outcomes, using an adult community sample, with a multi-method approach.

Extant research on perceptions of treatment by police and procedural justice in sexual assault investigations is also lacking in the attention paid to demographic characteristics of victims. Research documents differences in police treatment of victims based on victim demographics (see Campbell et al., 2001; Campbell & Raja, 1999) and whether police view victims as credible (Jordan, 2004). This suggests that not all victims receive the same treatment

during the investigation process. Younger, less educated, and ethnic minority victims report negative police experiences most often. Research has yet to explore sexual assault victim perceptions of treatment through a procedural justice lens, and furthermore, has yet to examine the effect of victim characteristics on such perceptions. For example, research shows several positive outcomes based on positive treatment by officers but it is unknown whether this effect is the same for all sexual assault victims. Whether procedural justice is a beneficial approach to sexual assault investigations or not is not as simple as “yes” or “no” but may vary for specific individuals or populations, and requires consideration during interactions with victims. For example, victims of a racial minority regard their interactions with police officers as harmful and less helpful than White victims (Patterson, 2011). As such, it is understandable that minority women may not be as willing to cooperate with police as White victims. This study considered the effect of victim demographic characteristics during analysis, as well as the demographic characteristics of the detective. Research – though mixed – suggests that the gender, education, and race of the officer may relate to perceptions and treatment of victims but has not been studied in this context. Therefore, officer characteristics served as control variables in the present study. Similar attention was also paid to characteristics of the assault (e.g., alcohol use, relationship to perpetrator, delayed reporting, etc.), which have historically been related to how victims are perceived and treated during the reporting and investigation process (see Jordan, 2004).

While there is a considerable amount of research related to reporting experiences and various outcomes, the evidence is piecemeal in establishing relationships through an individual study housed in a procedural justice framework. The present study contributes to the bodies of sexual assault and procedural justice research by filling the holes where questions are

unanswered. This study bridges gaps in extant research by exploring the presence of interactional and behavioral elements consistent with the procedural justice perspective in detective interactions with sexual assault victims, linking the perceived quality of such interactions to a variety of outcomes. Additionally, this study adds a renewed examination of the differences in demographic characteristics of victims who report and who do not report. The following chapter delineates the specific goals of this study.

### III. CURRENT STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the reporting and investigation experiences of sexual assault victims – particularly their perceptions of the quality of the interactions with the detective(s) who worked on their case – to explore the potential for a procedural justice approach in sexual assault investigations. This study aimed to understand victims’ satisfaction with the interaction based on the presence or absence of elements related to procedural justice, and how victims’ reporting experiences relate to outcomes including satisfaction with the detective, cooperation with the investigation, views of the police, willingness to report future crimes, and recovery. Victims are generally dissatisfied with their reporting experiences, often because of the officer’s behavior and communication during their interactions (Campbell, 2008). Microelements of interactions such as communication of belief and being polite may influence a variety of investigative and recovery-related outcomes. By looking at victims’ perceptions of what happened during their interactions with detectives<sup>3</sup>, steps could be taken to ensure that police respond to victims in a positive way that facilitates a strong investigation. A secondary component to this study was to examine the rationale of victims who did not report, as well as the demographic differences between victims who reported and did not report. This study also qualitatively examined victims’ recommendations for improving detective-victim interactions and the investigation process overall.

#### A. **Primary Research Aims**

The current study had four foci to understand how interactions rooted in procedural justice influence several outcomes related to the victim and the investigation itself. This study

---

<sup>3</sup> The terms “police” or “police officer” refer to the general law enforcement community. This study focuses on interactions with detectives, but necessary attention is also paid to responding officers and police overall, where applicable. The terms “detective” and “responding officer” are used to differentiate these roles.

used qualitative and quantitative methods to explore these foci. First, the study asked why victims report to the police. There are several documented reasons why victims report or are reluctant to report, but little attention is paid to whether views of the police play a role in this decision. As such, this study quantitatively examined victims' reasoning for reporting or not reporting to the police. In light of this study's focus on reporting, this study also examined demographic differences in the decision to report. Specifically, differences between victims who reported, victims who reported but did not interact with a detective, and victims who reported and interacted with a detective, were examined in terms of age, race, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

The second focus of this study was how victims perceive their interactions with the detective(s) working on their case. This was examined through the presence of elements that align with the procedural justice perspective. For example, did the victim feel the officer treated him/her with respect? Did the officer convey feelings of belief? The present study explored victims' perceptions of their interactions with the detectives, including the positive and negative aspects of these interactions, and how closely these interactional elements align with the procedural justice perspective. Furthermore, the present study qualitatively explored the feelings associated with these interactional elements. For example, victims were asked to discuss the positive or negative aspects of the interaction, as well as how that made them feel. Examining the aspects of the interaction victims perceive as positive or negative will help to inform training practices and contribute to our understanding of helpful police responses to victims who report.

The third focus of this research was to explore if the presence of procedural justice elements during interactions relates to satisfaction with the detective and several outcomes including willingness to cooperate with the detective, views of the police, willingness to report

future crimes, and recovery. Did victims who judged their interactions as procedurally just also view their interactions with the detective positively? Did victims who judged their interactions positively also have feel better in terms of recovery? Were they more willing to participate in the investigation and report future crimes? Did they view the police more favorably? Exploring the relationships between procedural justice-based encounters and these outcomes evaluated the potential for procedural justice-based sexual assault investigations through both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Few studies to date have examined ways to improve sexual assault investigations from the perspective of those who are involved in the process – the victims. Thus, the fourth focus of this research was to contribute victims’ voices to the direction of sexual assault investigations by asking interview participants their recommendations for improving the police response to victims who report.

## **B. Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This research study was driven by eight overarching research questions answered through the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods. For quantitative analyses, victim demographic, officer demographic, and assault variables were included as control variables.

### **1. Do views of the police relate to the decision to report sexual assault to the police?**

Extant research identifies several factors related to the decision to report a sexual assault to the police or not. Victims may report to the police to receive support (Liang et al., 2005) or because informal sources encouraged them to report (Paul et al., 2013). Several factors may deter victims from reporting including the circumstances of the assault (i.e., belief that their assault does not qualify as rape; Heath et al., 2013), fear of disbelief or feelings that the system will be unable to help them (Patterson et al., 2009), or fear of secondary victimization by the legal

system and individuals within the system (Campbell, 2008). This suggests that victims consider the capacity for police officers to provide assistance in the reporting decision, but does not answer the question of how attitudes toward the police influence this decision. James and Lee (2014) found that victims with positive and satisfactory views of the police are more likely to report. James and Lee (2014) used a sample of college students, so this relationship is unknown relative to adult community victims who may have more developed views of police or more experiences with police in the community. This question was qualitatively examined through two methods: 1) open-ended survey responses of victims who did not report to the police; and 2) interviews with victims who reported and did not report to the police.

2. What are the demographic differences between victims who did not report, victims who reported, and victims who reported and interacted with a detective?

It is well documented that victims are more likely to report assaults that fit the characteristics of a stereotypical rape (e.g., stranger, not alcohol involved, violent; reported immediately; Estrich, 1987; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). Yet research remains mixed on the demographic characteristics associated with reporting, and is less studied in terms of reporting to the police and having the opportunity to interact with a detective. For example, older victims are more likely to report (Chen & Ullman, 2014). Research is somewhat mixed on reporting based on race and education, but suggests that African American victims (Fisher et al., 2003) and less educated victims (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011) are more likely to report. Recent events, such as the Black Lives Matter Movement (see Rickford, 2016), increases in police brutality of African Americans shown in the media, and immigration laws under the new presidential administration may result in fewer minorities wanting to report to police. Research shows low reporting rates for LGBT victims of domestic violence (Briones-Robinson et al., 2016). Reporting rates may be similar for LGBT sexual assault victims as well. Women are more likely to report than men, but

this has not been explored outside of the male/female gender binary (Ménard, 2005). Research to date shows the possibility for inherent differences between victims who decide to report and those who do not in terms of demographic characteristics. Victims who report often do not have the opportunity to interact with a detective because their case does not make it to the point of investigation or the report is not filed. Thus, there may be demographic differences in victims who report, and victims who report and interact with a detective. Older, White, female, and heterosexual victims are hypothesized to report to the police more often than their counterparts. Quantitative analyses tested for differences between victims who did not report to the police, victims who reported, and victims who reported and interacted with a detective.

Hypothesis 1. Older victims will report to the police, and will interact with a detective more frequently than younger victims.

Hypothesis 2. White victims will report to the police, and will interact with a detective more frequently than non-White victims.

Hypothesis 3. Female victims will report to the police, and will interact with a detective more frequently than male and non-binary gender identifying victims.

Hypothesis 4. Heterosexual victims will report to the police, and will interact with a detective more frequently than LGBT identifying victims.

3. How do victims' perceptions of their interactions with the detective(s) relate to their satisfaction with the reporting and investigation process?

When reporting an assault, there are different responses victims may receive that shape how they perceive the interaction. Roughly one-half of individuals who report their victimization are at least somewhat satisfied with the treatment they received by police (Monroe et al., 2005; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). By contrast, victims are less satisfied during interactions where the officer engaged in harsh questioning, conveyed disbelief, and lacked support. Behaviors that victims find helpful and hurtful during interactions with police is well established in the literature but these behaviors have not been studied in the context of procedural justice. Qualitative and

quantitative data in this study examined the presence (or absence) of behaviors during detective interactions that fall within the procedural justice framework. Furthermore, the relationship between perceptions of the interaction and satisfaction with the detective is unknown. Positive interactions during the legal process are associated with greater satisfaction with the legal system (Orth, 2002) but have not been studied specific to sexual assault interactions with detectives. Qualitative data in this study explored what goes into victims' satisfaction with the detective interaction and investigation; quantitative data explored this empirically through the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5. Victims who perceive their interaction(s) with detective(s) as more procedurally just will be more satisfied with their detective interactions overall.

4. How do victims' perceptions of their interactions with the detective(s) relate to willingness to cooperate with the detective and participate in the investigation?

Qualitative research indicates that negative treatment by detectives could deter victims from pursuing legal justice (Patterson et al., 2009) or push victims to withhold details about the incident (Patterson, 2011). Research on adolescent victims linked behaviors perceived as caring, compassionate, and personable to greater legal system engagement (Greeson et al., 2014). This has not been explored using mixed-methods, or through a procedural justice framework. In this study, interview data explored victims' cooperation with the detective and thoughts on participating in the investigation with regard to their previous interactions with the detective(s) who worked on their case, and their justification in either direction. Survey data tested the relationship between judgments of procedural justice and willingness to participate in the investigation. With consideration of previous studies, it was hypothesized that victims who perceive their interactions as more procedurally just will be more willing to cooperate with the investigation.

Hypothesis 6. Victims who perceive their detective interaction(s) as more procedurally just will be more willing to participate in the investigation.

5. How do victims' perceptions of their interaction with the detective(s) who worked on their case influence their views of the police?

Research suggests that procedurally fair treatment can influence the level of trust and confidence in law enforcement. While this is well-established in the general procedural justice literature, it has not yet been studied among sexual assault victims. In this study, interview and survey data explored how victim interactions with the detective during the investigation influence views of the police. Interview data shed light on victims' views of the police before and after they reported to the police and quantitative data examined the relationship between assessments of procedural justice and trust/confidence in the police. It was hypothesized that sexual assault victims who perceive their interactions with the detective(s) working on their case as procedurally just will have greater trust and confidence in the police community.

Hypothesis 7. Victims who perceive their interaction(s) with the detective(s) as more procedurally just will indicate greater trust and confidence in the police.

6. How do victims' perceptions of their interactions with the detective(s) who worked on their case relate to willingness to report future crimes?

Research on procedural justice shows that when the elements associated with procedural justice are present during police interactions, individuals are more likely to report future crimes (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Wolitzky-Taylor and colleagues (2011) found that most sexual assault victims who were at least somewhat satisfied with the treatment they received by the police felt they made the right decision to report, and would report again should a similar incident occur. Together, these studies suggest that sexual assault victims who have positive interactions with the detective(s) working on their case will be likely to report revictimization or other future crimes. Survey and interview data together explored this question. Interview participants were

asked to discuss their willingness to report future sexual assault crimes and willingness to advise friends to report, with consideration of their previous reporting and investigation experience.

Quantitative data used a procedural justice framework to test the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 8. Victims who perceive their interaction(s) with the detective(s) to be more procedurally just will be more likely to report future crimes to the police.

7. How do victims' perceptions of the detective interactions during the investigation process relate to victim recovery?

Many victims experience secondary victimization, psychological symptoms, or distress because of reporting, which can impede the recovery process. Studies link experiences of secondary victimization due to interactions with police to increased PTSD symptoms (Campbell et al., 2001). Victims who rate their contact with police as hurtful exhibit greater psychological and physical health distress (Campbell et al., 2001), as well as feelings of depression, self-blame, anxiety, nervousness and low self-esteem (Campbell, 2005, 2006). Research suggests negative experiences with reporting and subsequent harm to recovery following their contact with police. As a result, it is possible that positive interactions may serve a positive function for post-assault adjustment, yet research has failed to study the relationship between recovery and procedural justice-based interactions. Because research on procedural justice in sexual assault investigations has been linked to positive investigational outcomes, it is be logical to presume that better recovery can be one of these outcomes as well. Survey and interview data explored victims' self-assessments of recovery following their interaction(s) with the detectives(s) who worked on their case. Interview participants were asked to discuss how their interaction(s) with detectives during the reporting and investigation process affected their emotional recovery. Survey responses tested the relationship between interactions rooted in procedural justice and victims' self-assessments of recovery, in line with the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 9. High judgments of procedural justice during detective interaction(s) will be related to greater feelings of recovery.

8. What are victims' recommendations for improving the reporting experience for victims who report to the police?

Sexual assault research documents the responses that victims find helpful and hurtful from police, but this is rarely researched in the form of what victims think can improve the reporting and investigation process, and even less studied in a way that allows victims to provide these recommendations in their own words. Interview participants were asked to discuss any suggestions they have – with consideration of their own experience with the police, understanding of others' reporting experiences, and/or knowledge of sexual assault and policing in general – on how the police response to victims who report can be improved.

In sum, there are eight research questions that served as a basis for inquiry in this research study. Two of these questions were answered through qualitative methods alone, and one through sole quantitative analysis. The remaining questions were wholly addressed through triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods. Within these questions, quantitative methods addressed nine specific hypotheses. The following chapters present the methods and analyses for this study.

## IV. METHODS

The procedural justice perspective models improved police-citizen interactions and subsequent positive outcomes for crime victims in general (Elliott et al., 2012; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003), but this model has not yet been applied to sexual assault investigations, particularly utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods. This study examined the potential for a procedural justice approach to sexual assault investigations using a mixed methods research design among a community sample of sexual assault victims. Specifically, the present study examined the experiences of victims who reported to the police and how these reporting experiences relate to several outcomes including satisfaction with the detective, cooperation with during the investigation, views of the police, willingness to report future crimes, and recovery using qualitative and quantitative methods. For victims who did not report to the police, this study quantitatively explored potential demographic differences between reporters and non-reporters, and victims' reasoning for not reporting. This study also used interview responses to gain insight into victims' recommendations for improving the police response to victims who report.

### A. **Mixed Methods Research (MMR): Triangulation Design**

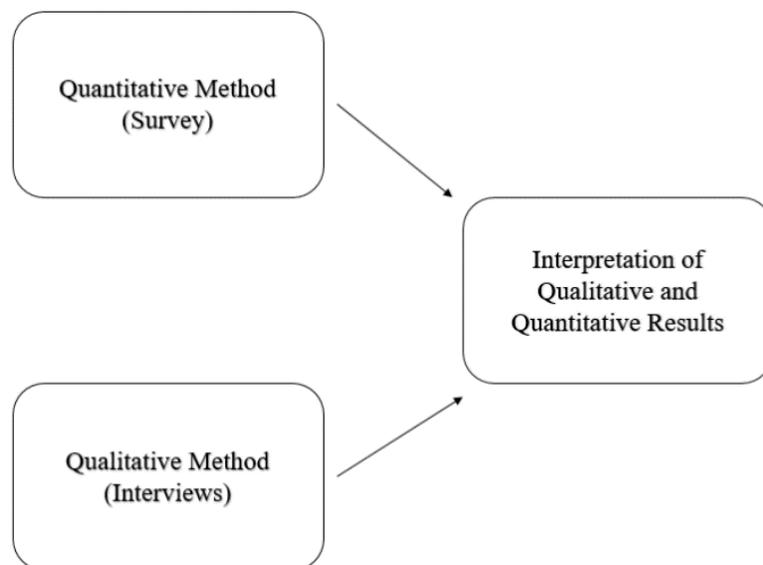
Sexual violence is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that occurs within a social context, influenced by many factors. The simultaneous integration of qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches is likely the best way to study this phenomenon. When researchers have the time, knowledge, and skill to employ both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in sexual assault research, they should take advantage of both methods to strengthen the study (Creswell, 2013). Specifically in the study of violence against women, a mixed methods approach can be particularly useful to bring together numerical and narrative accounts of

victims' experiences (Campbell, Patterson, & Bybee, 2011). Using multiple methods may increase the validity of the findings of this research and point out any contradictions in the data through comparison of different results (Brewer & Hunter, 2006), where the results from both methods serve to complement to one another.

The current study used a triangulation design where qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously (i.e., concurrent mixed-methods; Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The conceptual model for this approach is shown in Figure 1. As explained by Morse (2003), the purpose of a triangulation design is “to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic” (p.122). This approach allows for each method to compensate for the weaknesses of the other method (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The data used for this study includes limitations, and to best answer the research questions it is necessary to bring together the strengths of each method (Gelo, Braakmann, & Benetka, 2008). In this study, quantitative data were used to test the hypotheses to establish empirical relationships between the variables of interest, where clearly-defined relationships cannot be established through stand-alone qualitative methods. The quantitative data of this study were limited by a small sample size. Here, the qualitative piece compensated for this by adding depth to the quantitative responses. The interview data extended beyond the quantitative by providing an in-depth account of victims' interactions with detectives and capturing unanticipated relevant information that was not included in the survey. For example, interviews provided participants the opportunity to talk about any part of the interaction that stuck out to them (e.g., body language, statements made, follow-up contacts) that could not be captured through quantitative inquiry. Interviews also provided the space to discuss additional encounters with detectives and the differences between each encounter for victims who have reported more

than one sexual assault incident. Use of both methods created an opportunity to provide a richer interpretation and understanding of victims' experiences (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992), added insight that would be unavailable in a single-method design, and provided stronger evidence through the corroboration of findings (Brent & Kraska, 2010). Where the survey data aimed to establish a relationship between the variables of interest, interview data were used to explain *why* these relationships were found by providing further detail into a complex topic. Thus, the present study of sexual assault victimization and reporting experiences included analysis of both surveys and interviews. This methodological approach could offer stronger conclusions that can offset the weakness of each method. The research design that follows incorporates the use of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Figure 1. Triangulation design of a mixed methods research model.



## **B. Secondary Analysis of the CFE Project Data**

A primary function of law enforcement agencies is to investigate criminal acts, but research directed at this process is limited. The Center for Excellence (CFE) was developed to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness of homicide and sexual assault investigations by linking scientific knowledge to the practices of law enforcement investigations. With grant funding from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), Principal Investigators Dennis Rosenbaum, William McCarty, and Robert Boehmer, researchers, and a team of graduate students collected data from a variety of practitioners and community members regarding the status of sexual assault and homicide investigations across Illinois. Specific areas of the CFE project included quantitative and qualitative research of homicide and sexual assault detectives, quantitative research of police sheriffs and chiefs, and qualitative research of prosecutors.

The present study used data obtained from the CFE project specific to sexual assault victims' perceptions of their interactions with the responding officer(s) and detective(s) who worked on their case. The CFE study incorporated scientifically and theoretically sound qualitative and quantitative instruments that measure different aspects of victims' reporting and investigation experiences, and outcomes related to such experiences. The research instruments and methodology for the present study were generated through a collaboration of CFE researchers, graduate students (including Lorenz), and practitioners. The project utilized several agency partnerships to aid in the distribution of research materials and recruitment of participants. The project implemented two methodological parts concurrently: web surveys and semi-structured interviews. Research questions and hypotheses for the present study were examined using this data.

## 1. **Sample**

The data for the present study included sexual assault victims ages 18 and older from a large city and the surrounding metropolitan area. Sexual assault victims were invited to participate in this research, regardless of whether they reported their assault to the police. Recruitment and data collection took place from June 2015 to April 2017. Survey recruitment was ongoing until the minimum sample size of victims who reported to the police and interacted with a detective, generated from a power analysis, was well exceeded. Interview recruitment continued until the sample size allowed for saturation, whereby the same themes were repeated and new themes did not emerge (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). The final sample included 414 survey participants and 28 interview participants. Of the total survey participants, 195 reported to the police and 93 interacted with a detective. Of the 28 total interview interviews, 24 participants reported to the police, three of whom did not have the opportunity to interact with a detective.

## 2. **Recruitment**

Participant recruitment for this study took place through several methods. Recruitment strategies were designed to reach a variety of participants who: 1) may have recently reported their assault; 2) be currently participating in the investigation process; 3) may have reported in the past but are no longer involved with the investigation; or 4) did not report their assault at all. These strategies provided the opportunity to reach a greater number of participants who may – given their temporal relation to reporting – regard their reporting and investigation experience differently. Recruiting victims who did not report to the police provided the opportunity to understand why victims ultimately decided to not report, and to assess differences between victims who did and did not report. Reaching potential participants took place through one of two strategies: prospective sampling and community-based retrospective sampling.

a. **Prospective sampling of victims**

Prospective sampling took place through the local police department and three sexual assault advocacy agencies who agreed to assist the CFE with data collection. These organizations modified the existing paperwork provided to victims who seek their services to include an information page about the study and request for participation in the survey and interview. The information page provided the details of the study in both Spanish and English languages. These organizations also posted advertisements about the study to their websites and social media pages (i.e. Facebook, Twitter). Thus, victims were potentially invited to participate in this study at a variety of points: 1) an initial meeting with the detective; 2) an initial meeting with a victim advocate; 3) when a victim seeks counseling services at an advocacy agency; or 4) when visiting the web page of the local police or advocacy agency. Information pages were distributed by all detectives who met with sexual assault victims in one, large district of the city where this research took place. Advocacy agencies distributed information pages to all victims who sought services from their organization.

b. **Community-based retrospective sampling of victims**

Community-based recruitment took place from March 2016 to April 2017 in two ways: 1) flyers posted throughout the community; and 2) social media posts. In March 2016, posting flyers throughout the community was added as an additional approach to recruit victims to increase the number of responses. This second approach recruited victims with “older” reported cases and victims who may not have reported or sought advocacy services. Through a community-based retrospective recruitment, recruitment flyers were distributed throughout the city and metropolitan area. For this strategy, the goal was widespread dissemination of information about the study throughout the community. Flyers were posted throughout the

community at local businesses (e.g., coffee shops, grocery stores) and libraries. Flyers were also posted at a large urban university in academic buildings to recruit college students. To reach help-seeking participants, flyers were also sent to other local service agencies (e.g., mental health centers, women's shelters, etc.) who agreed to post the advertisements. In December 2016, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was amended to include advertisements for the study posted on social media. Social media advertisements were posted to Facebook and Twitter pages of social service organizations and could be "shared" by other individuals on that social media site. Because social media sites are not specific to a location, online advertisements specified the city in which the research was taking place. The retrospective recruitment strategies provided access to a larger base of victims, which was necessary to reach a desirable sample size.

### 3. **Procedures**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the university where the research took place approved the data collection procedures for the CFE project, as well as the use of the data for the present study. IRB approval was obtained before the research began and amended periodically to include updated recruitment methods (see Appendix D for most recent approval notice). All interview participants also participated anonymously in the survey. The following section details the procedures of the present study.

The researcher distributed recruitment materials (information cards, flyers, online advertisements) from a variety of mediums (e.g., internet, agency workers, flyer postings; see Recruitment section above). The recruitment materials invited individuals aged 18 or older who experienced a sexual assault to participate in an interview and/or survey. All sexual assault victims over age 18 met the inclusion criteria for the study, regardless of whether they reported their assault to the police. Recruitment materials informed participants of the nature of the study,

contained a link to access the survey, and provided contact information for the researcher to receive more information, a written survey, or to schedule an interview. Individuals were not compensated for their participation. As discussed in the Mixed-Methods Research section, recruitment and data collection took place concurrently due to the triangulation design of the study, which involved both methods simultaneously answering similar questions to allow for an integrative and in-depth discussion of the research questions. Thus, it was not necessary to employ recruitment and data collection methods sequentially, as one method did not inform the content of the other.

Surveys were available in both Spanish and English languages and were available online. Most participants indicated English was their primary language; fewer than 10 surveys were completed in Spanish. Written surveys were available for participants who preferred to write responses or who did not have computer access. However, only one participant requested a written survey and did not return the completed document. Qualtrics online survey software was used for the design and implementation of the survey instrument. The survey webpage directed individuals to the consent materials and support service referrals. Before beginning the survey, participants had to agree that they read (or were read) and understood the informed consent information, and were over 18 years of age. Appropriate skip and display logic directed survey participants through the questions. Participants were sent to one of two survey branches based on their response to a screening question about whether they reported the assault to the police. For example, the survey asked participants who did not report their assault to the police two introductory questions about their decision to not report, and then redirected them to later sections of the survey that would apply to them (e.g., views of the police, recovery, demographic information), allowing them to skip all sections of the survey asking about their interactions with

the police. Conversely, the survey directed participants who did report their assault to the police through several questions about their reporting and investigation experience that non-reporters did not receive. At the end of the survey, all participants received information about contacting support services. Participants also received information about participating in a follow-up interview about their reporting and investigation experience (for those who reported) or their decision to not report (for those who did not report), including contact information for the researcher (Lorenz) to learn more about interview participation and/or schedule an interview. When data collection was closed, the survey was replaced with a message about the survey closing and a list of support services.

Interviews took place with individuals who completed the survey and who wanted to participate in a follow-up interview, regardless of whether they reported to the police. Individuals interested in participating in an interview were instructed to contact the researcher (Lorenz) via telephone or email to receive information about the interview and to coordinate a date, time, and location for the interview that was safe and comfortable for both parties. Four of the 28 interviews took place over the telephone. Interview participants were required to provide informed consent for participating in the interview and for the audio-recording of the interview. All interview participants consented to have the interview audio-recorded. Audio-recordings were later transcribed by the researcher (Lorenz). Telephone interviews were not IRB approved to be audio-recorded so the researcher took unidentifiable notes on the content of the interview. The researcher also wrote notes after the interview to reflect on the content discussed during the interview. Interviews lasted an average of one hour, but ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours. During interviews, the researcher noted basic demographic characteristics (e.g., age, race,

gender) and assault characteristics (e.g., relationship to perpetrator, reported to police, adult versus child sexual assault) that the interviewee chose to disclose during the interview.

The researcher approached interviews without any prior information about the participant's experience. Interviews began with the researcher giving the interviewee the chance to discuss their experience without interruption. The researcher asked clarifying and follow-up questions after the interviewee completed telling his/her story. Follow-up questions were specific to the interviewee's account, but aligned with the interview protocol. The researcher's role in the qualitative methods used in the study was sympathetic to victims' stories. The researcher approached the interviews through a feminist framework that allowed open communication in a supportive and safe environment (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). The researcher strived to hear victims' perceptions of their reporting experience in the aftermath of sexual assault. The researcher encouraged participants to share only as much of their experience as they wanted. At the end of the interview, the researcher provided participants with a support services referral list. The following sections detail the quantitative survey measures and interview protocol used in the present study.

### C. **Survey Measures**

The quantitative method of this study included the assessment of several measures to test the hypotheses. The following section details the measurement of variables used in the present study. Table XV, Appendix A presents a table of the coding for each variable.

#### 1. **Independent (predictor) variables**

##### a. **Reporting group**

Survey participants were divided into three categories based on their decision to report and whether their report proceeded to the point of meeting with a detective: (1) did not report the

assault; (2) reported the assault but did not interact with a detective; and (3) reported the assault and interacted with a detective. Participants who did not report their assault to the police were asked to qualitatively describe why they decided to not report. Results of this open-ended survey question were used in response to Research Question 1.

b. **Procedural justice**

Participants were provided with fifteen items about their interactions with the detective who worked on their case and were asked to rate their agreement with these items on a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree. For a full listing of these items, see Table XVI, Appendix B.

Items were adopted from the Procedural Justice Index (Rosenbaum, Lawrence, Hartnett, McDevitt, & Posick, 2015), the Social Reactions Questionnaire (SRQ; Ullman, 2000), and with consideration of the social support literature. Researchers used the original scale to measure judgments of procedural justice in police-citizen encounters in the Police-Community Interaction Survey (PCIS). The CFE team modified the original list of items and added additional items to reflect elements of procedural justice that may be applicable to sexual assault investigations, based on the SRQ and the relevant literature. The items cover key dimensions of procedural justice: voice (e.g., “did not appear to listen to what I had to say”), neutrality (e.g., “seemed to doubt what I was saying”), respect (e.g., “treated me with dignity and respect”), trustworthiness (e.g., “seemed trustworthy”) and motive-based trust (e.g., “clearly explained the reasons for his or her actions”). Items included reflect elements desired specifically in social reactions to sexual assault, such as communication of belief (e.g., “treated me like he/she believed my story”), empathy (e.g., “did not appear sensitive to my feelings and needs”), and victim-blaming sentiments (e.g., “told me I could have done more to prevent the experience from occurring”;

Campbell, 2005; Jordan, 2011). Select items from the SRQ that align with the tenets of procedural justice were also included in the scale (Ullman, 2000). The SRQ measures both positive and negative forms of social reactions received by sexual assault victims disclosing their assaults. Items adopted from the SRQ include “minimized the importance of my experience”, “comforted and reassured me”, and “told me that I could have done more to prevent the experience from occurring”.

Using principal component analysis (PCA) with Horn’s (1965) parallel test, the list of 15 items was reduced to 12 items. The inclusion of these 12 items were informed by the principal component analysis, as well as the qualitative interview portion of this study. The researcher coded for detective behaviors that victims discussed during interviews as contributing to their assessments of the interaction. The results from coding were considered when determining which items to include in the scale. This 12-item scale depicts a unidimensional construct with good internal consistency among the items ( $\alpha = .969$ ;  $M=30.33$ ;  $SD=12.26$ ), with no multicollinearity issues. There are no validated scales to measure procedural justice specifically for sexual assault, so this scale represents an empirically supported scale which is composed of items reflecting the tenets of procedural justice applicable to sexual assault cases. See Table I for a listing of the 12 items included in the scale and individual factor loadings.

**TABLE I**

**ITEM CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE SEXUAL ASSAULT-SPECIFIC JUDGMENTS OF  
PROCEDURAL JUSTICE SCALE <sup>a</sup>**

Item	Factor Loading	Mean	SD	Range
Detective treated me with dignity and respect	.914	2.64	1.14	1 – 4
Detective acknowledged the importance of my experience	.809	2.44	1.25	1 – 4
Detective treated me fairly	.913	2.58	1.08	1 – 4
Detective appeared trustworthy	.903	2.58	1.13	1 – 4
Detective treated me politely	.897	2.75	1.09	1 – 4
Detective did not seem to doubt what I was saying	.799	2.49	1.23	1 – 4
Detective listened to me	.771	2.70	1.15	1 – 4
Detective comforted and reassured me	.862	2.05	1.15	1 – 4
Detective appeared sensitive to my feelings and needs	.868	2.47	1.26	1 – 4
Detective appeared to have enough time for me	.778	2.66	1.21	1 – 4
Detective took the matter seriously	.912	2.49	1.25	1 – 4
Detective treated me like he/she believed my story	.926	2.42	1.18	1 – 4

<sup>a</sup> N=93

**2. Dependent (outcome) variables**

**a. Satisfaction with the detective interaction**

Survey participants were asked to provide a summative judgment regarding their overall satisfaction with the encounter: “Taking the experience into account, how satisfied are you with the way you were treated by detective in this case?” This question was adopted from the Police-Community Interaction Survey (PCIS; Rosenbaum, Lawrence, Hartnett, McDevitt, & Posick, 2015) procedural justice questionnaire. Response options were given on a 4-item scale ranging from (1) very dissatisfied to (4) very satisfied.

**b. Willingness to participate in the investigation**

Participants were asked their willingness to participate in the investigation: “Based on your interactions and conversations with the detective, how likely are you to participate in the

next steps of the legal process [i.e., investigation]”. Responses were given on a 4-response option scale ranging from (1) very unlikely to (4) very likely.

c. **Willingness to report future crimes**

Willingness to report future crimes was assessed with the question “based on your interactions with the officers and detectives in this case, how likely are you to report crimes that occur in the future to the police?” Responses were given on a 4-response option scale ranging from (1) very unlikely to (4) very likely.

d. **Views of the police**

Participants were asked about their trust and confidence in the police with two questions measured on a 4-response option scale (1=strongly disagree; 4=strongly agree): “I trust my police department to make decisions that are good for everyone in my town/city” and “I have confidence that my police department can do its job well”. These two items were highly correlated and therefore were combined into one scale item collectively measuring views of the police.

e. **Recovery**

Survey participants were asked several questions about their feelings of recovery and help-seeking behaviors (e.g., counseling). In the present study, victim recovery was examined in terms of recovery related to reporting the sexual assault to police, based on a self-assessment made by the participant. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with statement “Reporting this crime has made things worse for me [i.e., recovery]” on a 4-point response option scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree.

### 3. **Control variables**

#### a. **Participant demographic information**

Several variables were included with the survey to measure the demographic information of the participant. Demographic variables used in the present study included: gender identity (1=male; 2=female; 3=non-binary), age (5 ordinal categories ranging from 18 to 65 and older), education (1=high school diploma or less; 2=some college/vocational/Bachelor's degree; 3=graduate/professional/JD degree), sexual orientation (1=heterosexual; 2=non-heterosexual/LGBT), race (1=White; 2=African American; 3=Hispanic; 4=Asian; 5=Native American; 6=Biracial; 7=Other race/ethnicity), and annual household income (3 ordinal categories ranging from \$50,000 or less to \$100,000 or more). Participants were also asked to indicate if they have been arrested before (1=no; 2=yes) and if they have been involved in the criminal justice system before as a crime victim outside of the assault referenced in the present study (1=no; 2=yes). Participants were asked to indicate how their contact with the police was initiated (1=I made contact with the local police; 2=someone else made contact with the police; 3=unsure/don't know; 4=other). In the regression models, gender identity was coded dichotomously as 1=non-female identified victim and 2=female identified victim, and race was coded dichotomously as 1=White and 2=Non-White. Age, race, gender identity, and sexual orientation were used as independent variables to test Hypotheses 1 – 4.

#### b. **Detective demographic information**

Several variables were used to control for detectives' demographic information during analysis. Detective gender was measured dichotomously (1=male; 2=female), detective age was measured as 3 ordinal categories including under 30 years old, 30-40 years old, over 40 years old. Detective race was measured dichotomously (1=White; 2=Non-White).

c. **Assault characteristics**

Several assault characteristics were included as control variables during analysis, including relationship to the perpetrator, substance use at the time of the assault, and physical injury. Relationship to the perpetrator was coded with seven categories, including “stranger”, “current or former spouse”, “acquaintance”, “romantic partner”, “friend”, “family member”, and “other”. Substance use at the time of the assault and injury were measured dichotomously (1=no; 2=yes). Other assault-related characteristics used as control variables were time elapsed since the assault, measured with 5 ordinal categories ranging from less than one month to over 5 years, and time elapsed before reporting (for victims who reported their assault), which was measured dichotomously (1=less than 24 hours; 2=over 24 hours).

D. **Interview Protocol**

The qualitative portion of the present study included semi-structured interviews where victims shared their story with the researcher. Conducting semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to maintain some control in how the interview was conducted, but with some freedom in the flow of the interaction (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). The interviews were semi-structured because the researcher was interested in answers to specific questions, but listened to any experiences that participants shared. Participants were asked to provide their post-assault experiences in an open-ended manner, but they were also asked follow-up and clarifying questions. Specifically, they were asked to share their post-assault experience in the context of reporting and participating in the investigation. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, other information about victims’ experiences were captured as well (e.g., informal disclosure, other formal help-seeking, legal experiences, interactions with the perpetrator, coping, etc.) but were beyond the scope of analyses in the present study.

The researcher asked participants to talk about the actual assault in as much or as little detail as desired. The details of the assault were not necessary for the study, as the research focus was the experience *after* the assault when police were contacted or when the decision to not contact the police was made. Participants were told at the start of the interview they could discuss their assault experience if they wanted to provide context to the rest of their story. This also addresses the victimization experience from the very beginning so that participants are not wondering if the next question would be about the assault, and so the participant's discussion could move forward temporally.

Participants were asked about their reporting and investigation experiences. Qualitative questions about victims' reporting and investigation experience were complementary to the quantitative questions victims answered in the survey, offering greater depth to the quantitative responses. First, participants were asked about their initial contact with a responding officer and/or detective, how this first meeting made them feel, and what specific (positive or negative) aspects of the interaction they remember. Participants were asked similar questions about any subsequent interactions with detectives during the reporting process and to give an overall "take away" evaluation of their reporting experience (e.g., going back in time and knowing what this experience is like, would you report again?). To understand participants' recovery, the interviewer asked how this experience has affected them (e.g., emotionally, financially, physically, etc.) and how reporting this experience affected their recovery. After the participant finished discussing his/her reporting experience, the interviewer asked questions about his/her feelings toward the police, his/her feelings toward participating in subsequent stages of the legal process, and willingness to report future crimes and sexual assault revictimization (or advise others to report sexual assault experiences). Participants were asked if their feelings were in any

way influenced by the outcome of their case or their original expectations for the reporting experience. Interviews concluded with the interviewer asking the participant if he/she has anything else to share about the reporting experience and any specific recommendations he/she may have about how police could better respond to victims who report.

Interview participants who did not report their assault to the police were asked to explain why they decided not to report. Participants who did not report were also asked questions about their views of the police, about any experiences they may have had with police officers in the past, and their expectations for their experience if they had reported this crime. Participants were asked about their willingness to report similar crimes in the future. Like participants who reported, those who did not report were also asked to discuss how their experience affected them (e.g., emotionally, financially, physically, etc.) and asked to describe any recommendations they may have for improving the police response to victims who do report.

## E. Analysis

### 1. Quantitative analysis

#### a. Missing data assessments

Descriptive statistics were generated to assess the amount of missing data for the variables of interest. Assessments of missing data found up to 30% of missing cases for demographic variables due to item non-response. A considerable number of participants did not disclose their demographic information: gender (27% missing), race (28% missing), sexual orientation (28% missing), income (28% missing) and age (22% missing). Item non-response for demographic variables may be due to the sensitive nature of the study or placement of these questions at the end of the survey (Sarraf & Tukibayeva, 2014; Tourangeau, Conrad, & Couper, 2013; see Limitations section). Imputation procedures were not used for demographic variables

because these items were not missing at random. Deleting cases with missing demographic variables listwise or pairwise was not advisable, as deleting cases would significantly reduce the (already small) sample size. Issues of missing data were found only for demographic variables, particularly for participants who did not report to the police. Thus, missing demographic data were not an issue for the subsample of participants who reported to the police and interacted with a detective, which was the primary focus of the quantitative analysis. Dependent and independent variables had fewer than 5% of cases missing and were missing completely at random (MCAR). As such, no imputation procedures were used in the data set.

**b. Preliminary bivariate analyses**

Preliminary bivariate analyses were conducted to explore associations between the control variables and dependent variables of interest (see Measures section) to empirically determine which control variables to include in the multivariate analyses and to assess any potential multicollinearity issues. First, chi-square tests of independence were conducted to test for any significant associations between control variables (i.e., assault characteristics and demographics) and the dependent variables. As each of these variables were measured nominally or ordinally, chi-square was the appropriate analysis technique (Norman & Streiner, 2003). Each control variable was included in a chi-square test against each dependent variable. Variables not significant at the  $p < .05$  level in the chi-square analysis were removed from the multivariate models if they did not have a strong theoretical justification for being included in the multivariate models. Eliminating these non-significant variables from the multivariate models also served to conserve the sample size of victims who reported to the police and interacted with a detective – the subsample of most of this study’s hypotheses. Second, nonparametric (Spearman’s Rank Correlation) correlations were conducted to assess any potential issues of

multicollinearity among the variables found significant in the chi-square analyses that tested for inclusion in the multivariate analyses. Spearman's correlation was used because it is a nonparametric correlation that assesses the difference in the ranks of each pair, and therefore is appropriate for ordinal variables, as used in this study (Norman & Streiner, 2003). The correlation value for considering variables multicollinear was ( $r = .70$ ), as stated by Tabachnick and colleagues (2001). No such multicollinearity issues were found.

c. **Testing for differences in victim reporting group**

Chi-square tests were used to examine demographic differences between victims who did not report to the police, victims who reported to the police, and victims who reported to the police and interacted with a detective (Hypotheses 1 – 4). Specifically, four chi-square tests were used to examine reporting differences based on the age, race, gender identity, and sexual orientation of victims. Measures of the strength of the associations between variables were included, selected based on the measurement of the variables in each chi-square test. For example, Phi and Cramer's V was used to measure the strength of the association between sexual orientation and reporting group, as these variables were nominal.

d. **Testing relationships between judgments of procedural justice and outcome variables**

Variables significant in the bivariate analyses were included in a series of multiple regression equations (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2013) to evaluate the ability of the independent variable (i.e., judgments of procedural justice scale) to predict the outcome variables (i.e., satisfaction with the detective, cooperation with the investigation, views of the police, willingness to report future crimes, and recovery). Prior to conducting regression analyses, several initial steps were taken.

First, the sample size for the present study was assessed. The entire sample included 414 sexual assault victims, though most of the analyses (Hypotheses 5 – 9) used a subsample of victims who reported to the police and interacted with a detective ( $n = 93$ ). Hypotheses 1 – 4 were tested using the full sample, so sample size was not an issue for the chi-square analyses. Given the small sample size used in the regression models to test Hypotheses 5 – 9 (i.e., victims who reported to police and interacted with a detective), tests of power were conducted. G\*Power statistical power analysis software was used to run a priori tests to determine the minimum sample size necessary for adequate statistical power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009; Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). The power analysis determined that the minimum sample size for multiple linear regression analysis was 74 participants for the maximum number of possible control (16) and predictor (1) variables in a given regression equation, with a large effect size ( $f^2 = .30$ ) and 80% power, at  $\alpha = .05$ . The sample size in the present study exceeded this minimum, allowing for 6 cases per predictor, meeting the minimum appropriate sample size to yield statistical power (Tabachnick et al., 2001). Thus, for the present study, sample size used in the regression analyses ( $n = 93$ ) was not an issue. Next, candidate variables were examined to test the assumptions of linear regression (i.e., linearity, statistical independence, homoscedasticity, and normality). For example, plots of residuals versus predicted values of the predictor variable and each outcome variable were used to test the linearity and additivity of variables. Following assessments of missing data (see Missing Data section above), chi-square tests were used to assess the relationship between control variables and dependent variables (see Preliminary Bivariate Analyses section above). Next, nonparametric correlations among the variables that were significant in the chi-square tests were used as a preliminary test for multicollinearity, where no such issues were identified.

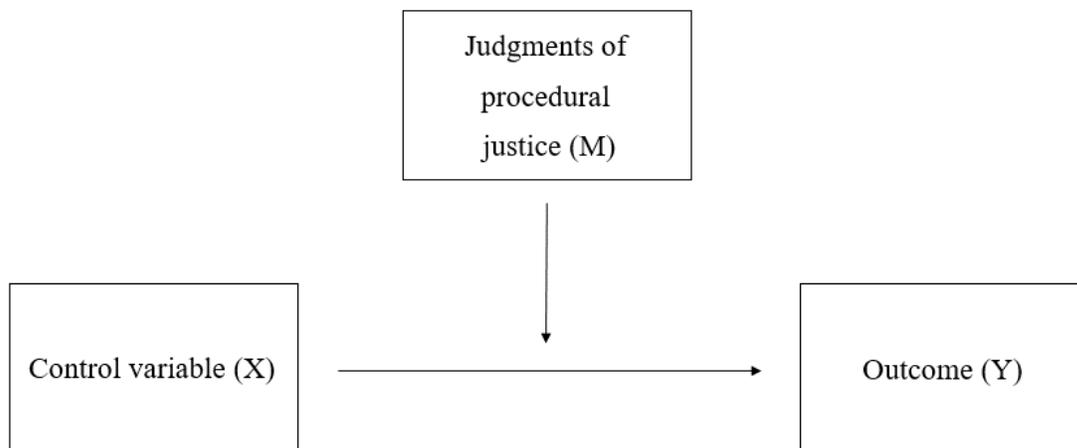
Following these preliminary steps, five regression models were conducted to test the hypotheses found in Research Questions 3 – 7 (Hypotheses 5 – 9) using the independent variable of victim judgments of procedural justice and the several identified outcome variables (i.e., satisfaction with the detective, investigation cooperation, views of the police, willingness to report future crimes, and recovery; see Measures section). As argued by Norman (2010), Likert scale items can be used in parametric analyses without concern of generating “incorrect” results. Thus, because most of the control variables were nominal and the outcome variables were treated as continuous variables, multiple regression was a fine-suited analytic technique for this study. Control variables that were significantly related to the outcome variables in bivariate analyses were included in the regression models. Inclusion of only control variables significantly related to the dependent variables in the bivariate analysis served to protect the sample size and reduce the potential for type two error (Norman & Streiner, 2003). Control variables were entered separately as a first step in the regression model to measure the variance in the dependent variable specifically accounted for by victim judgments of procedural justice (i.e., stepwise regression; see Norman & Streiner, 2003). Thus, control variables were entered in step one and the independent variable (i.e., judgments of procedural justice) was entered in step two of the regression models. Though initial tests revealed no multicollinearity concerns, variance inflation factors (VIFs) were checked for each regression model, and indicated no issues (i.e., no VIFs greater than 5; O’Brien, 2007).

e. **Testing for moderating effects**

Relations between variables can often be complex, and may be informed by the addition of a third variable in the research design. Testing for moderating variables can provide a more functional understanding of the relationships between variables (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

Following regression analyses (Hypotheses 5 – 9), the present study explored potential moderating effects between significant control variables, judgments of procedural justice, and the outcome variables. Figure 2 shows a sample moderation model for the present study. Moderation testing was conducted based on patterns that appeared in the regression analyses (Warner, 2013). Control variables significantly associated with the outcome variable in the regression model were tested for moderating effects with the significant independent variable. An interaction term was created from the independent and significant control variable. Moderation effects were tested using regression analyses, where all control variables (step 1), the independent variable (step 1), and the interaction term (step 2) were entered into a hierarchical regression model (Fairchild & MacKinnon, 2009). Tests for moderation are discussed in greater detail in the results section, where applicable.

Figure 2. Moderation model for present study.



## 2. Qualitative analysis

A qualitative approach is an appropriate method for obtaining a context-rich description of how the interactions between the victim and detective relate to several outcomes. While the focus of the present study was to explore victims' reporting and investigation experiences, interviews covered victims' overall post-assault experience including support received from informal sources and various formal support sources. For the focus of the present study, interviews covered several domains in great detail: 1) the decision to report; 2) accounts of the interactions between the victim and the responding officers and detectives who worked on his/her case; 3) how specific aspects of interactions with detective made the victim feel; 3) how victims' interactions with the police influence their decision to cooperate with the detective, participate in the investigation, and report future crimes (or advise others to report); 4) how the victims' reporting experiences relate to their recovery, trust in police, and confidence in police; and 5) recommendations from victims on how to improve the police response to victims who report.

The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for discussion of victims' experiences that may not have been anticipated or captured through quantitative methods. For example, a quantitative question may state, "the officer stated that he/she believed me", where the response options are in *agree to disagree* format. In qualitative research, the victim can describe what the officer explicitly said or did to illustrate disbelief and how this made the victim feel, and how this may have influenced his or her subsequent behavior. As another example, the researcher asked interview participants for recommendations they would make to the police department to improve their response to victims who report – something that survey participants were not asked. Thus, the qualitative component served as a complement to the quantitative

method and provided greater depth through specific examples and accounts that were unavailable through quantitative methods alone. This study included two forms of qualitative data collection: open-ended survey responses and qualitative interviews. These two forms of data were analyzed separately and through different methods, as discussed below.

a. **Open-ended survey question coding and analysis**

Two open-ended questions from the survey were used in the present study. The first was a follow-up question for participants who did not report their assault to the police (“could you please tell us why you decided to *not* report to the police?”). The responses to this question were analyzed for content related to the decision to not report with regard to views of the police (Research Question 1), providing an unprompted examination of whether views of the police play a role in victims’ reporting decisions. The second open-ended survey question was a concluding question that asked participants who reported to the police and interacted with a detective to provide any additional information about their experience during the investigation that was not captured in the survey (“please tell us anything else you’d like to tell us about your interaction with the detective”). This question provided further insight into the quality of police-victim interactions and victims’ perceptions of these interactions. As this question was rather broad, the responses to this question were coded for patterns as they apply to the research questions of the present study. In analysis of these questions, the researcher read through participant responses and created codes for text relevant to the research questions. Codes for these two questions were derived from the data text. This approach can be described as conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The open-ended component to these two quantitative questions provided participants the opportunity to provide greater explanation for their quantitative responses and any additional information they deemed important.

Additionally, open-ended questions allowed victims unable to participate in interviews the opportunity to tell more of their story through the survey.

Qualitative responses to the follow-up questions from the quantitative data were extracted and coded. Open coding was used for open-ended follow-up questions because the responses were short in length (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Additionally, open-coding allowed for the inductive creation of categories through identification of patterns to develop a working coding scheme (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Open-ended responses were coded via highlighting and notes of patterns on a print-out of the SPSS output. Keeping the open-ended responses in SPSS software allowed the qualitative responses to be linked to the other survey responses by that participant (e.g., demographic information) for analysis purposes while retaining the actual quotes<sup>4</sup>. The following section details the focused coding process that was used in analysis of the interview data.

**b. Interview coding and analysis**

The triangulation method of this research involved the concurrent collection of survey and interview data, whereby both methods were used to generate a thorough response to the research questions. As such, qualitative interviews were analyzed to identify patterns and themes relevant to the aims of this study and research questions. This section discusses the transcription, codebook development, and coding/analysis processes used in this study.

Audio recordings of all interviews were transcribed using transcription software (i.e., Express Scribe). To ensure trustworthiness of the data, the researcher (Lorenz) checked transcriptions against the recordings of the interviews and corrected the transcriptions as needed. Audio recordings of the interviews were deleted after the interviews were transcribed and

---

<sup>4</sup> open-ended survey responses can be linked to the survey data, but interview data cannot; for further discussion, see the Limitations section.

checked for accuracy. The final transcripts for each interview were loaded into Atlas.ti Version 7 qualitative analysis software for coding and analysis. Telephone interviews were not audio-recorded. In lieu of a transcript, the researcher wrote detailed and de-identified notes that were loaded into Atlas.ti and coded as transcripts.

The initial codebook development began during transcription where the researcher notated patterns occurring across interviews (Ezzy, 2002). This iterative process whereby code development begins during transcription has also been referred to as “first impression codes”. Next, the researcher re-read the transcripts to identify themes and patterns in participants’ interviews. This is also known as initial coding, which is the first step in focused coding (Charmaz, 2006). From this, a codebook draft was developed. Codes were descriptive in nature and summarized the primary topic of the excerpt (Saldana, 2009). The codebook draft was shared with the researcher’s dissertation advisor and a fellow graduate student skilled in qualitative research for feedback. Sample interviews were coded by the researcher to test how the codes applied to the interview content. The codebook used to code the 28 interviews in this study included a total of 97 individual codes (e.g., negative detective interaction), housed within broader headings or “families” (e.g., interactions with detectives). For a full listing of codes, see Table XVII, Appendix C.

Coding was completed through a focused coding method (Charmaz, 2006) with the specific research questions in mind. Codes were selected that best represented what was happening in the transcript. Focused coding was selected for this study because the goal of this research was description and exploration of predetermined research questions, rather than the emergence of theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher read the transcripts line-by-line, though not every line of the interview was paired with a code; only parts of the transcript

relevant to the present study were coded. Simultaneous coding (i.e., double coding) took place, whereby two or more codes were used to code a single excerpt of the transcript when relevant (Saldana, 2009). During coding, memos were also created within the analysis software to capture relevant or unanticipated themes and highlight relationships in the data (Charmaz, 2006). Writing memos during the coding process that are embedded within the coded data allowed the researcher to pay attention to the qualities and characteristics of the relationship between victims and detectives during the coding process (Patterson, 2011).

Interview analysis involved searching for patterns across interviews and within individual codes. The method for interview analysis was an interpretive process to identify patterns in the text that relate to the research questions of this study. This study specifically analyzed data for patterns that would explain victims' decision making in reporting to police, reporting victims' experiences with the responding officer(s) and detective(s) who worked on their case, and how their feelings about their interactions with the detective(s) influence their future reporting behavior, cooperation during the investigation, recovery, and views of the police. Patterns were identified when more than one participant described an aspect of their interaction with the detective, feeling a particular way as a result of that, and responding in a similar way (i.e., feeling judged and subsequently not wanting to disclose any additional information to the detective). While some approaches to qualitative analysis quantify the interviews by counting codes to be used for statistical analysis, the present study utilized a somewhat strict qualitative approach where little emphasis was given to quantification. Rather, the method for analysis focused on the identification and interpretation of descriptive data. Simple counts were provided to show how many participants illustrated a pattern. The goals of the interview analysis in this study were to let victims describe their reporting experience in their own words and to use the

information they provided to more fully understand how perceptions of detective interactions affect victims' overall experience.

Coding qualitative data is a process whereby “all coding is a judgment call” since researchers bring “subjectivities, personalities, predispositions, and quirks to the process” (Sipe & Ghiso, 2004, pp. 482-483). Such biases and predispositions should be acknowledged and understood in how they may influence the interpretation of data. Researchers recommend collaboration and teamwork in coding to reach a shared interpretation and understanding of the data (Guest & MacQueen, 2007). In the present study, teamwork was not possible, as coding and analysis was completed by a sole researcher. A random sample of five interviews were coded by an independent second coder to enhance the trustworthiness of the data (i.e., ensure that interpretations does not simply reflect the researcher's own perspectives; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and determine levels of interrater agreement between the second coder's and the researcher's interpretations of the data (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013). Intercoder Reliability (ICR) was assessed by calculating the agreement in use of the 10 most commonly used codes across all 28 transcripts (Burla et al., 2008). In Table II, columns 3 and 4 (labeled: Coder 1; Coder 2) show the frequency each code was applied in the 5 sample interviews. Column 5 (labeled: Agreement) shows the percentage of agreement in the use of these codes applied to a similar section of interview text. Discrepancies were addressed through discussion of code selection and application with the second coder to reach full consensus. Following discussion, appropriate changes were made to the coded text.

**TABLE II**  
**CODING FREQUENCY AND AGREEMENT RATE <sup>a</sup>**

Code	Code Description	Coder 1	Coder 2	Agreement (%)
11-1	Recommendations to improve police response	54	43	80
3-1	Negative interactions with the detective	31	25	81
9-6	Assessment of recovery related to reporting	27	4	15
8-5	Informal support	23	31	74
2-1	Negative interactions with responding officer	13	9	69
3-2	Positive interactions with the detective	33	32	97
3-5	Feelings about the detective interaction	29	29	100
1-7	Thoughts on future reporting	13	14	93
1-1	Active reporting	14	13	93
9-2	Engaging in self-blame	13	12	92

<sup>a</sup> Selected transcripts (N=5)

## V. RESULTS

### A. Descriptive Statistics of Survey Participants

The survey sample in the present study included 414 sexual assault victims. Most participants (n = 224; 55%) reported that they were recruited for this study through the community-based methods (i.e., posted flyers and social media advertisements), followed by victim advocacy agencies (n = 162; 40%), and the local police department (n = 18; 5%). The total sample was primarily female gender-identified (n = 273; 91%), followed by male identified participants (n = 16; 5%), and non-gender binary identified individuals (n = 11; 4%). Most participants were White (n = 198; 66%), followed by African American (n = 33; 11%), Hispanic (n = 31; 10%), Biracial or Multi-racial (n = 19; 6%), Asian (n = 13; 4%), and Native American (n = 1; .2%). The age of participants ranged from 18-74 years. The most common age range was 25-35 (n = 167; 52%), followed by 18-24 (n = 84; 26%), and 36-49 (n = 52; 16%). Almost all participants in this sample spoke English as their primary language (n = 292); only 7 participants indicated they speak a non-English primary language. The majority of participants defined their sexual orientation as straight (n = 188; 63%), followed by gay/lesbian (n = 16; 5%), bisexual (n = 63; 21%), and other (e.g., from text responses: pansexual, asexual, queer; n = 31; 10%). Most participants had attended some college or higher (n = 262; 88%). Participants reported their marital status as single (n = 91; 53%), cohabitating/living with someone (n = 27; 16%), or married (n = 44; 25%). Most participants reported a household income of less than \$50,000 (n = 171; 58%), followed by an income of \$50,001 to \$100,000 (n = 83; 28%), and only 14% (n = 42) reported earning over \$100,000. About 15% (n = 43) of participants reported in the survey that they had been arrested before and 29% (n = 87) reported that they have formerly been involved in the legal system as a crime victim.

Participants in the survey sample described the characteristics of the sexual assault. Most commonly, participants indicated that their assault occurred over five years ago ( $n = 166$ ; 55%), followed by between one and five years ago ( $n = 98$ ; 32%), and less than one year ago ( $n = 39$ ; 13%). Most participants were assaulted by a family member ( $n = 137$ ; 33%), followed by an acquaintance ( $n = 65$ ; 16%), a stranger ( $n = 58$ ; 14%), a friend ( $n = 36$ ; 9%), a short-term romantic partner ( $n = 32$ ; 8%), a long-term romantic partner ( $n = 22$ ; 5%), an acquaintance met online ( $n = 17$ ; 4%), a former spouse ( $n = 9$ ; 2%), and current spouse ( $n = 1$ ; .2%). Thirty-seven participants (9%) indicated their relationship to the perpetrator as “other”, which included individuals such as coworkers and teachers. Almost half of participants were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the assault ( $n = 122$ ; 41%). Almost half were injured as a result of the assault ( $n = 121$ ; 40%). Eight participants indicated that their assaults were related to sex work.

Of the 414 total participants, 214 did not report to the police (52%), 104 reported to the police but did not interact with a detective (25%), and 93 reported to the police and interacted with a detective (23%). Assault characteristics for the participants within these three groups are presented in Table III below. Participants who reported most commonly contacted the police within one day of the assault ( $n = 65$ ; 45%) and 39% waited longer than three days ( $n = 56$ ; 39%). Victims who reported to the police and interacted with a detective tended to be dissatisfied with the interaction(s) they had with the detective ( $M = 2.16$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ , Range 1 – 4) and were less willing to cooperate with the investigation ( $M = 2.56$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ , Range 1 – 4). Victims who interacted with a detective indicated that they were somewhat likely to report future crimes to the police ( $M = 2.70$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ , Range 1 – 4) and low in their trust and confidence in the police ( $M$

= 2.31, SD = 1.00, Range 1 – 4). Victims in this subsample felt somewhat recovered from the assault (M = 2.47, SD = .88, Range 1 – 4).

**TABLE III****ASSAULT CHARACTERISTICS BY REPORTING GROUP**

	Did not report (n=214)	Reported but did not interact with a detective (n=104)	Reported and interacted with a detective (n=93)
<b>Time elapsed since the assault</b>			
Less than one month	1 (.5%)	1 (3%)	4 (4%)
Between 1 and 6 months	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	6 (7%)
Between 6 and 12 months	7 (4%)	2 (5%)	13 (15%)
Between 1 and 5 years	58 (33%)	19 (49%)	21 (24%)
Over 5 years	105 (59.5%)	17 (43%)	44 (50%)
<b>Relationship to perpetrator</b>			
Stranger	19 (9%)	11 (11%)	28 (30%)
Current or former spouse	7 (3%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)
Romantic partner	36 (18%)	7 (7%)	11 (12%)
Acquaintance	52 (24%)	5 (5%)	25 (27%)
Friend	28 (13%)	3 (3%)	5 (5%)
Family member	54 (25%)	68 (65%)	12 (13%)
Other	18 (8%)	8 (7%)	11 (12%)
<b>Substance use at time of the assault</b>			
Not intoxicated	102 (58%)	27 (71%)	50 (57%)
Under influence of drugs/alcohol	73 (42%)	11 (29%)	38 (43%)
<b>Assault injury</b>			
Not injured	109 (62%)	25 (64%)	47 (53%)
Injured	66 (38%)	14 (36%)	41 (47%)
<b>Sex work-related assault</b>			
Not sex work-related	169 (97%)	39 (100%)	86 (98%)
Sex work-related	6 (3%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
<b>Previous CJ experience as crime victim</b>			
No	117 (69%)	28 (72%)	65 (74%)
Yes	53 (31%)	11 (28%)	23 (26%)
<b>Been arrested before</b>			
No	138 (81%)	35 (92%)	81 (92%)
Yes	33 (19%)	3 (8%)	7 (8%)

## **B. Descriptive Statistics of Interview Participants**

The qualitative sample for this study consisted of 28 interview participants. Interviewees also participated in the survey portion of the study. Due to IRB restrictions, interview and survey responses were unable to be linked (see Limitations section). Demographic and assault characteristics were collected for interview participants at the time of the interview based on the interviewer observations and/or the interviewee's statements made during the interview. The interview sample was overwhelmingly female, with only two male participants. Fifteen interview participants (54%) were between the ages of 18 and 30, four participants (14%) were between the ages of 30 and 40, and seven (25%) were over the age of 40. The ages of two participants were unknown. Nineteen participants were White (68%), five were African American (18%), and one participant was Hispanic/Latina. The race/ethnicity of three participants was unknown.

Of the 28 total interviewees, 24 reported to the police (86%). Of participants who reported to the police, 21 interacted with a detective. Interview participants who reported to the police interacted with 1 to 4 responding officers during the reporting of their assault ( $M = 1.71$ ; Mode = 2). Interview participants who had the opportunity to interact with a detective met with 1 to 3 different detectives during the investigation of their case ( $M = 1.71$ ; Mode = 1). Thirteen interview participants (46%) indicated that they had experienced multiple sexual victimizations. Of the assaults participants discussed during the interview, fourteen (50%) were perpetrated by an acquaintance, six (21%) were perpetrated by a stranger, five (18%) by a romantic partner, two (7%) were perpetrated by a coworker, and one perpetrated by a family member (3%). Eight (28%) of the participants discussed experiences of child sexual assault (CSA). Six participants discussed an adult sexual assault experience in addition to their CSA experience. The assaults

participants focused on discussing during the interview took place as recently as less than one year ago, to up to 40 years ago.

### C. Preliminary Bivariate Results

Chi-Square tests were conducted to test for significant associations between control variables and dependent variables (see Quantitative Analysis section). Being arrested in the past  $\chi^2(3, N = 88) = 8.46, p < .05$  and having been previously involved in the criminal justice system as a crime victim  $\chi^2(3, N = 88) = 7.78, p < .05$  were both significantly related to satisfaction with their detective interaction(s). No control variables were significantly associated with willingness to participate in the investigation. For views of the police, significant associations were found for victim gender identity  $\chi^2(3, N = 87) = 12.79, p < .05$ , victim physical injury  $\chi^2(3, N = 87) = 8.15, p < .05$ , time elapsed since the assault  $\chi^2(12, N = 87) = 20.70, p < .05$ , and age of the detective  $\chi^2(6, N = 86) = 19.00, p < .05$ . Victim willingness to report to police in the future was associated with victim physical injury  $\chi^2(3, N = 88) = 9.39, p < .05$ . The victim's assessment of recovery was associated with education level  $\chi^2(6, N = 88) = 14.49, p < .05$  and race  $\chi^2(3, N = 87) = 10.71, p < .05$ . Variables not significantly associated with the dependent variables ( $p < .05$ ) were eliminated from multivariate models (for a description of variables included in multivariate models, see Results section). The variables significantly related in each chi-square test did not present any theoretical reasoning to suspect multicollinearity issues. As a precaution, nonparametric correlations were conducted as a preliminary test for multicollinearity. No significant associations between these variables were found ( $p < .10$ ).

## D. **Research Question 1: Reporting to the Police**

### 1. **Qualitative results**

Qualitative data were analyzed to answer Research Question 1: *Do views of the police relate to the decision to report sexual assault to the police?* First, 175 responses to an open-ended survey question by victims who did not report to the police (“*could you please tell us why you decided to not report this assault to the police?*”) were coded and analyzed. Of these 175 open-ended responses, 63 (36%) included sentiments about not reporting to the police for reasons related to negative perceptions of the police and subsequent concerns of how their case would be handled. Second, interviews with victims who reported and did not report were coded and analyzed to examine why victims did not report or were concerned about reporting, with regard to views of the police. Results from both qualitative methods are integrated and presented below.

#### a. **Concerns of police treatment**

Many participants did not report because they were concerned about how they would be treated by the police. Most prominent of these concerns was fear of mistreatment, that victims felt would be fueled by disbelief that the assault occurred or victim-blaming attitudes. Three participants shared their concerns about the treatment they thought they would receive if they were to report to the police:

“I did not want to endure victim blaming and the insinuation that I was lying.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)<sup>5</sup>

“I didn’t think I would be treated with dignity.” – Non-reporter survey participant (G, Wh, 25-35)

“I was worried I wouldn’t be believed.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Hisp, 25-35)

---

<sup>5</sup> (Gender identity, Race, Age). Gender identity: F = Female, M = Male, G = Genderqueer, O = Other; Race/Ethnicity: Wh = White, AA = African American, Hisp = Hispanic, AS = Asian, NA = Native American, Multi = Biracial or Multiracial, O = Other; Age: age range.

Participants specifically feared mistreatment due to some aspect of their assault or other individual characteristics. This often led to victims engaging in a form of “pre-reporting assessment” where they considered a number of different factors including the situation in which the assault occurred (e.g., alcohol involvement, relationship to perpetrator), their personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race, sexual orientation, occupation), and the amount of evidence they could provide to the police (e.g., rape kit, injury). Victims considered these factors in the context of how they would be treated by police, and decided not to report. For example, several participants considered how they would be perceived and treated because they were intoxicated at the time of the assault. Quotes from five different participants exemplify the sentiments shared by many victims of substance-related assault:

“I was heavily intoxicated and I have had many sexual partners which were two factors I knew would impact the handling of my case.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 18-24)

“Nobody is going to believe that after you go to a concert and you’re drinking and smoking weed that I have a right to my body anymore.” – Non-reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“It was an alcohol-related incident. It wasn’t violent. I felt like, oh well, he didn’t really mean to rape me, he just loved me a little too much.” – Reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I felt like it was my fault because I was like blackout drunk walking down the street pretty much, and I figured that’s what they were going to say. That’s what the doctors and nurses all said.” – Reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I don’t know what I could do at this point because I don’t think there was any evidence from the rape kit.” – Reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

As shown from the quotes above, victims considered the circumstances of the assault and the evidence they can provide when deciding to report to the police. For example, in the last quote above, the victim felt that the police would be unwilling to help her because – due to her intoxication at the time of the assault – she was unable to remember much, and showered after

the assault, leaving little evidence for her to provide to the police and felt they would not believe her due to her intoxication. In the second quote above, the participant spoke about how she felt she would be blamed or not believed because she was assaulted while intoxicated at a music festival. Her statement reflected larger concerns of victim blaming and the societal oppression of women, where the rights and safety of women are not taken seriously. One victim discussed the disconnect she felt between the circumstances of the assault and how the police reacted:

“I’m sitting here going this is insane because these [perpetrators] are complete strangers, normally it is acquaintance rapes. The fact that three men drove me down the street and pulled me in their car is extremely public risk, you know. You’d think that as a police officer you’d be all over that.” – Reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The victim in the quote above spoke to her expectations of the police handling of the assault that was violent and stranger perpetrated, thus acknowledging biases in how police treat particular cases. Several participants talked about not reporting because of who the perpetrator was as an individual, and in relation to him/herself. Victims discussed the added complexity of assaults that were perpetrated by a spouse, noting that victims of domestic violence assaults are not taken seriously. Other victims discussed their inability to report because the perpetrator was related to a police officer or a police officer themselves. Victims also considered how the perpetrator would be treated by the police or criminal justice system, such as perpetrators who were in the U.S. illegally or perpetrators who were non-White. The quotes below are sentiments shared by four different participants:

“I did not think I would be believed. And if I was, I did not think my perpetrator would be treated fairly because he is a black man.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 18-24)

“I didn’t want to send any more men of color to prison.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, NA, 25-35)

“The history and relationship between people of color and cops are extremely disturbing. While NOTHING excuses someone perpetrating, I also refuse to be actively complicit in state-sanctioned violence against black and non-White bodies.” – Non-reporter survey participant (G, Wh, 25-35)

“I had initially been nervous about taking a police report and filing a police report. I had been waffling on do I really want this to be a police report? Mostly because of the immigration status thing [of the perpetrator]. I felt like it’s not fair because even if the police go and talk to him they realize he is undocumented, he might just get deported on a technicality which I don’t feel like is fair.” – Reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The quotes above suggest that victims felt the perpetrator deserved punishment for committing the crime, but felt the biased treatment they would receive by the police and legal system for being a minority was not fair. This suggests an underlying distrust of the system, interestingly regarding the mishandling of cases for the victim as well as the perpetrator. These quotes also show that victims are cognizant of the biases in the legal system and police-community relations, and consider this in their decision making. Furthermore, the fact that the victims in the quotes above were assaulted by non-intimate persons (e.g., co-worker, stranger), but they were still reluctant to send their perpetrators into a system they perceive as bias, underscores the magnitude to which these individuals distrust police handling of sexual assault and minority persons.

Victims also considered their personal characteristics and how they would be treated in spite of these attributes. For example, two victims discussed not reporting because they were a sex worker at the time and feared being mistreated or penalized. Several younger victims assumed the police would not take them seriously due to their age at the time of the assault, as suggested by the quotes from two participants:

“I was quite young and very intimidated by the police.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 18-24)

“I was young (17) and believed that if I reported it, I would not be taken seriously and that potentially I would get in trouble myself.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)

The quotes above reflect statements made by a handful of participants who were young at the time of their assault, and are startling because they reflect poor police-community relations that

contribute to fear of reporting. Another victim discussed her fear of mistreatment – and fear of the police – because of the intersection of their personal characteristics:

“I’m an autistic, disabled, transgender person. I have never reported to police because I’m terrified of them. Although I’ve never been assaulted by police, I know that because of the ways I’m marginalized, it’s quite likely that I would be harmed, assaulted, sexually assaulted, killed, or incarcerated by police simply by reporting – statistically speaking.” – Non-reporter survey participant (G, Wh, 25-35)

When deciding to report, other victims thought about their inability to present substantive evidence to the police. For those without solid evidence that the assault occurred, they were reluctant to report. The quotes below are sentiments shared by five different victims, but reflect the views of many participants in this sample.

“I knew it wouldn’t be taken seriously, I had no obvious physical injuries.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)

“It’s so hard to have proof. So, when I was older and I got assaulted I was like what is my proof? I went to a concert with these guys, I was hanging out with these guys all day, we were drinking all night, I let him in the tent with me. Nobody’s ever going to give two shits about that. [...] So, I think I just distrusted that anything would be done and thought it wasn’t worth the extra emotional turmoil.” – Non-reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I had no faith that they would do anything for me because it had been a couple weeks since it happened.” – Non-reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I think I would have felt like I had nothing really to bring to them. I knew I had been drugged but I didn’t know if I would be able to convince them [the police] of that. It looked pretty consensual from an outsider’s view. [...] We had been to a pizza place together before that so I just felt like it wasn’t a very convincing case.” – Reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I didn’t think the police would believe me because I didn’t go to the hospital and have a rape kit done.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 36-49)

The quotes above highlight the emphasis placed on evidence in sexual assault cases, revealing that victims consider this in their decision to report. Similarly, these quotes further demonstrate that victims consider the circumstances of the assault and rape myths in their decision-making. For example, victims considered how their assaults did not align with the societal notions of

“real” rape: violent assaults that result in injury (quote 1), spending consensual time with the perpetrator (quotes 2 and 4), delaying the assault (quote 3), and not going to the hospital for a medical examination (quote 5). Though, this does not necessarily reflect victims’ adherence to rape myths, but victims’ awareness of police officers’ adherence to rape myths, that made them concerned about how they would be treated if they were to report. One participant, who eventually filed a police report, reflected on her experience speaking with her therapist about reporting with regard to the evidence present and potential mistreatment:

“I brought it up to her [therapist] within my first session or two wanting to potentially press charges, she was pretty horrified. And that’s a strong word but she was. She was like ‘that seems like something that would retraumatize you. I don’t know why you’d want to do that, it’s impossible to prosecute them.’ Which, at first really pissed me off but the more I think about it, it is true because it would be really really hard to do it. I had no physical evidence. None. So, at that point I was like okay maybe I’m not going to do that.” – Reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The participant in the above quote ultimately ended up finding the identity of the (acquaintance) perpetrator and reporting to the police, contrary to the recommendation of her therapist.

However, no investigation occurred. She discussed in her interview how this was not surprising to her, as she had no evidence to present besides the name of the perpetrator.

**b. Previous police experiences**

Many victims considered the treatment they would receive from the police within the context of other factors including the circumstances of the assault, their personal attributes, or the evidence they could present to the police. The consideration of these factors appeared driven by an underlying concern or skepticism about being mistreated by the police – including (but not limited to) blame, stigma, judgment, and not being taken seriously. These underlying concerns may be indicative of unfavorable views toward police. While this was the driving force in the reporting decision for many victims, a considerable number of participants discussed previous

negative experiences or vicarious negative experiences with the police in their reporting decision-making. This is exemplified in the quotes below made by three different participants:

“When I went through the campus judicial system at my college I was victim blamed and retraumatized intensely. After how awful it was with my college, I couldn’t handle the likelihood that I would be harassed, blamed, and not believed by the police” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 18-24)

“We hear so many bad things about reporting to the police, how they blame the victim, how even if I report he could still go unpunished, it just didn’t seem worth it.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)

“I have heard horror stories of survivors who report and get questioned and get treated more like the criminal than the actual criminal. It was bad enough that I went through that [the assault].” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)

One victim shared the story of her friend’s negative experience with the reporting process and her experience going through this with her friend. Her friend’s experience led her to not report her own assault when it occurred. This powerful story illustrates the feelings many victims spoke to when deciding to report or not:

“I didn’t report it because of the way rape and sexual assault victims are treated by police, the legal system, the media, and the public. Not long before I was raped one of my friends had taken her rapist to court, where I was a witness for the prosecution, as I had been present at the party we were attending just prior to her assault; I had been with her from the very beginning – I was questioned by the police just hours after the incident and supported her through the trial – and I saw how she had been treated and the kinds of questions they asked her. They basically accused her of bringing it on herself and implied that she deserved what happened to her simply for being a girl at a friend’s party. Her rapist got a suspended sentence because he had an exemplary academic record and was on the football team, and had a football scholarship at stake. He went free. She killed herself. I didn’t want that for me. I felt that being gang raped repeatedly was bad enough without having the disgusting things the police would do to degrade me even more.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)

For the victim in the quote above, her friend’s experience with the police was retraumatizing and led her to commit suicide in the aftermath of the assault. After witnessing her friend endure the legal process, this victim felt that reporting to the police would further her trauma, something that she was unwilling to deal with after having been assaulted. She was not the only participant

to acknowledge the possibility of experiencing secondary victimization by the reporting and investigation process. Other victims talked about a general mistrust in the police and belief that reporting often leads to secondary victimization:

“Police are not trained to be sensitive in the moment toward victims.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, AA, 25-35)

“Talking to the police often leads to being interrogated.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)

“I don’t trust police. I don’t feel safe with them. I don’t trust that they will believe me.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, NA, 25-35)

“I do not trust law enforcement officers. They do not understand what sexual assault does to those who experience it.” – Non-reporter survey participant (G, Wh, 36-49)

“They [the police] are not kind, understanding, educated, or careful. I do not feel supported enough to be able to bring it all [the assault] back up again.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)

“I don’t trust police officers. While I know there are amazing men and women serving, doing their job, and helping victims of any crime, I also know not all officers are like that.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)

The quotes above shared by six different participants reflect a mistrust in police that was common in this sample. While participants acknowledged that not all police officers will treat victims poorly, taking the gamble of having a revictimizing investigation experience was not something many victims were willing to do, and therefore did not report. Some participants intended on reporting, but decided not to report because the officer who first responded to their assault treated them in an upsetting way, resulting in distrust and lack of confidence, as discussed by three different participants:

“I went to the hospital after my assault, four officers arrived at the hospital and were extremely confrontational. I was threatened and sworn at by the officers in question. It was an extremely traumatic experience.” – Non-reporter survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)

“By the time the officers even got there and honestly if they had taken a different approach, I might have been willing to file a report.” – Reporter interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

“Oh yeah, I was going to call the police; I was angry, but when that policeman said [Officer: “looks like you niggers have been playing in the mud”], I got so very humiliated and insulted and got mad with the policeman. I felt just as abused by him as I did by the rapist.”  
– Non-reporter interview participant (F, AA, Over 60)

The final quote above was from a victim who was assaulted in the 1960s, where a racial slur deterred her from reporting. Though this interaction took place a considerable time ago, it still reflects the impact a negative interaction can have on a victims’ willingness to report. The quotes above illustrate the harm that a negative interaction with a first officer can cause, and result in an unwillingness to report, despite the victims’ previous intentions of reporting the assault.

## **2. Summary**

Overall, victims appeared to consider several factors in their decision to report to the police. Through the combination of open-ended survey responses and interviews, it was found that views of the police do influence the decision to report. Many victims discussed other factors in the decision to report not related to the police such as embarrassment, not wanting others to know, and a delayed acknowledgement of the event as assault. However, a considerable amount of responses from victims reflected unfavorable views of the police that were taken into consideration when deciding to report. Of these reasons, many victims feared blame, judgment, or mistreatment by police, and felt nothing would be done or the assault would not be taken seriously. Participants also considered several factors surrounding the assault, the evidence, and their personal characteristics and how police would treat them because of these factors. Many participants discussed previous negative experiences with police themselves or through friends that deterred them from reporting. This shows that victims make informed decisions when it comes to reporting their assault. Some participants even expressed a complete mistrust in the police handling of sexual assault. Fearing negative treatment and lacking confidence in the possibility of a positive reporting experience suggest that these victims have an underlying

unfavorable view of the police, at least in terms of sexual assault crimes. Victims who expressed concerns of mistreatment and expressed negative views of police overwhelmingly ended up not reporting the assault. As a whole, the responses provided by victims evidence the amount of thought behind the decision to report, and suggest that views of the police are related to the decision to report.

E. **Research Question 2: Demographic Differences between Victims of Different Reporting Groups.**

1. **Quantitative results**

Research Question Two asked *what are the demographic differences between victims who do not report, victims who report but do not interact with a detective, and victims who report their assault and interact with a detective?* Chi-Square tests were used to assess the demographic differences among victims who did not report, victims who reported but did not interact with a detective, and victims who reported and interacted with a detective. Specific demographic characteristics included in these tests were: age (H1), race (H2), gender identity (H3), and sexual identity (H4). Results for individual hypotheses are presented below.

a. **Hypothesis 1**

Chi-square analysis tested the hypothesis: older victims will report to the police, and will report and interact with a detective more frequently than younger victims. Table IV presents the results. According to the chi-square test, there are no significant relationships between victims who did not report to the police, victims who reported to the police, and victims who interacted with a detective based on age group,  $\chi^2(8, N = 323) = 7.87, p > .05$ . Thus, for victims in this sample, there were no significant differences in the decision to report based on age. The first hypothesis of a relationship between age and reporting group was not supported.

**TABLE IV**CHI-SQUARE TEST OF VICTIM AGE AND REPORTING GROUP <sup>a b</sup>

	Reporting Group			Total
	Did not report to police	Reported to police but did not interact with a detective	Reported to police and interacted with a detective	
Age 18-24	46 (55%)	17 (20%)	21 (25%)	84
Age 25-35	93 (56%)	24 (14%)	50 (30%)	167
Age 36-49	34 (65%)	6 (12%)	12 (23%)	52
Age 50-65	8 (42%)	2 (11%)	9 (47%)	19
Over 65	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Total	182	49	92	323

<sup>a</sup>  $\chi^2 = 7.87$ ,  $df = 8$ ; \* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$ <sup>b</sup> Numbers in parentheses indicate row percentages.**b. Hypothesis 2**

A second chi-square tested the hypothesis: White victims will report to the police, and will report and interact with a detective more frequently than non-White victims. Results are presented in Table V. No significant relationships were found between not reporting to the police, reporting to the police, and interacting with a detective and the race/ethnicity of the victim,  $\chi^2(12, N = 298) = 6.26$ ,  $p > .05$ . From this sample, no association was found between race and the decision to report, finding no support for the second hypothesis.

**TABLE V****CHI-SQUARE TEST OF VICTIM RACE AND REPORTING GROUP<sup>a b</sup>**

	Reporting Group			Total
	Did not report to police	Reported to police but did not interact with a detective	Reported to police and interacted with a detective	
White	109 (55%)	27 (14%)	62 (31%)	198
African American	23 (70%)	4 (12%)	6 (18%)	33
Hispanic	17 (55%)	4 (13%)	10 (32%)	31
Asian	8 (62%)	2 (15%)	3 (23%)	13
Native American	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1
Biracial/multi-racial	11 (58%)	2 (11%)	6 (31%)	19
Other race/ethnicity	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3
Total	172	39	87	298

<sup>a</sup>  $\chi^2 = 6.26$ ,  $df = 12$ ; \* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$

<sup>b</sup> Numbers in parentheses indicate row percentages.

c. **Hypothesis 3**

A significant difference was found between gender identity and reporting group,  $\chi^2(4, N = 300) = 14.64$ ,  $p = .006$ . Results are presented in Table VI. Most males ( $n=14$ ; 88%) did not report to the police, showing a significant difference compared to the proportion of females (56%) and non-binary gender identified individuals (64%). There was not a significant difference found between the proportion of females and non-binary gender identified individuals who did not report to the police. A significantly larger proportion of non-binary gender identified individuals reported to the police but did not interact with a detective ( $n=4$ ; 36%), compared to males (0%) and females ( $n=35$ ; 13%). Females reported to the police and interacted with a detective at a significantly higher proportion (31%) than males (12%) and non-binary gender identified individuals (0%). The tests of association indicated that there is a weak to moderate association between gender identity and reporting to the police (Cramer's  $V = .156$ ;  $\phi = .221$ ).

The hypothesis, female victims will report to the police, and will report and interact with a detective more frequently than victims of other gender identities, was supported.

**TABLE VI**  
**CHI-SQUARE TEST OF GENDER IDENTITY AND REPORTING GROUP**

	Reporting Group			Total
	Did not report to police	Reported to police but did not interact with a detective	Reported to police and interacted with a detective	
Male-identified	14 (88%)	0 (0%)	2 (12%)	16
Female-identified	152 (56%)	35 (13%)	86 (31%)	273
Other gender identity	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	0 (0%)	11
Total	173	39	88	300

<sup>a</sup>  $\chi^2 = 14.64^{***}$ ,  $df = 4$ ;  $*p < .10$ ,  $**p < .05$ ,  $***p < .01$

<sup>b</sup> Numbers in parentheses indicate row percentages.

**d. Hypothesis 4**

A fourth chi-square analysis tested the hypothesis: heterosexual victims will report to the police, and will report and interact with a detective more frequently than LGBT identifying victims. Results are shown in Table VII. According to the chi-square test, there was a significant difference in the decision to report and interact with a detective among the different sexual orientation groups,  $\chi^2 (6, N = 298) = 22.48$ ,  $p = .001$ . A larger proportion of non-heterosexual (LGBT) victims did not report to the police ( $n = 78$ ; 71%) compared to heterosexual (straight) victims ( $n = 94$ ; 50%). There were no significant differences in the proportion of victims who reported but did not interact with a detective based on sexual orientation. Heterosexual victims reported to the police and interacted with a detective ( $n = 68$ ; 36%) more than non-heterosexual victims ( $n = 19$ ; 17%). The tests of association indicated that there is a moderate to moderately

strong association between sexual orientation and reporting group (Cramer’s V = .194;  $\phi = .275$ ). Results showed that straight victims reported to the police and interacted with a detective more frequently than LGBT victims, supporting Hypothesis 4.

**TABLE VII**  
CHI-SQUARE OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION BY REPORTING GROUP <sup>a b</sup>

	Reporting Group			Total
	Did not report to police	Reported to police but did not interact with a detective	Reported to police and interacted with a detective	
Heterosexual	94 (50%)	26 (14%)	68 (36%)	188
Non-heterosexual (LGBT)	78 (71%)	13 (12%)	19 (17%)	110
Total	172	39	87	298

<sup>a</sup>  $\chi^2 = 22.484^{***}$ , df = 6; \* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$

<sup>b</sup> Numbers in parentheses indicate row percentages.

e. **Summary**

Research Question Two examined demographic differences among victims who did not report to the police, victims who reported to the police but did not interact with a detective, and victims who reported to the police and interacted with a detective. The purpose of this question was to explore differences in reporting based on certain demographic characteristics, and to explore differential case progression (i.e., cases proceeding to investigation by a detective) for victims of different ages, genders, races, and sexual orientations. Hypotheses 1 and 2 explored these differences for age and race, finding no significant differences. Hypotheses 3 and 4 explored these differences for gender identity and sexual orientation. Female victims were more likely to report, and report and interact with a detective than male victims and victims who do

not identify within the male/female gender binary. However, the association between gender identity and reporting group was not strong. Heterosexual (straight) victims were more likely to report, and more likely to report and interact with a detective than victims who identified as non-heterosexual (LGBT). Tests of association indicated that the relationship between sexual orientation and reporting group was moderately strong. Together, these findings suggest differences in the decision to report and differences in cases proceeding to the point of investigation by a detective for victims with certain characteristics (i.e., non-female, non-heterosexual). Findings provide partial support for differential reporting and founding of assaults where the victim's characteristics do not align with the "classic rape" scenario (i.e., straight, female victim).

F. **Research Question 3: Satisfaction with the Reporting and Investigation Process**

Qualitative and quantitative analyses were used to answer Research Question Three: *How do victims' perceptions of their interactions with the detective(s) who worked on their case relate to satisfaction with the reporting and investigation process?* Quantitative analysis of survey responses tested the relationship between victim judgments of procedural justice and satisfaction with the detective interaction (H5). Qualitative interviews and open-ended survey responses of victims who interacted with a detective examined victims' perceptions of their interaction with the detective(s) who worked on their case and their feelings associated with these interactions. Results from both methods are presented below, followed by an integrative summary of the evidence presented in response to the research question.

1. **Quantitative results**

a. **Hypothesis 5**

Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis that victims who perceive their interaction(s) with the detective(s) as more procedurally just will be more satisfied with their detective interactions overall. Following bivariate analyses, control variables that were significantly associated with the dependent variable were included in the regression model (see Preliminary Bivariate Results section). Control variables included in the model were: 1) whether the victim has been arrested before; and 2) whether the victim has previous experience with the legal system as a crime victim (outside of this reporting experience). Results are shown in Table VIII.

The regression model predicting victims' satisfaction with the detective interaction based on judgments of procedural justice was significant,  $F(3, 86) = 102.31, p = .000, R^2 = .781$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .773$ . Judgments of procedural justice explained approximately 77% of the variance in satisfaction with the detective. When victims perceived their interaction(s) with the detective as being procedurally just, they were more likely to be satisfied with the detective overall. The two control variables in this model accounted for only 2% of the variance in satisfaction with the detective. When other variables were held constant, having past experience with the legal system as a crime victim was significantly related to less satisfaction with the detective ( $p = .010$ ). Previously being arrested was not significantly associated with satisfaction with the detective ( $p = .664$ ).

**TABLE VIII****REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE  
DETECTIVE INTERACTION<sup>a</sup>**

	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$
Been arrested before (1=No; 2=Yes)	.55	.46	.12	.98	.22	.02
Previous involvement in legal system as crime victim (1=No; 2=Yes)	-.46	.28	-.17	-.36	.13	-.13**
Judgments of procedural justice during detective interaction(s)	-	-	-	1.00	.05	.86***

<sup>a</sup> \* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$

Previous involvement in the legal system as a crime victim (e.g., participating in an investigation, meeting with a prosecutor, court involvement, etc.) was significantly related to satisfaction with the detective interaction. The prediction of satisfaction with the detective interaction from judgments of procedural justice may be stronger or weaker based on victims' previous legal system involvement. A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using an interaction term of previous legal system involvement and judgments of procedural justice to test for a possible moderation effect. In the first step, three variables were included: arrest history, previous legal system involvement, and judgments of procedural justice. The first model significantly predicted variance in the outcome,  $F(3, 86) = 102.310, p = .000, R^2 = .781$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .773$ . These variables accounted for approximately 77% of the variance in satisfaction with the detective interaction. In the second step of the regression model, an interaction term between previous legal system involvement as a crime victim and judgments of procedural justice was added. The second model also significantly predicted variance in the outcome,  $F(4, 85) = 81.145, p = .000, R^2 = .792$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .783$ . Results are shown in Table

IX. This interaction variable accounted for a significant additional amount of variance in satisfaction with the detective interaction,  $\Delta F(1, 85) = 4.644, p = .034, \Delta R^2 = .011$ . The interaction of previous involvement in the legal system and judgments of procedural justice significantly predicted satisfaction with the detective interaction.

**TABLE IX**

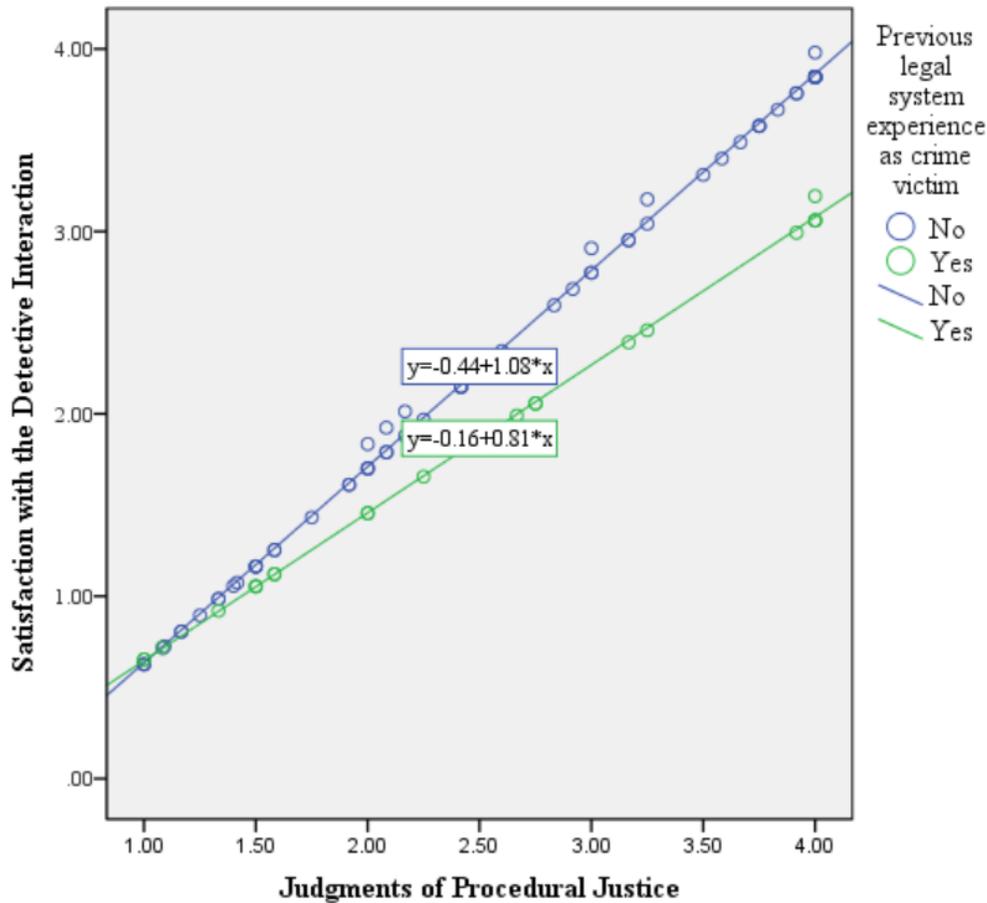
REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING MODERATION EFFECT OF SATISFACTION WITH THE DETECTIVE INTERACTION <sup>a</sup>

	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$
Been arrested before (1=No; 2=Yes)	.09	.22	-.13	.13	.22	.03
Previous involvement in legal system as crime victim (1=No; 2=Yes)	-.36	.13	-.13***	.29	.33	.10
Judgments of procedural justice during detective interaction(s)	1.00	.06	.86***	1.34	.16	1.15***
Legal experience X judgments of procedural justice during detective interaction(s)	-	-	-	-.27	.12	-.38**

<sup>a</sup> \* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$

Results indicate that the relationship between judgments of procedural justice and satisfaction with the detective interaction is stronger for victims without previous legal system involvement. As shown in Figure 3, procedural justice seems to have a stronger relationship with satisfaction when a victim has not had any prior involvement with the legal system.

Figure 3. Moderation effect of judgments of procedural justice and previous legal system involvement on satisfaction with the detective interaction.



## 2. Qualitative results

In open-ended survey responses and interviews, participants described many aspects of their interactions with detectives during the reporting and investigation process that contributed to their overall level of satisfaction with the detective(s) working on their case. Much of what participants described as contributing to their satisfaction with the interactions aligned with one or more of the four elements of procedural justice: voice, respect, neutrality, and trustworthiness. Additional support was also found for the use of empathy as an extension of procedural justice.

However, participants described other aspects of their interactions with detectives that do not clearly fall into one of these elements, suggesting a need to consider other factors when working with sexual assault victims. This section provides specific aspects of victim interactions with detective(s) during the investigation process that contributed to victims' overall level of satisfaction, and how these assessments fit within the tenets of procedural justice.

a. **Voice and respect**

As with crime victims in general, sexual assault victims discussed the value of being respected and listened to by the detective(s) during the investigation process. For many victims, being listened to and being respected went hand-in-hand, and were a necessity in a satisfactory interaction. The quotes below by four different participants exemplify the value victims placed on being listened to:

“They could have at least pretended that they listened to me when I was talking. Calling me back 12 times [to repeat her assault story] didn’t really help make me feel like they respected what had happened and why I was there.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“She made my cry because she [the detective] made me feel uncomfortable and not heard. This made the situation altogether worse rather than better.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I could tell, like I think he [the detective] didn’t want to talk too much because he didn’t want to take the words out of my mouth, but he talked enough to show that he believed me.” – Interview participant (F, unknown, 40-60)

“He [the detective] acted very nicely and patiently listened to what I had to say.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The first two quotes above reveal victims' thoughts after interacting with a detective who did not listen or grant them a sense of voice, compared to the last two quotes where the victims felt like the detective was listening. One victim talked in her interview about her negative experience with the first detective on her case. She first met with this detective at her home, shortly after the (stranger perpetrated) assault occurred. In her interview, she described the detective as

unsupportive, unwilling to help, and rude. She explained that it was clear in each of their interactions that the detective did not believe her. She eventually switched detectives and had a positive experience with the second detective. She explained that the first thing the detective did was allow her the opportunity to elaborate on the details of negative experience she had with the first detective:

“So, when I sat down that was one of the first things he said, ‘I really appreciate you coming in. I do understand that it sounds you didn’t have a very positive experience.’ And I was like are you fucking kidding me? I just went crazy about how I was treated [by the first detective]. And he just sat there. You would have never guessed there was any time sensitivity going on by how much he just listened and let me vent. And he believed me.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

This participant, like many others, valued the ability to have a voice, and be listened to with respect and in a supportive environment. When victims were provided the opportunity to have a voice and were treated with respect, they tended to evaluate their interactions positively. This quote also exemplifies how victims can have completely different experiences based on the detective and the treatment they receive.

**b. Feelings of safety and protection**

Several participants discussed their satisfaction with the detective(s) in terms of feeling protected. This suggests that victims’ satisfaction is also reliant on their trust in the detective to provide protection and make them feel safe in the aftermath of sexual assault. This is evidenced by the quotes from two participants below:

“They [the detectives] made me feel safe and like I had someone who would make sure I wasn’t hurt again.” – Survey participant (F, Wh, 25-35)

“It was handled well. I felt safe and they were respectful.” – Survey participant (F, Hisp, 36-49)

One victim turned to the police when she was fearful of the domestic violence situation she was involved with. In this situation, her need of immediate safety was her primary motive for

reporting. She discussed her dissatisfaction with the detective she spoke with because he was dismissive of her situation, which hindered her confidence that he would protect her from her abusive boyfriend:

“How dismissive he was, I think that hurt because I was shaking when I went in there, like visibly terrified...I just don’t think he cared at all. Like if safety is called in to question, just look into it or give resources. It just makes you feel really invisible when nothing is written down. It not only invalidates your feelings and is super unsafe, but it just completely erases what you’re going through.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The victim in the quote above was facing ongoing abuse from her boyfriend and decided to go to the police when he brought a gun into their home. Her quote captures concerns of safety and protection shared by many victims, particularly those who were experiencing ongoing intimate partner violence or who were assaulted by someone who knew where the victim lived. As indicated by these quotes, victims expressed wanting to feel safe and protected by the detective during the reporting and investigation process. This was a priority for several victims in this sample, primarily for those who feared for their immediate safety following the assault. For victims who were motivated to report by needs for safety and protection, their satisfaction was largely based on whether these needs were met. Trust in the detective to provide protection was not something that came automatically, but instead was something that came about through the detective’s behavior and demeanor toward the victim during their interactions.

c. **Feeling prioritized**

For other victims, feeling like a priority contributed to satisfaction with the investigation process and the detective. Several participants expressed the value of knowing that the detective had enough time for their case and of not feeling bothersome when contacting the detective for additional information.

“I definitely felt like being informed every step of the way. I just didn’t want to feel like I was not a priority, and I did feel like I was a priority for her. – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“Them telling me a little bit more about how motivated they were to capture him [the perpetrator] helped a lot. And I feel like the communication in terms of them making themselves available if the family or I have questions. They did a good job, there was never a time where I was like I don’t know what is going on.” – Interview participant (F, AA, 30-40)

“I did not feel like my case was getting any attention and I needed to constantly follow up with him [the detective] for updates. He at one point accused me of making the whole thing up so I requested a new detective.” – Survey participant (F, Wh, 18-24)

“She [the detective] was amazing. Always had time for me. She always took my phone calls. She believed me and that meant the most.” – Survey participant (F, Wh, 50-65)

The quotes above show that being informed and feeling like a priority is something that contributes to satisfaction with the detective. Working with a detective who kept the victim informed and who treated him/her like a priority showed victims that the detective cared, believed them, and was doing his or her job to investigate the case.

d. **Trust and confidence through perceptions of being believed**

Many participants discussed the need for the detective to express belief that the assault occurred. The expression of belief was not always desired for emotional purposes (i.e., recovery) but indicated that the detective would thoroughly investigate the case and do his/her best to apprehend the perpetrator. Thus, belief also contributed to victims’ confidence that their case would be handled well, and trust in the detective’s motive to investigate the case. One victim lamented that her case may have had a different outcome if the detective would have believed the assault happened:

“I mean, God only knows how many times he [the perpetrator] did this, he got away with it for 12 years. He probably did it [sexual assault] hundreds of more times and that could have all been prevented if somebody would have just fucking believed me.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

The victim in the above quote reported her (stranger perpetrated) assault right away but the detective originally assigned to her case did not believe the assault occurred, and the investigation did not proceed. Almost a decade after the assault, the victim found that the perpetrator was on trial for assaulting several other women after her. Her desire for belief from the detective was not for her own emotional well-being (though she expressed that it would have helped) but to her point, had the detective believed her, she would have investigated the case and possibly apprehended the perpetrator before he had the opportunity to commit other assaults. Thus, for this victim, the detective's communicated skepticism about the assault occurring resulted in the assault not being thoroughly investigated (because the detective did not pursue the investigation and because the treatment received by the detective made the victim unwilling to cooperate), which allowed the perpetrator the opportunity to commit additional crimes. This chain of events created a public safety issue but also was a source of additional guilt the victim felt, which further hindered her recovery. While this victim was dissatisfied with the detective because of the treatment she received, she was further dissatisfied that this detective did not investigate her case, allowing additional assaults to occur. Similarly, another victim discussed feeling that her case did not proceed to prosecution because the detective did not believe the assault occurred. In this situation, the victim felt she had a strong case: she was assaulted by a man she met up with after meeting online, she reported right away, and she went to the hospital. She discussed how she did not need the detective to convey belief for her own personal desire for support, but simply wanted her case to progress, and felt that the detective's disbelief played a role in the unsuccessful outcome:

“I always had my fiancé's support and my therapist. And so, to a point it was like even if you're not personally going to believe me, just let this run the way it will run and in the end, do your job. Do your job correctly and stop using your own personal bias. Like if you're not going to believe me that's one thing but if you're gonna hold that against taking

the case to court when another officer who would have believed me in the first place would have.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Similarly, other participants discussed how an expression of belief by the detective was a necessary step to show that the detective was taking the matter seriously and would investigate.

The participant in the quote below discussed not only how the detective’s disbelief made her feel that her case would not be investigated, but the detective’s behavior contributed to her

dissatisfaction and subsequent termination of the interview.

“I felt very invalidated. I didn’t feel like I was being taken seriously. I didn’t feel like she believed me so I didn’t think she was going to do anything about it. The more things I told her, the further I got into my story, the more she would interrupt and the more things she would say to me that will now run through my head and so I was like ‘I can’t keep talking to you’. Because one, you’re not even listening, and two you’re making things worse.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

One victim spoke about how the disbelief expressed by the detectives made her feel that her case was not a priority. She felt that the detectives did not believe her because she is a lesbian who was assaulted by a man she met at the bar, and was highly intoxicated at the time of the assault.

“It also didn’t help because I am like 100% gay. Super gay. And that’s the other thing they didn’t get. Because they’re like if you don’t like men, then why were you hanging out with this guy? [...] And that felt crappy because I’m being honest, that’s how I am, but this is what happened and I don’t know why. [...] they were like we have more important things, like people who really know what happened.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

By contrast, one victim who had described her detective interactions as highly positive, discussed how the belief and empathy conveyed by the detectives contributed to her confidence and trust in their ability to investigate the case. After suffering a (stranger perpetrated) assault, she was fearful to go outside because the perpetrator knew where she lived and threatened her life. She explained that the confidence the detectives instilled in her through their behaviors helped her feel safe:

“They were kinder and softer and they had this protective air to them. Working with them, they were encouraging in terms of we’re going to find this guy and we’re gonna work until

we get him so I felt a lot better after meeting them and a lot more trusting that they were going to do their jobs...They did apologize, they were like 'we're sorry this happened to you.' And that instilled a lot more confidence." – Interview participant (F, AA, 30-40)

For the victim in the above quote, the detectives demonstrated their belief by stating that they were sorry that the assault occurred and by actively investigating the case. Thus, for many victims, the detective's engagement in the investigation of the case is one way to demonstrate that they believed the assault occurred. Conversely, when detectives were unwilling to investigate, victims assumed the detective did not believe their story, which led to feelings of dissatisfaction with the detective – not necessarily because of the outcome but because of the invalidation felt when the detective was unsupportive and unwilling to put forth any effort into the investigation. Other victims who had positive experiences with the detective working on their case discussed the power of being believed and being supported. Feeling believed and supported showed victims that the detective was on their side. This is reflected in the statements made by three different victims:

"I always had the sense that she believed me. And she was very adamant too, like you go through the process so when people say things to you like 'oh you shouldn't be walking home alone', so at some points I would say at least now I know not to do that. And she was always very like 'it's not your fault for walking down the street. You shouldn't be afraid to walk down the street.' She was very supportive; she was very helpful. And it was nice to have someone who you felt was on your side." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"The detective routinely follows up with me. He calls to ask how I am and asks if there is anything he can do for me. I truly feel that I have someone on my side even though I had no one else on my side the whole process." – Survey participant (F, Wh, 18-24)

"He [the detective] was super nice and called the guy who had done this a creep and said we're gonna get him and was totally on my side." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

As the above quotes suggest, being believed and feeling supported were key pieces in having satisfactory investigation experiences, as they can serve as a proxy for trust in the detective's motive to thoroughly investigate the case and treat the victim well throughout the process.

e. **Empathy**

Several participants spoke about empathy and feeling that the detective cared about their situation. For the participants in the present study, detectives who showed empathy also conveyed belief in the victim's story and did not assign blame to the victim. Along with empathy comes understanding the victim's feelings and circumstances, and incorporating that into conversation. For example, three victims – one who had a positive experience with the detective, and the other two negative – discussed empathy in their detective interactions:

“He never made me feel helpless. He never made me feel intimidated. He never made me feel like this was my fault. [...] The fact that he made me comfortable and he was genuine. So, I think it's really critical for any victim to have one of their first points of contact be truly genuinely vested or at least have true empathy.” – Interview participant (F, unknown, 40-60)

“At no point did I feel like any of them [the detectives] cared that I had been raped.” – Survey participant (F, Wh, 18-24)

“She [the detective] just didn't give a shit. At all. I was the victim, she didn't care. The way she spoke to me on the phone was horrible.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

Based on the experiences of victims in this sample, it appears that empathy from the detective is something that contributes to a highly satisfactory interaction and investigation experience. Conversely, victims who were met with no empathy and felt mistreated (e.g., quotes 2 and 3 above) were notably dissatisfied. Thus, this illustrates that, at minimum, being kind to the victim is something that can create a satisfactory interaction, but that empathy appears to be important in facilitating highly positive interactions.

f. **Expectations**

For several victims, the expectations going into the investigation appeared to their overall satisfaction with the detective(s). Victims who had positive expectations that were not met were disappointed, where others had low expectations that were exceeded.

“I was lucky – I had two of the kindest, hardest working detectives on my case. At first when I was going through the process, I naively thought all detectives were like mine but after meeting other survivors I learned the extreme difference which made me even more grateful.” – Survey participant (F, AA, 25-35)

“So again, it’s been positive. We’ve been incredibly fortunate in that regard too, because I know that doesn’t always happen.” – Interview participant (F, unknown, 40-60)

“It’s not like I expected anything more from him than what he had given me. So, I would say that it went as I had anticipated.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

In the above quotes, the first two participants were very pleased with their interactions with detectives. Both of these participants situated their appraisal of these interactions in their knowledge that not everyone has positive experiences. So, because of that, they were even more grateful for their experiences. In the third quote, the victim explained that she was satisfied with the interaction because she did not expect much from the detective. She had low expectations because she did not have any physical evidence to present and still was not sure that she wanted to pursue an investigation (if granted the opportunity). However, as she reflected on this interaction during the interview, she grew less satisfied with the detective as she recognized the absence of support and motive to pursue the case from the detective during their conversation. As a whole, she appraised the interaction as “neutral”.

During her interview, one participant discussed two sexual assaults that she reported to the police. She described her first reporting experience as terrible, which led her to research the negative experiences victims have when reporting and why. She explained that by the time she was assaulted again, she understood what she needed to do to be believed and treated fairly by the police. She incorporated her newly acquired knowledge into reporting the second assault: she reported right away, she was visibly upset, and she provided physical evidence. She attributed her positive second experience to this knowledge.

“I knew exactly what they were going to look for to believe me. Which is kind of messed up...Honestly, I was like this is so much better than the last [sexual assault reporting] experience I had. From my perspective, I was like oh this isn't as bad as I thought it would be, which is terrible.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

For this victim, her second reporting experience may have been better because she was aware of the possibility for a negative interaction and was able to not only manage her expectations and brace herself for a possibly negative experience, but also use her knowledge of detectives' rape myth acceptance to her advantage (e.g., report right away, look visibly upset).

One victim discussed her expectations for their interactions with the detective based on her demographic characteristics:

“I knew that like often if you're reporting a sexual assault and you are like, if you're on the LGBTQ spectrum or something like that often doesn't go well or like if you don't speak English well or if you're in a woman of color, or a domestic violence victim. Like I knew all of those situations may or may not go well but I figured, I'm a well-educated articulate upper-middle class White girl so I didn't expect it to go that poorly.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The participant in the quote above considered the possible negative experiences individuals of other backgrounds may have when reporting to the police, and expected – because of her characteristics – the interaction with the detectives to go well. Despite her expectations, she had an unsatisfactory experience with the detective and was surprised by this. She then voiced her concerns regarding the negative experiences other victims may have when reporting:

“I myself felt really powerless, but I've heard this sort of thing happens and I didn't expect it to happen to me and if this happens to me, then it happens 10 times worse to someone who's not me because I am an upper-middle class educated White girl who assume the police are there to help. Take away any of those factors and that situation gets worse and worse.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Other victims shared similar sentiments regarding their unexpected negative treatment by the detective despite their status. For example, one victim, an immigrant, discussed the dissonance she experienced following a negative interaction with a detective that she expected to go well

because of her educational and professional status (i.e., having a Ph.D. and academic career).

Yet, she did not feel that she was treated well by the detective. She attributed this to her ethnicity, but also attributed her treatment to the fact that she was assaulted by her current (at the time) spouse. Another victim discussed how her status as a White, professional woman served as a protective factor in her interaction with the detective:

“I am a White woman and will more likely be believed by police than a woman of color who would go to the police, and I have not had a negative experience with the police but that would so much affect it.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

These quotes exemplify that expectations for the interaction contribute to the overall evaluations of the investigation process and satisfaction with the detective interaction(s). Specifically, within these expectations are knowledge of others’ experiences with the reporting/investigation process, including those for victims of different demographic characteristics. Victims recognize their personal and assault characteristics – and whether these characteristics will serve to hurt or protect them during their police interactions – when weighing their expectations of the interaction.

Expectations based on demographic characteristics also applied to the characteristics of the detective. Victims discussed having positive expectations when they learned the detective they would be interacting with was a female. However, not all female detectives responded to victims positively. Four victims had negative interactions with female detectives and discussed being particularly unsatisfied with poor treatment by females.

“I couldn’t believe that they [the detectives] were women too.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“But a female detective, shame on her.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

For these individuals, being felt mistreated and misunderstood from a female detective added more insult to the emotional injury of being assaulted and having a negative investigation

experience. When negative interactions occur with female detectives, they were perceived as less satisfactory than negative interactions with male detectives. This suggests that female detectives may be held to a higher standard during interactions with victims.

### 3. **Summary**

Quantitative and qualitative research methods examined the relationship between procedural justice and overall satisfaction with detective interactions. Quantitative results showed that victims who perceived their interactions with the detective(s) as procedurally just were more likely to be satisfied with the detective overall. Procedural justice accounted for 77% of the variance in satisfaction with the detective interaction, suggesting that the quality of interactions weigh heavily in satisfaction with the detective. This further illustrates the power of process-oriented investigations. Moderation analysis found a significant effect of previous legal system involvement on the relationship between judgments of procedural justice and satisfaction with the detective interaction. The relationship between judgments of procedural justice and satisfaction with the detective interaction was stronger for victims without previous involvement in the legal system.

Open-ended survey responses and interviews with victims explored the aspects of detective interactions that victims perceive as positive and negative in contributing to the overall satisfaction with the detective and investigation process. Qualitative results showed partial support for detective interactions that align with the procedural justice perspective as being perceived satisfactory. Victims discussed the importance of voice, respect, trustworthiness, and empathy in satisfactory interactions with detectives, but not neutrality. The desire for empathy was a considerable element in participants' discussions of their detective interactions. This provides further support for empathy as an extension of procedural justice and is important with

regard to the quality of detective interactions with sexual assault victims. Where procedural justice emphasizes neutrality (i.e., no preconceived preference for either party), victims expressed the need to have the support from the detective and feel that the detective is on their side during the investigation. Victims were dissatisfied when they felt that the detective was not on their side. Similarly, conveying belief and not placing blame were also frequently discussed with regard to satisfactory experiences with the detective. This contributed to victims' overall level of trust in the detective's motive and capability. As such, trust and having the support of the detective (i.e., feeling that he/she is on the victim's side) appear to go hand-in-hand with regard to satisfaction with the detective.

G. **Research Question 4: Cooperation with the Investigation**

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to answer Research Question Four: *How do victims' perceptions of their interactions with the detective(s) relate to willingness to cooperate during the investigation?* Regression analysis of quantitative survey data examined the relationship between victim judgments of procedural justice during their interaction(s) with the detective(s) who worked on their case and willingness to participate in the investigation (H6). Interviews explored victims' willingness to cooperate with the detective and participate in the investigation based on his/her interactions with the detective(s). Results from both methods are described below, followed by an integrated summary.

1. **Quantitative results**

a. **Hypothesis 6**

A regression model was used to test the hypothesis: victims who perceive their detective interaction(s) as procedurally just will be more likely to participate in the investigation. As no control variables were significantly associated with the outcome variable in bivariate analyses,

the regression model consists of one independent variable (judgments of procedural justice) and one dependent variable (willingness to participate in the investigation). Results for this regression model are shown in Table X below.

The regression model predicting victims' willingness to participate in the investigation based on judgments of procedural justice during interactions with the detective(s) was significant,  $F(1, 88) = 39.439, p = .000, R^2 = .309, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .302$ . Judgments of procedural justice explained approximately 30% of the variance in willingness to participate in the investigation. Victims perceiving their detective interaction as procedurally just was significantly associated with willingness to participate in the investigation.

**TABLE X**  
REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INVESTIGATION <sup>a</sup>

	Willingness to Participate in the Investigation		
	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$
Judgments of procedural justice during detective interaction(s)	.640	.102	.55****

<sup>a</sup> \* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$

### 1. Qualitative results

During interviews, participants spoke about their interactions with the detective(s) who worked on their case and their willingness to cooperate with the detective throughout the investigation process. In many situations, participants considered the behavior and attitude of the

detective during their interactions in their decision to cooperate with the detective and participate in the investigation. Negative interactions often made victims reconsider their level of cooperation and the amount of information they were willing to provide to the detective. For some, there were other motives to participate that eclipsed the negative interactions with the detective, and often led to an exceptional amount of cooperation and investigational participation. Conversely, participants discussed other factors that contributed to their decision to not cooperate. This section presents the results from interviews regarding victims' willingness to cooperate with the detective and participate in the investigation.

a. **Negative interactions**

Several victims who had negative interactions with the detective(s) working on their case discussed the aspects of the interaction that led them to not want to cooperate with the detective or participate in the investigation. Most prominently mentioned in relation to cooperation and willingness to provide information to the detective was feeling comfortable. Victims who were reluctant to provide information to the detective discussed that this often occurred because the detective – through attitude and behaviors – created an environment that was not encouraging to the victim to share information. On the contrary, one victim discussed how she initially did not want to even speak with the detective, but after he showed that he was on her side, she felt more comfortable and ended up providing the details of the (acquaintance-perpetrated) assault. Another victim met with the detective privately in her (parents') home after immediately reporting an assault perpetrated by a guest invited into her home by one of her family members. She described the detective as accusatory and blaming, suggesting that she somehow precipitated the assault.

“She was being pretty accusatory. I remember being very uncomfortable so I was like ‘Can I go to my parents?’ I started crying. I was like can I go to my parents because I was not

comfortable being alone with her anymore and she was making me feel like it was my fault so I went upstairs and told my parents what happened. I'm glad I decided to go upstairs because I could have kept being uncomfortable but I knew something, like this is not right. This is not how the conversation should be going. I shouldn't be feeling worse about it from you [the detective] I should be feeling better." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

In this situation, the victim (who was age 15 at the time of the assault) refused to speak to the detective any further. After her parents spoke to the detective on behalf of the victim, they soon also refused to provide any additional information and asked the detective to leave their home. As a result, the investigation did not continue. The quotes below, by five different participants, illustrate how negative attitudes and unsupportive behavior can facilitate a tense interaction where victims no longer want to cooperate with the detective:

"I didn't get through my whole story with her because it got to the point where I was like I cannot listen to you saying these things any longer or else I'm either going to yell at you or I'm going to cry and it's just like I can't be in here with you any longer so I ended up walking out." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"They [the detectives] weren't listening or being supportive so I felt I had no reason to give them any more information so nothing came of it [the investigation]." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"When people have gone through something traumatic, just having more stress you're going to forget details because I mean your brain is flooded with cortisol so it's like if you have someone who is just upping those levels, you're going to forget details, your whole body is going to be tense, and I think that because sometimes in trying to get those details you start feeling like you're on trial. It's not helping the cops get the information they need and it's not helping the victim." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"It makes you not want to tell what happened. It makes you want to say 'aw forget it, I did deserve it, let me just go get cleaned up.' And they [the detectives] don't really care, so why should I care? I don't even want to cooperate. I just want to go and get myself together so I can just go continue on with my life." – Interview participant (F, AA, 30-40)

"It [the interaction with the detectives] did make me feel like if I had remembered something right after I had told them something else and like oh crap I remember something, and that added in again, they would be like why didn't you tell us this before? So, I just felt like I was being interrogated and not listened to." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The participant in the final quote above spoke about how feeling uncomfortable with the detectives made her not want to share information with them regarding the assault she suffered by a man she met at a bar. Beyond this, she explained that this level of discomfort and lack of support made her feel like she could not reach out to the detectives should she have any additional information to share. This illustrates the importance of detectives creating an environment where victims feel comfortable speaking with them, and comfortable contacting them at a later date with information that could help the investigation. The above quotes exemplify that when victims do not feel they are in a safe and supportive space to share information, they may be less willing to do so. Unwillingness to share information may hinder the investigation.

Seven participants spoke about the physical location where their initial interaction with the detective took place. For these individuals, the combination of an unnerving physical environment and uninviting attitude by the detective(s) led to a reluctance to discuss the details of the assault. One participant was uncomfortable and reluctant to share information because she first met with the detectives while she was in the hospital. The other participants explained that they were asked to share the details of their assault in a public location, such as the lobby of their apartment building, outside the home of the perpetrator, or in a public area of the police department. These participants discussed feeling too uncomfortable to share information in these locations where others may overhear the details of the assault. For several victims, being asked to discuss the details of the assault in an uncomfortable location caused them to think the detective was not empathetic or understanding of the situation, resulting in an even greater reluctance to cooperate. While some participants acknowledged the location of the interview in

some circumstances may be beyond the detective's control, but were still hesitant to share information in that environment.

One participant described her initial meeting with the detective. She did not feel supported or believed by the detective. As such, she did not feel comfortable sharing the information about the perpetrator with them and asked the detectives to leave:

“They [the detectives] asked for his [the perpetrator] name, and I didn't give it to them because I was like I don't really trust you guys. I don't really know whose side you're on here so I don't want to give you his name. I don't want to give you any information because I don't feel like you're going to do anything with it. So, they left.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

This shows that a victim who feels a detective mistreated him/her can affect how much, or little, the he or she is willing to cooperate with the investigation. In the above situation, the detective's attitude caused the victim to doubt the detective's motives to the point where she would not share the perpetrator's information. This woman doubted the detective's motives to the point where she would rather withhold information about the (acquaintance) perpetrator than provide those details to the detectives. Thus, the detective's behaviors led to the victim's distrust, and resulted in her unwillingness to aid in the investigation. Similarly, another participant who felt mistreated was also reluctant to work with the detective:

“I was willing to help and then I was so disrespected by the detectives.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

This participant had a negative experience with the first detective she interacted with. This made her reluctant to cooperate when another detective followed up with her. Another victim discussed her concerns about reporting. She was assaulted by a coworker that she supervised, and was reluctant to report over concerns of possible ramifications in the work place. After explaining this to the detectives, their reaction made her feel that they would not take her concerns under consideration:

“The detective kind of insinuated – the male officer kind of insinuated – that what would happen is the next day the officers would show up in my work place. Like the way he said it made me afraid that it wasn’t going to be handled delicately [...] and I felt like the officer said that in order to push me to not file any sort of report.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

As she reflected on the insensitivity of the detectives with regard to her concerns about reporting, she discussed that the detective may have been purposefully harsh to deter her from filing a report. In this quote, she differentiates the male detective from the female detective, because it was primarily the male detective that was using inconspicuous threats, such as the one described above, to deter the victim from filing a report. Yet, as she explained, the female detective was not particularly helpful or friendly, but was not creating a tense situation as the male detective was. Yet the harmful behavior from the male detective weighed more into the victims’ willingness to cooperate more so than the neutral behavior of the female detective. Overall, she felt that her concerns were not considered and did not trust the detectives to handle the situation with care. Ultimately, she did not provide any information to the detectives and did not file a report with these detectives. Rather, she made a report at a later date with a different officer.

b. **Positive interactions**

By contrast, victims who had positive interactions with the detective(s) working on their case discussed that their willingness to share information and cooperate stemmed from the detective creating a comfortable and safe space to talk about the details of the assault, both in the initial and ongoing interactions. As discussed by victims in this sample, creating a comfortable environment to share information can also take form as a detective displaying empathy. Where the physical environment may not be ideal, the detective can demonstrate compassionate behaviors that create a safe space conducive to sharing information. One victim spoke of the power of empathy in detective interactions, and explained that when detectives have an

understanding and awareness of victims' circumstances and feelings, "they will wind up with better information". Another participant shared during her interview that the detective demonstrated empathy by acknowledging that she was uncomfortable sharing details necessary for the investigation:

"He was like, I'm going to have to ask you some questions that may be uncomfortable if that's okay. Do you mind talking with me? You know, he was very conscientious of how I felt about it. My suspicion was that he would have had someone else ask me if I didn't want to talk to him. He made it very clear that, like I know this is uncomfortable and if you're uncomfortable talking about it then we can talk about it later. You know? He was respectful." – Interview participant (F, unknown, 40-60)

After this initial conversation, this participant went on to work closely with this detective throughout the duration of the investigation leading up to the trial. While this participant was highly motivated to cooperate by her desire to prosecute the perpetrator – her husband, who was an immediate threat to her and her children's safety – she expressed that it was also the treatment she received from the detective and the comfortable environment that he created that made her and her children willing to work so closely with the detective for those several weeks leading up to charges being filed. She explained that she developed such a strong working relationship with this detective that he continued to work closely with her and her children in preparation for court.

Two participants spoke specifically about how different factors associated with comfortability can contribute to the tone of the interaction:

"I know police officers that might be considered rough and tough or ones that maybe their attitude is that they don't have time for you or whatever. Not saying I have experienced that per se but I know that happens and I know that body language, the whole nine yards' factors into whether a woman or man who's been assaulted is going to feel comfortable talking. There are so many things that go into that. I mean, they [victims] could choose to clam up simply based on, you know, a smirk or something because it is so incredibly sensitive and you're [victims] so incredibly vulnerable already, and you've been shattered already so I think that it is really important that the person you talk to about it is there for you to hear you and is really going to set the tone on how you feel moving forward about this thing [the investigation]." – Interview participant (F, unknown, 40-60)

“I think that the more affirmed a person feels the more likely they are to reveal that stuff [about the assault]. That would be a really effective way to solicit that information because if you’re not feeling believed you’re not going to be willing to give those details.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

One victim spoke about her reluctance to participate in the investigation of a stranger who assaulted and kidnapped her. The victim was feeling threatened by the perpetrator’s family which made her reluctant to pursue the investigation. The encouragement she received from the detectives and her trust in their abilities led her to fully cooperate:

“The police were asking me ‘Is anyone threatening you, trying to get you to change your statement?’ I wasn’t going to follow through with it [the investigation] but they really wanted him to be punished and I told them yeah, his [the perpetrator’s] family is calling me a whore and telling me I need to drop the statement. They [the detectives] took it really seriously.” – Interview participant (F, AA, 30-40)

Similarly, one victim discussed how feeling comfortable can lead to sharing information and participating in the investigation:

“He [the detective] did make me feel comfortable enough to feel like oh it is what it is so let’s talk about it. So, I didn’t hold anything back and I was just like here’s the book.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

Two other participants spoke about their interactions with a male detective. Though they were originally uncomfortable speaking to a male, the detectives were able to facilitate their cooperation:

“The detective was a giant man. He’s not one that I would normally open up to but he made me feel really comfortable so I think that speaks to, you don’t necessarily need a certain gender.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“Even now I skew more comfortable with females so it would have been nicer. I just worked with a lot of men and I learned to be more comfortable with it but that first night [meeting with the detective] was hard to like work with men so it was that constant battle in my head of having to remind myself like this one’s okay, he’s just trying to gather information.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The participant in the second quote above speaks to the ongoing internal struggle of wanting to trust a (male) detective. Even when detectives are supportive, victims may still struggle to trust

someone enough to share their story. Thus, when trying to solicit information, it is important that detectives help make victims feel comfortable sharing that information.

c. **Other motives for cooperation**

While many participants talked about the quality of their interactions with the detective as contributing to their decision to cooperate, participants also discussed other motivations for participating in the investigation regardless of whether they had positive interactions with the detective. For example, one victim shared all the details of the (acquaintance) assault, not because the detective was particularly encouraging or helped her to feel comfortable, but because she wanted to make a record of the assault:

“I feel like I did give him all the details or at least I think there was one or two things that I remembered later but I told him everything I knew because of the purpose that I was trying to make a record and trying to be accurate and report everything. I think because it was really in my best interest to do it, I did it. I don’t recall him really soliciting details or saying things that would prompt me.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Several victims wanted to participate in the investigation to prevent future assaults, regardless of how detectives treated them. This is exemplified by the following quotes shared by two different participants:

“I really didn’t want him to do any other girl or lady or whoever this way, you know. So, I wanted to participate as much as possible and find this person and arrest him.” – Interview participant (F, AA, 30-40)

“If I could at least help one victim then that would help me. But I did not realize what I was getting myself into [by participating in the investigation].” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

For others, willingness to cooperate with the investigation was a question of emotional capabilities, and whether they had the fortitude to deal with the stresses of ongoing interactions with the police, as noted in the following statements.

“I was exhausted. I was not close to going through with anything, but basically trying to figure out why I was even here, like literally living.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

“I just felt like I wanted to get on about it and move on.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“After like a month or so I was like I can’t really deal with this anymore.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

For the three participants in the quotes above, their unwillingness to cooperate with the investigation due to their emotional state stemmed from an understanding that participating in an investigation and the legal process can be revictimizing. This illustrates the victims understand the time and emotional commitment of participating in the investigation. While they may have been not treated particularly positively or negatively by the officers they interacted with, they still are aware of the potential revictimization by the legal system, or a detective they may interact with at some point. Where they were emotionally distressed already, they did not want to risk further emotional harm. So, these victims made an informed decision to not continue participating in the investigation. Though they all recognized feeling torn between their need for emotional protection and wanting to participate in the investigation to prevent other assaults.

d. **Exceptional cooperation**

Eleven victims not only cooperated with the detectives during the investigation but described what could be considered “exceptional cooperation”. For these victims, other motives for participating in the investigation masked any negative interactions with the detective(s) working on their case that might deter them from cooperating. For example, one participant discussed asking friends to look into the background of the perpetrator for her. Though she felt mistreated by the detective, she continued to make weekly calls to check on the status of her case. During the assault, she purposely found ways to get the perpetrator to leave DNA evidence

behind, which she immediately presented to the responding officers. Another victim tracked down the perpetrator herself by contacting the bar where she met him, locating his (the perpetrator's) credit card receipt through process of elimination, and finding security footage of him following her to the location where the assault took place. She took the investigation into her own hands because the detective working on her case said he was unable to find the perpetrator. She, like two other victims in this sample, used social media to find the perpetrator on their own. This shows that victims will go to great lengths to assist in the investigation because of their own personal motivation. Two victims discussed how they felt about going to extensive measures to aid in the investigation:

“I was a little frustrated that I had to do so much prodding but at that point I was like the most important thing is to get this resolved.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I think that I have put an extraordinary amount of work into this [the investigation]. Like I took the month off work and I spent all of the time that I normally would be working, working on this in various aspects of that and I don't think that is normal. I don't want the only reason something happens out of this be because I put in an extraordinary amount of work because it shouldn't take an extraordinary amount of work.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

e. **Investigation participation not an option**

Nine participants talked about how they wanted to participate in the investigation – and legal process had it been an option – but the detective never followed up after the initial meeting.

The feelings regarding a lack of follow up is captured in the statements by two participants:

“That was really the last thing that happened with the detectives. Nothing really came of it because they never, I mean, if they investigated and talked to him I was never made aware of that happening.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“There was no follow up ever. I kind of hoped that there would be.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“Well, they [the detectives] kind of listened, but I don't think they were even taking notes. I'm trying to remember; this was a lot of years ago. But they absolutely did not contact me

afterwards. The three contacts that were made were all made by me. Not once did they try to contact me.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The participants in the above quotes were willing to cooperate regardless of the interactions they had in the initial meeting with the detective but they were never contacted. To date, these victims still do not know if their case was investigated. One victim who was assaulted by a former romantic partner spoke about the distress she suffered from not being contacted by the detective about the status of the investigation after their initial meeting:

“I was so scared in general [about reporting] and that’s one of the main things that was not okay about what happened because I was already really scared of this person [the perpetrator] because it was someone I had been dating. I was already really scared of that. I felt pressured to give a statement and then they [the detectives] never ever [followed up], still don’t know. This still haunts me until today. They never told me if they followed up with him. So, I don’t know if he ever found out that I reported it. It was retraumatizing when they don’t make it clear what they are going to do and what they are going to follow up with me on.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

While detectives are not required to investigate all cases – rather it is common for cases go uninvestigated (“unfounded”) – but victims are not aware of this, and perhaps not made aware of this by the officer taking their report or the detective they first interact with. Yet, it is nonetheless harmful for victims who expect a follow-up contact – either because they are told they will be contacted or because they expect their case to be investigated – but are never contacted again to participate, even though they expressed interest in pursuing the investigation.

## 2. Summary

The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods addressed Research Question Four: *How do victims’ perceptions of their interactions with the detective(s) who worked on their case relate to willingness to cooperate?* Quantitative results showed that victims who judged their interactions with the detective(s) to be procedurally just were more likely to indicate willingness to participate in the investigation. Judgments of procedural justice accounted for

30% of the variance in willingness to participate in the investigation, suggesting that procedural justice-based encounters matter in victims' willingness to participate in the investigation, but as do other factors, which is reflected in the qualitative results also. Victims considered the treatment they received from detectives and the quality of these interactions when assessing their willingness to cooperate with the investigation. Yet, quantitative results show that there are other factors that contribute to willingness to cooperate that were not included in the regression model, which could partially be explained by the qualitative findings. Interestingly, no assault or demographic characteristics were significantly related to willingness to participate in the investigation.

Qualitative results showed support for the quantitative results, suggesting that how victims perceive their treatment by the detective does matter in their willingness to cooperate with the detective and willingness to participate in the investigation. Specifically, victims who felt that the detective did not support them, did not believe their story, or said hurtful things were often less willing to share information with the detective. This provides further support for victims' desire for empathy during detective interactions, and desire to feel that the detective is on their side. Many victims discussed the importance of feeling comfortable during interactions with the detective. When victims felt comfortable, they were more willing to provide information and assist with the investigation. When detectives created an uncomfortable environment, victims were reluctant to share information and reluctant to come forward with additional details about the assault later that could help the investigation. Victims who were on the fence about participating because of the emotional strain involved in the legal process were often deterred from participating when detectives were not supportive or encouraging. Contrary to what the quantitative results suggest, qualitative results show that the quality of detective interactions are

not always the determining factor in participating in the investigation. Victims expressed wanting to participate in the investigation – regardless of how the detective treated them – for other reasons such as wanting to prevent future assaults from occurring. Victims in this sample were willing to go to exceptional means to aid in the investigation, and others wanted to participate but were not given the opportunity. This shows that some victims are highly motivated to cooperate despite possible negative treatment by detectives. However, this was not the case for all participants, as 11 (39%) victims were willing to cooperate regardless of how they were treated. This could explain the variance in cooperation unaccounted for by judgments of procedural justice in the quantitative results. Recovery could also account for some of the variance in cooperation unaccounted for by procedural justice, as recovery was not included in the regression model, but a handful of participants in the qualitative sample discussed not wanting to cooperate because they did not feel emotionally ready to endure the process.

Together, qualitative and quantitative results showed that treatment by detectives contributes to victims' willingness to cooperate with the detective and participate in the investigation. Quantitative results support the use of procedural justice techniques in facilitating cooperation and participation. Qualitative results support this conclusion. Victims who felt comfortable, believed, supported, and encouraged by the detective felt better about their interactions and were more willing to cooperate with the detective. Victims emphasized the importance of feeling like the detective was on their side during their interactions to make them feel supported enough to cooperate with the detective. However, victims also discussed other motives for cooperation beyond treatment by the detectives. Thus, qualitative and quantitative results show that the quality of detective interactions are not the only contributing factor to

victim participation and cooperation, but a significant factor that needs to be considered when trying to facilitate victim cooperation.

#### H. **Research Question 5: Views of the Police**

Research Question Five asks the question: *How do victims' perceptions of their interaction(s) with the detective(s) who worked on their case influence their views of the police?*

This question was answered through the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative survey data were analyzed to test the relationship between victim judgments of procedural justice and views of the police (H7). Qualitative interview data explored victims' views of the police, including their trust and confidence in the police after reporting the sexual assault. Results from each method are presented below, followed by an integrated summary.

##### 1. **Quantitative results**

###### a. **Hypothesis 7**

A regression model tested the hypothesis: victims who perceive their interaction(s) with the detectives as more procedurally just will indicate greater trust and confidence in the police. Several control variables were significant in bivariate analyses, and thus included in the regression model: victim gender identity, detective age, assault injury, and time elapsed since the assault. Table XI shows the results of the regression model.

The regression model predicting victims' trust and confidence in the police based on judgments of procedural justice during interactions with the detective(s) was significant,  $F(5, 86) = 11.908, p = .000, R^2 = .409, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .375$ . Judgments of procedural justice during detective interactions accounted for approximately 38% of the variance in trust and confidence in the police. When victims perceived their interactions with the detective(s) who worked on their

case to be more procedurally just, they were significantly more likely to indicate greater trust and confidence in the police. Four control variables were included in the regression model, and together explained approximately 17% of the total variance in trust and confidence in the police. When other variables were held constant, being injured as a result of the sexual assault was significantly related to less trust and confidence in the police.

**TABLE XI**

REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE <sup>a</sup>

	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$
Victim gender identity (1=Non-female identified; 2=Female identified)	-1.63	.66	-.24**	-.86	.58	-.13
Age of detective	-.19	.17	-.10	-.08	.14	-.04
Physical injury (1=No; 2=Yes)	-.43	.19	-.21**	-.35	.16	-.18**
Time elapsed since the assault (1=Less than 24 hours; 2=More than 24 hours)	.17	.08	.20**	.09	.07	.10
Judgments of procedural justice during detective interaction(s)	-	-	-	.49	.08	.51***

<sup>a</sup> \* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using an interaction term of physical injury and judgments of procedural justice to test for a possible moderation effect on trust and confidence in the police. The interaction term was entered as a second step in the model, following five variables: victim gender identity, detective age, physical injury, time elapsed since the assault, and judgments of procedural justice. A moderating effect was not found ( $p = .807$ ),

suggesting that the strength of the relationship between judgments of procedural justice and trust and confidence in the police is the same for victims who were and were not injured as a result of the sexual assault.

## 2. **Qualitative results**

Interview participants were asked to discuss their views toward the police. Victims in this sample had positive and negative views of the police, but largely discussed their mixed feelings. Many also discussed a reluctance to make generalizations about their feelings toward the police in general. Five victims talked about positive views of the police, while others spoke of changes in their views after interacting with the police as a result of the sexual assault. This section presents the responses victims shared regarding their views of the police.

### a. **Views of the police as a culmination of experiences**

Five participants discussed clear positive views of the police. Interestingly, none of these victims made strictly positive statements about the police. Rather, these positive statements were preceded by earlier negative views and experiences, or explained through, what amounts to be, mixed feelings. Two of these victims had positive experiences with the detectives working on their case. The other three did not perceive their interactions with the detectives as positive, but this did not alter their previously existing positive views of the police. One victim discussed feeling revictimized by the detectives she interacted with in reporting her assault. When asked about her views of the police, she talked about working for a behavioral health agency that requires her to interact with the police on a semi-regular basis. She explained that these interactions are always positive, and she is often impressed by how these officers handle the situations they are involved with. For this participant, the positive experiences she had with officers in her professional life overshadowed the negative experience she had with the

detectives when she reported the sexual assault. A male participant discussed his ongoing revictimizing interactions with the police and detectives following a sexual assault that took place when he was a teenager. Since that time, he explained that he has had several other interactions with the police in his community. Similar to the woman discussed above, this victim's positive experiences with the police in a different context overshadowed his past negative experiences. He explained that it was a combination of the positive experiences with other police officers and the time elapsed since then that helped him to get over his disapproving opinions. Interestingly, he situated his ongoing positive experiences with the police in his neighborhood as a result of him being an active and well-known member of his community, rather than a black man committing crimes. A participant who had a positive experience with the detectives who worked on her case discussed how she felt the police would respond to another sexual assault victim:

“I think they [the police] would be sympathetic with a person who had been in a sexual situation. It just happened with me in the one particular time and under those circumstances that it happened like that.” – Interview participant (F, AA, Over 60)

The participant above discussed her positive views toward the police. Despite her personal negative interaction, she retained confidence that the police would respond positively to other sexual assault victims. In some cases, positive views prevailed over their negative experiences with reporting the sexual assault. This shows that negative interactions with detectives do not always lead to negative views of the police. Victims often have other experiences with officers and detectives that are positive and also contribute to their overall views toward the police. In these cases, the positive interactions outside of being the victim of sexual assault outweighed the negative interactions that took place as a victim of sexual assault. Other victims discussed their views of the police as a culmination of their unrelated interactions with the police. However, for

one victim, having multiple police experiences did not always translate to favorable views of the police, but rather made the victim unsure of her feelings:

“From my experience [reporting sexual assault], no [I do not have faith in the police]. But it’s hard to answer because I’ve had those interactions that were really positive for me at my job but at the same time I wasn’t the victim in that situation, I was a mediator so I don’t know how they felt as clients.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Another participant discussed how even a positive interaction with the responding officers and a negative interaction with the detective when reporting sexual assault left her with mixed feelings toward the police:

“The police that came were super nice and then the detective wasn’t so I kind of saw both sides within 24-hours.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

One participant talked about not wanting to share information with the police regarding an incident as a (non-sexual assault) crime victim. She discussed being unsure of why she reacted to the police that way in that particular situation, but eventually attributed it to her underlying distrust still present from her revictimizing experience with the police when she reported a sexual assault almost 40 years ago. For her, the mistrust was still there from that earlier negative experience and affected her level of trust and willingness to cooperate with the police today.

“I started looking at why I reacted the way I did. I think that was part of it, there was enough distrust, which for the most part is below the surface but depending on where I’m approached is going to come to the surface. I’m not going to fight a police officer but the openness and the trust is just not going to be there. I’m going to give you [the police] the benefit of the doubt but on a personal level that trust has to be earned.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

b. **Mixed views of the police**

Where some victims were clearly favorable in their views toward the police, the bulk of victims in this sample discussed mixed feelings when asked to explain their opinions of the police. Several different participants talked about negative experiences with the detectives they

interacted with related to the sexual assault that made them unlikely to trust those particular officers, but were reluctant to generalize these feelings toward police officers overall. It was fairly common for participants to discuss a relationship between their negative experiences and a subsequent lack of trust in police, captured by the statements of four different victims:

“I go by an officer-by-officer basis. I don’t do broad strokes. I’ve never done broad strokes. I’ll give you enough rope to hang yourself.” – Interview participant (M, AA, 40-60)

“I tend to trust a police officer until he shows me he can’t be trusted.” – Interview participant (F, unknown, 40-60)

“I always knew that the police were good and there were bad police.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 40-60)

“You might have a bad cop but for every bad cop you’re going to have a good cop.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

As one participant explained, she did not want to project her negative attitudes on all police and found it unfair to generalize. However, her experience with the officers she interacted with from a childhood sexual assault experience resulted in her having limited confidence in the legal system or police officers altogether.

“I never have [had faith], which sucks because I know that there are a lot of cops who would do the right thing. I’m not saying all of them don’t but I know that there are good police officers, and good lawyers, and good people doing that kind of work but when you have those bad experiences where you’re not protected from something that is so important then that trust is totally gone and you just get into the mode where you take care of it yourself, and I think that’s what I always did after that.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Three participants talked about feeling clearly mixed in their views of the police based on their experiences reporting sexual assault. These victims had contradicting experiences with the multiple detectives they worked with, which was conveyed in their overall opinions regarding the police.

“Honestly, I just kind of got the impression that they [detectives] were only supportive at all because I did everything as they wanted me to. And I knew that. I didn’t have any

delusions about that so my opinion hasn't really changed. Although I will say that I have encountered some officers and detectives were really great. It's a mixed bag but I feel like it's more often than not they're ignorant in some way or another." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"Unfortunately, with the police departments it is really the luck of the draw. You might get a really understanding male or female cop that wants to help you or you may get that jerk who's just going to look at you and be like 'tough shit'. – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"There've been some really good ones where they've been friendly. [...] So I'm not saying that's completely negative but their [the police] attitudes in interviewing that is something, well I'm 65, is something that scared me. I could imagine what it would do to a much younger person." – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

Two participants explained their conflicting feelings toward the police while considering the difficulty of police work. Both victims had positive interactions with the detective they were in contact with, but talked about their awareness of others' negative experiences when reporting sexual assault. In discussing their views of the police, they were sympathetic to the difficulties of being a police officer and considered this in their opinions:

"You know, they [police] have their own bad experiences. It's a difficult job. It really is. It's a very tough job for them to do and they encounter damaged people all the time. They have their own damage inside and their own set of fears and their own experiences. I feel like they're a mix. I feel like they do a tough job. I think there are some bad police. I think most of them are probably good people doing a really tough job." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 40-60)

"I feel like it's [policework] really tough. I don't want to stereotype all police officers at all. It's unfair for me to say that I generally mistrust the police, it's more that I don't trust the bureaucracy and I don't trust them [police] to prioritize. Like in the example I gave about untested rape kits. Like I just don't trust the police to prioritize it." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The latter of these two quotes speaks to views of the police falling within views of the legal system. Victims may have positive and negative perceptions of individual officers, but negative experiences and perceptions contribute to an overall mistrust in the system. This suggests a

negative halo effect of legal system views on police. Another victim spoke about her views of the legal system and the individual officers within it:

“I have had both very good and bad experiences with police officers and detectives reporting and investigating sexual violence. [...] So, I don’t have a lot of trust or confidence in (city) police but I think you can navigate the system to make it not so awful and even possibly positive and helpful. I dealt with a really excellent cop and a really excellent detective but somehow, I still think they’re anomalies. Maybe not as people but people in the system.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 40-60)

This victim had positive interactions with the officers she interacted with in the multiple experiences of reporting sexual violence, but talks about how these are likely not the norm.

Rather than attributing negative experiences other victims may have to the police, she suggests that the legal system itself may orient officers to act in this way.

When asked about their views of the police, four victims spoke about their views in relation to the current happenings regarding police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement:

“I guess there’s just so many thoughts about them [police] nowadays but I try to keep an open mind because not everybody is the same.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“Now I have more of a general distrust because of all the police brutality but I still try to maintain a positive mentality.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“When I think about the police being bad, it’s how they treat the young black men.” – Interview participant (F, AA, Over 60)

“That’s a tough question. So, if I am thinking about, there’s just been so much going on in the news right now so me being a black woman I’m very much conflicted. Right after my rape, not right after, but before everything with Black Lives Matter has come through I have always felt a little more sense of comfort around the police and if I was walking by myself and it’s dusk or whatever have you, and I feel uncomfortable because someone is walking too close behind me or something like that, like if I pass a police officer there’s something inside of me that relaxes a little bit because of the experience I had [during the investigation]. And so, I’ve had a little more confidence in them and I went to a, maybe a few years after my rape, I did do group therapy at (location) and hearing other women’s stories on how police treated them I was a little bit shocked because I didn’t realize how fortunate I was to have such a good experience. And hearing them talk about feeling like police didn’t believe them and them not really doing anything for them that’s when I really

realized that I did have a really good experience and I was lucky that I got the people that I did on my case. So, I felt fortunate. Now it's just a mixed bag because I still feel like I can trust the police in those sorts of situations but at the same time, as a black female I kind of don't feel like I can trust them so that's where my internal struggle comes from with the police." – Interview participant (F, AA, 30-40)

These four participants acknowledged the experiences of those affected by police brutality in explaining their feelings toward the police. The first two victims mentioned brutality, but inserted that they try to not let that influence their views of the police. The second two victims specifically referenced the treatment of African Americans by police, interestingly, as these two individuals were African American and the first two quotes were by White victims. In the final quote of this section, the victim talked about the cognitive dissonance she felt when thinking about her views of the police. This woman personally had very positive interactions with the police and feels safe in their presence, but the experiences of others who share her identities as African American and as a sexual assault victim make her feel that she should not be so trusting of the police. Together, these statements highlight the unique influence of the media regarding the police in general, as well as personal identifiers on views of the police.

c. **Changes in views of the police**

Some participants talked about a change in their views toward the police following their interactions during the investigation of the sexual assault. One victim noted her increase in trust following her interactions with the detective who worked on her case:

"I probably trust them a lot more from going through that." – Interview participant (F, AA, 18-30)

Two victims spoke about a clear shift in positive views to less favorable views following their interactions with the police in reporting sexual assault:

"I guess as a teenager I smoked pot and did things that I thought the police wouldn't approve of but in general I've had positive interactions with the police. I haven't ever thought they were just bad people but after that interaction [with the detective] like I

legitimately don't have any trust in the police department.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I think my faith in them has kind of gone down a lot since then [reporting the assault] just because you think that these are people who are here to help you and you're supposed to trust them, because it's always 'just call 911 if there's a problem'. And then when I finally was like yeah I should do that, it just felt weird not being supported in that way.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

One victim spoke to the changing opinions of police, and attribute these shifting views to the blind respect police assume when interacting with community members. As someone who grew up in the 1960s, she compared the respect police automatically received back then, to today where respect is taught as something to be earned.

“You were raised to listen to adults. That an adult could give you a beating if you did something wrong. Not that level of beating, but you know what I'm talking about. That you had to listen and respect adults simply because they were adults. That ended in the 60s. And I see some police officers today still expecting that kind of non-earned respect.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

This woman felt that both police and citizens want to be respected, but issues arise when one party (police) expect respect but do not treat others (victims) respectfully. Interestingly, another participant explained that she willingly shared all of her information with the detective, despite her lack of trust in the police. She later attributed her openness to being raised to trust and cooperate with the police:

“I didn't really have a trust in them [the detectives], which is so weird that I trusted them with that information and I didn't keep it to myself. But you see as a child you were raised to trust in the police. I was raised in an upper middle-class family so maybe that's what happened was that I reverted back to that.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

d. **Negative views of the police**

In describing their views toward the police, eighteen interview participants (64%) made statements to support negative views of the police. Two victims discussed both positive and negative interactions with different officers. Unlike those described at the start of this section, the

positive interaction did not outweigh the negative interactions. As such, both these victims hold unfavorable views toward the police. The excerpts below from five participants highlight victims' negative views of the police, often as a result of their negative interactions with detectives:

“I think that (police department) looks at sexual assault and thinks, but we have real crime going on.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I immediately don't trust police officers at all and in like any environment. [...] In terms of any crime or any kind of way that you would want to rely on police, I don't.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I had just terrible experiences with the police outside of that [sexual assault] too. So, I just don't really have faith in them.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I kind of hate you [the detective] right now. You're actually the worst and made things so much worse. So, I left.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I don't have much faith in (city) police department at all. Like they will not do anything. That could be very well because I had so many negative experiences, so after that I'm just kind of like everyone in the police department is untrustworthy to me. I am just so disgusted every time I see them [the police] now and I just have no...I don't trust them with anything.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The participant in the quote above spoke about her views of the police specific to the police department she interacted with. Her experience colored her views toward one police department, yet her views toward the police *in general* remained unscathed. Another participant discussed her strong distrust in the police following ongoing interactions during the investigation of her child sexual abuse. Almost 20 years later, she still feels negatively about police:

“I think I am also a little bit scared of cops. Like I don't trust them to protect me but I also don't trust them to not hurt me, which is unfortunate. Like if I walk my dog late at night in the park by myself late at night because the police drive around to the parks and stuff. And when I see them come up, I don't feel safer I just feel like great, there's two more men here that I don't trust and who also will have no repercussions if they do hurt me. So, in a way I kind of trust police less because I know for certain that they can in a way – and I think a lot of women feel this way – but after having been assaulted like that I know that at the end of the day most times if there is a man walking somewhere and the opportunity is right, that like if he wanted to, he could hurt me and that's a scary feeling that I don't think a lot

of people realize. And when you add that on top of being a police officer, so then it's like who do you call on a police officer? So then yeah, I have even more distrust. Which sucks.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Two participants who shared negative sentiments about the police discussed taking on an advocacy role in response to the harmful treatment they experienced by the detectives who investigated their case.

“I am much more passionate about making sure that this sort of situation, as in the after response that I got, does not happen again in this city, in this state, in this country, in this world. Like I don't think that is okay. I'm still more angry at the police than I am at him [the perpetrator].” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“Oh, I hated the police enough to become an advocate just so I could ensure that they didn't treat other women like that.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The participant in the first quote above remarked how she was more upset with the police than she was at the perpetrator. This illustrates the magnitude of the effect mistreatment can have on perceptions of the police. The nature of the assault may also affect victims' confidence in the police to investigate sexual assault cases. Three victims discussed their lack of faith in the handling of assaults that occur in the context of domestic violence, as expressed in the excerpts made by two of these women:

“I think they [the police] would make it worse. Because there is a lot of bias, especially around the domestic violence area. If I was assaulted on the [public transportation] then they would probably believe me but because I was in a relationship, then people have the tendency to not believe you and just kind of dismiss it. They don't really take it seriously.” – Interview participant (F, Hisp, 40-60)

“The police aren't really going to protect you if they think it's domestic. I really feel like if you're in a relationship with a man that you have no rights because nothing would happen from the police. They'd [perpetrator] would have to kill you or else they would just be like 'hey, that's your man, you should have known better.' It just seems like they don't have many tools to help the victim and it doesn't seem like they want to help the victim. It just seems like something they are not interested in. Women being sexually abused and held against their will is just not of interest to them. If you know him [the perpetrator] then it's your fault. 'Why would you be with a man like that?' That's what they said to me.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, unknown)

Two participants spoke about the gender of the detective they interacted with. One discussed her surprise that she was treated so poorly by a female detective. She expected the interaction to go well once she saw the detective was a woman but felt so mistreated that it altered her views of the police despite the positive experience she had with another detective. The other spoke about feeling that male police are unwilling to assist most sexual assault victims:

“Maybe it’s a man thing and so they don’t care – a man did it, they’re a man, so they don’t care. I don’t know but if I had been their daughters they would care. So, unless it’s personal they don’t care.” – Interview participant (F, AA, Over 60)

Overall, victims were variant in their views toward the police. It was clear that several factors affect victim views of the police, though interactions with the officers and detectives during the investigation of sexual assault appeared to be particularly salient.

### 3. Summary

Qualitative and quantitative analyses were integrated to lend explanation to Research Question Five: *How do victims’ perceptions of their interaction(s) with the detective(s) who worked on their case influence their views of the police?* In quantitative results, victim judgments of procedural justice were predictive of trust and confidence in the police. Victims who perceived their interactions with the detective(s) working on their case to be procedurally just had higher trust and confidence in the police. Results indicate that quality detective interactions and positive treatment do play a considerable role in views of the police, but suggest that there are other factors that contribute to trust and confidence as well. Qualitative results showed that views of the police are not static. Five victims made statements that reflected positive views of the police, but none had definitive positive views. Where victims described positive feelings toward the police, they also provided explanations that countered these views. Only one victim

expressed clearly negative views of the police, which she described as a general distrust as a result of her ongoing negative experiences in resolving her child sexual assault (CSA) case. However, even she still acknowledged that not *all* officers are bad. Most victims were clearly mixed in their feelings toward the police. Many did not want to generalize their views based on their personal experiences and prior knowledge of the police. How individuals perceived the police was also affected by other experiences with the police – both in other experiences as a sexual assault victim and experiences not as a victim, which may weigh differently into overall views. Several victims also discussed the influence of what is happening with the police in the media, specifically the police brutality of African Americans that sparked the Black Lives Matter movement (see Rickford, 2016). Views of the police appear to be affected by a myriad of things, but what is clear from this data are that the interactions that take place in reporting and investigating sexual assault do make a difference in individuals’ overall opinions of the police. Even for victims who do not want to generalize their views to all police, they still remembered the positive or negative interactions they had when thinking about or asked to talk about their experience reporting sexual assault to the police. Together, quantitative and qualitative results indicate that quality interactions – particularly those rooted in procedural justice – play a role in how victims view the police.

#### I. **Research Question 6: Willingness to Report Future Crimes**

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to answer Research Question Six: *How do victims’ perceptions of their interactions with the detective(s) who worked on their case relate to willingness to report future crimes?* Quantitative survey data were used to test the relationship between victim judgments of procedural justice during detective interactions and willingness to report future crimes (H8). Qualitative interview data explored victims’ experiences with the

detective(s) who investigated their case and their subsequent willingness to report future crime victimizations to the police. Results from each method are presented below, followed by an integrated summary.

1. **Quantitative results**

a. **Hypothesis 8**

A regression model tested the hypothesis: victims who perceive their interaction(s) with the detective(s) as more procedurally just will be more likely to report future crimes to the police. Assault injury was the only control variable significant in the bivariate analysis and thus included in the regression model. Table XII shows the results of the regression model.

The regression model predicting victims' willingness to report future crimes based on judgments of procedural justice during detective contact(s) was significant,  $F(2, 87) = 31.509$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $R^2 = .421$ ,  $\text{Adjusted } R^2 = .407$ . Victim judgments of procedural justice during interactions with the detective(s) accounted for about 40% of the variance in willingness to report future crimes to the police. Victims regarding their interaction with the detective as procedurally justice was significantly associated with victims' indication of willingness to report future crimes. Physical injury as a result of the assault was also significantly related to willingness to report future crimes, and accounted for approximately 8% of the variance in the dependent variable. Victims who sustained physical injury as a result of the sexual assault were less likely to indicate that they would report future crimes to the police.

**TABLE XII****REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING WILLINGNESS TO REPORT FUTURE CRIMES TO THE POLICE <sup>a</sup>**

	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$
Physical injury (1=No; 2=Yes)	-.63	.22	-.28***	-.48	.18	-.21***
Judgments of procedural justice during detective interaction(s)	-	-	-	.61	.08	.58***

<sup>a</sup> \* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using an interaction term of physical injury and judgments of procedural justice to test for a possible moderation effect on willingness to report future crimes to the police. The interaction term was entered as a second step in the model, following physical injury and judgments of procedural justice. The interaction term did not significantly predict willingness to report future crimes to the police ( $p = .099$ ). Thus, a moderating effect was not found, indicating that the relationship between judgments of procedural justice and willingness to report future crimes is the same for victims who were and were not injured as a result of the assault.

## 2. **Qualitative results**

Interview participants were asked to discuss whether they would report a future assault to the police, or advise a friend to report. Participants used the knowledge and experience obtained in their previous reporting and investigation experiences to determine whether they would report should a similar crime occur. Where several participants ( $n=9$ ) stated they would not report again, most participants ( $n=19$ ) were open to reporting a future sexual assault to the police. Those who were unwilling to report again discussed their reluctance to do so because of previous

negative police experiences. Interestingly, not all participants who stated they would report in the future had positive experiences with the police. Rather, they included criteria under which they would report again. Participants were also motivated through other means to report again. Many victims were willing to report again despite their negative experiences, often for altruistic reasons. This section presents victims' responses regarding their willingness to report future crimes.

a. **Reluctance to report due to negative investigation experiences**

When asked if they would report a future assault to the police, nine participants discussed their reluctance to report again due to their negative experiences reporting the assault they discussed in the interview. The quotes below illustrate three different participant's responses when asked about their willingness to report in the future.

"I knew almost instantly that I wasn't [going to report]. I just knew that I couldn't go through it again." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"I immediately like don't trust police officers at all and in like any environment. Like obviously god forbid I am assaulted again, if I report it I would expect the same thing [from the police] and so I probably wouldn't report it for that reason. But in terms of any crime or any kind of way you would want to rely on police, I don't." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"I don't think so. It was just so damaging the things he [the detective] said. I wouldn't want to go through that again." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

In the first quote, the participant discussed her feelings after reporting an acquaintance revictimization experience that occurred when she was an adult, after her CSA experiences that were reported to the police. Here, it was clear from her previous negative experiences with the police and legal system that she immediately decided she would not report her adult sexual assault experience to the police. She felt that reporting her CSA to the police did nothing to help her, and so she felt that in reporting an alcohol-facilitated adult sexual assault that the police

would again do nothing to help her. The other two quotes are from victims whose negative experiences colored their willingness to report in the future. For both of these women, the treatment they received reporting their initial sexual assault that they would be unwilling to risk additional harmful treatment reporting another sexual assault in the future. One victim discussed her willingness to report in the future. In reporting an alcohol-facilitated acquaintance assault, she did not receive legal justice because the detective never contacted her again after their initial meeting. So, in thinking about possibly reporting in the future, or advising a friend to report, she discussed her unrequited desire for justice, as well as her retraumatizing interaction with the detective.

“I would want them [other victims] to have justice. I think like my own desire for justice at this point would influence my decision, you know what I mean? Like I would want, like vicariously want justice through them. But yeah, I would be really hesitant to ever suggest that they would report to the police just because of the interactions that I had and the way that it hurt me made it so much harder to recover. I wouldn’t really want that for anybody else.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The victim in the quote above appeared mixed in her willingness to report, where on one hand she wanted justice but was unable to receive that, and wanted other victims to have the opportunity for justice. Yet, on the other hand, she had a negative detective experience herself and therefore was reluctant to suggest other victims report out of fear they would have a harmful detective interaction. Another victim discussed her interactions with detectives in relation to two separate sexual assaults. She had a negative experience when reporting the first assault, which led her to become a rape victim advocate. Her second investigation experience was, as she described, not as bad but not positive either. When asked if she would advise a friend to report, she gave responses as both an advocate and as a friend:

“I mean, if somebody asked my personal opinion, as an advocate I wouldn’t want to influence the person, but as a friend then I would just go on and on about how awful [the police] were.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The quote above reveals how victims use their own experiences in recommending others to report or not, further illustrating the presence of vicarious experiences on decisions regarding the police. Similarly, another participant spoke about how she would not report to the police again. However, if a friend came to her seeking advice about reporting, she would pursue other avenues of justice with this friend and make her aware of her negative reporting experience. In these situations, victims told their friends about their negative experience as a warning to others who may have been debating reporting to the police. During her interview, one participant discussed her interactions with the police in several different capacities – including domestic disputes, financial abuse, as a protester, and as a sexual assault victim. Through a culmination of these experiences, she discussed her underlying distrust in police. When asked about reporting crimes in the future, she said that she would report, but be less willing to share information. She discussed the link between lack of trust in the police and willingness to report crimes:

“When you live in a neighborhood where you’re not sure if the police are going to protect you from retaliation, you’re not likely to pick up that phone [to report]. You know? And if you’re not going to report a nonviolent crime, then it’s not likely you’re going to report a more serious crime.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

Another participant spoke about her reluctance to report a future assault to the police because of the emotional distress reporting previous assaults caused her. She, like several other participants, discussed the unsettling feeling of being a victim in the current political climate:

“It’s a frustrating world and I think that, getting back to reporting, I think that more people have less faith that society or the system will do anything for them. If you can get elected and have done that [sexual assault and harassment] as a president, nobody is really going to give a shit about ‘Josh’ at the bar who did more than you wanted him to.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The above quote illustrates the influence of the larger societal environment on reporting. Even something as situationally removed as the current political leaders, can cause victims to feel that

they will not be supported by other authority figures (such as the police) when reporting sexual assault. Perhaps this could also lead to more violence if offenders know they will not be reprimanded in the current political climate. Overall, the information shared by victims regarding willingness to report future crimes, connects the dots between negative experiences and reluctance to report revictimization (or advise others to report) for several victims in this sample.

b. **Willingness to report future crimes**

Most participants in this sample were willing to report to the police in the future, or advise others to report. Victims who had positive experiences were willing to report again should a similar crime occur. Not all victims who were willing to report future crimes had positive interactions with the officers and detectives they interacted with previously. For the participants in the quotes below, their negative experiences with the detective when they first reported would not deter them from reporting in the future:

“I think it would take more than one bad experience for me personally to not contact the authorities.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I’m not afraid now. If something happened to me now, I’m just gonna speak up [to the police].” – Interview participant (F, AA, 30-40)

The victims in the quotes above were not deterred from reporting future crimes due to their negative experiences reporting. Particularly in the second quote above, she felt that receiving a negative reaction from the detectives prepared her for the possibility of other negative interactions, showing a type of empowerment that surfaced after the harmful treatment from the detective. Another participant who had a negative detective interaction during the investigation of an alcohol-facilitated acquaintance assault discussed how, despite this, she would still report again. However, she discussed how her experienced helped her to understand why other victims often choose to not report:

“I can see now why people wouldn’t report because I think before this happened to me, I’d be like well why wouldn’t you just report? It is actually harder to really convince yourself [to report] and then have trust in people you don’t know to go and find someone or do something about the situation, especially in that situation. So, I think that I definitely identify more with people who don’t talk to other people and who are freaked out by the police. It makes sense now. And I’m a little bitter sometimes thinking about it, like oh God the police.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The victim in the quote above spoke about how to this day, she still has bitter feelings toward the police but would still report a future victimization. While she personally felt that she would report again to do her part to aid in the prevention of future crime, she explained that her negative experience made her more sympathetic to those who do not report, showing that her negative experience would not deter her from reporting but because of that she wouldn’t necessarily encourage *others* to report. Conversely, a victim who had a highly positive experience with the detectives who worked on the investigation spoke about her willingness to report again:

“I mean God forbid if it did ever happen again, I would still like reach out to the police and expect them to do just as good of a job and yes there’s always room for improvement but if not just as good, then better of a job with me this time around too. [...] And to be honest, I would probably contact the same detectives that I had. We had just built this weird family from this really horrible situation but we trusted each other; we worked with each other so closely for so long.” – Interview participant (F, AA, 30-40)

The above quote shows the power of a positive investigation experience. This participant described a positive experience with the detectives during the investigation of her stranger perpetrated assault, and discussed that without hesitation she would report to the police again. Further, her experience with the detectives in this case were so positive that she felt she could contact the same detectives with confidence that the experience would again be positive. Yet, unfortunately only a handful of victims had highly positive experiences like the victim in the quote above, but her story illustrates the possibility of building a strong working relationship with detectives that facilitate an unwavering willingness to report crime.

c. **The necessity of self-advocacy in future reporting**

Six victims stated they would be willing to report again or advise others to report, but would go about the reporting process differently than they did the first time they reported sexual assault. These participants talked about taking matters into their own hands, meaning self-advocating on their behalf, rather than relying on the system in their pursuit of legal justice. This is expressed in the two selected excerpts below:

“I have had both very good and very bad experiences with police officers and detectives reporting and investigating sexual violence. I think the key is to navigate the system so that you find the officers or are more likely to get the officers who are going to be receptive and sensitive and take your case seriously. You have to self-advocate – which I know a lot of survivors are not in a position to be able to do – or get someone to advocate for you. And unfortunately, often, you don’t have any control over who you get and you have to go with the luck of the draw. So, bottom line, I wouldn’t recommend that someone report to the police unless they have a really clear-cut case, they know he’s a repeat offender so they want to help establish a pattern, or they aren’t hyper-traumatized and aren’t easily triggered, and/or they have a phenomenal support system of advocates and friends and people who know the system and can help them navigate and advocate.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 40-60)

“Yeah [I would report] but I would take it upon my own self-education about this fucking city and how the system works and I would pretty much bypass every regular step I possibly could with the information I had, and do it on my own. I could go through my own channels and I would do my own research and I wouldn’t trust one fucking person.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

The victims in the two quotes above represent the handful of victims in this sample who would report, despite their negative detective interactions, but would be careful to consider the situation and, to some degree, take matters into their own hands. The victim in the first quote spoke about considering the circumstances of which the assault occurred, suggesting that the case characteristics influence how victims are treated by detectives. Both quotes speak to the necessity of self-advocating, including self-educating in order to navigate the system on his/her own, establishing a strong informal support network, and utilizing other channels (e.g., advocacy agency) throughout the process. Unfortunately, not all victims have the knowledge, resources,

and emotional capability to self-advocate during the reporting and investigation process. The implication that many victims are willing to go to additional measures to protect their own self-interests during the reporting process shows that victims are motivated to report, and are not completely deterred from negative interactions. This further shows that victims will go to extremes of exceptional cooperation to achieve justice. However, for these victims, it took enduring negative police interactions to learn how to navigate the reporting and investigation process. For others, the decision to report again depended on the situation. Victims discussed only reporting future crimes if their immediate safety was threatened, if they had physical evidence, or if they could report the assault to a different police department than the one that they interacted with in previous reporting experiences.

“If it’s something where you wait a couple weeks then to me it’s just like something that isn’t going to be worth it emotionally because in my eyes, there’s not much that you can do and it’s just going to cause you to retraumatize yourself. I definitely have the faith that if some immediate danger was happening, calling the police is definitely a good idea. I don’t feel like they’re totally useless.” – Interview participants (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I wouldn’t go to the police station in (city). I would not report anything to them.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I would be hesitant [to report again] if it were something where I didn’t have any kind of evidence because then it’s just stress on me and that my story is going to be picked apart and probably nothing come of it.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

In this final quote, the victim stated that she would report to the police if she had evidence to present to the officers. She also stated that if her situation was similar to the first assault she reported – where there was little physical evidence and the investigation did not proceed – she would not report.

“No [I would not report if there was no evidence] because I mean, even though nothing came of it [reporting] it was pretty traumatizing just going through the motions with the cops like that.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

This again illustrates that victims make informed decisions when reporting to the police, and learn from their previous reporting experiences. Two women in this sample were assaulted by their (at the time) spouses in a domestic violence situation. Both of these victims reported to the police and felt that they were mistreated by the detectives they interacted with due to the domestic nature of their assault. As such, both of these women discussed their unwillingness to report future domestic crimes to the police and willingness to report non-domestic crimes.

“I would call the police. I’m going to pretend that it is a stranger that attacked me because if you don’t know them they will treat it like a real attack. It makes me not interested in communicating with the police on any level. It would have to be something very serious. I wouldn’t want to communicate with them [the police] based on what I’ve seen [in my past reporting experience].” – Interview participant (F, Wh, unknown)

The above quotes indicate that victims do take the experience from their first reporting and investigation experience and use that knowledge to determine their actions in the future.

Together, the quotes in this section illustrate that the experiences victims have reporting do play a part in their future reporting decisions, though negative experiences do not always lead to unwillingness to report.

d. **Willingness to report despite previous experiences**

Many victims in this sample described negative detective interactions during the investigation that they tended to perceive as harmful and revictimizing. However, after describing these experiences and the emotional distress that occurred during these experiences, more often than not, victims were still willing to report to the police should a similar crime occur. In these situations, victims were asked to elaborate on their willingness to report, despite their negative experiences. Twelve participants explained altruistic motives for future reporting. Specifically, these participants were willing to endure potentially hurtful reporting and investigation experiences to aid in the prevention of future sexual assaults. More than altruism,

these victims expressed the guilt they would feel *not* reporting, which was described as worse than another potentially revictimizing investigation experience. The quotes below are from four of the victims who had negative and hurtful interactions with the detectives working on their case. Despite this, they explained they would report to the police should a similar crime occur, and advise others to report:

“I would. Like I think that obviously, every police officer is not the same and I think it’s better to be safe than sorry kind of. Like I wouldn’t not [report] because you have one bad experience. Like you might have a bad experience again but to me it’s worth it to report the person if it means they might not do it to someone else or if you might get a little bit of help.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I know now that it would suck having to tell them [the police] things again, but you might as well. You don’t have anything to lose at this point. And if they [the police] can stop something else from occurring then it’s worth it.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I think it would have been worse if I hadn’t [reported], definitely because I would have felt like I didn’t do anything. And so, I kind of thought just rip the Band-Aid off and just do it. And I think it was the right thing to do. I tried.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“You need to do it for other women! If you don’t report something it means that guy actually takes it as permission to do it again. It [reporting] is always about the other women. Always.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

The victim in the final quote above went on to explain that she was raised to always “do the right thing” and that as a victim, she has the responsibility to report to the police. Several victims were willing to report again and again regardless of the treatment they received in the process because reporting to the police was a value instilled in them as a child. For them, they would always report, because reporting is what people are supposed to do when a crime is committed. It is possible that reporting values are something shared by many victims. Similar to the sentiments shared in third quote above, victims sometimes found solace in knowing that they at least tried to help other individuals by reporting the crime. Though they endured a revictimizing experience (as was the case with the participant in that quote), doing all they could to prevent future assaults

was helpful to their emotional well-being because they were not faced with the additional guilt of not having reported. Another victim discussed the guilt she felt for not initially reporting alcohol-facilitated assault perpetrated by a man she met at a bar. After the assault, she investigated on her own to find the name of the man who assaulted her. Though she eventually reported, she discussed her feelings for not reporting sooner:

“The impetus for reporting it was knowing his name because since I did know that I think I felt empowered at least at first to be able to prevent that from happening in the future. And I think that tends to be the biggest source of guilt for me in the past few years is feeling like this is a person whose identity I know, who probably targeted me because I was out of town and he didn’t think I would find out who he was. And the I just kind of kept that knowledge to myself. [...] And I think you might regret not doing it but you’re not going to regret reporting it. So, I would say do yourself a favor potentially later on and report now.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

For this woman, the guilt of not aiding in prevention was one of the more salient feelings she had in the aftermath of assault. She went on to state that because of the guilt she experienced, she would advise others to report. One victim reported the (stranger perpetrated) sexual assault she experienced right after it occurred, but nothing came of the investigation. As she described, the detective treated her poorly, so she was not willing to cooperate with the investigation. The perpetrator went on to rape several other women, and after about a decade, faced charges for these assaults. The victim discussed the guilt she felt when she found out there were victims after her:

“I know it’s not my fault what’s happened to those other girls but I cannot help thinking that I played a part in that. I know it’s not my fault. Sometimes I think it is because it goes back to how I felt in the very beginning – did I say something that made her [the detective] not believe me? Should I have cooperated when she called me a year later? But you know what, a year later I was still so victimized, I was still being protective of myself and I was not thinking about any other possible victims. I didn’t have it in me to think about anybody else because I was exhausted.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 30-40)

In this situation, this woman explained this guilt would be the driving force behind reporting in the future. Similarly, another woman reported to the police after her friends – who were also sexual assault victims – told her that she would regret it if she did not report.

“When you report, lots of people come up to you and say ‘me too’. And lots of, I’ve had three if not four friends, close friends, who have said me too and I didn’t report it and I later regretted it.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

This participant went on to report the assault, and explained the harmful experience she had with the responding officers who handled her case, and one of the two detectives with whom she interacted. Despite this, she agreed that she would have regretted not reporting and stated that she would report in the future. In these situations, the guilt felt on behalf of other potential victims was a factor in reporting the assault in the first place for some, but also the catalyst for their willingness to report assaults in the future. This suggests that previous negative experiences do not completely color victims’ views on reporting in the future. Although they recalled these negative interactions and may have poor views of the police, other motives – such as altruism and reporting values – can serve as a greater factor in their willingness to report subsequent sexual assault crimes.

### 3. **Summary**

Quantitative and qualitative results explored victims’ willingness to report future crimes to the police, based on their experience reporting previous sexual assault incidents. Quantitative results showed that judgments of procedural justice predicted victims’ willingness to report future crimes to the police. Victims who perceived their interactions to be procedurally just were more likely to indicate they would report to the police should a similar crime occur.

Interestingly, victims who were physically injured as a result of the assault were less likely to indicate they would report in the future, though no moderating relationship was found.

Procedural justice accounted for 40% of the variance in willingness to report in the future, suggesting that detective interactions are a large contributing factor in victims' willingness to report in the future but that there are also other factors at play in this decision. Qualitative results supported this, suggesting that other factors affect victims' willingness to report future crimes, such as the circumstances of the assault and the ability to self-advocate in future reporting. In interviews, several victims stated they would report again, but only under certain circumstances, such as if the assault was committed by a stranger, if there was physical evidence, or if the assault occurred in another police department's jurisdiction. Where quantitative results indicated that the quality of detective interactions affected willingness to report in the future, qualitative results suggest that this was not the case for most victims. Only nine victims who had negative interactions stated they would not report again. Most victims – regardless of their previous reporting experience – stated that they would report again (or advise others to report). This typically was the case for one of two reasons: for altruistic reasons (guilt on behalf of other victims) and because of personal reporting values. Both of these reasons suggest an underlying feeling of responsibility for reporting crimes, and indicate that willingness to report future crimes is not completely contingent on the quality of detective interactions. Rather, the quality of detective interactions appears to be something that is considered but often gets eclipsed by other factors or varies by individual differences.

#### J. **Research Question 7: Recovery**

Quantitative and qualitative methods explored Research Question Seven: *How do victims' perceptions of the detective interactions during the reporting and investigation process relate to victim recovery?* Quantitative survey responses were used to test the relationship between victim perceptions of their interactions with the detective(s) during the investigation

process and victim self-assessments of reporting-related recovery (H9). Qualitative interview data were used to further explore this relationship through victims' discussion of the investigation process and how this affected their feelings and recovery following the assault. Results from each method are presented in the sections below, followed by an integrative summary in response to Research Question Seven.

1. **Quantitative results**

- a. **Hypothesis 9**

Regression analysis tested the hypothesis: high judgments of procedural justice during detective interaction(s) are related to greater feelings of recovery. Victim race/ethnicity and education were included in the model as control variables. Results are displayed in Table XIII.

The regression model was significant  $F(3, 86) = 8.355, p = .000, R^2 = .226$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .199$  suggesting that judgments of procedural justice are predictive of victim recovery. Judgments of procedural justice accounted for approximately 20% of variance of victim assessments of recovery. Victims who judged their interaction(s) with the detective during the investigation of their case as *not* procedurally just were more likely to indicate that reporting the assault made recovery worse for them. In other words, procedural justice in police-victim interactions contributes to victims' perceived recovery. Victim race was marginally significantly related to the dependent variable ( $p = .06$ ), suggesting that White victims were more likely to indicate that reporting their assault to the police made recovery more difficult.

**TABLE XIII**REGRESSION MODEL PREDICTING REPORTING-RELATED RECOVERY <sup>a</sup>

	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	SE	$\beta$
Victim education level	-.15	.19	-.08	-.24	.17	-.13
Victim race (1=White; 2=Non-White)	-.19	.25	-.08	-.43	.23	-.18*
Judgments of procedural justice during detective interaction(s)	-	-	-	-.49	.10	-.47***

<sup>a</sup> \* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$

A regression model including an interaction term of victim race and judgments of procedural justice was used to test for a possible moderation effect on recovery. The interaction term was entered as a second step in the model, following victim education, victim race, and judgments of procedural justice. The interaction term did not significantly predict recovery ( $p = .755$ ). A moderating effect was not found, suggesting that race does not alter the strength of the relationship between judgments of procedural justice and recovery.

## 2. Qualitative results

Interview participants who reported to the police discussed whether their interactions with the responding officers and/or detectives who worked on their case affected their recovery from the assault. First, interview results showed that both interactions with the responding officers and detectives can contribute to victim recovery. Not surprisingly, participants who had positive detective interactions stated more often that reporting the assault was helpful for their recovery. By contrast, participants who perceived their interactions with the detectives as negative or hurtful felt that reporting made recovery more difficult. For some, even though they felt mistreated by the officers they interacted with they still regarded the reporting process as

helpful in recovery. This was found also for victims when (to their disappointment) their assault was not investigated. This suggests that while treatment by detectives can have an influence on emotional well-being after assault, there are other aspects of the reporting and/or investigation process that contribute to recovery. The following section presents statements victims made related to detective interactions and recovery.

a. **Investigation experiences that facilitate recovery**

Five participants spoke about positive interactions with detectives that were helpful for recovery. One victim spoke about the negative interaction she had with the responding officers she met in the hospital following an alcohol-facilitated assault perpetrated by an acquaintance. Where this negative interaction was harmful to her emotional state, she explained that her positive follow-up contact with the detective was helpful:

“He [the detective] told me that what had happened to me was not my fault, like specifically said that. And told me that he was going to get this guy and that he was a total creep and nobody should be allowed to do this to a woman. He was like really empowering. I think if it had just been the beat cop and that I never had an interaction with the detective then I would have probably spiraled into an awful depression. I just feel like I would have really latched on to what he [the responding officer] said and it would have been much harder for me to get over that.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

For this victim, the positive interaction with the detective compensated for the emotional hurt she suffered from the interaction she first had with the responding officers. Though her case did not result in filed charges, she still felt that the positive interaction she had with the detective was helpful to her recovery, suggesting the power of process oriented investigation over outcome-oriented investigations. Another victim had a positive investigation experience that resulted in a conviction of the perpetrator, who was a family friend. Though the sentence was only two years, the victims spoke of the emotional healing that came along with knowing the perpetrator was incarcerated:

“It was that peace of mind that he wasn’t hurting other girls.” – Interview participant (F, unknown, unknown)

While the outcome of this case aided in the victim’s recovery, she also discussed the importance of having supportive detectives:

“Victims shouldn’t feel like they’re alone in it. I: What about your process helped to make you feel like you weren’t alone? P: Knowing that the police officers that I had taking care of my case were supportive and acted like they care. You want to be able to feel like you have somebody who actually cares and if you’re not with somebody who cares, it’s going to make yourself a whole lot worse. Other than just being raped, it’s going to be worse off for you too. You have to be able to trust those people [police] to do what they say they’re going to do.” – Interview participant (F, unknown, unknown)

The participant in the quote above also talked about being harassed by the perpetrator’s family after reporting. She explained that she started to believe the hurtful things these people were saying, but the reassurance and support from the detectives helped to counter these negative responses. This highlights the importance of positive support for victims who report. Similarly, another participant had a positive experience with the detectives during the investigation of the stranger-perpetrated assault. She discussed the comfort she felt after the perpetrator was arrested, but the treatment she received from the detectives played a greater role in her recovery. She spoke about her distress following the assault, and how helpful it was to receive ongoing support from the detectives during the investigation.

“The only time I did leave my house during that time [the several weeks following the assault] was to go to the police station and then every other time because I was so scared that he [the perpetrator] was going to find me. So, knowing that [finding the perpetrator] was their [the detective’s] greatest motivation helped me feel like we were on the same team and that I have people in it with me together. Yes, I had my family but I needed the authorities to be in it with me.” – Interview participant (F, AA, 30-40)

**b. Investigation experiences that were harmful to recovery**

Sixteen participants discussed having negative investigation experiences that were harmful to their recovery. The quotes below exemplify the sentiments shared by five different

participants who had a more difficult recovery because of the hurtful interactions they had during the reporting and investigation process:

“I felt like it took a lot longer to get over that because of how they [the detectives] reacted to me.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I felt like no one was on my side. It was just really difficult.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“When that policeman said that [racist remark] I got so very humiliated and insulted and got mad with the policeman. I felt just as abused by him as I did by the rapist.” – Interview participant (F, AA, Over 60)

“The police, I felt like I was abused twice. I felt like I was being mentally battered by the police on a disrespectful level. I was just being disrespected in some of the worst ways possible – by a man whom I’ve loved for 17 years. They [the police] were treating me like I’m a piece of shit after I was already treated by shit by him [the perpetrator]. I thought about killing myself but I wasn’t going to give them the satisfaction.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, unknown)

“It was retraumatizing when they [the detectives] don’t make it clear what they are going to do and what they are going to follow up with me on. That was like the worst thing they could have done.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The participant in the final quote above suffered an assault by a romantic partner. The assault was reported without the victim’s consent. As she explained, the detectives did not contact her again after their initial meeting. As such, she did not know if the perpetrator was ever contacted or knew that the assault was reported. For her, this was the worst outcome: she (over a year later) was living in fear of this uncertainty. While her interactions with the detectives were harmful, not knowing if the assault was investigated (and perpetrator contacted) was more harmful to her recovery. This underscores the importance of follow-up contacts or creating an environment where victims feel comfortable inquiring about the status of their case.

One victim who suffered ongoing CSA (by her father) disclosed to her mother, who reported to the police (at age 4). They participated in the legal process, resulting in the victim having supervised visits with her father. After having harmful experiences during the legal

process, the abuse did not stop because the supervising police officers did not care to intervene. Of course, this was detrimental to the victim's emotional and physical state, having to undergo continued sexual abuse by her father. This also resulted in a silencing effect, where she did not disclose to anyone again for up to 10 years because disclosing did not help her before, but rather made things harder for her mother. This illustrates the silencing effect many victims experience after negative police interactions (see Ahrens, 2006). This can be additionally harmful to recovery, as it prevents victims from seeking the support they need.

One victim had a negative experience with the first detective she interacted with, but a positive experience with the second. She explained the emotional harm caused by the first detective:

“Well it was life or death I'd have to say because of the way I was treated [by the detective]. Nobody believed me. I had nobody to vent to because people literally did not believe me and I assumed nobody was going to believe me because the authorities did not believe me. So, all of the therapy I got and everything like that was self-initiated and I am very grateful for it because it did save my life because it was just continuous revictimization, just hurt in my head not believing me and revictimization every time, questioning whether or not it was something I said that made her [the detective] not believe me.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

In this situation, the emotional harms caused by the first detective were not reversed by the support provided by the second. Similar to the victim in the quote above, negative responses (including disbelief) by the detective was particularly hurtful to victims' recovery because it reinforced the negative feelings that were already lingering in the back of their minds. This occurred for most victims who had negative responses from detectives, captured in the statements of three victims below:

“I told him [the detective] I was at a bar by myself drinking and like his immediate response to that was like I shouldn't do that; that it's not a good idea to go out. It makes me really mad now. In the moment, I was feeling like everything was my fault and so I was just like, yeah you're totally right. He just affirmed all the inaccurate things I was thinking already.

It just made it so much harder for me to convince myself that it wasn't my fault." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"They [the detectives] were just like so why were you with him [the perpetrator]? A lot of blame with that because it was just so, this is my fault because I was talking to a guy and I don't even like guys. It's been like a year so I've gotten a lot better at being like it's not my fault at all. It took a lot after talking to the police, like that didn't help at all." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"It was like it [detective interaction] ended up erasing my thoughts of like I actually had a legitimate reason to be scared because I was just met with this lack of empathy, this lack of understanding where I was coming from so I was like well, damn, maybe it's not that big of a deal, maybe this is okay." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The quotes above illustrate the emotional damage caused by insensitive statements made by detectives during their interactions. This highlights the importance of rape victim advocates in providing positive support in attempt to counter the negative, as well as the need to implement training that makes detectives aware of the impact of their reactions to victims. Similar to the participants in the quotes above, disbelieving or invalidating statements made by detectives or responding officers often led victims to question their feelings, question their role in the assault, or nullify their concerns. As for the victim in the third quote above, she made contact with a detective when her abusive partner brought a gun into their home. She did not feel safe, but the detective's dismissive attitude made her question if her immediate safety was actually threatened. Another victim was assaulted by an acquaintance while she was sleeping in her bed, but he was supposed to be sleeping in another room. She explained that the detective blamed her for the incident and told her it was not a big deal. This invalidated the victim's traumatic experience and feelings, and led her to question if she was somehow responsible for the assault. Like many participants explained in their interviews, the quote below illustrates the link between hurtful interactions and more difficult recovery:

"My work literally did nothing to protect me. The police did nothing. And the detective was worst of all. [...] The police officers and detectives were the first people I told and

they were the worst responses I got telling someone so those responses kind of form how I see it now. They've definitely shaped how I have recovered from it in a very negative way because when something terrible happens and the first people that you tell basically tell you that this rape was your fault, that's what I believe now. I now question myself. And maybe if they hadn't responded in that way I wouldn't question that. Still a year and a half later I'm still trying to work through that or at least challenge some of those thoughts. They definitely made things worse for how it's been the past year and a half of trying to cope with this. [...] I have flashbacks to the night when the assault happened but now I also have flashbacks to when I met with the detective because that was also a traumatizing experience." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Several victims who received blaming or other hurtful responses from detectives were able to pinpoint why these statements were so harmful to their recovery. As the following quotes by three victims illustrate, statements made by detectives had a greater influence on recovery because they came from a figure of authority.

"Even when I meet with my therapist to this day and she's like 'I believe you' I'm like, well I hear that you believe me – and still to this day when people tell me like 'I believe you' and 'I believe what happened to you was not okay' I still can't really fully believe people when they tell me that because I would tell the police and they wouldn't believe me. So still when safe people like my therapist tell me, I'm like I'm not so sure. And I don't think it's too extreme of a statement to say that's because of the police and that's their fault I think that way now. And if they hadn't said that then maybe I would believe safe people when they tell me now like I believe you and it wasn't your fault. It's like that's their [the police's] job and that's what they do every day. They didn't believe me and they didn't take me seriously, then I don't know why you [other people] are. So, that's more of a thought process that I have now and something still a year and a half working on. I wasn't thinking those things before I reported." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"Your family is your family but I feel like it's just a little bit different when it's an authority figure. Having them say it ["It's not your fault"] I think goes a little bit further. Like having an authority figure who has experience and who has gone through this sort of thing before, hopefully more times than the person has, I think would have helped. Because I think in the moment when I was watching the news [regarding the assault] I would have been able to recall the memory of a police officer saying it's not your fault and it just helps the internal battle a little bit more." – Interview participant (F, AA, 30-40)

"I was just so upset when I left the police station. It [detective's response] just made me really hopeless and helpless because again it was this thing I knew I was going through and the police are supposed to make sure you are safe and they were like I don't care about you. And so, you're going through the abuse and it all sort of compacts on it and makes you feel helpless because you're like man, my perpetrator thinks nothing of me, people

who are *supposed* to care about my safety think nothing of me.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

For several victims in this sample, negative responses and interactions with detectives led to victims’ further emotional distress, including questioning their culpability for the assault and being skeptical of supportive statements made by other people. Victims discussed still coping with the damage caused during these interactions several months – or years – after the fact. This suggests the influence detectives can have on victims’ recovery process, and that they may not be aware of the weight they carry as an authority figure in these situations.

c. **Empowerment and validation through reporting**

Several participants spoke about the empowerment they felt from reporting to the police and participating in the investigation. These victims felt empowered and validated by the reporting and investigation process itself, even if the detectives were not empowering or validating in their behaviors and interactions. After her assault, one victim took the investigation into her own hands and tracked down the (stranger) perpetrator. From there, she assisted the detective with the investigation as much as she was allowed. She discussed the positive interactions she had with the detective, as well as how assisting with the investigation helped her emotionally:

“When someone sexually assaults you, you lose like so much of your own control and free will. I liked when I at least had control in the investigation. Like that helped kind of get some of that back.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

For her, assisting with the investigation served as a distraction from the actual assault, but also was empowering in that she was taking back some of the control she lost when she was assaulted. Though the investigation did not result in an arrest, she still felt that participating was helpful to her recovery. This illustrates an emotional benefit of exceptional cooperation. Like the participant in the quote above, one participant went through her own channels to identify the

(acquaintance) who assaulted her. Though her assault was reported but not formally investigated, she discussed the power she felt simply by knowing the identity of her assailant, and knowing that he does not know she has this information.

“I think a lot about how I feel powerful in some ways that I know who he [the perpetrator] is and he doesn’t know that I know who he is. [After reporting] I felt proud of myself in the same way you feel proud of yourself when you like go to the doctor and you don’t want to and you’re like oh I did something good for my health. So, I felt proud of myself for doing kind of the right thing in a way – something that was good for me and something that was good for everybody potentially. And I felt like I had done something both brave and important.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

In addition to the two above, four other participants discussed feeling empowered by reporting and participating in the investigation. One victim described herself as passive and timid person, but dealing with the unhelpful police officers, legal personnel, and administrators at her school after reporting the assault helped her gain boldness and courage to advocate for herself.

Similarly, another participant commented on the transition she underwent during the investigation that gave her the strength to continue through the legal process:

“At some point, I just sort of transitioned from being terrified and anxious to being really angry. And once I transitioned to being really angry, it was not a problem for me to keep going.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

One victim had a negative interaction with the responding officers and first detective she interacted with. She spoke about how the negative reactions she received from those officers, while hurtful, were actually empowering. She shared her reaction to the negative treatment she received:

“Because I had expected a little bit of a negative reaction or pushback like having that reaction from the police made me no longer afraid of negative reactions because I was like well that was the worst, I clearly had nothing to do with that. That’s a problem. The problem is your reaction to this and so I felt like that kind of galvanized me a little bit.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

In this situation, the empowerment from the negative responses she received from those three officers drove her to find another detective to speak with about pursuing her case. Further than this, she was driven to do other things that aided in her recovery, such as seek therapy, file a formal complaint with the officers and detective who mistreated her, file a complaint with her employer, and assist with the investigation to a great extent.

Three participants discussed the empowerment they felt reporting to the police because it created an official record of what happened. Whether or not they were believed or treated well, their story was documented. As one of these women pointed out, there are only two people who know the story – the victim and the perpetrator – which are likely opposing. So, reporting can be a way to validate that side of the story.

“You don’t have to sit there and be all scared all the time. You can turn it [the assault] into a better situation so think things like that are definitely good about reporting. And you get your story out so you know other people will know it and it’s not like you just made it up in your head. So just being validated like that. I think that did give me more willingness to share [with others].” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Beyond empowerment through reporting, another participant spoke about feeling empowered knowing she could report at any time. As she explained, the statute of limitations is restricted to pursuing charges, not filing a report – something that many victims may be unaware. So, she found a source of power in the knowledge that she can report anytime:

“I think it is much more empowering to be able to say I can always report. You know? Because that’s claiming power. I’m choosing not to and I can hold that over you. I can still report you and I can get this documented. [...] It happened when I reported to the police [30 years after the assault] that it was a really powerful experience.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 40-60)

As the quotes above illustrate, several participants felt empowered through the act of reporting and participating in the investigation itself, regardless of how they perceived their interactions with the officers they encountered during this process. Through this empowerment, better post-

assault adjustment can occur. However, for most victims in this sample, negative detective interactions made recovery more difficult, whereas positive interactions helped with the recovery process.

### 3. **Summary**

Quantitative and qualitative methods explored victims' recovery as it related to reporting and interactions with the detective during the investigation process. Quantitative analyses tested the relationship between the quality of detective interactions and reporting-related recovery. Results showed that victims who perceived their interactions with the detective to be more procedurally just, were more likely to indicate that reporting to the police *did not* make recovery worse for them. This shows that quality of interactions does impact victims' emotional well-being following sexual assault, and that interactions rooted in procedural justice can help achieve a better recovery for victims. Procedural justice accounted for 20% of the variance in recovery, suggesting that there are other factors that contribute to victims' recovery. This is expected, as the literature shows several other factors are at play in sexual assault recovery that extend beyond social reactions from formal sources such as the police. In the regression analysis, victim race was significantly associated with reporting-related recovery, suggesting that White victims are more likely to indicate that reporting to the police made recovery worse. The relationship between recovery and race was explored in the qualitative results, though no mention of race was found related to assessments of recovery. Qualitative results showed support for the quantitative findings. Interviews explored victims' assessments of emotional well-being in relation to their interaction with the responding officers and detectives they worked with during the reporting and investigation process. For most victims, their perceptions of the interactions with the officers were congruent with their subsequent recovery. Victims who perceived their interactions with

the detectives to be harmful (e.g., blaming, questioning, invalidating) discussed additional emotional distress and harsher recovery as a result of these interactions. By contrast, those who had positive interactions discussed the positive impact of being supported by the officer(s). Victims specifically spoke about the impact of both positive and negative responses by police officers on their mental health. As such, qualitative findings showed that the quality of interactions with victims do matter in recovery and post-assault adjustment. While this was overwhelmingly the case, several victims – who had both positive and negative interactions – spoke about the empowerment and emotional benefit they found by reporting and participating in the investigation itself. Though this does not imply that negative interactions do not have an effect on recovery, it simply suggests that many victims found the act of reporting to be helpful for recovery. Overall, the combination of qualitative and quantitative results suggest that the quality of detective interactions have an effect on victim recovery. Interactions perceived as harmful are harmful to recovery, and vice versa. This reveals the value of process-oriented investigations and procedural justice based interactions for better recovery outcomes for victims.

#### **K. Research Question 8: Recommendations from Victims**

##### **1. Qualitative results**

Interview participants were asked to provide recommendations for improving the police response to victims who report sexual assault. Participants provided several recommendations based on either their experience interacting with the responding officers and/or detectives. Those who did not report to the police provided recommendations based on previous interactions with the police, knowledge of other victims' experiences reporting, or from their personal reservations about reporting. Most recommendations focused on providing updates and information to victims (n=11), asking if victims have a gender preference of the officer (n=11), providing rape/trauma

specific training to officers (n=11), greater empathy and understanding by officers (n=10), and having officers respond to victims in a non-blaming/judgmental way (n=9). Other recommendations included active listening, providing resources, and focusing on victims' safety.

a. **Follow-up contacts**

Eleven participants recommended that follow-up contacts and updates on the status of the investigation become part of the investigation practice. Several victims reported and were interviewed by a detective but were never contacted after that initial meeting. These victims were never informed if their case was investigated and/or if anything came from the investigation. As such, they were left with this uncertainty that hindered them from moving forward because they were not granted any sort of closure. Several victims spoke to this issue as shown in quotes by three participants:

“I was never really given clear information as to like should I be calling them [the detectives] to like see if they've checked up on it, like I don't even have, I think I have her cell phone number but I don't have a case number or anything.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I guess I would have liked him [the detective] to just contact me more than once after I'd seen him at the hospital to try and update me on what was happening. Just because feeling like I don't really know what took place after the interview is, not concerning, but I would like to be in the loop about stuff. Like if it's not going anywhere, just so I can know it's not going anywhere so I can let go of that versus just being in this in-between space. I feel like that would be a weight off my chest.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I was never really sure what was supposed to happen next. The legal system can be intimidating, especially when you don't know how things go. I don't know. [There should be] just like a way to make sure you feel like you haven't been dismissed.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

When victims were not contacted by the detective after their initial meeting, it led them to feel dismissed and insignificant. For many, a simple follow-up contact after the first meeting would have made a great difference, even if it was to inform them that their case was unfounded. These participants expressed that not knowing the status of their case kept them from moving on after

the assault, but knowing – no matter the outcome – would close the door and allow them to cope with whatever the outcome of the investigation was. In addition to a follow-up contact, participants wanted to be told what would happen next in the process following their initial police contact. They discussed not knowing if they should contact the detective, or if they should wait to be contacted. Again, this uncertainty stalled victims' ability to move forward after the assault. Similar to this, seven participants recommended that responding officers and detectives provide tangible resources to victims.

“I think it would have been nice to at least been given some resources about sexual assault because all I was given was just the generic state victim's rights pamphlet and there wasn't anything specific. I think that would have at least felt a little validating like here's your issue, here's resources for you, here's maybe where you can talk to somebody. Even if they [the police] weren't trained that well, at least they were giving me or whoever else has that issues resources to get help for it.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

As the quote above touched on, providing resources can be validating to victims. The provision of resources about sexual assault implies that the officer believes that an assault did occur.

Several participants discussed that not receiving supportive responses from the police led them to seek other formal support, underscoring the need to provide resources particularly when officers may not be responding to victims in a positive way. While it may be protocol to provide resources to victims, several commented that the information they provided was not helpful for all victims. For example, two male victims spoke about not knowing where to access support services. They both recommended that resource referrals that apply to males be provided. One of these participants specifically recommended resource referrals for male victims around his age range (late 20s) who were assaulted by a female. Further, the other male victim discussed not being sure if he wanted to report, but knew he needed help, and did not know where to find it. He suggested that resource referrals be available at police stations for victims who need support, but are not ready to make a formal police report.

b. **Officer gender**

Participants also made recommendations regarding the characteristics of the officer. Four victims commented on the age of the officers. Three of these participants spoke about their reservations speaking to an older male officer. They suggested that older male officers may be more traditional in their views of victims, leading them to be more likely to adhere to rape myths and incorporate this rape myth acceptance in their interactions with victims. Older officers may be less able to identify with younger victims, causing them to be uncomfortable and unwilling to share information. In response to these statements, these women recommended that older officers be trained to be more understanding of the impact of sexual assault and try to send younger detectives to meet with younger victims. Conversely, the fourth participant who discussed the age of officers spoke about interacting with an older female detective. As she explained, when she saw that the officer had gray hair and appeared older (she described her as her mother's age), she was comforted by this because she assumed the officer had been working with sexual assault victims for a long time. For her, an older female officer lent greater credibility. These three comments may suggest that older male officers are not perceived as well as older *female* officers. Eleven participants spoke about the gender of the officer, ten of whom stated they would have preferred a female officer.

“I just feel like I would have felt more comfortable talking to a woman about it rather than putting me in a room with a policeman and I've already been victimized by a man. I just feel like they should take that into consideration and at least respond with someone of each gender.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Participants who expressed preference for a female officer felt that speaking with a female would make them feel more comfortable relaying the details of the assault. One participant spoke about identifying more with her own gender, and so automatically felt more connected and comfortable with women. While it is unlikely that female officers can respond to all sexual assaults, victims

expressed at least wanting to be offered the option to speak with a female. For example, one male detective noticed that the victim appeared uncomfortable during the interview and offered to bring in a female to speak with her. She decided to continue with the male detective, but appreciated the offer because it showed that the male detective acknowledged and understood her hesitation and empathized with her feelings of discomfort about sharing such personal information. This display of empathy helped her to feel comfortable discussing the assault with the detective. Where many participants discussed preference for a female officer, others wanted an empathetic and able detective, regardless of their gender.

“If the male cop had been more compassionate I think that would have changed everything. I don’t think a female cop necessarily, I mean, I don’t know, I think it depends on if that female cop knows about rape culture and understands the significance of sexual assault. Like I think that women are maybe a little more likely to know about that stuff so then maybe it would be better but it wouldn’t be *because* she’s a woman.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

As illustrated in the quote above, many participants cared about *how* they were responded to when reporting rather than *who* responded to them. While participants may have been hesitant about working with a male detective, they were ultimately satisfied with the detective if he treated him/her with respect and understanding.

c. **Quality of responses received by officers**

Most participants’ recommendations were related to the way they want to be treated during their interactions with responding officers and detectives. Ten participants talked about wanting officers to respond to them in an empathic and understanding way, and to feel like the officer is on their side. Victims expressed the benefit for both the officer and victim when police-victim interactions take place in a respectful and empathetic manner, as illustrated in statements by three participants:

“[If you don’t respond with understanding] you’re not going to get the honesty and you’re not going to get the openness. It’s going to appear that the woman does want the help but she doesn’t trust you any more than she trusts the man who attacked her.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

“I think empathy is 100% key.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“You need to treat the person [victim] with discretion and respect because that’s really what they’re looking for. They were just completely disrespected and completely betrayed by whomever so I think that officers need to take that into account. Kind of like put yourself in someone else’s shoes.” – Interview participant (F, unknown, 40-60)

One woman talked about the victim-blaming statements the prosecutor made to her during their meeting and that the detective was there to defend her against these hurtful statements. The victim spoke about the significance of having a detective who was on her side and willing to stand up for her. Another victim talked about the affirmation she felt when her employer used specific adjectives to try and identify with what she was going through after the assault:

“It’s affirming when people are able to try and identify with how you feel and in a way to where you could tell that she [her employer] was applying it [being assaulted] to herself like how violated she would feel because it showed such empathy but also the idea that she was going to be angry for me because that shouldn’t happen, and she knew that.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

For her, having her employer display empathy and anger in her response was validating. She went on to explain that this could be helpful if officers were to respond to victims in an empathetic way similar to this. In her reporting experience, she stated that hearing a note of responsibility and care on the part of the detective would have gone a long way for her in terms of feeling supported. Nine participants discussed the importance of officers reassuring victims that the assault was not their fault, that they believed the assault occurred, and responding to victims in a non-judgmental way. Where this is similar to empathy, participants discussed the value in the officers verbalizing their belief and support.

“Really, they [police officers] should say three things. They should say: I’m sorry this happened to you, this wasn’t your fault, and nobody deserves this. It’s three sentences. You

don't need to be the most compassionate person in the world to master that." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

"That's another point for them [the police] too, that they could do. Tell the person that you are valuable. Say those three words. You Are Valuable. You don't deserve this to have happened to you." – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

"I feel like as much as we can tell that ["it's not your fault"] to survivors the better, because everything else in our culture tells them that it is their fault, you know what I mean? So, I feel like it is so important to say that again and again and again." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Six participants talked about wanting officers to actively listen to their story without interruption, and ask clarifying questions, which can make victims feel like they are being heard and give them a sense of voice. Further, this can make victims feel like they are a priority for the officer. Two victims specifically recommended that officers interact with victims in a way that makes them feel like a priority.

"You don't want to feel like yours [case] is on the backburner. Like you want to feel like it is important." – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The woman who spoke the quote above discussed how the detective working on her case always made her feel like a priority. She talked about the value of being involved in the investigation and important to the detective, which helped her to feel more emotionally stable and willing to go to great lengths to assist in the investigation. Feeling like a priority can be achieved in several ways, such as demonstrating empathy and care, not appearing rushed, making follow-up contacts and providing information about what would happen next in the investigation process. As another victim pointed out, the body language displayed by officers can also be indicative of the investment the officer has in the case. She explained in her interview that the detective stood in a way that made her feel like he did not have time for her case and did not care about her. As such she recommended that officers take into account the message they send through their body language:

“Things like making eye contact with me and maybe sitting down instead of standing the whole time as if you’re about to run out the door.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

This woman was not the only one to mention the impact of body language during officer interactions. As others discussed, the body language of the officer can cause victims to feel uncomfortable, disrespected, or that they are not being taken seriously.

Two participants who were victims of intimate partner violence made recommendations that officers do more to respond to victims’ immediate safety needs. For victims who were threatened by the perpetrator or involved in an ongoing abusive situation, they expressed the need to feel protected. Specifically, these women recommended that the officers reassure the victim that reporting was the right thing and instilling confidence that they are being protected.

d. **Interview modifications**

Others had recommendations specifically related to the interview. One woman recommended having a safe space to conduct the interview. This was an issue that four participants discussed when talking about their detective interactions. These victims were interviewed in uncomfortable and public places. As such, it was recommended that police departments create a designated, comfortable place for victims to be interviewed or make detectives aware of how victims may be uncomfortable discussing the assault where within earshot of other people. Another woman recommended that therapy dogs be available to help victims feel more comfortable during the interview. As she explained, having a therapy dog present can be distracting from the content of the interview and give victims something calming to do while they talk. This participant witnessed her children become more comfortable and willing to share information during a detective interview at the Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC) once they brought a therapy dog into the room, which she felt would be helpful for all victims rather than just children.

e. **Improving the police response through training**

Participants made recommendations specific to the behaviors of individual officers and detectives. In addition to these recommendations, participants also had more general suggestions regarding the training of detectives who will be responding to sexual assault victims. Three victims recommended that officers get more training about rape myths and the rape culture:

“There’s just no training. They [detectives] all need to be explained that you don’t just get to treat somebody based off your rape myths. Because that’s what it really all boils down to, is rape myths and I feel like most officers one way or another support them.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I really do think it’s a societal issue, especially when we talk about women who are assaulted, just respect for women’s bodies. We’re just way behind so it’s hard when it is a social construct that is built into our world and it absolutely can be broken down.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

“I just feel like in general police just need so much more training. I think like just general education about rape culture and the message that the culture sends about rape. I think in general just as much education as they can get about things about rape culture, about consent, about victim blaming. I guess even things like talking to survivors and hearing the way that their interactions affect people because I don’t think that cop ever thought twice about what he said to me. Like it was just a stop along his way that night and he had to lecture some girl about what to do at night and so I think that if he actually knew how it affected my life that maybe he would be more careful about his words.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

The woman in the quote directly above, spoke about educating officers about rape culture, including the impact of sexual assault on victims’ lives. The detective she interacted with blamed her for drinking and lectured her about going to bars alone. As she explained, this greatly affected her emotionally, and did not think the detective realized the power of his words.

Similarly, other recommendations included training focused on the impact of sexual assault, as discussed by the two victims in the excerpts below:

“They [police] need to learn and understand the vulgarity of being victimized. They need to understand the process of victimization that happens and how it defines a person’s reality.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

“I’m not going to get too emotional, but it [sexual assault] takes your life from you in a way. It can really affect the rest of your life. So, to me, it’s the same as someone getting shot and then in a wheelchair for the rest of your life because it affects your life in that way. It’s not like a one and done type of thing. It’s not like you got in a fight at a bar. It’s not the same type of thing so I think understanding those long-term implications of sexual violence could be really helpful in treating those situations with respect.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

To learn the impact of sexual assault, the participant in the second quote above suggested that training for officers include bringing in sexual assault victims to talk about the effects of sexual victimization. As she explained, officers might not take the ramifications of assault into account unless they learn a better understanding of the impact of being assaulted. She made an enlightening comparison of sexual assault to another violent crime (fight at a bar) to illustrate the ongoing impact of sexual assault – a comparison that could be eye-opening if made to detectives during training. Similar to this, participants also recommended that detectives be trained about the neurological impact of sexual assault. Learning about the neurobiology of sexual assault can help detectives better understand the post-assault behaviors of victims, including memory recall issues and unemotionality. Her recommendation for training on the neurobiology of sexual assault highlights the potential benefit of borrowing from the school of trauma-informed interviewing in the application of procedural justice to sexual assault investigations. As one participant explained, this understanding can lead to greater empathy:

“I believe that science can make people more compassionate so I wish that it was something they [detectives] got to know because I also think that would honestly help the cops. If they’re also trying to judge the credibility of your [victim’s] statements, then understanding what’s actually going on, on that neural level for someone who has been through trauma, I think it helps them better understand our body language. Like maybe the way that we do trip up over questions. There’s a huge difference between someone who is fabricating a story and somebody who just cannot recall a detail. Like I just feel like that’s something that, especially with cops, we aren’t lie detectors but it is something I think could be helpful.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, 18-30)

Participants also made recommendations for other forms of specialty training aimed to improve the quality of police-victim interactions. For example, one woman felt her case was not handled respectfully by the detectives because she disclosed that she was gay and assaulted by a male. Based on this interaction, she recommended that officers be trained on sexual assault scenarios involving people from the LGBT community. One woman spoke about the need for police officers to be trained in how to interact with victims who have physical and mental disabilities. This participant had a physical disability that required her to take medication that affected her cognitive abilities. Based on her several interactions with responding officers and detectives, she recommended that officers receive training on victims with disabilities:

“People who are disabled are actually more likely to be victimized so you’re more likely to be dealing with a disability. [...] Giving the person a chance to talk and not rush them is also extremely important. I don’t think they [police] do a good job in understanding where disability plays a role in their interactions. For example, my medications as well as my disability makes timelines really difficult for me at times. So, I’ve been accused of lying because its, you know, the facts are not following the sequence that makes sense to the police officer.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

As mentioned in the quote above, her credibility as a victim was questioned because officers were unaware of the effect her disability has on how she speaks and interacts with others. She explained that simply asking if she has a disability or is taking any medication that might affect her memory or her verbal abilities would help to alleviate these issues. Another woman spoke about the need for detectives to be trained on investigating sexual assaults that occur in domestic violence situations. As she explained, these situations are ongoing and complicated, and often involve multiple forms of abuse beyond the sexual assault. As such, they should be investigated accordingly:

“I think people should pay more attention and ask the questions and ask about things that happen, not just the rape itself, but how is your relationship with this person? Is he abusive or controlling? Because that is just the tip of the iceberg. You have to go and see the whole history of the relationship. Do you fight a lot? Is he paranoid? Does he have a history of

mental illness? Does he own a gun? [...] I would be more confident that the police would help me if I knew they had that training. But just walking into the police station saying I was just raped by my husband and I don't feel like going back, what are they gonna do? Put him behind bars and he hires a lawyer, he's out, I'm probably dead." – Interview participant (F, Hisp, 40-60)

As the end of this quote illustrates, domestic violence situations are complicated in that the immediate safety of the victim is always in question. Other participants recommended officers appeal more to the immediate safety of victims, and this applies to domestic violence situations as well. However, in order to know the situation is domestic, officers must first know to ask those questions. One participant recommended that officers be trained in relaxation techniques. She recognized that officers have stressful and demanding jobs. She also recognized that the mood of the officer can set the tone for the entire interaction, including how the victim is treated as well as how comfortable he or she feels:

"I think police in general need to learn to do some relaxation techniques like yoga or something just to help them relax because everybody feeds off of everybody so someone who is already tense and nervous to be there and then they get someone who's overworked and done five interviews today and now comes to another one and they're already tense I think that's a recipe for disaster." – Interview participant (F, unknown, 40-60)

In addition to this, she recommended that police departments should do more to manage the self-care of officers. Officers should be able to say they are mentally drained and need to take a few minutes to themselves before going into an interview. As she discussed, this can benefit both the officer and victim, and lead to more information shared during the interview.

f. **Reforming sexual assault investigations**

Other participants made recommendations about reforming how sexual assault investigations are conducted. For example, one participant recommended that detectives be incentivized for investigating cases and pursuing charges rather than securing prosecutions. As she explained, this could lead detectives to investigate more cases rather than scrutinize victims

and only investigate “strong” cases. Three older participants recommended that police departments revert back to forms of community policing that were in place in the 1950s and 1960s:

“So, you know, it’s more of that casual interaction that could be established again. There’s gotta be a way to bridge the gap between the community and the police department.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

As these participants explained, community policing efforts created more interactions with police and community members. These casual interactions and increased positive police presence led to greater trust in the police and willingness to report. With this, participants also recommended that the investigation process be reframed to be more of a police-victim partnership. Specifically, asking the questions “what can we do to resolve this?” and “how can we [police] help you [victim] not only solve the case and bring justice but how can we help you work your way through this?”, rather than asking “is the victim lying or credible?” and requests for “just the facts” could reframe how police and victims approach investigations. As she explained, approaching the investigation from this perspective can be beneficial for both the police and the victim:

“It is not a one-sided benefit. It really isn’t. It’s a mutual benefit. The police will feel better about the work they do because they’ll get better results.” – Interview participant (F, Wh, Over 60)

Similarly, another participant recommended that the community be educated on how to interact with the police and navigate the legal system. This includes keeping copies of the evidence and reports, taking the initiative to make follow-up contacts with the detectives, and being willing to cooperate with the detective during the investigation. As she explained – and statements by other participants supported – being involved in the process can be empowering. Conversely, a participant recommended that police reframe their views to value victims who report. Officers

should acknowledge that victims are not required to report, as well as the emotional turmoil associated with reporting. As the participant explained, this change in perspective may result in police being more empathetic and compassionate towards victims, and being respectful to those who dedicate their time to the investigation. The top five recommendations made by victims to improve the police response to victims who report are shown in Table XIV.

**TABLE XIV**

**TOP RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS <sup>a</sup>**

Recommendation	Description
1. Provide more information (n=11)	Information about next steps in the process, case updates, and follow-up contacts.
2. Ask about officer gender preference (n=11)	Ask if victim has a gender preference of the detective or acknowledge discomfort of speaking to the gender they did not prefer.
3. Provide rape/trauma specific training to officers (n=11)	Train detectives to be aware of impact of trauma, rape culture, different types of assault, and working with victims with disabilities or LGBT victims. Training to improve the quality of interactions (e.g., respect and active listening).
4. Greater empathy and understanding by officers (n=10)	Taking time to build rapport, acknowledge the traumatic event, and convey that detectives care about the victims' emotional and physical well-being. Provide some level of support.
5. Ensure non-blaming/non-judgmental response (n=9)	Acknowledge that the assault was not the victim's fault and convey belief.

<sup>a</sup> Other recommendations include: provide resources, appeal to safety of the victim, make the victim feel prioritized, and reforming the process of investigation.

## 2. Summary

The final research question in this study explored victims' recommendations for improving the police response to victims who report. Interview participants were asked to discuss any recommendations they have based on their interactions with the responding officers and/or detectives who worked on their case, previous experiences with the police, and knowledge of others' experiences reporting sexual assault. Most of the recommendations victims made were somehow related to the treatment responding officers and detectives give to victims during their interactions. This shows the value victims' place on the treatment they receive during interactions with detectives. No recommendations were related to the outcome of their case (e.g., training officers apprehend more offenders). Again, this suggests the power of process-oriented investigations over outcome oriented investigations. Victims' recommendations focused largely on training officers to respond to victims in a supportive and respectful way.

## VI. DISCUSSION

Hundreds of thousands of sexual assaults occur each year in the U.S., but sexual assault remains the most underreported of all violent crimes (Bachman, 1998; Truman & Langton, 2015). Although there are many reasons why victims may decide to not report their assaults to the police, fear of negative treatment by the police and fear of secondary victimization appear to be most common (Campbell, 2008). For victims who do report to the police, most regard their experiences negatively (Logan et al., 2005), often resulting in secondary victimization (Campbell, 2005). The procedural justice perspective posits that the quality of police-citizen interactions can lead to a number of positive outcomes for both parties (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 1990). While researchers have examined the application and benefits of procedural justice in police-citizen interactions and police interactions with crime victims, little is known about the possible benefits procedural justice can offer to police interactions with sexual assault victims. Procedural justice has not been thoroughly studied in the context of sexual assault investigations, and has not been studied using a mixed methods research design. The present study was the first of its kind to explore the potential for procedural justice in sexual assault investigations through an examination of detective-victim interactions during the reporting and investigation process. This study applied existing knowledge about procedural justice to a specific population of crime victims that, historically, have had negative interactions with police and under-investigated cases. As such, results of this study offer new insights into sexual assault policing strategies that can improve the quality of detective-victim interactions, as well as the strength of investigations and the investigation experience of victims. Findings from this study offer a number of contributions to both research and practice.

The present study had four overarching goals to contribute to both extant research and the practice of sexual assault investigations. First, this study sought to qualitatively examine if victims' views of the police contribute to their reporting decision. Second, this study aimed to contribute a renewed examination of the differences in reporting, and reporting and interacting with a detective based on demographic differences. Third, this study sought to explore the potential for a procedural justice approach to sexual assault investigations through a mixed methods examination of sexual assault victims' experiences with the reporting and investigation process. Qualitative and quantitative data explored the relationship between the perceived quality of detective-victim interactions and a variety of outcomes including satisfaction with the detective, cooperation during the investigation, views of the police, willingness to report future crimes, and recovery. This exploration intended to expand the current state of knowledge about victims' reporting and investigation experiences by testing these relationships in one comprehensive study through a procedural justice framework. Fourth, this study aimed to contribute victims' voices to the direction of sexual assault investigations by asking interview participants their recommendations for improving the police response to victims who report. The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods was used in pursuit of these research goals.

Qualitative analysis of interview data and open-ended survey responses showed that victims consider their views of the police when deciding to report their assault. A considerable amount of responses reflected unfavorable views of the police that were taken into consideration when deciding to report. Many victims feared blame, judgment, and mistreatment by the police, and felt the police would do nothing to help them. This is indicative of negative views of the police, at least in terms of handling sexual assault, as found in other research (Logan et al., 2005). Victims who expressed these sentiments tended to be those who did not report. James and

Lee (2014) found college students were more likely to report if they had favorable views of the police. Findings from the present study are congruent with those of James and Lee (2014), further suggesting that views of the police affect the decision to report. Results from the present study show that many victims have an underlying distrust and lack of confidence in the police, at least in terms of the handling of sexual assault crimes, which deter them from reporting.

Some participants expressed complete distrust in the police handling of sexual assault when asked why they did not report. Interestingly, these statements were often couched in factors surrounding the assault, the evidence, and their personal characteristics, which contributed to their feelings that the police would be unwilling to help. Specifically, victims of alcohol-involved assault or assaults perpetrated by a known person expressed concern that they would be mistreated by police or not taken seriously because of these assault characteristics. This echoes earlier research that found more stereotypical assaults (e.g., stranger perpetrated, non-drinking victim) are more likely to be reported (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). In their decision to report, victims also gave substantial consideration to the physical evidence they could provide to the police. Victims tended to engage in a form of pre-reporting assessment where they considered the possible strength of their case and how they would be treated as a result of this. Several participants discussed not reporting because they did not have an evidence collection kit (i.e., rape kit) conducted or because they were lacking other forms of physical evidence. This suggests an over-emphasis of DNA evidence to the point where victims self-assess the physical evidence of their case in their decision to report. Where there are police biases in kit submission (Strom & Hickman, 2010), victims may also be subject to these biases in assault reporting. Several victims shared fears of mistreatment due to their personal characteristics, such as being a sex worker, minority, or of young age, and were reluctant to report due to these characteristics. Examining

the intersections of these characteristics on the decision to report would be an interesting topic of future research. The consideration of personal characteristics in the decision to report shows that victims tend to perceive the police as biased and unlikely to treat people equally based on their personal attributes. A handful of victims considered the characteristics of the perpetrator when deciding whether to report. Specifically, victims were reluctant to report because the perpetrator was a racial minority or immigrant and felt the mistreatment the perpetrator would receive by the police and system was too harsh. This may be a possible reflection of the political climate or race relations at the time of the assault, suggesting views of the police (and the legal system overall) are influenced by events shown in the media around the time of the assault, which may deter victims from reporting and is therefore a factor that should be considered in research examining the decision to report and views of the police.

As earlier research found that encouragement from informal sources can lead to reporting (Paul et al., 2013; Woltizky-Taylor et al., 2011), this study found that *discouragement* to report has a similar influence on victims' reporting decisions. Victims discussed recommendations from informal sources *not* to report, which contributed to their decision. The influence of informal sources on the decision to not report shows that the negative views of the police or the fear of reporting sexual assault of one person can affect that person's decision to report, as well as the subsequent reporting decisions of their informal network. The influence of informal sources on reporting victimization highlights the potential of negative police experiences and negative views of the police on sexual assault reporting rates. If one person is deterred from reporting or had a negative reporting experience, this may flow downstream to his or her informal support network, contributing to lower reporting rates overall. However, this was not something explicitly examined in the present study so this relationship cannot be concluded. Though these data reveal

patterns in the influence of vicarious reporting experiences and informal networks on not reporting, possibly affecting reporting rates overall, and should be studied more thoroughly in future research.

Results from the present study show differences in victims who reported and victims reported and interacted with a detective based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Female victims reported and interacted with a detective more frequently than male victims and victims who do not identify within the female/male gender binary. Heterosexual (straight) victims reported and interacted with a detective more frequently than gay/lesbian victims, bisexual victims, and victims of other sexual orientations. These findings reveal differences in the decision to report and differences in cases proceeding to the point of investigation by a detective for victims of certain gender identities and sexual orientations. In part, these findings support rape myths and the notion that victims are more likely to report and have their case progress if they reflect the “legitimate” victim stereotype (i.e., female, straight; Heath, Lynch, Fritch, & Wong, 2013; Weis & Borges, 1973). Findings also echo earlier research that found that men are less likely to report, possibly out of fear of being perceived as gay (Sable et al., 2006). No significant differences in reporting were found for age or race. Other research found that African American women are more likely to report (Bachman, 1998; Fisher et al., 2011) but not in college populations (Thompson et al., 2007). The present study did not support this conclusion. Nonsignificance for age and race may be due to the low sample size and missing cases for these variables, as studies that detected an effect had considerably larger sample sizes.

This study explored the relationship between the quality of detective-victim interactions and satisfaction with the reporting and investigation process. Results show a significant relationship between judgments of procedural justice and satisfaction with the detective

interaction. Victims who perceived their interaction with the detective as procedurally just were more likely to indicate satisfaction with the detective, showing support for the application of procedural justice to sexual assault investigations. Judgments of procedural justice accounted for a large proportion of the variance in satisfaction with the detective, suggesting that the quality of interactions matters greatly in terms of victims being satisfied with the detective with their interaction(s) during the investigation process. Support for this finding was found in the qualitative analysis of the present study. Much of what interview participants described as contributing to their satisfaction with the detective aligned with one or more elements of the procedural justice perspective. Specifically, victims discussed the value of being respected, having a voice, and feeling like they could trust the detective. Earlier research on the application of procedural justice to police-citizen interactions shows that satisfaction with the police is based on the perceived effort put into the encounter and how police treat victims, regardless of the outcome (Skogan, 2005; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Qualitative and quantitative results from the present study show this as well, providing support for the application of procedural justice to sexual assault investigations in terms of facilitating satisfaction with the detective interaction. Results from the present study also support findings by Herman (2005), who found victims do not prioritize legal justice, but value acknowledgment, validation, and vindication from others, including the police. Earlier research found that the initiation of police contacts (i.e., citizen initiated versus police initiated) contribute satisfaction with the encounter (Skogan, 2005), where citizen-initiated police contacts tend to be perceived as more satisfactory. There was not an association between the initiation of encounters and satisfaction in the present study, perhaps because most contacts with police following sexual assault are victim-initiated, either through

victims contacting the police directly or through awareness of mandatory reporting procedures at the hospital.

Qualitative and quantitative results show that satisfaction with the detective interaction depends on the treatment victims received from the detective. Qualitative results suggest that the quality of interaction and the treatment victims receive when they report to the police is largely a “mixed-bag”, meaning the treatment varies on a detective-by-detective basis. Victims who interacted with multiple detectives during the reporting and investigation of their case – or who interacted with multiple detectives in multiple investigation experiences – discussed the variance in the treatment they received where detectives were polar opposites (i.e., helpful versus harmful). Earlier research shows that detectives vary in their treatment of victims, often due to disbelief of victims or negative attitudes toward sexual assault (Page, 2010), suggesting that the limited training detectives receive for interacting with sexual assault victims is inconsistent or ineffective. Detectives may also simply be burnt out or unwilling to invest time in pursuing a sexual assault case, possibly due to a lack of incentive. Victims should not have to take the gamble of having a good or bad experience when they report sexual assault. As such, more effective training procedures or selection of sexual assault detectives is necessary to minimize negative victim-detective interactions. Furthermore, additional research is needed to explore how interactions with multiple detectives (that may be starkly different in quality) are related and influence victims’ overall investigation experiences.

Aspects of the interaction(s) that victims perceived as positive and negative aligned with that of extant research (see Campbell, 2006; Campbell et al., 2001; Frazier & Haney, 1996; Ullman, 1996a). Specifically, victims in this sample tended to be dissatisfied with the amount of information and attention received, blaming or distracting responses, and insensitive questions.

For citizens in general, aspects of the interaction at the scene such as an officer or detective being polite, helpful, fair, attentive, and willing to explain what was happening contributed to satisfaction (Skogan, 2005). The present study showed similar findings, specific to sexual assault victims. Victims in the qualitative sample spoke about the importance of the elements described in earlier research, as well as other aspects of the interaction that contributed to their satisfaction level, such as wanting to feel protected, believed, and supported by the detective. These three constructs are likely intertwined but appear to be uniquely important feelings for sexual assault victims in terms of satisfaction with the detective. Feeling protected by a police officer when seeking services is not specific to procedural justice, but an aspect of policing that should apply to all interactions. Thus, it is problematic to policing in general when individuals do not feel protected when reporting a crime to which their immediate safety is threatened. Speaking to feelings of support, it is possible that feeling supported mediates the relationship between procedural justice and satisfaction with the interaction, but warrants further study. Feeling believed and supported are needs for sexual assault victims that extend beyond that of the traditional procedural justice perspective. The need for victims to feel believed and supported does not suggest that procedural justice be modified to include these elements, but highlights the importance of empathy as an extension of procedural justice. Future research is needed to further decipher the relationship between empathy and procedural justice in the context of sexual assault investigations.

Findings from moderation analysis show that previous involvement in the legal system as a crime victim influenced the strength of the relationship between judgments of procedural justice and satisfaction with the detective interaction. The relationship between judgments of procedural justice and satisfaction with the detective was stronger for victims without previous

legal system involvement. This makes sense, as victims with previous legal system involvement may be biased from their earlier legal experiences, whereas victims without previous legal system experiences are more dependent on how they are treated by the detective in their interpretations of the interaction. It is unlikely that individuals enter detective interactions as a blank slate and thus previous experiences may impact interpretation of the interactions and satisfaction. Encounters with the police can be conditioned by prior experiences (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins, & Ring, 2005), suggesting that attitudes about the police may differ for victims with previous direct experience with the police. The influence of previous legal system involvement on satisfaction with the detective interaction may also be due to the expectations victims have when reporting the assault and interacting with a detective. Expectations of detective interactions may vary based on the context or satisfaction with previous legal experiences (e.g., whether the previous experience was positive, or whether the previous experience was police-initiated; Rosenbaum et al., 2005), but this was not examined in the present study. Victims with vicarious knowledge of police encounters likely have preconceived attitudes going into these interactions (Rosenbaum et al., 2005) that shape their expectations, but may not be as powerful as having previous personal experiences. Vicarious knowledge of sexual assault victimization-related interactions may cause victims to have low expectations going into the interactions that are exceeded. Qualitative results show that expectations of the interaction are important in understanding the quality of interactions. However, only two victims discussed their expectations in terms of previous involvement in the legal system as a crime victim. In both of these situations, their expectations were influenced by their previous experiences and personal attributes. These anecdotes show that expectations flow from vicarious reporting experiences and personal characteristics (e.g., race, education).

Anecdotal findings suggest a need for future mixed methods research to study previous legal experiences, vicarious reporting experiences, and demographic characteristics with regard to satisfaction. It may also be informative to explore the relationship between previous legal experiences and the intersection of demographic characteristics on expectations and satisfaction with detective interactions.

Qualitative and quantitative results show that treatment by detectives contributes to victims' willingness to cooperate with the detective and participate in the investigation. Quantitative results support the use of procedural justice techniques in facilitating cooperation and participation. As expected, victims who rated their interactions with the detective as procedurally just indicated a greater willingness to participate in the investigation. Qualitative results show support for the quantitative findings. Victims who felt comfortable, believed, supported, and encouraged by the detective were more willing to cooperate with the detective during the investigation. Conversely, victims who felt mistreated by the detective were less willing to share information with the detective. In several cases, victims who experienced harmful treatment by the detective refused to provide information and abruptly concluded the interaction. These findings support that of earlier research linking police treatment to cooperation in sexual assault victims (Greeson et al., 2014; Patterson, 2011; Spohn, White, & Tellis, 2014), but do so through a procedural justice framework, which highlights specific techniques and interactive elements necessary to facilitate cooperation. Victims also discussed the necessity of feeling like the detective was on their side – something demonstrated through the detective's belief, support, and empathy – as a contributing factor in their willingness to cooperate. Victims in Patterson's (2011) study explained that they felt believed when the detective verbalized that he or she was on the "victim's side" or shared information about the perpetrator (e.g., prior

convictions). In Patterson's (2011) study, the expression of belief by detectives led to greater disclosure of information by victims, ultimately leading to more prosecuted cases. Findings from the present study support those of Patterson (2011) by further illustrating that victims desire to be believed and feel that the detective is on their side, which can facilitate greater cooperation, which has important implications for increasing prosecution rates. The need for victims to feel like the detective is on their side is something that may contradict the neutrality element of procedural justice in its traditional form and warrants further exploration, but is something that underscores the importance of providing supportive and positive reactions to victims (Ullman, 1999), particularly in soliciting information for the investigation (Patterson, 2011).

Research on procedural justice using citizen samples show that cooperation is shaped by trust in the police (Tyler, 2005). Qualitative findings from the present study support this conclusion specific to sexual assault victims, showing that trust and treatment received by detectives are both important in facilitating cooperation. Qualitative results showed that victims who felt supported by the detective had more trust in the detective, resulting in a greater willingness to cooperate during the investigation. This makes sense, as victims may be unwilling share information when they are concerned that this information will be used against them (i.e., motive-based trust). When victims perceive police treatment as potentially harmful to their recovery, they engage in noncompliance as a form of self-protection from the system (Greenson & Campbell, 2011). As such, it is important that detectives work to build trust, so victims are confident that the information they provide will be helpful, rather than hurtful, to their well-being. The influence of trust on cooperation with the detective was not studied in the quantitative aspect of this study, but qualitative results suggest that this is something that should be explored in future quantitative research examining trust and cooperation in sexual assault investigations.

Together, quantitative and qualitative results show that victims consider the treatment they receive from detectives and the quality of these interactions when deciding on their level of cooperation, providing further evidence of the importance of positive detective-victim interactions.

Alderden and Long (2016) found that victims of stereotypical assaults are more likely to participate in the investigation, but were unable to account for the social reactions by police on level of participation. Earlier research by Kerstetter and Van Winkle (1990) found that police were influential in the decision to participate because they encouraged participation of victims of stereotypical assaults. Conclusions by Alderden and Long (2016) and Kerstetter and Van Winkle (1990) were not supported by quantitative findings but partially supported in the qualitative results. In the quantitative results, no assault characteristics were significantly associated with investigation participation. Quality of the interaction was the only variable found to have an effect on investigation participation, suggesting that the quality of treatment victims receive may be arbitrary, vary individually, or based on other factors not accounted for in the quantitative analysis of this study. Kerstetter and Van Winkle (1990) collected their data from the perspective of detectives, prosecutors, and victim advocates, where the present study was solely from the victim perspective, which may also account for the differing conclusions. In the qualitative data, two participants felt encouraged to participate by the detectives on their case, both of whom were involved in stranger assaults that they reported immediately. Though, both of these participants attributed the encouragement to report to the amount of physical evidence they were able to provide to the detectives and the fact that the assault was stranger-perpetrated. This partially supports conclusions by Kerstetter and Van Winkle (1990), but also illustrates the importance of physical evidence in encouragement to participate. Several participants discussed being

discouraged from filing a report or not contacted by the detective following the initial interaction. While it is unclear if these victims were discouraged due to the characteristics of the assault, some felt they were discouraged or not contacted again because they did not have physical evidence of the assault. The victims who were not contacted again or discouraged from filing a report were victims of non-stereotypical assaults. However, no causal conclusions can be drawn from the qualitative findings. Yet these findings suggest that future quantitative research studying officers' encouragement to participate should include a variable of physical evidence. It is also possible that victims may be encouraged (or discouraged) to participate in the investigation or legal process based on their personal characteristics, but no evidence to support this was found in the quantitative or qualitative results of the present study.

Though less common, several victims in the qualitative sample expressed willingness to cooperate with the detective during the investigation for other reasons, regardless of the treatment they received. Victims discussed wanting to participate to help other women and prevent future crimes from occurring. Altruistic participation could explain some of the variance unaccounted for by judgments of procedural justice in the quantitative findings. Several victims in this sample were willing to go to extraordinary means to assist in the investigation, including providing information but also taking the investigation into their own hands or working very closely with the detective. The exceptional cooperation shows that some victims are highly motivated to participate regardless of possible negative treatment. It is unclear what differentiates these victims from other victims. Some victims may not have the emotional fortitude following the assault to endure negative treatment and still participate, or may use participating in the investigation as a coping strategy (e.g., distraction, finding meaning). It is also possible that altruistic motives are so powerful that victims will endure negative treatment

for the sake of helping others and preventing future crimes. The motive behind exceptional cooperation in the investigation, for some victims but not others, is something that warrants further qualitative study. Exceptional cooperation should be studied from both the perspective of the detective and with consideration of the quality of detective-victim interactions during the investigation to help understand this phenomenon.

In the present study, detective-victim interactions contributed to victims' views of the police. As predicted, quantitative analysis showed that victims who perceived their interactions with the detective as procedurally just had higher trust and confidence in the police. Thus, where earlier research identified a relationship between procedural justice contacts and trust and confidence in the police for citizens in general (Tyler, 2005), findings from the present study illustrate this relationship specifically among sexual assault victims. The considerable amount of variance in trust and confidence in the police accounted for by procedural justice suggests that detective interactions play a substantial role in victims' views of the police, but that there are other factors that contribute to trust and confidence in the police. Similar conclusions were drawn from qualitative analyses, though findings suggest that views of the police are more complicated than expected. Qualitative data show that views of the police are not static, but rather change over time and reflect a culmination of personal and vicarious police interactions. Because of this, most interview participants were generally mixed (i.e., had both negative and positive feelings) in their views of the police and were reluctant to make generalizations about their views of the police based on a limited number of interactions. Yet, the qualitative data reveal that the quality of interactions during the sexual assault investigations leave a substantial mark on some victims' views of the police but not others.

Being injured as a result of the assault was significantly related to *less* trust and confidence in the police. Yet, there was no moderating effect found between these variables and the quality of the detective-victim interaction. Injury may be indicative of greater stress at the time of the assault, leading to PTSD (see Filipas & Ullman, 2001b), where simply being victimized and physically injured could lead to decreased confidence in the police to protect individuals from violent crime. Injury may also somehow interact with trust and confidence in the police, perhaps because greater injury contributes to a need for safety and protection from law enforcement, and when this is not met, trust and confidence decrease. Qualitative results showed that when victims felt their immediate safety was at risk and sought protection from the police that was not provided, their trust and confidence in the detective's willingness to help was called into question. This finding could also be attributed to the dichotomous measurement of physical injury suffered, whereby measuring different degrees of injury may shed more light on the relationship to trust and confidence in the police. The relationship between physical injury and trust and confidence in the police is something that should be looked into further and replicated in future research.

Qualitative findings raise the question of what type of trust sexual assault victims are looking to have in the detectives investigating their case. Researchers have proposed both institutional trust (i.e., viewing police as honest and competent authorities; Tyler, 1990) and motive-based trust (i.e., viewing police as having benevolent intentions; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Qualitative results suggest that victims pay more value to the latter when asked about trusting the police. Participants specifically spoke about the value of trusting the police to thoroughly investigate their case, to prioritize their case, and to be supportive. Though trust in the police could also refer to trust in their ability to prevent crime and handle crime reports appropriately in

situations that are not tied to them (the interview participants) directly. For example, victims in this sample spoke about accountability when asked about their trust in the police. They indicated that they do not trust the police to do what is right when they are not being held accountable for their actions, which contributed to their overall trust in the police and subsequent willingness to share information. This is another dimension of trust that appears important – particularly in terms of facilitating feelings of safety among recently victimized citizens – that may not be tied to motive-based trust. Future research should examine the different dimensions of trust among sexual assault victims to identify which type of trust victims want to have in the police and which type of trust is the outcome of positive interactions.

Contrary to findings by Tyler (2005), trust in the police did not differ for minority and White participants. With respect to the quantitative analyses, this may be due to low power creating an inability to detect differences in trust for minority and White victims. It is also possible that when looking specifically at sexual assault victims, trust is hinged more on the behavior of the detective during the interaction rather than preconceived views that differ based on race. Qualitative results in the present study revealed that several participants' views of the police were shaped by the current events surrounding race relations between citizens and police. Four victims in the interview sample spoke about their views of the police in terms of current race relations, particularly police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement (see Rickford, 2016). One African American participant discussed the dissonance she experienced; the current issues of police brutality made her feel she should be skeptical of police, but because of her positive interaction with the detectives in the investigation of the sexual assault case, she had an overall trust in police. Other victims spoke about how the current race relations contribute to their negative views of the police. The relationship shown between race relationships and views

of the police supports earlier research showing public trust and confidence in the police are intertwined with concerns about the relationships between ethnic and social groups, including racial profiling (Tyler & Wakslak, 2004) and excessive use of force (Weitzer, 2002). Current events and race relations were not the only factor in determining victims' views of the police, but rather something they considered in their overall assessment along with their personal police experiences and experiences of those in their informal support network. Several participants – particularly after the 2017 presidential election (which occurred during data collection) – spoke about how the current political climate affected their views of the police. They explained that having a president accused of sexual assault raised concerns about the level of accountability police are being held to today, as well as concerns regarding the level of respect women receive after reporting a sexual assault when the president has outstanding uninvestigated harassment and assault allegations. This underscores the importance of police accountability in feelings of trust and safety among individuals in society. These findings also raise the question of whether events in the media and politics impact the police perspective and treatment of victims. Police officers are aware of current events, including race relations, and possible biases or hostility toward the police. They are also aware when the current political climate grants them greater discretion with less accountability, which may affect how police treat sexual assault victims during interactions. Police-victim interactions and views of the police in the context of current social and political events is something that would be an interesting and timely area of further inquiry. Yet it should be noted that the current events and social relations to which victims in this sample are referring with regard to their views of the police, are factors affecting their *current* views of the police, rather than their views of the police immediately after their reporting/investigation experience. Though in this particular circumstance, the

reporting/investigation experiences of these victims took place in a similar time frame of the current events and social relations, but raises the question of temporal influences on views of the police. Victims may have particular views of the police after reporting their assault 10 years ago, and have differing views in present day due to current events shown in the media, and it is unclear whether current views are based on their past personal experiences or media exposure, or both. Future research examining views of the police among crime victims should be aware of these temporal issues and be cognizant that police views are a culmination of personal and vicarious experiences, when asking questions and interpreting responses.

The current study also examined the relationship between the quality of detective-victim interactions and willingness to report future crimes to the police. As expected, victims who perceived their detective interactions as adhering to the components of procedural justice were more likely to indicate that they would report future crimes to the police. The relationship between procedural justice and willingness to report future crimes to the police found in the present study supports earlier quantitative research showing that victims who were at least somewhat satisfied with the treatment they received from police were more likely to indicate that they would report in the future (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). This conclusion is also in line with that of the procedural justice literature (outside of sexual assault crimes), where police-citizen interactions that adhere to the components of procedural justice lead to willingness to report future crimes (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003), providing further support for the application of procedural justice to sexual assault investigations. Physical injury sustained as a result of the assault was significantly related to willingness to report to the police in the future, though procedural justice did not moderate the relationship between injury and willingness to report future crimes. Again, this relationship could be due to victims' perceptions of assault severity

(i.e., perceived life threat) or the measurement of physical injury. Wolitzky-Taylor and colleagues (2011) found that injury predicted reporting, but not when peritraumatic fear was included in the model, suggesting shared variance between the two variables. They studied fear in terms of reporting, not willingness to report revictimization, which suggests differences in victims' willingness to report crimes and report future crimes (i.e., revictimization crimes). Another factor related to the likelihood of being injured could account for some of this relationship as well, such as sex work or if the assault was perpetrated by an intimate partner. Further study is needed to decipher the association between injury and willingness to report future crimes.

Quantitative findings show that judgments of procedural justice contribute to victims' willingness to report future crimes. This quantitative finding was supported by the qualitative data, which showed that the quality of detective-victim interactions was related to victims' willingness to report crimes to the police in the future for some, but not all, victims. Qualitative data show that most victims are willing to report future crimes. Only nine victims indicated that they would not report again due to their previous (negative) reporting experience. Others discussed willingness to report, but only under certain circumstances, such as if the assault was committed by a stranger or if there was physical evidence. Again, this illustrates the weight placed on physical evidence in the reporting of crimes. Findings further demonstrate the influence of rape myths on reporting, showing that blaming victims of non-stereotypical assaults reinforces stereotypes that made victims reluctant to report the assaults in the first place (see Heath et al., 2013). Several victims discussed their willingness to report future crimes but cautioned that they would self-advocate on their own behalf in future reporting experiences. Victims expressing the necessity of self-advocacy in reporting aligns with findings by Greeson

and Campbell (2011) showing that victims who perceive the legal process as potentially harmful engage in agentic processes (i.e., self-advocating; e.g., compliance to increase likelihood of case progression, defiance by challenging the response to their report) to shape their experiences. Findings from this study suggest that victims who perceive their first experiences with the investigation process as harmful will engage in agentic process (such as those described by Greeson and Campbell, 2011) and self-advocate to help make future experiences positive ones. Victims in the present study discussed being more willing to challenge unfair practices or outcomes by the detectives, making themselves knowledgeable about the process, and gathering their own evidence if they were to report a future crime. Together results show that the quality of detective interactions during victims' investigation experience contributes to willingness to report again. Qualitative results specifically reveal that negative investigation experiences can create skepticism and an underlying distrust in the legal system overall, which feed into a reluctance to report again.

Most victims in the qualitative sample indicated that they would report again regardless of the treatment they received in their previous detective-victim interactions. Victims were willing to report again for one of two reasons. The first reason was altruism, meaning that victims wanted to help others by doing their part to prevent future assaults. Altruism is a motive for reporting found in other research (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011), suggesting that victims want to prevent future sexual assaults more than punish those who commit them (Herman, 2005). This finding in the present study is new in terms of the decision to report revictimization (i.e., subsequent assaults). Several victims in this sample went a step further than altruism by discussing the devastating guilt they would feel by not reporting. Guilt from not reporting was something that drove victims to report in the first place, or regret not reporting. Reporting guilt

reveals another layer of guilt and self-blame that victims may feel in the aftermath of sexual assault. The second reason victims discussed for their willingness to report in the future were crime reporting values that was instilled in them as children. For these victims, reporting crimes was a non-negotiable responsibility for crime victims, revealing a large influence of reporting values on the decision to report crimes and future crimes to the police that occurs without influence of other contextual factors. For the most part, qualitative results indicate that willingness to report is not something hinged on the quality of detective interactions. Rather, the quality of detective interactions appears to be something that is considered, but is often eclipsed by larger influences. It is unclear what differentiates these victims from the victims who were unwilling to report again, as there were no discernable characteristics that may explain these differences. As such, the individual differences in victims' willingness to report future crimes is an avenue for future research that should be studied to better understand willingness to report sexual revictimization.

Results show the quality of detective-victim interactions influence victims' emotional well-being following sexual assault, and that procedurally just interactions can help facilitate better recovery for victims. Quantitative results reveal a link between judgments of procedural justice and recovery. Specifically, victims who perceived their interactions with the detective to be more procedurally just were less likely to indicate that reporting to the police made recovery worse for them, which was also shown in qualitative results. Interview participants who perceived their detective interactions to be harmful (e.g., blaming, harsh questioning, or disrespect) discussed additional emotional distress and a more difficult recovery as a result of these interactions. By contrast, those who had higher quality detective interactions (e.g., believed, respected, listened to) discussed the positive impact the interaction had on their

recovery. Results overall show interactions with detectives that involve the victim being treated respectfully, with voice, and supportively can help facilitate recovery, supporting earlier research that examined the relationship between recovery and social reactions from formal support providers (Campbell, 2008).

Qualitative results from this study add to the body of evidence showing that victims often experience secondary victimization when involved with the legal system (Campbell et al., 2001; Campbell, 2008; Felson & Pare, 2008). Specifically, victims discussed in their interviews feeling badly about themselves, feeling depressed, anxious, violated, and engaging in self-blame following negative detective interactions, in line with earlier research (Campbell 2005, 2006). Victims in the qualitative sample appeared more greatly affected by negative detective interactions than they were by positive ones, as also shown in the informal social reactions literature (see Ullman & Filipas, 2001). Victims discussed the effects of negative treatment specifically by authority figures. Even when victims received positive support from informal sources, negative treatment by the police was still detrimental to their emotional well-being because of the authority status police hold. Victims discussed second guessing their interpretation of the assault (i.e., was it actually sexual assault?) and engaging in self-blame due to negative reactions received from detectives, even when met with positive informal support from friends or family. The emotional distress suffered from victims reacted to negatively by detectives illustrates that disbelieving and unsupportive treatment by police can be particularly invalidating and harmful to victims. Unfortunately, this harm may not be countered by positive support from other sources. As explained by Filipas and Ullman (2001), receiving negative reactions from an authority figure can be particularly detrimental, as victims expect protection and guidance from the police. Police are not always aware of the emotional harm they cause

during interactions with victims (Campbell, 2005). Training practices should work to help detectives be more cognizant of the impact of their behaviors and words when interacting with victims.

In the quantitative results, judgments of procedural justice accounted for about 22% of the variance in recovery. The amount of variance in recovery accounted for by procedural justice indicates that quality interactions that adhere to the components of procedural justice are important in victims reported-related recovery, but that there are other contributing factors. It is not surprising that other factors contribute to recovery, as extant literature shows other contributing factors at multiple levels of the social ecology, such as informal social support (Ahrens et al., 2010), coping responses (Ullman, Townsend, Filipas, & Starzynski, 2007), and revictimization (Messman-Moore, Long, & Siegfried, 2000), that were beyond the scope of this study. In the present study, assault and individual characteristics were not significantly associated with reporting-related recovery. Nonsignificance of assault characteristics in the present study may not be atypical though since other research finds that subjective measures for assault severity (i.e., perceived life threat) are often more predictive of recovery than an objective measure like the one included in the present study (i.e., injury, weapon use; Ullman & Filipas, 2001b). Quantitative findings should be reexamined in future research with the inclusion of more variables identified in the literature as associated with recovery.

Victims in the qualitative sample spoke about how the act of reporting the assault and participating in the investigation was beneficial to their recovery, regardless of the quality of the detective interactions. These participants felt empowered by taking action. The empowerment victims felt by reporting is not to say that negative interactions did not have an impact on these victims, but simply suggests that many victims found the act of reporting helpful for their

recovery. Finding that some victims felt empowered by reporting is similar to the findings of Konradi (2007), who found that many victims relish the opportunity to take control and tell their story. Victims value the opportunity to participate in the process more than the actual outcome (Cluss et al., 1983), as found in the present study. Participating in the investigation may provide victims with a sense of control, which can be helpful for recovery (Ullman, Filipas, Townsend, & Starzynski, 2007). Generating a sense of control through reporting was the case for several victims in this study who emotionally benefitted from being a part of the process. Similarly, victims who wanted to participate but were not offered the opportunity (i.e., never contacted again after reporting) discussed how they felt reporting might have helped them regain some of the control that was lost because of the assault. The value of participating in the investigation emphasizes the importance of allowing victims a voice during the reporting and investigation process, because even if the desired outcome is not achieved, the process can still be empowering and helpful in recovery. This also relates back to the idea of exceptional cooperation, where victims who had the desire and opportunity to actively participate in the investigation, tended to regard this participation as helpful for their emotional well-being. Again, the motive and benefits of exceptional cooperation is something that warrants further study. The desire and benefit of participating in the investigation process may be something unique to sexual assault victims and should therefore be considered in the application of procedural justice to sexual assault investigations.

Demographic and assault characteristics were not found to have as salient of an effect in this study as expected. Other studies documented bias in treatment based on individual characteristics of the victim and the assault through assessments of credibility (see Briones-Robinson, Powers, & Socia, 2016; Campbell et al., 2001; Page, 2008). However, this study

found positive outcomes for treating people well, with little influence of personal or assault characteristics. A moderating effect was found for previous involvement in the legal system and satisfaction with the detective interaction. Physical injury was significantly related to trust and confidence in the police and willingness to report future crimes. Victim race was significantly associated with recovery. However, no other demographic or assault characteristics were associated with the outcome variables in the multivariate analyses once the procedural justice variable was added to the model. Interview participants discussed race and gender when asked about their views of the police and satisfaction with the treatment they received. Participants also discussed the treatment they received in terms of their gender and the assault characteristics, but they did not discuss these factors as contributing to their recovery, willingness to report in the future, and cooperation. It is possible that victims recognize that they deserve fair and respectful treatment, and are similarly impacted by the quality of treatment they receive, regardless of their personal attributes or the circumstances of the assault. This may be a finding specific to sexual assault victims, a unique group that suffered a severe violation and then faced secondary victimization by law enforcement which tested their emotional fortitude, willingness to proceed with the investigation, and views of the police. Nonetheless, the influence of victim, officer, and assault characteristics on outcomes associated with quality detective-victim interactions are something that should be replicated in future research using a larger sample to best understand these relationships and inform training practices. Future research should also explore the possible role of intersectionality in victims' interpretation of their investigation experiences to provide further insight into the role of personal characteristics in the relationships between detective-victim interactions and the outcomes examined in the present study.

Quantitative data did not show any differences in the appraisal of the interaction based on the characteristics (i.e., race, age, gender) of the detective. Yet, age and gender of the detective were mentioned by several interview participants. Victims discussed feeling like older male detectives would be unwilling to relate to them and may not be as supportive. Yet this did not influence their satisfaction with the detective interaction. Rather, what influenced their satisfaction was the quality of the interaction. By contrast, victims often expected that a female detective would be understanding and treat them better during the interaction. They were surprised and more upset when their interactions with female detectives were negative. Yet they were not surprised or more upset by a negative interaction with a male detective, showing a level of gender stereotyping. Results show that the characteristics of the detective do not matter in appraisals of the interaction unless it is a negative interaction with a female detective, which illustrates that females may be held to a higher standard when it comes to fair treatment. The presence of negative interactions with both male and female detectives reiterate conclusions drawn from earlier research that sexual assault investigations should not routinely be assigned to female detectives (Rich & Seffrin, 2012). Yet it should be considered how these biases disadvantage both the victims and the female officers since male officers could give the same negative treatment as a female officer but not be judged as harshly. Gender biases in interpretations of detective interactions is something that should be recognized in performance evaluations, and further highlights a need for sexual assault-specific training for all detectives.

Results from this study highlight an inconsistency in how neutrality is defined in the procedural justice literature and the practice of neutrality in sexual assault investigations. In the present study, neutrality was quantitatively conceptualized as “explaining reasons for his/her [the detective’s] actions”, “explaining what would happen next in the process”, and “treating me [the

victim] fairly”. This conceptualization aligned with neutrality in its definition as *neutrality in decision making* (Tyler, 2005) but not *making decisions based on facts*. The conceptualization of neutrality is more complicated in sexual assault investigations, as there are no “facts” until later in the investigation, or even years later due to rape kit backlogs in most of the U.S. (Peterson, Johnson, Herz, Graziano, & Oehler, 2012). Rather, victims are often treated based on preconceived notions or rape myths (Jordan, 2004). So, it is difficult to treat victims based on facts at the beginning stages of the investigation. As such, it is difficult to measure neutrality in its traditional form of making decisions based on facts, which was conceptualized when procedural justice originally was applied to courtroom settings where the facts were already presented in the evidence (Tyler, 2006). Results from the present study show that victims wanted the detective to explain his or her actions in a respectful and polite manner. Victims expressed satisfaction when this occurred, regardless of the investigation outcome. Victims wanted to feel supported and believed by the detective, something that contradicts neutrality when it is defined as “acting on facts of the case”, and is nearly impossible as there are no true facts of the case during initial detective-victim interactions. Though, feeling supported was something that could be achieved through explaining decisions, and being polite, respectful, and empathetic. Victims expressed dissatisfaction with the detective, were less willing to cooperate, and felt worse recovery-wise when they did not feel supported by the detective. Feeling like the detective was on their side was something that also contributed to their trust in the detective’s motives and confidence that their case would be handled well. This is not neutrality in its hardest form, but is neutrality in terms of treating victims fairly and explaining decisions that appears to be unique to procedural justice in sexual assault investigations. The findings from this study call for a nuanced conceptualization of neutrality (i.e., explaining decisions, explaining next steps in the

process, and treating victims fairly) when applying this aspect of procedural justice to sexual assault investigations. Future research examining procedural justice in sexual assault investigations should consider the distinctions in how neutrality is conceptualized. It is also possible that neutrality is not necessarily relevant in sexual assault investigations where victims initiate contact with the police (especially if both the suspect and accuser are not present at the same time), which is something that requires more theoretical work on neutrality in general.

The present study found support for empathy as an extension of procedural justice, as proposed by earlier research (see Rosenbaum et al., 2017). Rosenbaum and colleagues (2017) argue that when facing stress or trauma, individuals are seeking comfort and reassurance from police officers that is not always forthcoming. During interviews, victims discussed needing the detective to display empathy during their interactions. Victims in this study expressed needing to feel like the detective was on their side during the investigation (i.e., support) and that they were believed, both of which can be conveyed through empathy. Interview participants discussed empathy as a necessary component in contributing to their satisfaction with the detective, willingness to cooperate, and recovery. Empathy is something that appears particularly important in interactions with sexual assault victims, as victims are seeking validation and support following the violation they just experienced (Herman, 2005). During interviews, several victims discussed the importance of empathy (including belief and support) coming from the detective in particular, a person of authority. Where victims are often left unsupported by other formal support sources and even informal support sources (Ullman & Filipas, 2001), being supported by an agent of authority was particularly powerful for several victims in this sample. Though empathy is inherently different from procedural justice, as it does not concern the fairness or respectfulness of treatment. Results from this study show that empathy is an important extension

of procedural justice and a necessary aspect of quality interactions with sexual assault victims. Findings also underscore the importance of studying procedural justice in sexual assault investigations separately from other crimes, as sexual assault victims may desire empathy more than other crime victims.

Results qualitatively reveal what victims think is needed to improve the law enforcement response to sexual assault victims. Few studies have examined what victims want. Participants indicated that they want to receive more information about the investigation process, including follow-up contacts. The desire for more information is not surprising, as other research shows victims are often dissatisfied by the amount of information and attention received by officers during the investigation (Frazier & Haney, 1996). Victims want to be informed during the process and offered the opportunity to be involved, which can facilitate better outcomes for both the victim's recovery and the strength of the investigation. Victims also recommended that they be offered the choice of gender of the detective working on their case. Again, this relates back to victims wanting a voice in the process. Where some felt comfortable with a female, others simply wanted a detective who treated them supportively and with respect. When it is not possible to offer the option of a female detective, acknowledging the possible discomfort of sharing sensitive information with a male is something that may help to alleviate issues, as indicated by several victims who were uncomfortable interacting with a male detective. Victims also commented on the quality of responses they received from detectives, indicating that they wanted to be treated with respect, empathy, and feel supported by the detective. Overall, no victims made recommendations regarding the outcome of their report or investigation (i.e., recommend harsher sanctions for perpetrators or recommend all cases be charged), further evidencing the importance of process-oriented investigations.

## VII. CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

### A. Contributions

Previous research studying procedural justice and the outcomes associated with quality police interactions have typically utilized a sample of community citizens or crime victims in general. These studies established relationships between quality police interactions and positive outcomes including satisfaction with the detective interaction, willingness to report future crimes, views of the police, and cooperation (Skogan, 2005; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 1990). Furthermore, studies examining procedural justice among citizens were pivotal in underscoring the value of fair and respectful treatment (Tyler, 2005) and emphasizing process-oriented encounters over outcome-oriented encounters. Yet, these studies were unable to examine procedural justice in samples solely consisting of sexual assault victims. Furthermore, procedural justice in sexual assault investigations has not been studied in interactions with detectives, who generally have a considerable amount of contact with victims whose cases are investigated. Several studies to date have linked the quality of treatment of sexual assault victims to positive outcomes including recovery, cooperation, and prosecutions (Greeson et al., 2014; Patterson, 2008, 2011), but have not done so in one comprehensive mixed-methods study through a procedural justice lens. Overall, research to date on procedural justice in sexual assault investigations is rather piecemeal in evidencing the relationship between quality interactions and positive outcomes. The present study makes a noteworthy contribution to the literature and bridges gaps in extant research by exploring the quality of detective-victim interactions and linking the quality of such interactions to various outcomes. Specifically, this study adds to extant sexual assault research by offering an in-depth examination of victims' experiences with particular sources of formal support, providing both exposure to the problem of negative police-

victim interactions, as well as potential solutions to minimize secondary victimization that occurs as a result of these interactions. The present study adds to the procedural justice literature by applying this model to a specific violent crime through both qualitative and quantitative methods, demonstrating the versatility of procedural justice and opening the door to future research in this area. Finally, this study expands upon extant policing literature by exploring a new approach to a historically problematic area of policework, revealing a number of changes that can be made to sexual assault investigations to improve the quality of sexual assault investigations, increase reporting rates for this traditionally underreported crime, improve views of the police, and enhance victims' investigation experiences. Future research can use the results of this study as a stepping stone to further examine the quality of police-victim interactions and the benefits of positive interactions to inform police training practices.

In addition to the contributions this study makes to extant research, findings from the present study also contribute to the current state of knowledge on policing practices. This study was the first of its kind to explore the potential for procedural justice in sexual assault investigations through an examination of victims' experiences with the reporting and investigation process. Where other studies have examined victims' experiences with the police generally, examining these experiences through a procedural justice lens offers unique contributions to policing practices by looking at specific aspects of the interaction that make these experiences positive or negative, including the benefits of quality interactions. Findings show that procedural justice is a viable option for improving the quality of detective-victim interactions, and can lead to a number of positive outcomes for both the detective and victim. Qualitative findings provide nuances to the procedural justice perspective in the context of sexual assault investigations. This study shows that victims respond well to fair and respectful

treatment, which can result in a stronger investigation – something that is beneficial for both law enforcement and victims. Findings further evidence the relationship between treatment and recovery, showing detective-victim interactions that adhere to the components of procedural justice can help produce better recovery outcomes for victims. Results of this study also include recommendations from victims on how to improve these interactions, something that has not been examined before. The recommendations victims provided are helpful to practice by providing insight into improving victim interactions with detectives, straight from those who have had these experiences. Results from this study underscore the importance of quality interactions and provide insight into what specific aspects of these interactions create a positive experience. This information can be used to guide training practices for sexual assault detectives.

#### **B. Limitations**

The strengths of the proposed study are contrasted by a few noteworthy limitations. The first limitation concerns the small sample size of the data. This study involved sexual assault victims who reported to the police and victims who did not report to the police, to allow for comparison between the two groups. However, several of the research questions of this study focused on: 1) victims who reported their assault to the police; and 2) victims with cases that progressed to involve interaction with a detective. The number of respondents for these two subsamples is low, particularly for the latter of the two. One consequence of the small sample size for the different reporting groups is a small cell size in many of the chi-square analyses. As such, it was difficult to detect large differences between cell sizes and should be noted when interpreting the results of the chi-square analyses. The sample size for participants who interacted with a detective was adequate for the number of independent variables included in the multivariate analyses, though the models could have benefitted from a larger sample size.

Moderation and mediation effects may have been detected had the sample size been larger. As such, future research examining these relationships should utilize a larger sample size. The small sample size is not surprising given the generally low reporting rates of sexual assault and the added difficulty of reaching victims who are willing and emotionally able to discuss their experiences in a research setting. This low response does not necessarily reflect on the recruitment strategy of the study, but likely reflects the attrition rate for sexual assault cases in the legal system (i.e., making it to the point of detective contact). The mixed-method design of this study sought to compensate for this limitation (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative sample is of adequate size relative to similar studies (e.g., Patterson, 2011).

On a similar note, the sample size is limited by the missing data for several demographic variables. While other variables did not have a significant amount of missing cases, several demographic variables had upwards of 30% of cases missing. Interestingly, the missing demographic cases were limited to victims who did not report to the police and victims who reported to the police but did not interact with a detective. As such, the primary subsample for the present study (i.e., victims who reported to the police and interacted with a detective) did not have missing data issues. Nonetheless, the missing cases limited the ability to conduct comparative analyses between these reporting groups and possibly detect significance. Missing data in demographic variables is not uncommon and may be due to the placement of these questions at the end of the survey (i.e., breakoff; Sarraf & Tukibayeva, 2014). Missing demographic data may also be due to the sensitive nature of the survey, as participants may have been reluctant to share that information out of fear of identification. Though, it is curious that participants who reported to the police and interacted with a detective were willing to share the demographic information, as this branch of the survey was longer. These participants may have

been less concerned over being identified, as they shared their information with the police. These participants may also have been more invested in completing all questions of the survey and more motivated to share their experiences after having participated in the investigation process.

A third limitation concerns the measurement of procedural justice used in the quantitative analyses. In this study, procedural justice was measured using one comprehensive scale that covered the four elements of procedural justice (i.e., voice, respect, neutrality, and trustworthiness), as well as empathy, which research has recently been documented as related to procedural justice (Rosenbaum et al., 2017). The scale used in the present study is inclusive of the elements of procedural justice and has been modified to reflect the distinct differences of sexual assault investigations. The scale is also a highly reliable measure. As suggested by Gau (2011), the development of this scale was partly informed by the qualitative portion of this study. However, nuances in the measurement of procedural justice suggest that the subdomains of procedural justice should be measured separately rather than in one comprehensive measure. This was not ignored in the development of the sexual assault-specific scale in the present study. Rather, the scale used in this study was strategically developed as one scale to limit the number of independent variables used during analysis of this small sample of sexual assault victims. In a larger sample, the components of procedural justice would have likely been broken out as individual measures to examine the effect of each procedural justice element. Further mixed-methods research is needed to further develop and improve the measure for procedural justice specific to sexual assault. Another limitation of this scale concerns the response options for the items. Survey design researchers suggest including a mid-point response option rather than using a 4-point response option scale (Weijters, Cabooter, & Schillewaert, 2010). In this study, the items measuring procedural justice used a 4-point response scale, which may have influenced the

distribution of responses. The measurement of procedural justice is noted as a limitation, but it should also be noted that this scale is the first of its kind to measure procedural justice specifically in the context of sexual assault investigations. Thus, the use of this scale – while limited – is still a path-breaking step in studying the application of the procedural justice perspective to police interactions with sexual assault victims.

Another limitation concerns the measurement of recovery used in the present study. In this study, recovery was measured in the context of reporting (i.e., “reporting this crime has made recovery more difficult for me”), which is not a representative measure of victims’ feelings of recovery. Rather, recovery is best understood through other post-assault measures (e.g., coping, depression, social support), as they are predictive of PTSD symptomatology (Ullman et al., 2007). Future research examining the effects of reporting on recovery should use a more comprehensive measure to assess recovery. Similarly, this study used injury sustained from the assault as a measurement for assault severity rather than perceived life threat, which has been shown in other studies to be a better measurement for assault severity compared to objective measures (e.g., weapon use, injury). Future studies should utilize subjective measures of assault severity.

The qualitative approach to this study is limited by the inability to link survey responses to interview responses. As such, interviews were not informed by the participant’s survey responses and qualitative analysis could not be conducted with quantitative demographic variables. The CFE researchers were unable to obtain IRB approval for such methodology due to confidentiality concerns about storing potentially identifying information of participants. While this does undercut the strength of the mixed method approach, this study still achieved the primary research goals without directly linking survey and interview responses. To compensate

for this methodological limitation, basic demographic and assault characteristics discussed in the interview and observed by the researcher were noted (see Descriptive Statistics of Interview Participants section) and linked to the transcripts in the qualitative analysis software.

The participants in the research are a convenience sample of a select group and may not be representative of all victims who report to the legal system. Although this study actively recruited a diverse sample of sexual assault victims, the decision to participate was ultimately up to the victim and therefore the sample of the study may differ from that of the general population of sexual assault victims, and sexual assault victims who report to the police. It is also possible that because of the self-report design of the study, individuals who self-elected to participate in the study were extremely satisfied or dissatisfied with their experience with the detective. However, based on the information received in qualitative responses, it does not appear that participants were biased to participate by negative investigation experiences, as several participants had highly positive experiences and others regarded their experience as neutral. As found in other research (Campbell & Adams, 2009) participants in this sample appeared to have altruistic motives to participate in this study. This suggests participants were not motivated by biases for or against the police, or seeking a therapeutic outlet.

Just as individuals could potentially be biased by their reporting experiences in their decision to participate in the study, the responses of this study could also be biased by who received recruitment cards from the detectives. Detectives who assisted with the recruitment of participants could have been selective in their distribution of the recruitment materials by only providing survey cards to individuals who appeared satisfied with the detective. This bias may have been curbed by the multiple recruitment methods.

Recruitment for this study included several methods (i.e., police, advocates, online and community advertisements). While recruitment materials stated that this study was specific to the large metropolitan city where the study took place, it is unknown whether all participants abided by this eligibility criteria. As such, it is unknown whether the results of this study are actually specific to encounters with officers from this one police department and unknown if the results are generalizable to all police departments. Furthermore, the third-party recruitment strategy used in the present study creates difficulty in assessing a response rate, as it is unknown how many participants received information flyers or viewed the research advertisement on social media. On a similar note, the sample for this study was not particularly diverse in terms of participant ethnicity. Over half of participants (66%) were White, possibly as a result of recruitment bias. Though this study employed multiple recruitment methods to reach a diverse population of sexual assault victims in a large metropolitan area, almost half (40%) of participants were recruited through a victim advocacy agency, which are generally less frequently visited by ethnic minorities compared to White victims (Campbell et al., 2001).

A final limitation concerns the memory recall of participants recruited retrospectively for participation. Recruitment strategies were designed to reach a variety of victims with a range of time elapsed since the assault. Time elapsed since the assault ranged from within one year of the assault to over 30 years. Victims who were involved in an investigation a considerable time ago may not have a completely accurate memory of their feelings about the police interactions or the specific details of such interactions. Additionally, victims of assaults that took place multiple years ago may have had more time to reflect on their experience, and may perceive their police experience at the time of the interview differently than when their experience actually occurred. Victims who participated during their involvement in the legal system or shortly after their

investigation experience may still be emotionally charged by their experience and may not have had enough time to reflect on their experiences prior to participating in this research. From interviews, it did not seem that participants were overly traumatized, which suggests that this sample may have a greater emotional fortitude than victims overall and therefore may not be representative of all victims. As such, this was considered during data analysis and noted as an inherent limitation of the study. These limitations should certainly be considered by future researchers building on this study. Despite limitations, this study offers new insights into the police response to sexual assault victims and contributes to the current state of knowledge on sexual assault policing strategies.

### **C. Practical Implications and Directions for Future Research**

This study has several noteworthy implications for practice and research. This project was developed in collaboration with local law enforcement and advocacy agencies to explore the possible benefits of applying a procedural justice approach to sexual assault investigations. Results show that when detectives adhere to the principles of the procedural justice perspective in their interactions with victims, these encounters are more beneficial for both the victim and the detective. The findings from this research will be provided to the collaborators, including recommendations to the local law enforcement agency (that assisted with recruitment of participants) on how to improve their response to sexual assault victims and strengthen investigations through interpersonal interactions with victims. This study also took a feminist research approach by sharing findings with participants (see Hesse-Biber, 2007). Sharing findings allows participants to know how their research contribution is being used to shape practice.

The findings of this study suggest that applying the procedural justice perspective to interactions with sexual assault victims is something that could be beneficial to victims and the strength of the investigation. Detective-victim interactions that align with the procedural justice perspective are those that lead to greater satisfaction, cooperation, trust and confidence in the police, willingness to report future crimes, and recovery outcomes. Findings from this study illustrate that all of these outcomes are interrelated and boil down to fair and respectful treatment. Results show that victims want detectives who are respectful, trustworthy, allow them a voice, and show empathy. This does not necessarily contradict the goals of policework by asking detectives to take on a therapeutic role, but rather asks detectives to treat victims with respect and listen to them during the process. The goals of policework and treating sexual assault victims in a positive way are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Thus, treating victims in ways that adhere to the components of procedural justice does not require a therapeutic approach, but rather requires someone who understands the value of treating others in a respectful and polite manner. Yet this reveals a challenge for detectives to investigate the facts of the case *and* appear as an ally collecting evidence, rather than a skeptic looking for lies. This underscores the importance of having specialty training for sexual assault detectives, though unfortunately sexual assault specific training is often limited in quality and quantity (Lorenz & Maskaly, 2016; Reaves, 2016). Research shows that officer attitudes toward sexual assault are a significant part of how victims are treated during the investigation (Rich & Seffrin, 2012), suggesting that changing attitudes yields changes in behavioral performance. Though, experimental evaluations show that training is most effective in improving behavioral performances – not attitudes (Lonsway, Welch, & Fitzgerald, 2001). This highlights the difficulty of sexual assault training, but nonetheless indicates that advancements in training practices and training research are

needed. Training initiatives can borrow from both trauma-informed approaches and the procedural justice perspective. Recent experimental research on police-public interaction training (QIP) shows that training programs are effective at increasing respectful and reassuring behavior during role-playing encounters but not self-reported interpersonal communication skills, attitudes about showing respect or procedural justice (Rosenbaum & Lawrence, 2017). This shows training efforts geared toward improving interpersonal interactions between officers and community members are promising, but mixed, and require further examination in developing effective training practices. Findings from the present study can be used to inform training practices for detectives who handle sexual assault cases to improve the investigation process for both victims and law enforcement.

Though this study underscores the importance of specialty training for sexual assault investigations, this is often an unrealistic goal due to financial and time constraints. Where specialty training is not an option, officer-advocate partnerships could be a practical alternative. A study by Campbell (2006) showed that victims who had the assistance of a rape victim advocate were significantly more likely to have reports taken and were less likely to be treated negatively by police officers. Working with an advocate also resulted in less distress after their contact with the legal system. In the present study, several victims worked with a rape victim advocate from a third-party agency and regarded these experiences as helpful. Yet, because this was beyond the scope of the present study, it is unclear whether working with an advocate alongside the detectives contributes to the outcomes examined in this study (i.e., willingness to cooperate, willingness to report future crimes, views of the police), but would be an interesting and useful line of future inquiry. The benefits of officer-advocate partnerships are something that warrants further study, including an assessment of the possible need for additional resources for

advocacy agencies. Future research should also examine whether victims benefit more from third-party advocates than court-appointed advocates, as interview data showed that victims have different experiences with advocates who are immersed in the policing culture, as opposed to advocates who operate through another organization with a victim-centered mission.

Additionally, victims may be unaware of advocacy services or not know how to contact an advocacy agency, which further evidences the necessity of service referrals provided by officers responding to sexual assault victims and the possible benefit of police having already established partnerships with advocates.

While findings from this study show that more police training is needed to improve detective-victim interactions – and that detective-advocate partnerships may be a viable option – researchers and practitioners need to consider the larger picture in searching for solutions to improve sexual assault investigations and the experiences of victims who report to the police. Training for officers has proven difficult and often ineffective. While this highlights the need for additional research to develop and evaluate training programs, it also reveals an underlying issue in the policing culture, as well as the larger seemingly intransigent social climate toward rape and rape victims. Deeper issues that create hostile interactions between detectives and sexual assault victims may lie within other aspects of the policing experience, such as cynicism of overworked and undervalued police officers. In terms of sexual assault, the policing culture may reflect the larger social climate where women are often undervalued and sexual assault is not taken as seriously as is warranted. While scholars and practitioners can speculate about what contributes to problems in sexual assault reporting and investigation, existing knowledge on the topic – this research included – shows that there are underlying issues that need to be addressed before training can be most effective. For example, improved hiring procedures or better

mentoring programs for new officers may help to produce a new generation of officers who do not endorse rape myths or engage in victim blaming. Offering top-down training that addresses rape attitudes of administrators and police chiefs could slowly counter the police culture. Finally, reworking the incentive system for investigating cases could encourage detectives to investigate more cases rather than those seen as “winnable”. Without changes in the criminal legal system, it may be difficult for changes at the level of policing to have an effect, as priorities at the legal system level contributes to the behavior of police officers who are responding to how the system responds to sexual assault. These are just a few suggestions, but overall illustrate that the practical suggestions that arise from research may need to consider the broader context of the social ecology.

The findings from this study have implications for crime prevention and reporting. Patterson (2011) demonstrated in her qualitative sample that compassionate questioning was associated with the provision of information during victim interviews, and linked this to more prosecuted cases. Findings from the present study further evidence that the quality of treatment is predictive of cooperation and investigation participation. From this, it is clear that facilitating cooperation through positive treatment is something that can strengthen cases and increase prosecutions of sexual assault perpetrators. The present study also established a link between quality treatment and willingness to report future crimes. Currently, sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes (Rennison, 2000, in Sit, 2015). Positive treatment of those who report sexual assault can increase the number of assaults reported in the future through victims’ willingness to report revictimization, and their advising of others to report. If more sexual assault cases are being reported, actively investigated and prosecuted, this may create a deterrent for committing assaults in the first place.

Qualitative and quantitative results show that the quality of detective-victim interactions contributes to victims' willingness to provide information to the detective and participate in the investigation. The relationship between quality of interactions and willingness to cooperate has important implications for investigational practices because it shows that detectives can behave in a way that facilitates victims' sharing of information, ultimately building a stronger investigation and better experience for victims. For most victims, cooperating with the detective was something that came after a quality interaction characterized by support, belief, respect, and trust. Several victims also spoke about feeling comfortable, both emotionally and physically. Quality detective-victim interactions contributed to the victims' level of emotional comfort, and in turn, greater cooperation. Another way this could be accomplished is by taking time to build rapport with victims before questioning them about the assault. In trauma-informed approaches, it is customary to wait two sleep cycles before conducting the interview to allow for neurological processing of the event to obtain the greatest amount and quality of information. Similarly, meeting with victims immediately after the assault (to gather only preliminary, pertinent information) – but not conducting the interview until a second meeting – could produce similar benefits, as victims would be more comfortable and willing to provide information if rapport is established prior to questioning. As such, not conducting the interview immediately is something that is informed through both a trauma-informed approach and a procedural justice approach to sexual assault investigations. Though comfort is not something that may be the same for everyone and therefore it may be difficult for police to know what is comfortable for each individual. For example, sitting farther away or touching the victim may be comfortable for some but not others. One way to overcome this would be for officers to explain to victims that they want them to be as comfortable as possible and asking how to make that happen, which would

express that the officer cares about the victim's comfort and well-being, something that can facilitate cooperation, satisfaction, and better recovery outcomes.

Comfort is something also facilitated through the physical environment where the interaction takes place. A handful of victims noted feeling uncomfortable and unwilling to share information when the detective wanted to conduct the interview in a public place or uncomfortable environment (e.g., the apartment where the assault took place). This shows that a minor change – the venue of the interaction – can create a more comfortable environment that facilitates information sharing. For example, the Baltimore Police Department recently redesigned their victim interview rooms to be more comfortable and inviting than the traditional interview room (e.g., comfortable chairs, painted walls; Rector, 2016). Participants in the present study's sample recommended providing victims with an emotional support dog during the interview to make them feel more comfortable, a practice typically used with child abuse survivors during the forensic interview. Changes such as these aimed to produce a more comfortable and inviting environment for victims can make a considerable difference in the amount of information provided, as well as improve victims' experience with the process.

The findings from this research suggest that empathy is an important extension of procedural justice. Qualitative results show that empathy is a necessary aspect of quality detective-victim interactions, and is associated with better recovery, trust, and cooperation. It is possible that empathy mediates the relationship between procedural justice and these outcomes, particularly trust, as Rosenbaum and colleagues (2017) found in their study of community members. Future quantitative research should break the measurements of empathy out of the procedural justice scale to measure empathy separately in order to better understand the importance of empathy, as well as the relationship of empathy to other variables specific to

interactions with sexual assault victims. Sexual assault victims may value empathy and support more than other crime victims, which would suggest that the procedural justice perspective need modification to include empathy when applied to sexual assault. The relationship of empathy to procedural justice and the outcomes of interactions rooted in procedural justice should be explored in future quantitative research, using a larger sample of sexual assault victims. Future research should also examine whether procedural justice sans empathy still results in the positive outcomes identified in this study (e.g., does a detective acting in accordance with procedural justice – but who is clearly not empathetic – still create an interaction that facilitates cooperation and positive recovery outcomes?). The gendered aspect of empathy warrants further study as well, as empathy may be something desired more from female victims than male victims. This would make sense in the context of sexual assault, as most sexual assault victims are women and empathy appeared to be very important to victims in this sample, which was largely female. Thus, future research examining the relationship of empathy to procedural justice in sexual assault investigations should include gender comparisons to gain further insight into the importance of empathy in detective-victim interactions. Overall, results indicate that victim support received from formal providers – particularly the police – is complex and should continue to be studied, particularly with regard to empathy and other interactive elements that may contribute better reporting and investigation experiences for victims.

Both qualitative and quantitative findings reveal that the quality of interactions impact willingness to report future crimes to the police, but show that there are other factors that contribute to this willingness. Qualitative data show individual differences in willingness to report future crimes. Where some victims were clear in their unwillingness to report because of negative detective interactions, most victims discussed motives beyond their personal police

experiences including altruism and crime reporting values. These individual differences are something that should be studied in future research. There is a major gap in the literature on reporting revictimization, but should be studied since the reasons for reporting victimization and reporting revictimization appear to be somewhat different. This is an important line of inquiry, as understanding what contributes to reporting revictimizations (and advising others to report) could facilitate an increase in reporting rates, since so many individuals are assaulted each year, and being sexually assaulted is a risk factor for later revictimization (Humphrey & White, 2000; Messman-Moore et al., 2000). Qualitative findings regarding willingness to report future crimes revealed factors associated with reporting repeat victimizations that are not typically examined as factors contributing to reporting in quantitative measures, including altruism, crime reporting values, and reporting contingencies (e.g., ability to self-advocate). Future quantitative studies examining reporting victimization and reporting revictimization should be broadened to include these additional factors to better understand what goes in to the decision to report revictimization.

Several victims were dissatisfied with the amount of information they received during the investigation process and recommended that efforts be made to provide more information to future victims who report to the police. Providing more information to victims may be one way to increase satisfaction with the investigation process. Results from the present study show that victims want to be informed and involved throughout the process, and are willing to go to exceptional lengths to assist with the investigation. As suggested by Frazier and Haney (1996) this information could be provided at various points in the process. For example, victims could be informed about how and why arrest decisions were made, providing victims about the progression of the case after charges have been filed, or told if the defendant has been set free on

bail. Recently, some states have moved toward policy that involves officers providing information regarding evidence testing, which is a step in the right direction (e.g., Illinois Sexual Assault Incident Procedure Act). Keeping victims informed throughout the process can provide victims with a sense of involvement or partial control over the decision-making process. Victims should be provided occasional updates regarding their case so they are aware of if their case is open but not actively being investigated, or actively being investigated still, or if it was closed. This was an issue expressed by several victims in the present study who were unable to move forward with their recovery because they did not know if they would someday be contacted to further assist with the investigation or go to trial. In these situations, being informed one way or another was more important than the actual outcome. Informing victims when the defendant will be set free on bail or released from incarceration could increase victims' sense of safety, particularly in non-stranger perpetrated assaults where the defendant knows the victim and may be aware of his/her residence or workplace. This was important for several victims in the present study who felt unsafe because they were not kept abreast of the defendant's incarceration status or whether the perpetrator had been informed that the victim filed a report against him/her. Practically speaking, it may be difficult for officers to know when perpetrators are immediately released from jail or prison. However, there are phone applications (i.e., "apps") that provide notification when individuals are released (e.g., VINELink by the National Victim Notification Network). Information about this application could be provided to victims in their paperwork so they can easily stay informed about perpetrators' incarceration status. Yet this is just one small solution to keeping victims informed. Detectives should be made aware of the discomfort that occurs when victims are not informed about their case or not contacted again after filing a report, and agency policy should be put in place to rectify this injustice.

This study focused on victims' interactions with detectives, but qualitative results highlight that interactions with *responding officers* matter too. Yet this is a complicated area of study because detectives and responding officers have different training and goals (Martin, 2005). Victims' interactions with the detectives and satisfaction with the investigation may be shaped by a combination of responding officer and detective interactions. In some situations, victims intended on reporting to a detective but were mistreated by the responding officer(s) and, as a result, ended up not reporting at all. Just as officers are often unaware of the emotional effects their behavior has on victims (Campbell, 2005), responding officers and detectives may also be unaware of how their behavior affects victims' willingness to file a report or cooperate. Though, in some cases a negative first experience with a responding officer was nullified by a positive experience with the detective later, but this was not the case for all victims. The outcomes associated with quality detective-victim interactions (i.e., willingness to report future crimes, recovery, trust/confidence in the police, etc.) may differ with regard to victims' interactions with the responding officer, or these outcomes may be a culmination of their interactions with both the responding officer and detective. It is unclear how interactions with one officer can counteract the effects of an interaction with another, but these individual differences should be qualitatively studied. Victim interactions with detectives and responding officers both need to be looked at in research, but separately, to further explore these relationships and inform policing practices.

Several interview participants discussed feeling empowered by reporting their assault and assisting with the investigation. Other participants spoke about the other avenues they took to feel empowered, such as becoming an advocate or investigating the assault through their own channels. For example, one participant spoke about feeling empowered by reporting even though

her assault was not investigated. She discussed how if she did not feel satisfied from reporting, that she would have found other ways to achieve her own form of justice. Another victim found empowerment in knowing that she could always report, even if charges could not be filed. For these victims, they were able to achieve positive recovery outcomes outside of the investigation. This is important to note, as victims can find justice through other avenues if they are not satisfied with their investigation experience. Victims should know that reporting is not the only option; there are other things that victims can do to spark change that could enhance their recovery. For example, Beaulieux (2016) created a decision matrix for sexual assault victims that presents informal, institutional, and legal choices for victims in the aftermath of sexual assault. The U.S. military implemented a policy that allows victims to file a restricted report (i.e., record of incident without entering the adjudication system) if they are not ready to pursue legal action. While the civilian legal system could not and should not model the military system, policy changes such as this could be adapted to the civilian system so victims could report a suspect and document the assault without having to commit to duration of the legal process. Victims should be aware of alternative options to achieve their own personal form of justice that could help them recover, without risking secondary victimization if they are not emotionally equipped to take that risk (see Beaulieux, 2016). This is important to know for victims whose friends seek advice about reporting assault or people who were revictimized but reluctant to report to the police because of a first negative experience.

Interview and survey questions did not specifically ask participants about the encouragement they received from other support sources to report, but some participants indicated that they spoke with other (informal and formal) supporters in their decision-making. This aligns with other research, suggesting that informal sources influence victims' decision to

report to the police (Paul et al., 2013; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). However, this is less studied in terms of encouragement (or *discouragement*) from formal support sources (e.g., therapist, SANE) but was a minor pattern noted from the interview data. Also, less studied is the influence of other support sources on the willingness to cooperate with the investigation process. Other support sources may hear of the quality of interactions with the detective or responding officer and either encourage or discourage the victim to continue pursuit of legal justice. This may be the case for encouragement to report revictimization as well. These questions remain unstudied, but should be studied in future research to shed light on the role of informal and other formal support sources on reporting and legal system involvement.

In this study, qualitative and quantitative methods were used concurrently to provide a complete understanding of victims' experiences with the investigation and the quality of interactions with the detective during this process. Quantitative findings provided overwhelming support for procedural justice in detective-victim interactions. Qualitative findings contradicted these conclusions in some places, and provided further detail to shed light on the conclusions drawn from the quantitative findings. As such, the breadth and depth of findings would not be possible without utilizing both methods. This research underscores the importance of a mixed-methods approach, particularly in exploration of phenomena that are understudied. Future research examining this topic should take into account the limitations of this study and build on these findings using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Interview data from this study explored victims' post-assault experiences overall. Though the focus of this study was detective experiences, data revealed several other aspects of victims' post-assault experiences that should be looked at in future research on victims' help-seeking. Overall, there were 97 codes in this study, about half of which were used in the present study,

but there is other knowledge to be learned from the other aspects of the interview data. For example, victims spoke of other help-seeking experiences that affected their recovery such as the reactions of responding officers, court-appointed advocates, and prosecutors. In this sample, it was fairly common for victims to disclose to their employers for various reasons, and responses of their employers greatly impacted their post-assault experience (e.g., negative reactions, Human Resources involvement, creating hostile work environments). As employment is such a large aspect of daily life, exploring how victims' work life is affected following assault should be a focus of future research. Overall, in support of qualitative research, the data yielded from this study offers further depth and nuance to victims' post-assault experiences that will benefit future sexual assault research.

Researchers in the field should note the difficulty faced in recruiting participants for this study. Difficulty in recruitment highlights the importance and challenges of this type of research. The recruitment strategy through the local law enforcement agency was not a significant contributor to the number of victims who participated in this study (5%). This may be due to the low number of sexual assault reports made in districts where recruitment cards were being distributed. With few reports, it is not completely surprising that there would be a low response rate. It is also possible that victims who are recruited at the point of reporting the crime may not be emotionally equipped to participate in research or may be too busy navigating the legal system to participate in research. However, advocacy agencies that distributed the same card (both retrospectively and at the point of contacting an advocate) recruited a large proportion of the survey and interview participants (40%). This may indicate differences in willingness to participate in research by those who seek advocacy services and those who just report to the police, or suggest a problem using detectives to recruit participants. Future recruitment designs

may require researchers to work more closely to ensure that cards are distributed to all victims who report to the police, or use a different recruitment strategy altogether. Electronic (i.e., social media) and community-based recruitment (i.e., flyers) contributed slightly over half (55%) of participants, so these strategies should be considered in future recruitment strategies.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Sexual assault is a common but highly unreported crime that leaves many victims left without the possibility of legal justice, tangible aid, or formal support. Victims who do report their sexual assault to the police are often met with a lack of support from law enforcement and under-investigated cases, resulting in harsher recovery outcomes and possibly less favorable views of the police. While a successful investigation should produce important information, it should also leave the victim feeling good about their interaction with the officer. Therefore, it is important that researchers and practitioners make strides to improve victims' experiences with the detective(s) working on their case. By improving the quality of detective-victim interactions, there is the potential to produce better outcomes for both victims and detectives through improved recovery, a stronger investigation, and better views of the police. This study sought to address this issue by examining victim experiences with the investigation process through a procedural justice framework using survey and interview data from a community sample of sexual assault victims. Findings show that quality detective-victim interactions are associated with satisfaction with the interaction, cooperation with the detective, willingness to report future crimes, positive views of the police and better recovery. Overall, results suggest that procedural justice is a viable approach to quality detective-victim interactions in sexual assault investigations, though qualitative results show that special considerations need to be made when applying procedural justice to sexual assault investigations. Overall, this research offers several practical implications that can help improve victims' reporting experiences and at the same time facilitate positive investigational outcomes.

## CITED LITERATURE

- Ahrens, C. E. (2006). Being silenced: The impact of negative social reactions on the disclosure of rape. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 38(3-4), 263–274.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-006-9069-9>
- Ahrens, C. E., Campbell, R., Ternier-Thames, N. K., Wasco, S. M., & Sefl, T. (2007). Deciding whom to tell: Expectations and outcomes of rape survivors' first disclosures. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31(1), 38–49. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00329.x>
- Ahrens, C. E., Stansell, J., & Jennings, A. (2010). To tell or not to tell: The impact of disclosure on sexual assault survivors' recovery. *Violence and Victims*, 25(5), 631–648.  
<https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.25.5.631>
- Alderden, M. A., & Ullman, S. E. (2012). Creating a more complete and current picture: Examining police and prosecutor decision-making when processing sexual assault cases. *Violence against Women*, 18(5), 525–551. doi: 10.1177/1077801212453867
- Alderden, M., & Long, L. (2016). Sexual assault victim participation in police investigations and prosecution. *Violence and Victims*, 31(5), 819–836. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.VV-D-14-00103>
- Anders, M. C., & Christopher, F. S. (2011). A socioecological model of rape survivors' decisions to aid in case prosecution. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 35(1), 92–106. doi: 10.1177/036168430394802
- Ashworth, C. D., & Feldman-Summers, S. (1978). Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System: The female victim's perspective. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 5(3), 227–240.

- Ask, K. (2010). A survey of police officers' and prosecutors' beliefs about crime victim behaviors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 25*(6), 1132-1149.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260509340535>
- Bachman, R. (1998). The factors related to rape reporting behavior and arrest new evidence from the national crime victimization survey. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 25*(1), 8–29.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854898025001002>
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*(6), 1173.
- Barrett, E. C., & Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. (2013). The victim as a means to an end: Detective decision making in a simulated investigation of attempted rape. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling, 10*(2), 200–218. doi: 10.1002/jip.1385
- Bateman, J., Henderson, C., & Kezelman, C. (2013). Trauma-informed care and practice: Towards a cultural shift in policy reform across mental health and human services in Australia, a national strategic direction. *Position Paper, Mental Health Coordinating Council*.
- Beaulieux, M. (2016, April 26). Reporting Rape Is But One Choice. Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michele-beaulieux/reporting-rape-is-but-one\\_b\\_9771606.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michele-beaulieux/reporting-rape-is-but-one_b_9771606.html)
- Block, R. (1974). Why notify the police: The victim's decision to notify the police of an assault. *Criminology, 11*(4), 555–569.

- Boateng, F. D. (2016). Crime reporting behavior: Do attitudes toward the police matter? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Advance online publication.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516632356>
- Bondurant, B. (2001). University women's acknowledgment of rape: Individual, situational, and social factors. *Violence Against Women*, 7(3), 294–314.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801201007003004>.
- Borja, S. E., Callahan, J. L., & Long, P. J. (2006). Positive and negative adjustment and social support of sexual assault survivors. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 19(6), 905–914.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.20169>
- Brent, J. J., & Kraska, P. B. (2010). Moving beyond our methodological default: A case for mixed methods. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 21(4), 412–430.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10511253.2010.516562>
- Brewer, J., & Hunter, A. (2006). *Foundations of Multimethod Research: Synthesizing Styles*. SAGE.
- Briones-Robinson, R., Powers, R. A., & Socia, K. M. (2016). Sexual orientation bias crimes: Examination of reporting, perception of police bias, and differential police response. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, Advance online publication.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854816660583>
- Burke, K., & Leben, S. (2007). Procedural fairness: A key ingredient to public satisfaction. *Court Review*, 44, 4–24.
- Burla, L., Knierim, B., Barth, J., Liewald, K., Duetz, M., & Abel, T. (2008). From text to codings: Intercoder reliability assessment in qualitative content analysis. *Nursing Research*, 57(2), 113–117. doi: 10.1097.01.NNR.0000313482.33917.7d

- Burt, M. R. (1980). Cultural myths and supports for rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 38(2), 217.
- Campbell, J. L., Quincy, C., Osserman, J., & Pedersen, O. K. (2013). Coding in-depth semistructured interviews: Problems of unitization and intercoder reliability and agreement. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 42(3), 294-320.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124113500475>
- Campbell, R. (1998). The community response to rape: Victims' experiences with the legal, medical, and mental health systems. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 26(3), 355–379. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022155003633>
- Campbell, R. (2005). What really happened? A validation study of rape survivors' help-seeking experiences with the legal and medical systems. *Violence and Victims*, 20(1), 55–68.  
<https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.2005.20.1.55>
- Campbell, R. (2006). Rape survivors' experiences with the legal and medical systems: Do rape victim advocates make a difference? *Violence Against Women*, 12(1), 30–45.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801205277539>
- Campbell, R. (2008). The psychological impact of rape victims. *American Psychologist*, 63(8), 702–717.
- Campbell, R. (2012). *Neurobiology of Sexual Assault: Implications for First Responders in Law Enforcement, Prosecution, and Victim Advocacy*. Presented at the National Institute of Justice Research for the Real World Seminar. Retrieved from  
<https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=263040>
- Campbell, R., & Adams, A. E. (2009). Why do rape survivors volunteer for face-to-face interviews? A meta-study of victims' reasons for and concerns about research

- participation. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24(3), 395–405.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260508317192>
- Campbell, R., Dworkin, E., & Cabral, G. (2009). An ecological model of the impact of sexual assault on women’s mental health. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 10(3), 225-246.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838009334456>
- Campbell, R., & Johnson, C. R. (1997). Police officers’ perceptions of rape: Is there consistency between state law and individual beliefs? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 12(2), 255–274. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088626097012002007>
- Campbell, R., Patterson, D., & Bybee, D. (2011). Using mixed methods to evaluate a community intervention for sexual assault survivors: A methodological tale. *Violence Against Women*, 17(3), 376–388. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801211398622>
- Campbell, R., & Raja, S. (2005). The sexual assault and secondary victimization of female veterans: Help-seeking experiences with military and civilian social systems. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 29(1), 97–106.
- Campbell, R., Wasco, S. M., Ahrens, C. E., Sefl, T., & Barnes, H. E. (2001). Preventing the “second rape”: Rape survivors’ experiences with community service providers. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 16(12), 1239–1259.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/088626001016012002>
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative research*. Sage Publications Ltd, London.
- Chaudoir, S. R., & Fisher, J. D. (2010). The disclosure processes model: Understanding disclosure decision-making and post-disclosure outcomes among people living with a

- concealable stigmatized identity. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136(2), 236–256.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018193>
- Chen, Y., & Ullman, S. E. (2014). Women’s reporting of physical assaults to police in a national sample: A brief report. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 23(8), 854–868.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2014.942448>
- Clay-Warner, J., & Burt, C. H. (2005). Rape reporting after reforms: Have times really changed? *Violence Against Women*, 11(2), 150–176. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801204271566>
- Cluss, P. A., Boughton, J., Frank, E., Stewart, B. D., & West, D. (1983). The rape victim: Psychological correlates of participation in the legal process. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 10(3), 342–357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854883010003009>
- Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (2013). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*, 209–240.
- Du Mont, J., Miller, K.-L., & Myhr, T. L. (2003). The role of “real rape” and “real victim” stereotypes in the police reporting practices of sexually assaulted women. *Violence Against Women*, 9(4), 466–486. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801202250960>
- Elliott, D. E., Bjelajac, P., Fallot, R. D., Markoff, L. S., & Reed, B. G. (2005). Trauma-informed or trauma-denied: Principles and implementation of trauma-informed services for women. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 33(4), 461–477. doi: 10.1002/jcop.20063

- Elliott, I., Thomas, S. DM., & Ogloff, J. R. P. (2012). Procedural justice in contacts with the police: The perspective of victims of crime. *Police Practice and Research, 13*(5), 437–449. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2011.607659>
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 62*(1), 107–115. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04569.x>
- End Violence Against Women International. (n.d.). Start by Believing: Ending the Cycle of Silence in Sexual Assault. Retrieved March 29, 2017, from <http://www.startbybelieving.org/home>
- Erez, E. (1999). Who's afraid of the big bad victim? Victim impact statements as victim empowerment and enhancement of justice. *Criminal Law Review, 545–556*.
- Fairchild, A. J., & MacKinnon, D. P. (2009). A general model for testing mediation and moderation effects. *Prevention Science: The Official Journal of the Society for Prevention Research, 10*(2), 87–99. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-008-0109-6>
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A.-G. (2009). Statistical power analyses using G\* Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. *Behavior Research Methods, 41*(4), 1149–1160.
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G\* Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods, 39*(2), 175–191.
- Feild, H. S. (1978). Attitudes toward rape: A comparative analysis of police, rapists, crisis counselors, and citizens. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 36*(2), 156–179. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.36.2.156>

- Feldman-Summers, S., & Ashworth, C. D. (1981). Factors Related to Intentions to Report a Rape. *Journal of Social Issues*, 37(4), 53-70. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1981.tb01070.x>
- Feldman-Summers, S., & Palmer, G. C. (1980). Rape as viewed by judges, prosecutors, and police officers. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 7(1), 19–40.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/009385488000700103>
- Felson, R. B., & Pare, P.-P. (2008). Gender and the victim's experience with the criminal justice system. *Social Science Research*, 37(1), 202–219.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2007.06.014>
- Filipas, H. H., & Ullman, S. E. (2001). Social reactions to sexual assault victims from various support sources. *Violence and Victims*, 16(6), 673–692.
- Fisher, B. S., Daigle, L. E., Cullen, F. T., & Turner, M. G. (2003). Reporting sexual victimization to the police and others results from a national-level study of college women. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 30(1), 6–38.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854802239161>
- Frazier, P. A., & Haney, B. (1996). Sexual assault cases in the legal system: Police, prosecutor, and victim perspectives. *Law and Human Behavior*, 20(6), 607–628.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/BF01499234>
- Frohmann, L. (1991). Discrediting victims' allegations of sexual assault: Prosecutorial accounts of case rejections. *Social Problems*, 38(2), 213–226. <https://doi.org/10.2307/800530>
- Frohmann, L. (1997). Convictability and discordant locales: Reproducing race, class, and gender ideologies in prosecutorial decisionmaking. *Law and Society Review*, 531–556.

- Gau, J. M. (2011). The convergent and discriminant validity of procedural justice and police legitimacy: An empirical test of core theoretical propositions. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 39, 489-498
- Gelo, O., Braakmann, D., & Benetka, G. (2008). Quantitative and qualitative research: Beyond the debate. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 42(3), 266–290.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-008-9078-3>
- Greenberg, M. S., & Ruback, R. B. (1992). *After the crime: Victim decision making*. Springer US.
- Greeson, M. R., & Campbell, R. (2011). Rape survivors' agency within the legal and medical systems. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 35(4), 582–595.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684311418078>
- Greeson, M. R., Campbell, R., & Fehler-Cabral, G. (2014). Cold or caring? Adolescent sexual assault victims' perceptions of their interactions with the police. *Violence and Victims*, 29(4), 636–651.
- Grubb, A., & Turner, E. (2012). Attribution of blame in rape cases: A review of the impact of rape myth acceptance, gender role conformity and substance use on victim blaming. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 17(5), 443–452. doi: 10.1016/j.avb.2012.06.002
- Guest, G., & MacQueen, K. M. (2007). *Handbook for Team-Based Qualitative Research*. Rowman Altamira.
- Heath, N. M., Lynch, S. M., Fritch, A. M., & Wong, M. M. (2013). Rape myth acceptance impacts the reporting of rape to the police: A study of incarcerated women. *Violence Against Women*, 19(9), 1065–1078. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801213501841>

- Herman, J. L. (2005). Justice from the victim's perspective. *Violence against Women, 11*(5), 571–602. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801205274450>
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2007). The practice of feminist in-depth interviewing. *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, 111–148.
- Holmes, K. A. (1980). Justice for whom? Rape victims assess the legal-judicial system. *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology, 8*(2), 126–130.
- Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research, 15*(9), 1277–1288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>
- Humphrey, J. A., & White, J. W. (2000). Women's vulnerability to sexual assault from adolescence to young adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 27*(6), 419–424.
- James, V. J., & Lee, D. R. (2014). Through the looking glass: Exploring how college students' perceptions of the police influence sexual assault victimization reporting. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 30*(14), 2447–2469. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260514553116>
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher, 33*(7), 14–26. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014>
- Jordan, J. (2004). Beyond belief? Police, rape and women's credibility. *Criminal Justice, 4*(1), 29–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466802504042222>
- Jordan, J. (2008). Perfect victims, perfect policing? Improving rape complainants' experiences of police investigations. *Public Administration, 86*(3), 699–719. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2008.00749.x>

- Kerstetter, W. A., & Van Winkle, B. (1990). Who Decides? A study of the complainant's decision to prosecute in rape cases. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *17*(3), 268–283.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854890017003003>
- Kilpatrick, D. G., Resnick, H. S., Ruggiero, K. J., Conoscenti, L. M., & McCauley, J. (2007). *Drug-facilitated, incapacitated, and forcible rape: A national study*. Medical University of South Carolina, National Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center Charleston, SC.
- Knight, C. (2015). Trauma-informed social work practice: Practice considerations and challenges. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, *43*(1), 25–37.
- Konradi, A. (2007). *Taking the Stand: Rape Survivors and the Prosecution of Rapists*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Koss, M. P., Dinero, T. E., Seibel, C. A., & Cox, S. L. (1988). Stranger and acquaintance rape: Are there differences in the victim's experience? *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *12*(1), 1–24.
- Liang, B., Goodman, L., Tummala-Narra, P., & Weintraub, S. (2005). A theoretical framework for understanding help-seeking processes among survivors of intimate partner violence. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *36*(1-2), 71–84.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-005-6233-6>
- Littleton, H. L., Axsom, D., Breitkopf, C. R., & Berenson, A. (2006). Rape acknowledgment and postassault experiences: How acknowledgment status relates to disclosure, coping, worldview, and reactions received from others. *Violence and Victims*, *21*(6), 761–778.  
<https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.21.6.761>

- Logan, T. K., Evans, L., Stevenson, E., & Jordan, C. E. (2005). Barriers to services for rural and urban survivors of rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 20*(5), 591–616.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260504272899>
- Lonsway, K. A., Welch, S., & Fitzgerald, L. F. (2001). Police training in sexual assault: Response process, outcomes, and elements of change. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 28*(6), 695–730. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009385480102800602>
- Lorenz, K., & Maskaly, J. (2016). The relationship between victim attitudes, training, and behaviors of sexual assault investigators. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0735648X.2016.1218356>
- Madigan, L., & Gamble, N. C. (1991). *The second rape: Society's continued betrayal of the victim*. Macmillan Pub Co.
- Maier, S. L. (2008). "I have heard horrible stories..." Rape victim advocates' perceptions of the revictimization of rape victims by the police and medical system. *Violence against Women, 14*(7), 786–808. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801208320345>
- Martin, P. Y. (2005). *Rape work: Victims, gender and emotions in organization and community context*. Psychology Press.
- Martin, P. Y., & Powell, R. M. (1994). Accounting for the "second assault": Legal organizations' Framing of rape victims. *Law & Social Inquiry, 19*(4), 853–890. doi: 10.1111/j.1747-4469.1994.tb00942.x
- Ménard, K. S. (2005). *Reporting sexual assault: A social ecology perspective*. LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC.
- Messman-Moore, T. L., Long, P. J., & Siegfried, N. J. (2000). The Revictimization of child sexual abuse survivors: An examination of the adjustment of college women with child

- sexual abuse, adult sexual assault, and adult physical abuse. *Child Maltreatment*, 5(1), 18–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559500005001003>
- Monroe, L. M., Kinney, L. M., Weist, M. D., Dafeamekpor, D. S., Dantzler, J., & Reynolds, M. W. (2005). The experience of sexual assault: Findings from a statewide victim needs assessment. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20(7), 767–776. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260505277100>
- Morse, J. M. (2003). Principles of mixed methods and multimethod research design. *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*, 1, 189–208.
- NCVSR. (2013). *Building Cultures of Care: A guide for sexual assault services programs*. Retrieved from [http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications\\_nsvrc\\_guides\\_building-cultures-of-care.pdf](http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_guides_building-cultures-of-care.pdf)
- Norman, G.R. (2010). Likert scales, levels of measurement and the "laws" of statistics. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 15(5), 625–632. doi: 10.1007/s10459-0109222-y
- Norman, G. R., & Streiner, D. L. (2003). *PDQ statistics* (Vol. 1). PMPH-USA.
- O'Brien, R. M. (2007). A caution regarding rules of thumb for variance inflation factors. *Quality & Quantity*, 41(5), 673–690.
- Orchowski, L. M. (2010). *Disclosure of Sexual Victimization: A prospective study of social reactions and subsequent adjustment*. ProQuest, Ann Arbor MI.
- Orchowski, L. M., Untied, A. S., & Gidycz, C. A. (2013). Factors associated with college women's labeling of sexual victimization. *Violence and Victims*, 28(6), 940–958. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.VV-D-12-00049>

- Orth, U. (2002). Secondary victimization of crime victims by criminal proceedings. *Social Justice Research, 15*(4), 313–325.
- Page, A. D. (2007). Behind the blue line: Investigating police officers' attitudes toward rape. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, 22*(1), 22–32.
- Page, A. D. (2008). Judging women and defining crime: Police officers' attitudes toward women and rape. *Sociological Spectrum, 28*(4), 389–411.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02732170802053621>
- Page, A. D. (2010). True colors: Police officers and rape myth acceptance. *Feminist Criminology, 5*(4), 315–334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085110384108>
- Parsons, J., & Bergin, T. (2010). The impact of criminal justice involvement on victims' mental health. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 23*(2), 182–188. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.20505>
- Patterson, D.A. (2008). *Constructing justice: How the interactions between victims and detectives affect the quality of rape investigations*. ProQuest.
- Patterson, D. A. (2011). The linkage between secondary victimization by law enforcement and rape case outcomes. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26*(2), 328–347.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260510362889>
- Patterson, D. A., Greeson, M., & Campbell, R. (2009). Understanding rape survivors' decisions not to seek help from formal social systems. *Health & Social Work, 34*(2), 127–136.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/hsw/34.2.127>
- Paul, L. A., Zinzow, H. M., McCauley, J. L., Kilpatrick, D. G., & Resnick, H. S. (2013). Does encouragement by others increase rape reporting? Findings from a national sample of women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 38*(2), 222–232.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684313501999>

- Peterson, J., Johnson, D., Herz, D., Graziano, L., & Oehler, T. (2012). Sexual assault kit backlog study. *Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/238500.pdf>
- Petronio, S., Flores, L. A., & Hect, M. L. (1997). Locating the voice of logic: Disclosure discourse of sexual abuse. *Western Journal of Communication, 61*(1), 101-113.
- Ptacek, J. (1999). *Battered women in the courtroom: The power of judicial responses*. UPNE.
- Reaves, B. (2016). *State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013* (No. NCJ 249784). Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/slleta13.pdf>
- Rector, K. (2016, September 28). Baltimore Police Redesign Interview Space to Help Comfort Victims of Sexual Assault. *The Baltimore Sun*. Retrieved from <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-sexual-assault-interview-rooms-20160928-story.html>
- Reinharz, S., & Davidman, L. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. Oxford University Press.
- Rich, K., & Seffrin, P. (2012). Police interviews of sexual assault reporters: Do attitudes matter? *Violence and Victims, 27*(2), 263–279. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.27.2.263>
- Rickford, R. (2016). Black lives matter: Toward a modern practice of mass struggle. *New Labor Forum, 25*(1), 34–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1095796015620171>
- Rosenbaum, D. P., & Lawrence, D. S. (2017). Teaching procedural justice and communication skills during police–community encounters: Results of a randomized control trial with police recruits. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, Advance online publication.

- Rosenbaum, D. P., Lawrence, D. S., Hartnett, S. M., McDevitt, J., & Posick, C. (2015). Measuring procedural justice and legitimacy at the local level: The police–community interaction survey. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, *11*(3), 335–366. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-015-9228-9>
- Rosenbaum, D. P., Maskaly, J., Lawrence, D.S., Escamilla, J.H., Enciso, G., Christoff, T.E., & Posick, C. (2017). The police-community interaction survey: Measuring police performance in new ways. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, *40*(1), 112–127. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-07-2016-0119>
- Rosenbaum, D. P., Schuck, A. M., Costello, S. K., Hawkins, D. F., & Ring, M. K. (2005). Attitudes toward the police: The effects of direct and vicarious experience. *Police Quarterly*, *8*(3), 343–365. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611104271085>
- Sable, M. R., Danis, F., Mauzy, D. L., & Gallagher, S. K. (2006). Barriers to reporting sexual assault for women and men: Perspectives of college students. *Journal of American College Health*, *55*(3), 157–162. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JACH.55.3.157-162>
- Saldana, J. (2009). An Introduction to Codes and Coding. In *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*, 1-31.
- Sarraf, S., & Tukibayeva, M. (2014). Survey page length and progress indicators: What are their relationships to item nonresponse? *New Directions for Institutional Research*, *2014*(161), 83–97. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.20069>
- Sipe, L. R., & Ghiso, M. P. (2004). Developing conceptual categories in classroom descriptive research: Some problems and possibilities. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *35*(4), 472–485.

- Sit, V. K. Y. (2015). *Sexual assault and formal service use: Understanding help-seeking among women living in poverty* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto (Canada)).
- Skogan, W. G. (2005). Citizen satisfaction with police encounters. *Police Quarterly*, 8(3), 298–321. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611104271086>
- Sleath, E., & Bull, R. (2012). Comparing rape victim and perpetrator blaming in a police officer sample: Differences between police officers with and without special training. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 39(5), 646–665. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854811434696>
- Spohn, C., White, C., & Tellis, K. (2014). Unfounding sexual assault: Examining the decision to unfound and identifying false reports. *Law & Society Review*, 48(1), 161–192 doi: 10.1111/lasr.12060
- Starks, H., & Trinidad, S. B. (2007). Choose your method: A comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10), 1372–1380. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732307307031>
- Starzynski, L. L., Ullman, S. E., Filipas, H. H., & Townsend, S. M. (2005). Correlates of women's sexual assault disclosure to informal and formal support sources. *Violence and Victims*, 20(4), 417–432. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.20.4.417>
- Steffensmeier, D., Ulmer, J., & Kramer, J. (1998). The interaction of race, gender, and age in criminal sentencing: The punishment cost of being young, black, and male. *Criminology*, 36(4), 763–798. doi: 10.1111.j.1745-9125.1998.tb01265.x
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory (2nd ed.)* (Vol. xiii). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Sunshine, J., & Tyler, T. R. (2003). The role of procedural justice and legitimacy in shaping public support for policing. *Law & Society Review*, 37(3), 513–548. doi: 10.1111/1540-5893.3703002
- Tabachnick, B. G., Fidell, L. S., & Osterlind, S. J. (2001). Using multivariate statistics. Pearson.
- Thompson, M., Sitterle, D., Clay, G., & Kingree, J. (2007). Reasons for not reporting victimizations to the police: Do they vary for physical and sexual incidents? *Journal of American College Health*, 55(5), 277–282. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JACH.55.5.277-282>
- Tourangeau, R., Conrad, F. G., & Couper, M. P. (2013). *The Science of Web Surveys*. Oxford University Press.
- Tyler, T. R. (1990). *Why people obey the law: Procedural justice, legitimacy, and compliance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Tyler, T. R. (2003). Procedural justice, legitimacy, and the effective rule of law. *Crime and Justice*, 30, 283–357. <https://doi.org/10.1086/652233>
- Tyler, T. R. (2005). Policing in black and white: Ethnic group differences in trust and confidence in the police. *Journal of Police Quarterly*, 8(3), 322–342. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611104271105>
- Tyler, T. R. (2006). Does the American public accept the rule of law? The findings of psychological research on deference to authority. *DePaul Law Review*, 56, 661.
- Tyler, R. R., Rasinski, K. A., & Spodick, N. (1985). Influence of voice on satisfaction with leaders: Exploring the meaning of process control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48(1), 72–81. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.48.1.72>

- Tyler, T. R., & Wakslak, C. J. (2004). Profiling and police legitimacy: Procedural justice, attributions of motive, and acceptance of police authority. *Criminology*, *42*(2), 253–282. doi: 10.1111/j.1745-9125.2004.tb0065020.x
- Ullman, S. E. (1996a). Correlates and consequences of adult sexual assault disclosure. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *11*(4), 554–571. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088626096011004007>
- Ullman, S. E. (1996b). Social reactions, coping strategies, and self-blame attributions in adjustment to sexual assault. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *20*(4), 505–526. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1996.tb00319.x>
- Ullman, S. E. (1999). Social support and recovery from sexual assault: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *4*(3), 343–358. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789\(98\)00006-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789(98)00006-8)
- Ullman, S. E. (2000). Psychometric characteristics of the social reactions questionnaire. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *24*(3), 257–271. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2000.tb00208.x>
- Ullman, S. E., & Filipas, H. H. (2001a). Correlates of formal and informal support seeking in sexual assault victims. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *16*(10), 1028–1047. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088626001016010004>
- Ullman, S. E., & Filipas, H. H. (2001b). Predictors of PTSD symptom severity and social reactions in sexual assault victims. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, *14*(2), 369–389.
- Ullman, S. E., Townsend, S. M., Filipas, H. H., & Starzynski, L. L. (2007). Structural models of the relations of assault severity, social support, avoidance coping, self-blame, and PTSD among sexual assault survivors. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *31*(1), 23–37. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-5402.2007.00328.x
- Ullman, S.E., Filipas, H.H., Townsend, S.M., & Starzynski, L.L. (2007). Psychosocial correlates

- of PTSD symptom severity in sexual assault survivors. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 20(5), 821-831. doi: 10.1002/jts.20290
- Walsh, R. M., & Bruce, S. E. (2011). The relationships between perceived levels of control, psychological distress, and legal system variables in a sample of sexual assault survivors. *Violence Against Women*, 17(5), 603-618. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801211407427>
- Walsh, R. M., & Bruce, S. E. (2014). Reporting decisions after sexual assault: The impact of mental health variables. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 6(6), 691–699. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0036592>
- Warner, R. M. (2013). *Applied Statistics: From bivariate through multivariate techniques* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Weijters, B., Cabooter, E., & Schillewaert, N. (2010). The effect of rating scale format on response styles: The number of response categories and response category labels. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 27(3), 236–247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2010.02.004>
- Weis, K., & Borges, S. S. (1973). Victimology and rape: The case of the legitimate victim. *Issues in Criminology*, 71–115.
- Weiss, K. G. (2010). Too ashamed to report: Deconstructing the shame of sexual victimization. *Feminist Criminology*, 5(3), 286–310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085110376343>
- Weitzer, R. (2002). Incidents of police misconduct and public opinion. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 30(5), 397–408. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2352\(02\)00150-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2352(02)00150-2)
- Wentz, E., & Archbold, C. A. (2012). Police perceptions of sexual assault victims: Exploring the intra-female gender hostility thesis. *Police Quarterly*, 15(1), 25-44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611111432843>.

Williams, L. S. (1984). The classic rape: When do victims report? *Social Problems*, 31(4), 459–467. <https://doi.org/10.2307/800390>

Wolitzky-Taylor, K. B., Resnick, H. S., McCauley, J. L., Amstadter, A. B., Kilpatrick, D. G., & Ruggiero, K. J. (2011). Is reporting of rape on the rise? A comparison of women with reported versus unreported rape experiences in the national women's study-replication. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26(4), 807–832. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260510365869>

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A.

**TABLE XV**  
**VARIABLE CODING USED IN QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

Variable	Original Coding	Coding in Present Study
Reported to Police	0 = Did not report to the police 1 = Reported to the police 2 = Reported and interacted with detective	0 = Did not report to the police 1 = Reported to the police 2 = Reported and interacted with detective
Satisfaction with Detective Interaction	1 = Very dissatisfied 2 = Dissatisfied 3 = Satisfied 4 = Very satisfied	1 = Very dissatisfied 2 = Dissatisfied 3 = Satisfied 4 = Very satisfied
Willingness to Participate in Legal Process	1 = Very unlikely 2 = Somewhat unlikely 3 = Somewhat likely 4 = Very likely	1 = Very unlikely 2 = Somewhat unlikely 3 = Somewhat likely 4 = Very likely
Willingness to Report Future Crimes	1 = Very unlikely 2 = Somewhat unlikely 3 = Somewhat likely 4 = Very likely	1 = Very unlikely 2 = Somewhat unlikely 3 = Somewhat likely 4 = Very likely
Trust and Confidence in Police Department	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly agree	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly agree
Self-Assessment of Reporting-related Recovery	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly agree	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly agree
Victim Relationship to Perpetrator	1 = Stranger 2 = Current or former spouse 3 = Romantic partner 4 = Acquaintance 5 = Friend 6 = Family member 7 = Other	1 = Stranger 2 = Current or former spouse 3 = Romantic partner 4 = Acquaintance 5 = Friend 6 = Family member 7 = Other
Substance Use at time of Assault	1 = Non-drug/alcohol related assault 2 = Drug/alcohol related assault	1 = Non-drug/alcohol related assault 2 = Drug/alcohol related assault

**TABLE XV, APPENDIX A** (continued)

Physical Injury	1 = Did not sustain injury 2 = Was injured	1 = Did not sustain injury 2 = Was injured
Time Elapsed before Reporting	1 = Less than 1 hour 2 = 1 to 6 hours 3 = Within 1 day 4 = Within 2 days 5 = Within 3 days 6 = A longer time period 7 = Unsure/don't know	1 = Within 24 hours 2 = Over 24 hours
Time Elapsed since the Assault	1 = Less than one month 2 = 1 to 6 months 3 = Between 6 and 12 months 4 = 1 to 5 years 5 = Over 5 years	1 = Less than one month 2 = 1 to 6 months 3 = Between 6 and 12 months 4 = 1 to 5 years 5 = Over 5 years
Victim Gender	1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Transgender 4 = Other/please specify	1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Non-binary gender identity
Victim Age	1 = 18-24 2 = 25-35 3 = 36-49 4 = 50-65 5 = Over 65	1 = 18-24 2 = 25-35 3 = 36-49 4 = 50-65 5 = Over 65
Victim Education	1 = Some grade school 2 = Some high school 3 = Graduated high school 4 = Technical/vocational 5 = Some college 6 = Graduated college/BA 7 = Graduate school/professional	1 = High school graduate or less 2 = Some college/vocational/Bachelor's 3 = Graduate/Professional/JD degree
Victim Sexual Orientation	1 = Straight 2 = Gay/lesbian 3 = Bisexual 4 = Other	1 = Heterosexual/straight 2 = Non-Heterosexual/LGBT
Victim Race	1 = White 2 = Black/African American 3 = Hispanic or Latino/a 4 = Asian 5 = Native American 6 = Bi-racial or multi-racial 7 = Other/please specify	1 = White 2 = Non-White

**TABLE XV, APPENDIX A (continued)**

Victim Income	1 = Less than \$25,000	1 = Under \$50,000
	2 = \$25,001-\$50,000	2 = \$50,001 - \$100,00
	3 = \$50,001-\$75,000	3 = Over \$100,000
	4 = \$75,001-\$100,000	
	5 = Over \$100,000	
Detective Gender	1 = Male	1 = Male
	2 = Female	2 = Female
Detective Age	1 = Under 30 years' old	1 = Under 30 years' old
	2 = 30 to 40 years' old	2 = 30 to 40 years' old
	3 = Over 40 years' old	3 = Over 40 years' old
Detective Race	1 = White	1 = White
	2 = Black or African American	2 = Non-White
	3 = Hispanic or Latino/a	
	4 = Asian	
	5 = Native American	
	6 = Bi-racial or multi-racial	
	7 = Other	

APPENDIX B.

**TABLE XVI**

FULL LIST OF SURVEY ITEMS TO MEASURE JUDGMENTS OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

Item	Mean	SD	Range
Detective treated me with dignity and respect	2.62	1.13	1 – 4
Detective minimized the importance of my experience	2.59	1.25	1 – 4
Detective clearly explained what would happen next in the process	2.56	1.08	1 – 4
Detective treated me fairly	2.56	1.08	1 – 4
Detective appeared trustworthy	2.55	1.14	1 – 4
Detective explained the reasoning for his/her actions and decisions	2.38	1.07	1 – 4
Detective treated me politely	2.73	1.09	1 – 4
Detective seemed to doubt what I was saying	2.54	1.23	1 – 4
Detective listened to what I had to say	2.66	1.16	1 – 4
Detective comforted and reassured me	2.03	1.14	1 – 4
Detective appeared sensitive to my feelings and needs	2.45	1.25	1 – 4
Detective told me I could have done more to prevent this experience from occurring	2.13	1.17	1 – 4
Detective appeared rushed as if he/she did not have time for my case	2.34	1.20	1 – 4
Detective took the matter seriously	2.50	1.25	1 – 4
Detective treated me like he/she believed my story	2.39	1.18	1 – 4

## APPENDIX C.

**TABLE VIII**  
**CODES USED IN QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS <sup>a b</sup>**

Code	Number of Times Code used in Analysis
<b>REPORTING</b>	
Decision to report: Active decision	61
Decision to report: Forced hand	25
Delayed reporting	21
Decision to not report: Related to perceptions of police	34
Decision to not report: Not related to perceptions of police	47
Non-reporting: Officer interference	8
Reporting future crimes	72
<b>INTERACTIONS WITH RESPONDING OFFICER(S)</b>	
Negative interaction	94
Positive interaction	47
Neutral interaction	7
Expectations for interaction	17
Feelings about the interaction	45
Cooperation with RO	27
Responding officer rape myth acceptance	9
<b>INTERACTIONS WITH DETECTIVE(S)</b>	
Negative detective interaction	100
Positive detective interaction	92
Neutral detective interaction	11
Interaction expectations	27
Feelings about the interaction	79
Cooperation with detective	50
Detective rape myth acceptance	3
<b>INVESTIGATION PARTICIPATION</b>	
Exceptional cooperation	22
Investigation participation	32
Not participate: Other	4
Not participate: Police related	23
<b>LEGAL PROCESS PARTICIPATION</b>	
Willingness to participate	26
Willingness to not participate: Police related	2
Willingness to not participate: Other	2
Opportunity not presented	9

**TABLE XVII, APPENDIX C (continued)**

<b>INVESTIGATION OUTCOME</b>	
Outcome expectations	44
Changes in desired outcome	9
Actual outcome	26
Current status of case	12
Outcome satisfaction	11
Outcome dissatisfaction	28
Survivor-initiated contact with police	15
<hr/>	
<b>EXPERIENCES WITH LEGAL SYSTEM OVERALL/LEGAL PROFESSIONALS</b>	
Rape kit testing	29
Prosecutor's office/State's attorney	19
Defense attorney	9
Judge	9
Police – Other	33
Legal system involvement – Other	2
Court advocate	7
<hr/>	
<b>EXPERIENCES WITH EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS/ PERSONS</b>	
Media coverage	10
Advocacy agency	36
Employer	37
Hospital or medical professionals	31
Informal support persons	100
Counselor or therapist	16
<hr/>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
Police recommendations	199
Legal system recommendations	10
<hr/>	
<b>VICTIM RECOVERY</b>	
Recovery symptoms	46
Self-blame	54
Coping methods	46
Recovery appraisal positive	16
Recovery appraisal negative	24
Formal help-seeking	34
Advocacy	34
<hr/>	
<b>OFFICER CHARACTERISTICS</b>	
Gender	45
Race/ethnicity	5
Age	7

---

**TABLE XVII, APPENDIX C (continued)**

<b>ASSAULT CHARACTERISTICS</b>	
Substance use	14
Resistance	21
Relationship to perpetrator	34
Physical violence	16
Injury	19
Child sexual abuse (CSA)	14
Sex work	6
Domestic violence/IPV	13
Time elapsed since the assault	23
Delayed acknowledgement of the assault	24
Revictimization experience	30
Assault context	47
Perpetrator characteristics	17
<b>VIEWS OF THE POLICE</b>	
Positive views of the police	6
Negative views of the police	48
Neutral views of the police	2
Mixed views of the police	35
General views of the police	9
Changes in views of the police	11
Views of the legal system	12
<b>VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS</b>	
Race/ethnicity	12
Gender identity	7
Education	4
Class	6
Sexual orientation	6
Age	5
Mental illness	3
Physical disability	5
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
Reactions to research study/participation	19
Quotes	86
Memory recall	14
Societal or political comments	81
Victim rape myth acceptance	4
Procedural justice-based interaction element	27
Miscellaneous	1

<sup>a</sup> A full codebook with code descriptions and abbreviations is available by request.

<sup>b</sup> Total codes = 97

APPENDIX D.

IRB Approval Notice for use of CFE Project Data for this Dissertation Study

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**

**Amendment to Research Protocol and/or Consent Document – Expedited Review**

**UIC Amendment # 13**

May 11, 2017

William McCarty, Ph.D.

Criminology, Law, and Justice

1007 W Harrison St., M/C 141

Chicago, IL 60607

Phone: (312) 996-7971 / Fax: (312) 996-8355

**RE: Protocol # 2014-0122**  
**“Center for Excellence in Homicide and Sexual Assault Investigations Program”**

Dear Dr. McCarty:

Members of Institutional Review Board (IRB) #2 have reviewed this amendment to your research and/or consent form under expedited procedures for minor changes to previously approved research allowed by Federal regulations [45 CFR 46.110(b)(2)]. The amendment to your research was determined to be acceptable and may now be implemented.

Please note the following information about your approved amendment:

**Amendment Approval Date:** May 10, 2017

APPENDIX D (continued)

**Amendment:**

Summary: UIC Amendment #13 dated and received via OPRS Live May 18, 2017: An investigator-initiated amendment involving the request for approval for (2) previously approved research assistants (Katherine Lorenz and Stacy Dewald) to use data obtained from this project for their respective dissertation projects. These graduate students have assisted with data collection and management on this project and will be conducting analyses that align with the overarching goals and hypotheses of the CFE project. Their use of this data will not step outside of what is already approved under the current research protocol. Thus, there is no request for any changes to the project, just approval for these two students to use this data for their dissertation projects.

**Please note the Review History of this submission:**

Receipt Date	Submission Type	Review Process	Review Date	Review Action
04/18/2017	Amendment	Expedited	05/10/2017	Approved

Please be sure to:

→ **Use only the IRB-approved and stamped consent document(s) and/or HIPAA Authorization form(s) enclosed with this letter when enrolling subjects.**

→ Use your research protocol number (2014-0122) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

→ Review and comply with all requirements on the guidance document,  
"UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects"  
(<http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/ovcr/research/protocolreview/irb/policies/0924.pdf>)

**Please note that the UIC IRB #2 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 at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 355-2939. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,

Jewell Hamilton, MSW

IRB Coordinator, IRB # 2

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

## VITA

### Education

B.S. Sociology, Central Michigan University, 2012

M.A. Criminology, Law, and Justice, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2013

Preliminary Exams for Ph.D. completed December 2015

Ph.D. Criminology, Law, and Justice, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2017

### Professional Research Experience

Research Assistant, May 2015 to December 2017

University of Illinois at Chicago

Department of Criminology, Law, and Justice

Conducted analysis and interpretation of longitudinal quantitative data and dyadic interview data individually and in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team of researchers working on the Women's Stress and Support Study funded by the National Institute of Health. Principal Investigator: Sarah Ullman

Research Assistant, August 2015 to May 2016

University of Illinois at Chicago

Interdisciplinary Center for Research on Violence

Contributed to the development of new research projects surrounding the prevention of adolescent dating violence, substance abuse, stalking, and sexual assault. Principal Investigator: Paul Schewe

Research Assistant, January 2014 to May 2015

University of Illinois at Chicago

Department of Criminology, Law, and Justice

Worked on a team of scholars and practitioners researching the state of homicide and sexual assault investigations across the state of Illinois to develop training procedures for Illinois detectives, funded by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA). Principal Investigators: Dennis Rosenbaum, William McCarty, Robert Boehmer

Research Assistant, September 2010 to May 2012

Central Michigan University

Department of Sociology

Assisted with grant writing and data collection on various projects related to violence and fear of crime. Principal Investigator: Rebecca Hayes

### Publications

Kirkner, A., Lorenz, K., & Ullman, S.E. (in press). Recommendations for Responding to Survivors of Sexual Assault: A Qualitative Study of Survivors and Support Providers. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*.

Lorenz, K., Ullman, S.E., Kirkner, A., Mandala, R., Vasquez, A.L., & Sigurvinsdottir, R. (2017). Social Reactions to Sexual Assault Disclosure: A Qualitative Study of Informal Support Dyads. *Violence Against Women*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/1077801217732428

Ullman, S.E., Lorenz, K., & Kirkner, A. (2017). Alcohol's Role in Social Reactions to Sexual Assault Disclosure: A Qualitative Study of Informal Support Dyads. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Advance online publication.

Harper, S.B., Kirkner, A., Maskaly, J. & Lorenz, K. (2017). Enhancing Title IX Due Process Standards in Campus Sexual Assault Investigations: Considering the Role for Procedural and Distributive Justice. *Journal of School Violence*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1080/15388220.2017.1318578

Lorenz, K. (2017). Sex Trafficking in the United States: Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 20 (2), 293-295. doi: 10.1080/10282580.2017.1292834

Lorenz, K. & Maskaly, J. (2016). The Relationship between Victim Attitudes, Training, and Behaviors of Sexual Assault Investigators. *Journal of Crime and Justice*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1080/0735648X.2016.1218356

Lorenz, K. & Ullman, S.E. (2016). Correlates of Alcohol-Specific Social Reactions in Alcohol-Involved Sexual Assaults. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, and Trauma*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1080/10926771.2016.1219801

Lorenz, K. & Ullman, S.E. (2016). Alcohol and Sexual Assault Victimization: Research Findings and Future Directions. *Journal of Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 31, 82-94. doi: 10.1016/j.avb.2016.08.001

Hayes, R., Lorenz K., & Bell, K. (2013). Victim Blaming Others: Rape Myth Acceptance and the Just World Belief. *Feminist Criminology*, 8, 202-220. doi: 10.1177/1557085113484788

## **Presentations**

Lorenz, K. 2017. Quality Interactions and Positive Outcomes: Exploring the Potential for Procedural Justice in Sexual Assault Investigations. Accepted for presentation at the American Society of Criminology in Philadelphia, PA. November 15-18.

Ullman, S.E., Lorenz, K., & Kirkner, A. 2017. Overcoming Primary Data Collection Challenges in Victimization Research. Accepted for presentation at the American Society of Criminology in Philadelphia, PA. November 15-18.

Lorenz, K., Ullman, S.E., Kirkner, A., Mandala, R. Vasquez, A.L., & Sigurvinsdottir, R. 2017.

Social Reactions to Sexual Assault Disclosure: A Qualitative Study of Informal Support Dyads. Accepted for presentation at the American Society of Criminology in Philadelphia, PA. November 15-18.

Mazar, L., Kirkner, A., & Lorenz, K. 2017. Graduate Student and Faculty Experiences with Sexual Harassment in Higher Education. Accepted for presentation at the American Society of Criminology in Philadelphia, PA. November 15-18.

Lorenz, K., Kirkner, A., Harper, S., & Schewe, P. 2017. Bad Breakups: Preliminary Findings from a Teen Dating Violence Survey. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Kansas City, MO. March 21-25.

Vasquez, A.L., Lorenz, K., Kirkner, A., & Ullman, S.E. 2016. Using Dyadic Interviews to Examine Social Support in Female Sexual Assault Survivors. Presented at the American Society of Criminology in New Orleans, LA. November 16-19.

Harper, S., Kirkner, A., Maskaly, J., & Lorenz, K. 2016. Enhancing Title IX Due Process Standards in Campus Sexual Assault Investigations. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Denver, CO. March 29-April 2.

Lorenz, K. & Ullman, S.E. 2015. Alcohol-Involved Sexual Assault: What do we Know and What Types of Research are still needed? Presented at the Annual Conference of the American Society of Criminology in Washington, D.C. November 18-21.

Alderden, M., Venema, R., Lorenz, K., & Stemen, D. 2015. "Investigating" Homicide and Sexual Assault Investigations in Illinois. Presented at the American Society of Criminology annual conference in Washington, D.C. November 18-21.

Lorenz, K., & Dewald, D. 2014. The Center for Excellence: Researching Sexual Assault Investigations. Presented at the American Society Criminology annual conference in San Francisco, CA. November 19-22.

Lorenz, K., & Ullman, S.E. 2014. Predicting Social Reactions to Female Survivors of Alcohol-Related Assaults Based on Demographics, Assault Characteristics, and Post-Assault Victim Responses. Presented at the American Society of Criminology annual conference in San Francisco, CA. November 19-22.

Johnston, R., Lorenz, K., Dewald, S., Christoff, T., Boehmer R., & Taylor, S. 2014. The Center for Excellence in Homicide and Sexual Assault Investigations: Advancing knowledge and Practice of the Investigation Process through Researcher and Practitioner Collaboration. Presented at the annual conference of the Midwestern Criminal Justice Association annual meeting in Chicago, IL. September 25-27.

Hayes, R., Bell, K., & Lorenz, K., 2011. "It's a Mad World": An Examination of Fear of Crime,

Victim Blaming, and Just World Belief. Presented at the American Society of Criminology in Washington, D.C. November 16-19.

### **Teaching Experience**

Adler University - Online Campus for Master of Arts in Criminal Justice  
Subject Matter Expert and Course Designer  
    Capstone in Criminology Part 1  
    Capstone in Criminology Part 2

University of Illinois at Chicago - Department of Criminology, Law, and Justice  
Teaching Assistant  
    Criminology (Spring 2013)  
    Introduction to Criminology (Fall 2013)  
    As a T.A., I designed and taught the discussion sections of this course.

### **Other Relevant Employment**

Graduate Assistant, September 2012 to January 2013  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
College of Medicine  
Office of Student Affairs

Undergraduate Intern, January 2012 to May 2012  
Isabella County Juvenile Trial Court  
Mt. Pleasant, MI

### **Professional Activities**

Ad hoc reviewer      *Violence & Victims*  
                            *Addiction Research & Theory*  
                            *Aggressive Behavior*

Member of            American Society of Criminology  
                            Division on Women and Crime  
                            Division of Policing