

STUDYING RAPE:
THE PRODUCTION OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT
SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

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ABSTRACT

In 1987, statistics transformed rape from a rare and personal concern into an epidemic in popular consciousness. Mary Koss and colleagues conducted victimization surveys with thousands of college women, 1 in 4 of whom reported completed or attempted rape. This finding received tremendous attention in the 1980s, and continues to influence activists and state officials. Notwithstanding the importance of this and other scientific facts, scholars have rarely explored the role of scientists in shaping perceptions of and responses to sexual violence. This project addresses that gap in the literature, via the following questions: (1) how have scientists conceptualized sexual violence among adults; and (2) what social mechanisms enable, constrain, and otherwise influence scientific research on sexual violence? Drawing on insights from feminist science studies, I approach sexual violence as an intra-active phenomenon, and regard objects of study (sexual violence) as inseparable from agencies of observation (research instruments, researchers). Data came from three sources: content analysis of journal abstracts (N=1,313), in-depth assessment of texts in different subfields (N=84), and interviews with researchers (N=31). Ultimately, I argue that sexual violence research has been dominated by psychological inquiries, as well as gendered assumptions regarding who is most capable of perpetrating and experiencing rape. Scientists have produced a tremendous body of knowledge regarding the individual-level causes, individual-level outcomes, and prevalence of men's sexual aggression toward women. Systemic forces and sexual violence that deviates from this particular gendered pattern remain underexamined. I further argue that scientific research on sexual violence is shaped by a range of social mechanisms that are particular to fields associated with questions of social morality and social movements including feminism(s).

For Tasia, my partner in survival.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In my third year of college, I made the questionably ambitious decision to take an advanced feminist theory class with a professor to whom I'll refer here as April. The reading list was dizzying. Donna Haraway, Sarah Ahmed, Judith Butler – these and numerous others whose work struck me as equal parts aligned with and in opposition to the most treasured tenets of those feminisms with which I was familiar. And whereas other professors might have pushed us to identify a favorite theorist, or at least to claim that some were more compelling, April posed a greater challenge. She asked us to consider the social forces behind feminist theorizing. She asked that we approach knowledge as contingent and variable, linked with specific actors and contexts. Rather than seek out “Truth” (that is, with a capital “T”), she raised the possibility that multiple truths might coexist.

Midway through the term, having established the course as postmodern but not quite having brought my classmates and me to where we knew what that meant, April led an exercise in knowledge production. She read several statements aloud, each beginning with a knower and finishing with a knowledge claim. *Alan knows that it is time for breakfast. Beverly knows that she must study for her statistics exam.* My peers and I were tasked with the deceptively simple mission of guessing how these actors might have come to know whatever it was that they knew.

Most statements were handled swiftly. We might propose two or three explanations, enough to demonstrate some measure of variance, and move along. “Alan always eats breakfast at 8:00, and that’s what time it is.” “Alan’s partner announced that it was breakfast time.” “Beverly’s test is next week, and she did poorly on the last one.” And so we continued, until April offered the following:

Mary knows that she is pregnant.

Our tame discussion erupted. Practically everyone had something to offer; April, herself had prepared more than 10 explanations. “Mary’s belly is swelling.” “She took one of those at-home pregnancy tests.” “She had a dream.” “She saw an omen.” “She got an ultrasound, and the doctor gave her a picture of the baby.” “Mary’s periods stopped.” “She just knows.” “One of her friends is a nurse – nurses always seem to know before anyone else, don’t they?” “She took a blood test.” “The angel Gabriel told her that she was with child.” “She’s been throwing up.” “Something about her food cravings changed.”

Engaging as these musings were, it was what happened next that fixed the lesson in my memory. We transitioned from merely offering explanations to assessing their credibility. Moreover, we began to consider that credibility might vary among claims of pregnancy, and might be achievable in different measures and through different means by different actors in different contexts (Epstein 1996; Shapin 1995; Waidzunus 2012). Some classmates had been pregnant before. A few of them – and several of our collective acquaintances who were not present for the exercise – had contacted their doctors to disclose pregnancies and schedule appropriate care. In every case, patients’ accounts were deemed insufficient to establish pregnancy. Doctors demanded further examination under their own supervision. One person recalled that a friend had shown up well into her second trimester –belly swollen, periods ceased – only to hear her doctor say that “you’re not pregnant until my test says so.” So claimants were unequal. However confident Mary might be, however many friends and relatives might believe her, she was a substandard knower in medical encounters (provided that she wasn’t, herself, a doctor who engaged in medically sanctioned self-assessments before declaring pregnancy). Body fluids were also unequal. Blood carried more weight than pee. Except for menstrual blood, the absence of which was of limited value. Moreover, certain objects were

rendered imperceptible in these moments, thereby excluding particular knowledges (Murphy 2006; Proctor 2008). Doctors might hear Mary report missed periods and at-home tests, but would hardly entertain a discussion of angels. Restriction to established medical knowledges would necessarily produce ignorance of what medicine refused to acknowledge.

Though we did not venture here, my classmates and I might have raised more ontological questions. The very definition of pregnancy, the moment at which an individual transitions from “not pregnant” to “pregnant,” is a matter of some controversy. This might occur when sperm penetrates egg, when the embryonic genome is assembled or activated, or when the embryo is implanted. It might also occur, or be felt to occur, later on in the process. It might not even be a moment, so much as a gradual shift. It might be achieved retroactively, as with my classmate’s acquaintance who was told she could not be pregnant without the doctor’s confirmation. Presumably, after the requisite blood test or ultrasound, she would come to have been (medically/legitimately/credibly) pregnant for months.

These days, I find myself returning over and over to April’s exercise. In my present role as a sociologist, I study those who study rape. I study the social processes that shape and are shaped by scientific research. I seek out the disciplinary conventions and external pressures that set boundaries regarding what questions may be posed and what answers given. I investigate how someone might know whether they have been raped, and how scientists might accept or challenge their self-assessment. This forces attention to markers of and struggles over credibility, and to the making and unmaking of ignorance that occurs within and through the production of knowledge (Jasanoff 2005; Latour 1987; Proctor 2008). The knowers, in this case, are mostly scientists. The knowledges are matters of scientific fact. I am again tasked with the deceptively simple mission of asking “how.” There are some differences, of course. I must also ask “why any of this matters,” and be more accountable for my own assumptions and

contributions. The subject matter, and my relationship with it, differs radically from that day in advanced feminist theory. I have devoted more than a decade to anti-rape work at this point in my life, whereas then I spent mere moments contemplating each statement. I have been raped; I have never been pregnant. Perhaps the most obvious shift is that I have transitioned from an undergraduate to a career academic. My professional credentials, increased since then and increasing still through this endeavor, will no doubt expand my credibility as a knowledge producer and the gravity awarded my positions.

In the following pages, I investigate four decades of scientific research on adult sexual violence in the United States and Canada. I restrict to these two nations partially for feasibility, favoring in-depth assessments in a narrower geographic region over a more general assessment of global trends. There are also reasons for looking at the United States and Canada together, rather than focusing on one of these nations. Both have produced considerable bodies of scientific literature on this subject. Many scientists (in this field) and others have worked in both nations and/or with scholars from both nations across their careers, and similar priorities and trajectories in antiviolence activism and policy change provided notable similarities in the broader social context of scientific research on rape (e.g., the initiation and persistence of Take Back the Night marches, major legal reforms in the 1970s and 1980s, organizing around pervasive sexual violence perpetrated by White colonist men and their descendants against indigenous women). My inquiries are driven by two primary research questions: *(1) how have scientists conceptualized sexual violence among adults; and (2) what social mechanisms enable, constrain, and otherwise influence scientific research on sexual violence?*

Remembering April's exercise, I approach scientific works as products of particular knowers who advance and foreclose particular knowledges. Drawing on insights from feminist science studies, I further understand my own perspective as partial, situated within the various

personal experiences and dispositions, disciplinary training, professional expectations, and broader cultural and historical contexts that shape my position(s) as a researcher (Barad 1998; Flax 1992; Haraway 1988; Harding 1995). More specifically, this work is informed by my training and experiences as a sociologist, as an interdisciplinary collaborative researcher, as an antiviolence advocate of more than 10 years, as a social justice activist with particular ties to queer and transgender organizing, and by theoretical commitments to intersectional feminism within and beyond science studies (including intersectional scholarship within feminist science studies) and queer theory (Butler 2006/1990; Collins 2004; Halberstam 2011; Rubin 1993/1984). My own conceptualization of rape is informed by these politics. I understand sexual violence as a gendered and sexualized phenomenon, but also as something that may be perpetrated by and against people of all genders and sexualities. I further understand sexual violence as entangled with innumerable dimensions of power and inequality, including but far from limited to disability, race, ethnicity, age, nation, citizenship, and class. Although I have sincerely endeavored to approach scientific actors and knowledges openly, it is possible if not unavoidable that my own background and perspective(s) enabled me to perceive some knowledges and not others. Consequently, while I may produce meaningful and engaging answers to these questions, they should not be regarded as definitive or complete.

In this dissertation, I argue that the field of sexual violence research in the United States and Canada has been dominated by psychological inquiries, as well as gendered and (hetero)sexual assumptions regarding who is most capable of perpetrating and experiencing rape. Scientists have produced a tremendous body of knowledge regarding the prevalence, individual-level causes, and individual-level outcomes of gender congruent men's sexual aggression toward gender congruent women. Interpersonal and systemic forces, as well as sexual violence that deviates from this particular gendered pattern, remain undertheorized. I

further argue that scientific research on sexual violence is shaped by a range of social mechanisms that arise when questions of social morality are interwoven with scientific inquiry. Individuals face credibility challenges from outsiders – that is, scholars who do not study sexual violence – who dispute the very notion that research on rape can be scientific, due to an assumption that “social” and “political” concerns fall distinctly beyond the realm of science (Cech and Sherick 2015). Such pressures sometimes compel researchers to abandon the field of sexual violence research, incorporate additional markers of credibility through strategic choices in study design and publication writing, remove overtly political content from their scientific works, or decline to seek the validation of other scientists; however, this last approach carries risks such as decreased chances for tenure and greater difficulty publishing in prestigious scientific outlets (Bourdieu 1975; Latour 1987). Simultaneously, insiders – that is, scholars who do study sexual violence and thus already accept this work as scientific and/or disinvest in such categorizations – pose moral challenges to one another regarding the social implications of their work. Such pressures sometimes compel researchers to abandon projects that seem controversial, seek to comply or at least minimize deviations from dominant conceptualizations of “acceptable” work in the field, or disinvest in insiders’ approval; again, this last approach carries career risks that compound the already considerable challenges of having one’s work broadly perceived as unscientific. Finally, given the “heaviness” of this topic, mentoring and collective processes of care work are central to maintaining an active community of scholars.

To prepare for laying out these arguments, I provide a theoretical framework involving feminist science studies literature on agential realism and situated knowledges (Barad 2007; Haraway 1988), social problems literature on ontological gerrymandering and enactments (Woolgar and Lezaun 2013; Woolgar and Pawluch 1985), and sexual script theory (Simon and

Gagnon 1986; Simon and Gagnon 2005/1973). I then discuss my mixed methods approach, and provide an overview of chapters.

Why Study Science?

Despite the centrality of statistics in shaping public consciousness, rape prevention and response may appear somewhat nonscientific on the surface, somewhat nonscientific.

Community activism, social services, and criminal justice may seem like more obvious domains within which to locate a project on this topic. However, since the emergence of large-scale anti-rape activism in the 1970s¹, scientists have collaborated with community activists, practitioners, and fellow scholars in raising awareness of rape and promoting reforms in law and social policy (Brownmiller 1975; Spohn and Horney 1992; Whittier 2009). Furthermore, scientists play unique and important roles in producing knowledge about rape. In a widely understood understanding of how science operates, they (we) are tasked with determining the incidence and prevalence of rape (Breiding et al. 2014; Krebs et al. 2007; Rutherford 2017; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000), identifying factors that promote or deter individual risk or communal rates of perpetration and victimization (Abbey 2011; Armstrong, Hamilton and Sweeney 2006; Humphrey and White 2000), and evaluating prevention and response efforts (Coker et al. 2011; McMahon 2014; Morrison et al. 2004; Rothman and Silverman 2007). Service providers and state officials often request, challenge, or draw from scientific research in order to improve upon their own efforts to address rape.

¹ Large-scale, national organizing against rape emerged through large-scale, national feminist activism in the United States and Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. However, it is important to note that marginalized communities in these nations began publicly challenging sexual violence centuries earlier. For example, legal scholar and activist Sarah Deer (2015) has written extensively about early Native American activism against White colonist men's sexual violence toward Native women, and connects present activism with that legacy.

While many perceive scientific knowledge simply as an objective reflection of reality, sociologists of science have shown how its production entails social processes that may be studied sociologically (Bourdieu 1975; Epstein 1996; Fox and Alldred 2016; Jasanoff 2004; Jasanoff 2005; Latour 1987; Shapin 1995; Shapin and Schaffer 2011/1985). Decision-making processes in the study of rape, made by researchers who are themselves subject to influence by peers, disciplinary conventions, historical events, social movements, state and other institutions, and public ideals; and who engage various identifications, personal and collective values, and dispositions throughout the work of doing science; can produce divergent and sometimes contradictory scientific facts. In the United States, for example, scientists who study social problems such as rape may face pressure to quantify them (Jasanoff 2005). Scholars who receive funding from the Office on Violence Against Women may be further compelled to represent rape as a component of (men's) violence against women more broadly, and may be encouraged to focus on college campuses in light of recent federal investment in addressing sexual violence among students (Rutherford 2017; White House Council on Women and Girls 2014). Those who receive LGBT-specific grants from the American Psychological Association may be compelled to incorporate or even prioritize same-sex violence on or off-campus. Those who pursue funding from the National Institutes of Health may find that success hinges upon incorporating content on alcohol (specifically to obtain National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism funds, which are a major supporter of public health and psychological research on sexual violence). When designing, conducting, and reporting on their own research efforts, and when reviewing others' work for publication, scientists must continually decide to what extent they can and should challenge dominant perspectives (Bourdieu 1975).

The predominance of conflict and controversy within and around science, particularly regarding the study of high stakes social problems, gives further testament to the social

character of scientific work (Epstein 2006; Shapin 1995; Waidzunas 2012). When attempting to address rape, scholars may appeal to competing or entirely contradictory conceptualizations, and thus produce competing findings regarding the causes of rape and appropriate strategies for intervention. When this occurs, they likely must engage in credibility struggles as a means of strengthening their own positions and weakening those of their opponents. Academic and state credentials, professional experiences, and personal accounts may provide foundations from which to claim authority or expertise within the field of scientific research on sexual violence (Bourdieu 1975). To further complicate matters, credibility disputes within science may inform, and be informed by, broader political contexts (Epstein 1996; Waidzunas 2012). For example, feminist researchers who sought to address date rape in the late 1980s-early 1990s faced hostility from scholars outside of rape research communities who reasserted “real rape” discourses and strove to discredit findings such as “1 in 4 women” (Jhally 1994; Rutherford 2017). Those doing such work in the Obama years enjoyed a more supportive political climate.

While scholars of rape have provided rich accounts of feminist anti-rape activism, legal reforms, and social and medical services (Bevacqua 2000; Corrigan 2013; Martin 2005; Mulla 2014; Spohn and Horney 1992); as well as the capacity of sexual violence to maintain power relations (Collins 2004); there have been few comparable investigations of scientific work (Rutherford 2017 is an exception, see below). Researchers have devoted considerable attention to popular and institutional support for rape myths (Edwards et al. 2011; Ryan 2011), and approaches to sexual communication and the interpretation of sexual consent and refusal (Muehlenhard 2011; Muehlenhard et al. 2017), without exploring their (our) own potential role in shaping conceptualizations of these issues. Yet scientists can and do have influence. This dissertation contributes to the interdisciplinary field of sexual violence research as it acknowledges that scientists’ own conceptualizations of this social problem, and the social

mechanisms that inform their work, shape broader understandings of and responses to rape. Decisions regarding study design, recruitment, and theoretical foundations guide the production of knowledge. Published works may impact popular and institutional approaches to rape and consent (Jhally 1994; Rutherford 2017). Ongoing reliance on statistics in the United States policy arena ensures ongoing influence for scientists who produce and interpret statistics, and a potentially more limited impact for qualitative scholars (Espeland and Stevens 2008; Jasanoff 2005; Porter 1995). Ultimately, if the construction of scientific knowledge matters for social policy, as well as popular understandings of rape, it is necessary to investigate the social processes happening within science. It is further important to consider relationships between science and such external influences as social movements, state and community institutions, members of “target” populations, and broader historical and cultural contexts.

In a recent paper entitled “Surveying Rape: Feminist Social Science and the Ontological Politics of Sexual Assault,” psychologist Alexandra Rutherford applied insights from feminist science studies to examine the history and impacts of efforts to quantify sexual violence. She focused on two widely contested figures from surveys of college students in the U.S.: Koss and colleagues’ 1987 finding that 1 in 4 college women had experienced completed or attempted rape, and Krebs and colleagues’ 2007 finding that 1 in 5 women experience some form of sexual assault during their college years. Both figures received tremendous coverage in popular press outlets. Supporters insisted that Koss and/or Krebs’ data drew attention to the real phenomenon of sexual violence against women, particularly the scope of date rape in student populations. Critics accused Koss and/or Krebs of overstating the real prevalence of sexual violence against women, and of embracing biased methods and data interpretation strategies in order to advance particular political (read: feminist) agendas. Koss and Krebs were both accused of selecting overly broad definitions of rape in order to bolster their prevalence estimates; Koss,

in particular, received criticism for labeling experiences as rape when her survey participants did not. Notably, these highly publicized controversies served to secure national attention for both studies, and to introduce/reinforce (contested) concepts such as “date rape” and “campus sexual assault” into popular consciousness.

Rutherford ultimately argued that instruments such as campus sexual assault surveys do not simply measure objective empirical realities, but also participate in generating ontological and social realities. She encouraged her readers to approach surveys as performative, and insisted that:

In treating the rape survey not as a transparent measuring instrument, but rather as a practice that performs within a complex assemblage of implicit and explicit beliefs, attitudes, institutions, communities and politics (including, importantly, feminist politics), social scientists can be more deliberative about the social worlds they realize through their methods and, perhaps more importantly, engage more effectively in debates with the critics of these contested realities and their stakeholders. (116)

Rutherford by no means sought to suggest that rape was not “real” or “important,” but rather that the nature and scope of rape were unavoidably connected with methodology.

This project complements and extends Rutherford’s analysis, contributing to sexual violence research and what might be termed literature in the “social history of rape” in three distinct ways. First, rather than focus exclusively on efforts to quantify (campus) rape, I investigate scientific research on sexual violence more broadly. This enables documentation of general patterns in the field as well differences across a range subfields including quantification, causal inquiries, and outcomes/effects research. Second, drawing on Karen Barad’s theory of agential realism (1998; 2007), I approach sexual violence, scientific knowledge about sexual

violence, and participants in such research as intra-active phenomena² (see also Fox and Alldred 2016). In addition to considering the capacity of a particular measurement tool to be “intimately involved in structuring the experience it purports to measure” (Rutherford 2017: 102), I emphasize relationships among objects of study and agencies of observation, including scientific researchers who are, themselves, complexly situated producers of knowledge (Haraway 1988). Disciplinary training, collaborative relationships, professional and popular expectations, funding and other resources, historical events, social movements, personal dispositions, and other forces may influence researchers’ approaches to studying rape in ways that have philosophically/empirically meaningful consequences. Affective flows – that is, the emergence and movement of capacities to affect and be affected – guide the production of particular knowledges and the preclusion of others within phenomena (Fox and Alldred 2016).

Finally, introducing a concept I refer to as *precasting*, I consider researchers’ and research instruments’ capacity to set boundaries regarding which actors are relevant to their objects of study, and in what ways. In defining rape, for example, quantification researchers such as Koss and Krebs have not only contributed to the ontological realization of “date rape” in popular consciousness, but also collective perceptions of typical (or even conceivable) aggressors and victims/survivors³. In the following section, I review these theoretical approaches and contributions in greater detail. This overview is intended to be cursory; the potential for agential realism and precasting to enhance scientific understandings of (the study of) sexual violence will be explored further in subsequent chapters.

² To be clear, Rutherford did devote considerable attention to the historical and political context of research, including the various ideological concerns held by researchers. However, her primary focus – as indicated through engagement with a “social life of methods” approach – was on the ontological politics of the sexual assault survey. This project extends her analyses with a more central focus on the social processes within scientific research, and the intra-active relationships described by Barad (1998; 2007).

³ Throughout this project, I use the terms victim, survivor, and victim/survivor interchangeably to refer to people who have experienced sexual violence.

Toward a Sociology of Sexual Violence

As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, scholarship on sexual violence has been dominated by psychology and individual-level inquiries. This is readily apparent through quantitative trends in scholarship including the overall number of scientific publications, the relative presence of discipline-specific journals, the training and affiliations of dominant scientists, and the distribution of citations over the past four decades. While sociologists and other social scientists have not been altogether absent, their contributions to date have focused on particular contexts and communities such as fraternity culture (Armstrong, Hamilton and Sweeney 2006; Martin and Hummer 1989), marital rape (Bergen 1996), same-sex violence (Girshick 2002), and institutional responses in domains such as social services and criminal justice (Burgess and Holmstrom 1974b; Martin 2005). Much of this literature falls within the sociology of gender and sexuality, and to a lesser extent the sociology of violence. This project extends and complements these contributions through working towards a broader and more comprehensive sociology of sexual violence. In-depth assessments of scholarship on prevalence, causes, and effects, as well as social mechanisms within this scientific field, reveal opportunities for further sociological intervention. Moreover, the role of researchers in shaping understandings of sexual violence, and the related influence of social processes such as credibility struggles and gender politics within science, have received minimal attention in sociological (and other) research in this field. Even within the sociology of gender and sexuality, gendered patterns in sexual aggression and victimization are sometimes approached as settled matters rather than urgent and challenging empirical questions. In taking a feminist science

studies approach, I am able to extend sociological literature through a critical assessment of sociologists' and other scientists' role in producing knowledge about rape.

This project also contributes to the sociology of scientific knowledge through consideration of a feminized field that occupies a contested status within science. As the following chapters will demonstrate, sexual violence research is feminized in terms of participation, in that a substantial majority of participants are gender congruent women; and reputation, in that many within and outside the domain of science regard rape as a "woman's issue." Moreover, rape is often regarded as an inherently political matter, which contributes to credibility challenges from scientists who believe that science and politics can and should be entirely separate (Cech 2013; Cech and Sherick 2015). These perceptions contribute to the devaluing of sexual violence scholarship within the larger domain of scientific research.

Attention toward sexual violence offers a more specific contribution to gender and sexuality research within science studies. This literature has often emphasized more masculinized – or at least masculine-coded – domains such as the scientific conceptualizations of male sexuality or homophobic responses to HIV/AIDS (Epstein 1996; Waidzunas 2015; Waidzunas and Epstein 2015), or focused on reproduction and birth control (Clarke 1998; Mamo 2007; Oudshoorn 2003; Thompson 2007). Feminist science studies scholars who emphasize gendered logics and social practices often study fields such as medicine and "natural" sciences such as physics and biology (e.g., Barad 2007; Clarke 2004; Haraway 1997; Jordan-Young 2011; Mamo 2007; Oudshoorn 2003; Pitts-Taylor 2016; Star 1989). This can make it difficult to discern social mechanisms particular to more feminized scientific fields. Michelle Murphy's study of Sick Building Syndrome offers a partial exception (Murphy 2006), due to its inclusion of women's health activists' perspectives on health and disease. However, the controversy she studied was

characterized by conflict between professional scientists and lay feminist activists (rather than feminists and nonfeminists within the domain of professional science). Susan Leigh Star and Anselm Strauss investigated “invisible work” within computer-supported cooperative work, particularly the domestic and background labor often unrecognized and disproportionately performed by women (Star and Strauss 1999). Their analysis offered valuable insights regarding feminized labor within science, but not social practices within fields that are broadly feminized from the outset, such that even more conventionally visible labor is dismissed as nonscientific. When considering social processes within science, sociologists and other scholars have focused on processes such as credibility struggles, competition over resources and peer recognition, gatekeeping within and between disciplines, standards for interpreting and evaluating scientific evidence, and strategies for demonstrating superior knowledge and technical prowess (Bourdieu 1975; Jasanoff 2005; Latour 1987; Murphy 2006; Shapin 1995; Shapin and Schaffer 2011/1985; Waidzunas and Epstein 2015). More feminized processes, such as care work, have been relatively neglected (see Acker 1990 for a discussion of similar concerns in research on labor inequality). This project thus builds on previous efforts in the sociology of scientific knowledge and feminist science studies through considering social practices within the feminized domain of sexual violence research, and specific attention toward collective care work and other feminine-associated practices within science.

Intra-active Phenomena and the Study of Rape

It is conventional, in many scientific circles and in the popular imagination, to envision empirical research as a process whereby scientists detachedly investigate the properties of objects external to them. In the context of research on sexual violence, this would rely on the

assumption that something called “sexual violence” (or “rape” or “date rape” or “acquaintance rape” or “sexual harassment” and so on) exists independently of researchers’ efforts. The challenge, then, would be to find effective approaches to identify and document the properties of sexual violence, and afterwards to convey/represent said properties clearly and comprehensively for peer and other audiences. In *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Karen Barad (2007) offers an alternative perspective via agential realism. This approach builds on the work of physicist Niels Bohr, particularly his notions of phenomena and complementarity.

In Bohr’s philosophy-physics, to borrow Barad’s descriptor, scientists do not study external objects with preexisting determinate properties but rather intra-active phenomena. These phenomena are comprised of entangled objects of study and agencies of observation. Barad’s use of “intra-active,” as opposed to the more common notion of “interactive,” indicated the inseparability of phenomenal components. Scientific facts/findings will vary in accordance with the apparatuses employed. Such apparatuses are complexly entangled with the objects they are intended to measure. It is not until scientists enact “agential cuts” that distinct “objects” or “findings” or “data points” can be perceived. Barad further pointed to Bohr’s argument that some objects of study were characterized by *complementary* properties that could not be assessed simultaneously. In such cases, different observational approaches would yield differently propertied phenomena. Within quantum physics, efforts to identify the “true” nature of light provide an apt example. It has long been known that light manifests both wavelike and particle-like properties. Bohr – and Barad, through her reading of Bohr – attributed the seemingly paradoxical nature of light to variation in experimental conditions. The documentation of light waves and light particles could not occur simultaneously; rather, these properties/entities were detected through different measurement apparatuses. Within the

broader field of “research on light,” waves and particles were detectable within different phenomena characterized by different agencies of observation. Significantly, this entanglement of objects of study and agencies of observation indicated a similar entanglement of epistemological (ways of knowing) and ontological (ways of being) matters.

In Barad analysis, Bohr’s writings on phenomena suffered from an under-theorization of agencies of observation. He seemed to focus a great deal on laboratory equipment without necessarily considering the entanglement of laboratory researchers and broader institutional contexts. It is worth quoting her concerns in some detail:

Apparatuses, in Bohr’s sense, are not passive observing instruments. On the contrary, they are productive of (and part of) phenomena. However, Bohr leaves the meaning of “apparatus” somewhat ambiguous. He does insist that what constitutes an “apparatus” emerges within specific observational practices. But while focusing on the lack of an inherent distinction between the apparatus and the object, Bohr does not directly address the question of where the apparatus “ends.” In a sense, he only establishes the “inside” boundary and not the “outside” one. For example, if a computer interface is hooked up to a given instrument, is the computer part of the apparatus? Is the printer attached to the computer part of the apparatus? Is the paper that is fed into the printer? Is the person who feeds the paper? How about the community of scientists who judge the significance of the experiment and indicate their support or lack of support for future funding? What precisely constitutes the limits of the apparatus that gives meaning to certain concepts and the exclusion of others? (Barad 1998: 98)

To address these concerns, Barad engaged Bohr’s philosophy-physics through and alongside the work of feminist science scholars such as Donna Haraway and critical social theorists such as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler. She argued that observers (including but not limited to professional scientists), apparatuses (such as laboratory equipment and quantitative surveys), and objects of study (such as light and sexual violence) were all entangled. Moreover, observers

were situated within/across varying material and discursive social contexts that informed phenomenal intra-actions.

In scientific research on sexual violence, differently situated scholars might favor different research questions, methodologies, funding sources, publication outlets, and more. They might engage differently with “the same” research instruments and objects of study. Individual scholars might also engage “the same” phenomena differently at different times. As identitarian articulations manifest and shift – that is, as various aspects of self such as gender, victimization history, age, disability, feminist identity (or lack thereof), and disciplinary background come into and out of play – scholars’ perceptions of sexual violence and scientific knowledge of sexual violence may shift accordingly (Vila 2017). An agential realist approach extends Rutherford’s (2017) insights on the ontological politics of prevalence surveys to encompass complex and changeable intra-actions between those apparatuses and other entangled components within the phenomena of research on sexual violence. Such an approach is consistent with Fox and Alldred’s call for attention toward the micropolitics of “research assemblages,” which are comprised of “the bodies, things, and abstractions that get caught up in social inquiry, including the events that are studied, and the researchers” (Fox and Alldred 2016: 152). In a sense, what it means to be human – or rather, what it means to be a particular sort of human, such as a scientist or feminist or activist or person of moral character or objective seeker of knowledge or source of objective knowledge – is at stake in much scientific research.

Precasting Assailants and Victims/Survivors

This project focuses on the scientific study of sexual violence among human adults. As noted above, I contend that scholars have the capacity to set boundaries regarding which actors

are relevant to this subject matter, and in what ways. I refer to such boundary work as *precasting*. This concept is indebted to sociological and philosophical literature in science studies and social problems, specifically the concepts of ontological gerrymandering (Woolgar and Pawluch 1985) and ontological enactments (Woolgar and Lezaun 2013) that provide a means for theorizing exclusions built into research designs. Sexual script theory (Simon and Gagnon 1986; Simon and Gagnon 2005/1973) further aided in exploring mechanisms whereby research might produce scripted possibilities for consensual and nonconsensual sexual encounters. Precasting provides another extension of Rutherford's analyses (2017), which did not substantively address questions regarding who might qualify as an assailant or victim/survivor, or how such questions might be answered differently across different research efforts including the important prevalence studies of Koss and Krebs (Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987; Krebs et al. 2007).

Ontological Gerrymandering and Ontological Enactments

In 1985, Woolgar and Pawluch introduced the concept of *ontological gerrymandering* to describe a problematic trend in social science literature. They were particularly concerned with definitional work, which emphasized variations in conceptualizations of social problems. Such work consistently relied on scholars' (pre)determination that some assumptions were open to skepticism and others were not. They illustrated this argument through a critique of Pfohl's (1977) "The 'Discovery' of Child Abuse," which depicted child beating as a stable phenomenon while treating definitions of child beating as changeable:

The condition ("child beating") to which the claims-making activities refer is portrayed as fixed; by contrast, definitions of this (unchanging) condition are portrayed as highly variable – child beating has been variously the prerogative of the parent, part of the larger problem of poverty, a function of the

psychopathic impulse of the disturbed parent, and child abuse; finally these variations in definition are “explained” by reference to socio-historical circumstances. (Woolgar and Pawluch 1985: 218)

Woolgar and Pawluch questioned the assumption of a “fixed” phenomenon and scientists’ pre-determination of which phenomena are constant and which may vary. They further critiqued Pfohl, in particular, for assuming that the final definition of child beating was most appropriate: “the use of such words as barriers...reaffirms that Pfohl’s article is an account not of the creation of a label but of the slow removal of one barrier after another until the parental abuse of children was finally revealed for what it was” (221). One can imagine a similar critique of studies that depict rape as a stable phenomenon with varying – and increasingly apt – social definitions (e.g., Brownmiller 1975). For example, rape might have shifted in popular discourse from “the husband’s prerogative,” to “a function of the psychopathic impulse of disturbed criminal men,” to “an unfortunate but very personal problem” before being recast as “a social problem and outcome of patriarchy.” Yet what does not vary in these depictions is that the perpetrator is always understood to be male, while the victim is always female.

Responding further to this problem, Woolgar and Lezaun (2013) theorized *ontological enactments*. Rather than view any objects’ ways of being as fixed, they advocated viewing different statuses as achieved (or not) in specific contexts. Texts enact varying statuses of objects in different moments, and enact the same sort of status (e.g. woman, actual/potential rapist, actual/potential rape survivor) differently in different moments. Thus, any features of texts conceptualizing social problems, including but not limited to definitional work, might be treated as socially and temporally contingent. However, one potential limitation of enactment literature is its risk of avoiding “areas of silence and difficulty” – that is, power dynamics along such lines as gender and sexuality – that do not explicitly surface in a given text (Clarke 2004: 74). It is important to note that these concepts are compatible with the approach of agential

realism, as gerrymandering practices and (im)possibilities for enactment emerge as intra-active components of phenomena.

Sexual Scripts and the Scientific Study of Sexual Violence

While these concepts are useful for analyzing the construction of scientific knowledge, sexual script theory (Simon and Gagnon 1986; 2005/1973) provides a means for describing the impact of scientific discourses, as well as cultural material available for the production of these discourses. This framework provides a three-tier approach to sexuality that encompasses *interpersonal scripts*, through which actors negotiate sexual encounters; *intrapsychic scripts*, which comprise individual conceptions; and *cultural scenarios*, broader social frameworks through which actors learn how (not) to engage sexually. Conceptualizations of rape are available as cultural scenarios through which actors identify incidents as (non)consensual. Actors may employ different scenarios in different moments. The “same” behavior (e.g., verbally expressed ambivalence) can activate rape scripts in one scenario, thereby deterring aggression; and seduction scripts in another, in which case aggression may persist. Boundaries can also shift or conflict. While numerous scientists have employed sexual script theory in investigations of rape, particularly in studies of rape myth acceptance (e.g., Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994; Ryan 2011), few have assessed their own engagement with sexual scripts in the course of doing science. Consequently, many risk unintentionally reinscribing cultural scenarios from popular and academic discourses when producing scientific knowledge. If the only scenarios engaged presume that “typical” rapes occur on heterosexual dates, for example, scientists may limit analyses to such circumstances without considering the potential for violence in queer encounters. While there can be compelling methodological and theoretical reasons to limit

individual studies to particular scenarios and populations, it is worth considering whether such approaches are embraced conscientiously and transparently. This, too, is compatible with the approach of agential realism. Sexual scripts may comprise part of the broader social/cultural context in which observers are entangled, shaping the content of research design.

Precasting Assailants and Victims

Scientists' conceptualizations of rape do not merely produce states of being, such as "victim" or "rapist," that may be enacted in scripted encounters. They set boundaries regarding which actors may achieve which states. Such boundaries represent a form of ontological gerrymandering that I theorize as *precasting*. Precasting constitutes ontological gerrymandering (Woolgar and Pawluch 1985) because the manifestations of a social problem are limited to the actions of predetermined actors, even as other aspects of the problem are allowed to vary. Koss and colleagues' (1987) work offers an example. In their groundbreaking quantification study, the role of "rapist" was limited from the outset to men who targeted women. The role of "rape victim" was likewise limited to women who were targeted by men. Other pertinent details were allowed – even presumed – to vary among incidents of rape. These included victim-aggressor relationships (e.g., strangers, casual acquaintances, dating partners, spouses and other long-term partners) and the specific acts involved (e.g., presence or absence of alcohol, use or threat of physical force, vaginal vs. oral vs. anal penetration). Bachman and colleagues' (1992) work on rape proclivity provides another example. This research relied on vignettes in which women were precast as victims and men as aggressors. Other details varied across vignettes, including victims' consumption of alcohol, victim-aggressor relationships, assailants' use of force, victims' engagement in resistance, and physical or psychological harm to victims.

When studying rape, scientists produce and otherwise engage with sexual scripts regarding “typical” or even “conceivable” violent encounters. Precasting occurs when particular actors are presumed (in)capable of enacting particular statuses (Woolgar and Lezaun 2013). Studies that precast women as victims and men as aggressors may render same-sex violence, women’s aggression toward men, and any violence by or toward persons with nonbinary gender identities imperceptible (Murphy 2006). Rather than subject such matters to empirical scrutiny, researchers investigating sexual aggression might assume from the outset that only men can rape, and design sampling frames accordingly. Rather than openly and conscientiously limit analyses to particular actors or environments, researchers might simply assume that their theoretical and methodological approaches reveal the obvious “truth” of sexual violence – conceived as an external referent with determinate properties, rather than an intra-actively produced phenomenon – and thus require no explanation.

While my analysis will focus primarily on gendered precasting, it is crucial to note that this concept may apply to enactments of any status. Collins has critiqued controlling images that depict Black men as sexual aggressors toward White women (Collins 2004). These cultural scenarios inform popular understandings of rape, as well as institutional approaches in such diverse arenas in criminal justice, news media, and healthcare. Among friends and other acquaintances, such scenarios may inform reactions to disclosures of victimization and aggression. In a qualitative study of race and sexual victimization among women, Wyatt (1992) found that Black women expressed great “concern about how others will perceive their credibility as rape victims” due to the assumption that “real” or perhaps “sympathetic” victims were White women (87; see also Tillman et al. 2010). Other scholars have addressed widespread presumptions regarding victims’ and aggressors’ (hetero)sexuality. Relative to heterosexual women, lesbian and bisexual women experience considerable barriers to disclosing victimization

experiences; racial minority lesbians and bisexual women experience additional barriers relative to their White counterparts (Sigurvinsdottir and Ullman 2015). In studies with college students, heterosexuals have often been perceived as more legitimate and sympathetic victims– and thus less at fault for the violence they suffer – than queer individuals (Davies, Rogers and Whitelegg 2009; White and Kurpius 2002). In vignettes with male aggressors and victims, for example, gay victims are often perceived as more at fault than heterosexuals. This likely reflects homophobic stereotyping as well as problematic assumptions that people who are attracted to men (including gay/bisexual men and heterosexual/bisexual women) somehow provoke or even enjoy victimization by male assailants.

Precasting is problematic because it forecloses scientific inquiry, treating empirical uncertainties as settled matters unworthy of investigation. In the context of sexual violence research, this can prevent the investigation of anything that diverges from dominant rape scripts. Given the influence of scientific research on state actors and practitioners (Jasanoff 2004), precasting can ultimately inhibit the development of inclusive policy and services. Men who experience sexual violence may struggle to find support from advocates who have been trained to approach rape as a subset of violence against women. Women who perpetrate may find themselves unwelcome in offender intervention programs. Nonbinary individuals may be excluded from services for victims and aggressors. Such possibilities speak to Barad's (2007) argument that it is not merely epistemological and ontological dimensions of research that are inseparable, but rather epistemological, ontological, and ethical dimensions. It is important to note that some measure of precasting may be unavoidable in scientific research (including the present endeavor, particularly given my exclusive focus on human actors)⁴. However, as the

⁴ Woolgar and Pawluch make a similar point in their piece on ontological gerrymandering, and ultimately call for reflective and transparent scholarship rather than an “end” to the practice.

conclusion to this dissertation explores, reflexive and transparent approaches – along with openness to other phenomenal possibilities – may go a long way toward fostering more inclusive scholarship.

In drawing attention to these cases of gendered precasting, I do not seek to downplay the pervasiveness of men’s violence toward women, or the causal forces of patriarchy and sexism (Brownmiller 1975; Eschholz and Vieraitis 2004; Yodanis 2004). It is rather my intention to assert the existence of other gendered patterns in sexual violence. I further argue that the causal forces behind men’s aggression toward women may not fully align with those behind same-sex violence, women’s aggression toward men, and incidents involving nonbinary individuals. Such incidents of sexual violence warrant empirical investigation in their own right. Moreover, scientific research on men’s sexual violence toward women can and should explicitly recognize that this gendered pattern – however dominant – is not exhaustive. The “opposite” of gendered precasting is not gender neutrality, so much as gender inclusivity.

Methods

This study investigates historical and contemporary trends in the scientific study of sexual violence in the United States and Canada. As noted above, analyses explore two primary research questions: *(1) how have scientists conceptualized sexual violence among adults; and (2) what social mechanisms enable, constrain, and otherwise influence scientific research on sexual violence?* In order to address this first question, I began with a broad search for relevant scientific journal publications from 1975 to 2015. This provided me with four decades’ worth of material, beginning with a very important year in scientific and other scholarly research on sexual violence. Two books advancing a groundbreaking patriarchal causal model, which

approached individual men's sexual violence toward women as an interpersonal manifestation of male dominance and female subordination, were published that year: Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* and Diana Russell's *The Politics of Rape*. The ending point of 2015 corresponded with the beginning of this project. After conducting a systematic content analysis of abstracts, I determined that the primary functions of this literature involved (1) quantifying, (2) accounting for, and (3) determining the effects of sexual violence. I then engaged in more in-depth qualitative analysis of smaller samples of scientific publications that sought to quantify, account for, and determine the effects of sexual violence. Finally, to help me further interpret these quantitative and qualitative samples of scientific publications, and to address the second research question about mechanisms that have shaped the assumptions, methods, and approaches of science, I conducted interviews with 31 scholars who have contributed to scientific knowledge about sexual violence in the United States and/or Canada.

Quantitative Content Analysis of Scientific Abstracts

To identify relevant studies for content analysis, I consulted the Social Sciences Citation Index within the Web of Science database. I searched for publications with any of the following terms in their titles: *rape*, *sexual assault*, *sexual violence*, *rapist*. All searches were completed between February and April of 2016. To ensure feasibility and gain a sense of knowledges that had acquired some traction in scientific communities, I restricted the search to works that had received at least 10 citations among those published from 1975-2009 and at least 5 citations among those published from 2010-2015 (see Waidzunas and Epstein 2015). This yielded an initial pool of 1,855 records, including 1,511 and 314 from these respective time periods. All records were screened for study relevance. My aim was to identify empirical studies and

reviews of empirical studies that focused on rape among adults, including (though not necessarily exclusively) within the U.S. and Canada. Works that did not meet these criteria – theoretical literature, historical overviews, and policy papers that did not provide, critique, or otherwise review empirical data; studies focused exclusively on sexual violence involving children; works focused exclusively on sexual violence outside of these nations; and those for which I was unable to locate abstracts – were excluded. The final pool contained 1,313 records, including 1,107 from 1975-2009 and 206 from 2010-2015.

To gain a sense of scientists' conceptualizations of sexual violence over time, I coded all records along the following dimensions: lead author, title, year, academic citations, methods (qualitative, quantitative), study aims (causes of sexual violence, effects, quantification, policy/program evaluation, assessing theoretical and/or methodological approaches), area of focus (victims or victimization, perpetrators or perpetration, professionals in violence prevention and response, bystanders and/or the general public), gender dynamics (women as victims, women as perpetrators, men as victims, men as perpetrators, transgender inclusivity), and target population (general or community populations, colleges and universities, military, care facilities such as hospitals and crisis centers, current or former prison inmates, other actors involved in criminal justice proceedings such as complainants or defendants, demographic populations such as African American women or queer individuals). These initial codes were based on the first research question for this project regarding scientists' conceptualization of rape, with particular attention toward populations of interest and gender inclusion due to my engagement with intersectional feminist and queer theory perspectives. Most of this information was collected through a review of abstracts, though full texts were consulted regularly as needed to complete content analysis of each study. When pieces were difficult to classify along these criteria, I supplemented coding with qualitative notes. Categories were not

mutually exclusive. For example, a study that explored both the prevalence of rape and risk factors for victimization would have been classified as addressing both quantification and causes. To limit the imposition of my own assumptions onto scientists' work, I restricted coding to the explicit content of each publication. For example, if a piece focused on college women's experiences of sexual victimization, and seemed (in my estimation) to regard men as default sexual aggressors but did not incorporate such assumptions into the text, I coded that study as addressing "women as victims" but not "men as perpetrators."

Throughout the content analysis process, I wrote memos to reflect upon emergent patterns/themes and to refine the coding scheme (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011). After reviewing several hundred works, I noted a rather striking form of precasting in which authors engaged gender neutral language in abstracts to describe manuscripts with gender specific approaches. For example, an abstract might refer to "interviews with 75 rape survivors" when describing a study with exclusively women participants, or reference a "typical date rape scenario" that would later be revealed to concern heterosexual men's aggression toward women. In these instances, gendered assumptions were so firmly engrained that authors presumed it unnecessary to be specific. I began to code abstracts and overall manuscripts for "gender inclusive approaches," defined as approaches allowing for the possibilities of aggression by men and women, as well as the victimization of men and women (transgender inclusivity was assessed separately). After completing coding, I ran chi-square tests to assess shifts over time.

As systematic and comprehensive as my search and analyses were, they carried at least two substantial limitations. Neither was clear to me at the outset. However, subsequent analyses and conversations with other scholars made these limitations clear, and I believe they merit attention at this early stage, before reviewing any of the data or arguments. The first

concerns the fact that some publications in the field were missed by my search terms of rape, sexual assault, sexual violence, and rapist(s). Incorporating additional terms such as *sexual aggression*, *sexual victimization*, and *sexual coercion* would have provided a more comprehensive sample. More significantly, I found relatively few abstracts for publications focused on socially marginalized communities and/or anything that deviated from the dominant script of men's sexual aggression toward women. Very few pieces focused on racial/ethnic minority populations. Few pieces focused on people with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses. Few pieces emphasized class distinctions. Few pieces incorporated or addressed queer communities, or even included sexual orientation as a variable. Not a single piece focused on transgender individuals; as far as I could tell, none provided a clear avenue through which gender variant participants might make their identities known. Yet there have been, and continue to be, such investigations. I ultimately came to realize that my search terms provided a sense of "mainstream" or "dominant" literature, and that this literature prioritized and constituted dominant conceptualizations of rape. Incorporating scholarship on sexual violence in marginalized communities would have required individual searches for every such community. Studies that address the prevalence, causes, and outcomes of sexual violence among transgender people, for example, appear to align more readily with "transgender literature" than "sexual violence literature" at first glance. Works such as Griner and colleagues' (2017) "The Intersection of Gender Identity and Violence: Victimization Experienced by Transgender College Students" and Stotzer's (2009) "Violence Against Transgender People: A Review of United States Data" both provide information on sexual victimization among gender variant people; neither would have been screened as relevant in my Web of Science search.

Qualitative Analysis of Scientific Studies

Content analysis illuminated historical trends across scientific research in this arena, but did not indicate the relative dominance of different perspectives, priorities, or methodological approaches in much detail. It was also of limited value for considering variation in phenomena that emerged as rape and other forms of sexual violence were defined (or not), and approached as either causal forces or outcomes of other causal forces, across different research endeavors. On reviewing quantitative trends in scientific research, I also came to believe that it would be more productive to assess research in subfields of sexual violence research, rather than approaching the entire field as a singular body of work. To that end, I set out to explore developments within incidence and prevalence research, causal research, and outcomes/effects research. I selected four incidence/prevalence studies that varied considerably in sampling frame and survey design, with notable consequences regarding gendered precasting. I analyzed them closely and wrote detailed memos about each study, as well as connections and divergences among them. To identify themes in causal and effects/outcomes research, I selected the 10 top-cited pieces within each subfield from 1975-1984, 1985-1994, and 1995-2004; and the 5 top-cited pieces from 2005-2009 and 2010-2015. These 80 scientific works were analyzed in *Atlas.ti*. My approach was guided by the coding scheme described above, supplemented with concepts specific to causal and/or effects inquiries and concepts too in-depth to incorporate into analysis of abstracts (e.g., sexual desire, power/control, substance use, standardization, sampling frames). After analyzing texts from each decade, I composed detailed memos regarding overall trends within that decade as well as differences across time periods.

Interviews

Scientific abstracts and full texts were of tremendous value in addressing my first research question about scholars' conceptualizations of sexual violence. However, they provided an unavoidably incomplete picture. It would be inappropriate to assume that researchers contending with word limits, theoretical and discursive conventions across journals and disciplines, and other pressures always conveyed their perspectives completely and transparently in publications. Scholars' ideas might also change in form or substance through the peer review process. More important for this project, publications reveal little about my second research question concerning the social mechanisms shaping research. In order to understand the interpersonal, institutional, and cultural processes involved in research on sexual violence, it was necessary to speak with the individuals involved in producing that work.

Recruitment began with my review of scientific abstracts. As I sampled publications, I developed a list of scholars who varied in overall focus, methodology, and discipline among other factors. I began reaching out via phone and email. On completing interviews, I asked participants for referrals for individuals (including, but not necessarily limited to, other scientists) who had influenced, taken part in, or otherwise affected their research on sexual violence. Finally, I engaged in networking at meetings for professional associations in various disciplines to identify potential participants. This was particularly helpful for identifying "younger" scholars who had not yet published or received many citations, as well as scholars whose publications on sexual violence were missed in my initial Web of Science search.

Whereas my content and textual analyses had offered a sense of "dominant" perspectives and priorities in sexual violence research, interviews offered variation. I reached out to widely cited scholars whose work had demonstrably influenced the field, and to scholars who focused on relatively marginal or neglected aspects of this work (e.g., sexual violence

within intimate partnerships). I reached out to established researchers, early career scholars, and graduate students. I sought out scholars who were trained in different disciplines, employed different methodologies, and who worked in different fields within and outside of academia. Across all of these approaches, I contacted 83 scholars. Forty-nine (59%) responded, including 43 (52%) who expressed interest in completing an interview. I was able to schedule and conduct interviews with 31 of these scholars (37% of the initial recruitment list, 72% of those who expressed interest). All recruitment and interviews took place between October 2016 and October 2017.

Interviews were semi-structured (see Appendix A for the interview guide). They began with broad questions about participants' work (e.g., what let you to study sexual violence?), which were often sufficient to generate rich discussions on a range of subjects including priorities for the field, collaboration and conflict among scholars, varying methodological approaches, and strategies for building and maintaining relationships with community partners. Interviews ranged in length from approximately half an hour (this occurred when researchers had severe time constraints, but still wanted to participate) to two hours; most conversations were between 50-70 minutes.

Drawing from literature in active interviewing and feminist research methods (Campbell et al. 2010; Ellis and Berger 2003; Holstein and Gubrium 2003), I strove for transparency and non-hierarchical interactions in each encounter. I invited participants to ask any questions or share concerns before, during, and after each interview. I tried to be as clear as possible in sharing my overall research aims, as well as the logic behind various interview questions. When participants asked me for information, I shared as much as seemed possible without violating others' confidentiality or my own personal boundaries (though I sometimes asked that we save such questions for the end of our conversations). This ranged from providing impromptu

explanations for the project and anticipated findings (and plans for sharing and acting on those findings) to discussing my own personal connections with sexual violence research and advocacy to discussing interview and content analysis findings to sharing interview guides and Institutional Review Board paperwork (the interview component of this project was approved by the review board at Temple University). All participants provided oral consent to participate and, if they were comfortable, for me to audio record our conversations. I transcribed all recordings, and removed identifying information as thoroughly as I could in order to safeguard anonymity. Although all participants were “visible” in the field of sexual violence research through publications and/or presentations at professional meetings, many shared personal experiences and critical insights that made it necessary to prioritize confidentiality in interviews. I also encouraged participants to assist me in recognizing aspects of their work and experiences that might be difficult to write about without revealing their identities, and further to let me know whether of any content they wished me to omit from transcripts or subsequent writings for any reason. When analyzing and writing about interviews, if I had doubts about my capacity to preserve confidentiality while discussing a particular study or insight, I either omitted that content or consulted with participants to develop a suitable approach.

Throughout the processes of recruiting, interviewing, and transcribing, I wrote memos to reflect upon emergent patterns/themes and interpersonal dynamics across interviews. I then developed a coding scheme based on my primary research questions, previous strategies for analyzing abstracts and full texts, and concepts that seemed more specific to these qualitative data. All transcripts were analyzed in *Atlas.ti*. I then developed the central arguments of this paper, and composed this and subsequent chapters, based on repeated close readings and analysis of the coded data and memos.

Chapter Overview

Drawing inspiration from ambitious works in feminist science studies, such as Donna Haraway's *Primate Visions* (1989) and Karen Barad's *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007), I envision this project as speaking differently to different audiences. Some may wish to read all chapters in order; others may prefer to focus on one or two that seem particularly relevant to them and their interests. To accommodate this, I have attempted to compose a narrative without too much repetition while also ensuring that each chapter stands sufficiently alone that readers might be selective without sacrificing clarity.

Part One: Conceptualizing Sexual Violence

Readers who seek a critical "state of the field" will be particularly interested in this section. Chapters draw equally upon content analyses of scientific abstracts, close assessments of well-cited literature across subfields, and interviews with scholars who have contributed to the production of scientific knowledge concerning the scope, causes and consequences of sexual violence. Readers who are interested in the feminist science studies application of this project may be particularly interested in Chapter Two on quantification, whereas readers seeking to identify areas for improvement in sexual violence scholarship more generally may be more drawn to Chapters Three and Four on causal and effects/outcomes research.

Chapter Two, "Locating the Problem," concerns scientists' efforts to quantify rape and other forms of sexual violence among adults. Quantification has long been central to raising awareness of and garnering public and institutional support for addressing social problems in the United States and Canada (Jasanoff 2005). Rape statistics have been particularly effective in

this regard. Scholars and activists seeking to reduce sexual violence often utilize high prevalence rates to raise alarm, and to bolster their demands for improved resources, legislation, and social policy. Actors who doubt that rape is a common or pressing issue often seek to discredit high prevalence rates. Overall, this chapter argues that quantification requires scientists to “locate the problem” of sexual violence through selecting specific definitions and sampling frames. I begin Chapter Two by (re)visiting a controversy over rape statistics in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In this well-publicized dispute, conservative scholars such as Neil Gilbert and Katie Roiphe challenged Mary Koss and her colleagues’ assertion that, based on their empirical survey of more than 3,000 undergraduate women, rape was a widespread problem in the United States. I utilize the perspective of agential realism to consider different actors’ interpretations of that research, and the capacity of different survey approaches – and even of different interpretation approaches within the same survey – to produce radically different prevalence estimates. From there, I consider broader trends in quantification over the past 40+ years, and explore the relevance of precasting to prevalence research through a close assessment of four large-scale investigations that varied by definitions, survey design, sampling frames, and interpretative strategies. Finally, I explore participants’ insights on the (non)significance of consistency in definitions and broader role of quantification in sexual violence research and activism. Gendered assumptions, and tensions between scholars’ investment in intersectional feminism on the one hand, and addressing patriarchal violence on the other, pose an ongoing problem in this subfield. Struggles over whether to engage predefined conceptualizations of rape and other forms of sexual violence, or to provide participants with an opportunity to name and define their own experiences, comprise another central concern.

Causal inquiries consider the social forces and other conditions that promote or deter sexual violence. Much like incidence and prevalence research, this subfield has been beset with

controversy. Yet the nature of disputes has differed. Quantification conflicts have been centered on the very existence of some forms of sexual violence, such as date rape, and whether sexual violence constitutes a widespread social problem. Anti-rape activists and scholars have often found themselves opposed by actors who are otherwise uninvolved with this field. In causal research, or research seeking to identify the causes of rape, insiders – that is, scientists and other scholars who study sexual violence – often challenge one another regarding what constitutes a scientifically and/or morally sound causal explanation. Chapter Three argues that concerns over “misuse” have been a central mechanism within causal research on sexual violence. This chapter further demonstrates that individual-level accounts of men’s sexual violence toward women have been consistently dominant, whereas systemic investigations and additional gendered patterns in victimization and aggression have been neglected. It begins with a consideration of two particularly controversial approaches to accounting for sexual violence: communication-based models, such as Charlene Muehlenhard and others’ work on “token resistance” in heterosexual dating; and evolution-based models, such as Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer’s search for an ultimate causal understanding of men’s sexual violence toward women. From there, I assess four decades of quantitative trends in this subfield, and provide an in-depth look at the ten most highly cited works from each decade between 1975-2015. My analysis reveals a persistent, though declining, tendency to favor psychological and psychiatric research and individual-level explanations for aggression and victimization. Finally, I turn to participants’ insights. The scholars who took part in *Studying Rape* endorsed a broad range of causal explanations; however, different approaches to discussing causation confirmed that some perspectives remain controversial or otherwise marginal in the field. Participants expressed support for more interdisciplinary work, increased engagement with/from additional

social science fields such as sociology and anthropology (in addition to, rather than in place of, psychological inquiries), and greater attention toward cultural and institutional factors.

If Chapter Three explores scientific responses to the question, “why does rape happen,” Chapter Four on investigates responses to the question, “so what,” or “why does it matter if rape happens?” This chapter argues that, although effects research has been less controversial than prevalence and causal work, this subfield has suffered stagnation and (over)emphasis on endorsing and reforming current institutional resources, such as criminal prosecution, without sufficiently considering alternatives, such as restorative justice and rape crisis services. Analyses further demonstrate that systemic outcomes of sexual violence; individual-level effects of committing acts of sexual aggression (rather than experiencing victimization); and outcomes of sexual violence in queer contexts, involving actors with gender variant identifications, and involving women’s aggression toward men in heterosexual contexts remain understudied. Throughout my analyses of scientific abstracts and top-cited studies, I encountered no controversy in effects research that seemed comparable to those outlined above. Yet it was in this subfield, discerning “The Impact of Sexual Violence,” that interview participants expressed the most criticism and most insistent calls for shifts in research priorities. Many shared frustration with what they perceived as stagnation. They worried that the same disciplines, instruments, and questions continued to dominate. Many of these same participants shared excitement for novel or somewhat neglected outcomes and interventions. For example, several scholars who had worked on criminal justice processes called for the consideration of victims’ (positive and negative) experiences with various criminal justice institutions and processes in addition to the more established outcomes of reporting, indictment, conviction, and sentencing; and for investment in alternatives to criminal proceedings such as restorative justice conferencing. After briefly reviewing these insights, I assess four decades of quantitative trends

in this subfield, and provide an in-depth look at the ten most highly cited works from each decade between 1975-2015. Echoing the trends in Chapter Three, I demonstrate a persistent tendency in the literature to favor psychological and psychiatric research and individual-level considerations. Finally, I bridge these observations with participants' insights to outline potential new directions for effects research.

Part Two: Social Mechanisms

This section explores social processes within and around science, and draws almost entirely on participants' insights. Science studies scholars may be particularly interested in Chapters Five and Six, which consider factors that promote and sustain participation in sexual violence research as well as credibility struggles and conflict among scientists. Chapter Seven on researcher-community collaboration is the most practically oriented part of *Studying Rape*, and may be of value to applied scholars in a range of disciplines.

Throughout this project, I have welcomed questions from participants about my own background, my immediate and long-term hopes for this project, my theoretical framework(s) and methodology, and my data interpretations. The question I most often received concerned pathways into the field. Many participants anticipated a sort of standard trajectory that began with antiviolence activism or personal encounters with sexual violence and ultimately extended into academic pursuits; to put it another way, they expected antiviolence work to be a lifelong commitment that preceded and informed academic ambitions. I initially shared those expectations. To our collective surprise, the 31 scholars who took part in this project shared a wide range of motivations for engaging in sexual violence research. Chapter Five, "Choosing to Study Rape," begins with those stories. After exploring pathways into the field, I turn to social

mechanisms that sustain actors in this often emotionally and intellectually demanding work.

This chapter argues that choosing to study rape – choosing to study anything – is not so much a one-time decision that determines a life course, but a decision that may be made and unmade repeatedly, and is often contingent on the presence of support and care work among peers. Mentoring and collaboration play substantial roles. Extending and departing from my own training as an advocate, I further propose that self care is a collective process with great significance for building and sustaining scholarship in this field.

Whereas Chapter Five concerns supportive forces in sexual violence research, Chapter Six, “Dividends and Detriments of Dissent,” focuses on conflict and credibility struggles. I argue that the heaviness of sexual violence as a research topic, and its dual association with questions of social morality and feminist activism, contributes to specific credibility and moral challenges among scientists. Some involves actors to whom I loosely refer as “out-group” scholars, that is, individuals who are also trained scientists or academics but do not study sexual violence. Many participants recalled hearing that scholarship on sexual violence was altogether unimportant or unscientific. Further conflict occurs “in-group,” as sexual violence researchers disagree about which research questions and methodologies are worth pursuing, and what should be published/publishable in scientific periodicals and other outlets. I then turn to institutional pressures. More specifically, I examine the role of universities, which have the capacity to influence research trajectories through hiring and tenure guidelines and other career pressures; and grant providers, which have the capacity to influence research via the hierarchical process of identifying priority and non-priority areas for support. The title of this chapter is borrowed from Amin Ghaziani’s *The Dividends of Dissent* (2008), which considers the impacts of internal conflicts in queer activism. While it may be objected that science and social movements comprise different domains, Ghaziani’s insights seem particularly productive for this area of

scholarship. Many scientists who study rape have activist backgrounds, and others are drawn toward antiviolence advocacy through their research efforts. Even those who do not venture directly into social movement work are likely to contend with those who do.

The final chapter of *Studying Rape* revisits the project's primary research questions (how have scientists conceptualized sexual violence among adults; and what social mechanisms enable, constrain, and otherwise influence scientific research on sexual violence) and the analytical resources of Karen Barad's (2007) agential realism and my own concept of precasting. Approaching the scientific study of rape as a dynamic and developing field, I celebrate historical and ongoing achievements while calling for greater investment in theoretical and methodological inclusivity, systematic and interdisciplinary analyses, and accountability in scientific endeavors.

Appendix 2, "Engaging the Community," was originally prepared as a standalone essay. Many participants shared experiences of partnering with diverse local communities, institutionalized populations, and a range of institutional actors such as hospitals, bars and restaurants, advocates and social workers, police, attorneys, teachers, school administrators, and medical providers. Hearing their stories led me to believe that I might "give back" to participants and the broader community of sexual violence scholars – as well as scholars in a range of other community engaged fields – by gathering insights on challenges in building and sustaining collaborations, as well as demonstrably effective strategies for doing so. Readers seeking more applied content, including those who are less interested in the science studies aspects of this project, may wish to skip directly to this appendix. Those who are more inclined to interrogate the social mechanisms within science may still find value in its content, as

researcher-community partnerships comprise an important and multilevel (interpersonal, professional, and institutional) force that may enable, constrain, and otherwise influence scientific work.

PART ONE

CONCEPTUALIZING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

CHAPTER 2

LOCATING THE PROBLEM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE: DEFINITIONS, SURVEY DESIGN, & SAMPLING FRAMES IN QUANTIFICATION

I really want people to define [RAPE] for themselves, obviously. That's part of my work, thinking about how people think about it...That's a really interesting conversation that I think qualitative and quantitative researchers can have. Because we're all so stuck thinking about how to get money and grants, and do good in the world if we don't have numbers... and people don't want to believe them anyway. So I don't know what the point is. People don't even believe "1 in 4," "1 in 5," even though the numbers say that. But again, you can't get any public money without showing that this is a problem. So that's a really interesting juxtaposition to think about.

Kristen, sociologist

The prevalence estimates we get are very different if you say, "have you ever been sexually assaulted?" Well, that requires somebody to interpret "what do you mean by sexually assaulted?"... If you ask, "have you ever been sexually assaulted," they might say "no." But if you ask them, "has anybody ever touched you in private areas that made you feel uncomfortable," they would say "yes" to that... the more specific event-based questions that you ask, people will be able to say yes or no, that that specific event happened to them. But not necessarily conclude that that was a sexual assault. So I don't want them concluding, based on a very fungible definition, what physical or sexual assault is. I want to be able to make that determination based on whether something specific happened to them against their will.

Karen, criminal justice scholar

Quantification – the calculation of incidence and prevalence rates – has long been central to the work of addressing sexual violence (Rutherford 2017). Particularly within the United States, the very recognition of rape as a social problem has been and arguably remains contingent upon statistical data over and above the distribution of personal narratives and high profile cases. This chapter concerns scientists' efforts to quantify sexual violence in the United States and Canada from 1975 to 2015. Each of the works assessed here, at some level, seeks to answer the question, "how common is rape?" I begin with a close assessment of a scientific controversy regarding the prevalence of rape among college women, utilizing the science studies concepts of credibility struggles and environments (Epstein 1996; Shapin 1995;

Waidzunas 2012) and the insights of agential realism (Barad 2007). Subsequent sections incorporate content analyses of 125 quantification studies, identified from a broader pool of 1,313 scientific publications.

Ultimately, I demonstrate that quantifying rape requires scientists to commit to specific definitions. One must determine what rape is in order to count it (Espeland and Stevens 2008). Scientists must further link this social problem with particular spaces and populations in order to refine research questions and develop sampling frames. In other words, quantification entails locating the problem. Rape, sexual assault, and other forms of sexual violence are not external referents awaiting documentation by detached scholars, but rather intra-active phenomena made intelligible by agential cuts in the conduct on presentation of research. Scientists and other scholars are complexly situated and entangled with disciplinary conventions, scientific and nonscientific communities, historical events, social movements, state and private institutions, and public ideals (Bourdieu 1975; Epstein 1996; Epstein 2006; Jasanoff 2004; Latour 1987; Shapin 1995; Shapin and Schaffer 2011/1985); and draw in shifting and varying ways upon their own personal values, identifications, and dispositions (Vila 2017). There are no “innocent” or “clean” scientific truths, statistical or otherwise (Flax 1992).

In the United States and Canada, experiential criteria – particularly criteria that align with legal and other state conceptualizations of rape and other forms of sexual violence – have been favored over other criteria such as self-assessment in quantification projects, though not necessarily in causal or effects research. Consistent gendered precasting, characterized by emphasis on gender congruent men’s sexual aggression toward gender congruent women in study design and interpretation, has further located the problem predominantly – and, at times, exclusively – in heterosexual contexts. To justify these assertions, I draw on forty years of trends

in incidence and prevalence research and in-depth assessments of four quantification studies from the United States, selected as illustrative of divergent approaches.

In the final sections of this chapter, I present insights from interview participants on definitions and quantification efforts more broadly. Variation among scholars has far-reaching consequences. As noted by Kristen, quoted above, institutions such as universities and state agencies are more inclined to support research for social problems with established quantitative significance. Social processes in the production of incidence and prevalence statistics ultimately shape policy and interventions, funding and other resource distribution, and collective understandings of sexual violence.

Making and Unmaking an Epidemic

In 1987, statistics transformed sexual violence from a rare and personal concern into an epidemic in popular consciousness (Jhally 1994; Rutherford 2017). Mary Koss and colleagues drew on victimization surveys with more than 3,000 college women, and found that 1 in 4 reported an experience that qualified as completed or attempted rape (Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987). The “1 in 4 women” statistic received tremendous attention in mainstream news outlets, and continues to influence activists and state officials to this day.

Whereas years of organizing protest marches, providing education and support through rape crisis centers, and advocating for legal reform had fostered incremental changes in dominant perspectives (Bevacqua 2000; Matthews 1994; Spohn and Horney 1992), Koss and colleagues achieved a more rapid transition for at least two reasons. First and foremost, they commanded credibility as scientists. Activists might be doubted for their presumably vision-clouding agendas, but scientists were expected to possess a detached objectivity as knowledge producers. Second, as quantitative researchers, they appealed to a way of knowing that was and

remains dominant in the United States. Moving scholarship on rape from the realm of personal and historical narrative (e.g., Brownmiller 1975) into “the language of numbers” ensured broader reach (Espeland and Stevens 2008; Jasanoff 2005: 265; Porter 1995; Waidzunas 2012; Woodward 1999).

The early 1990s gave rise to a “backlash” in which critics sought to reframe anti-rape activism and scholarship as manufacturing a false problem (Jhally 1994; Rutherford 2017). “One in four women” was subjected to immense scrutiny. Neil Gilbert (1991; 1992), a professor of social welfare (and therefore an “outsider” to the world of professional science), accused Koss and colleagues of using an overly broad definition of rape. He noted that a majority (73%) of women whom the researchers classified as rape victims did not self-identify as such. These arguments gained considerable ground when echoed by literature graduate student and self-identified feminist Katie Roiphe, who dismissed Koss and her supporters as “rape crisis feminists” whose politics were detrimental to women’s sexual autonomy (1991; 1994/1993: 70). What followed was in essence a trial of strength (Latour 1987) in which critics attempted to sever Koss’ alliance with the women who had participated in her study (and arguably with college women more broadly). Actors on both sides further contested the nature of feminism, and thereby also their relative claims to feminists as potential allies. Through insisting that rape was a threat to women’s welfare, Koss positioned her research as inherently feminist. Drawing attention to women’s assessments of their own experiences, Gilbert and Roiphe also appealed to discourses of feminist activism. They (re)presented Koss’ work as disempowering through its negation of participants’ narratives.

The controversy over “1 in 4 women” might be envisioned as a centering on several key actors who promoted/disputed particular matters of scientific fact. *Mary knows that 1 in 4 college women have experienced completed or attempted rape. Neil knows that far fewer than 1*

in 4 women have experienced completed or attempted rape. Disagreements over such “big picture” claims directed attention toward quantification strategies. A more thorough approach might thus begin with more foundational knowledges. Before counting prevalence rates, Mary must have determined what rape is, and must have developed a strategy for identifying college women and asking after their experiences. She must have determined how to identify rape victims. Neil’s critique might extend to, or perhaps emerge from, these theoretical and methodological decisions. Consider, then, the following:

Mary knows that Participant Y is a rape victim.

So how might Mary know? And how can readers, as modest witnesses to Mary’s scientific endeavors (Haraway 1997; Shapin and Schaffer 2011/1985), make sense of this matter of fact? This particular Mary relied on two resources in producing a definition of rape: Ohio legislation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Reports (FBI, UCR; Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987). Ohio took a broad approach. Penile-vaginal penetration, penile-anal penetration, oral assaults, and penetration by objects might all qualify as rape provided that assailants used physical force and/or administered intoxicants to victims in order to subdue them. Statutes embraced a gender inclusive approach, such that male and female actors might both qualify as assailants or victims. In contrast, the FBI (then) restricted rape to forcible acts of penile-vaginal penetration with male assailants and female victims⁵. Combining Ohio’s range of criminalized acts with FBI gender restrictions, she used the following questions to document experiences of rape:

Have you had sexual intercourse when you did not want to because a man gave you alcohol or drugs?

⁵ This has since changed. As of 2012, the FBI definition of rape expanded to allow for the possibility that men and women might qualify as assailants or victims, although perpetration is still restricted to penetration by an aggressor.

Have you had sexual intercourse when you did not want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc) to make you?

Have you had sex acts (anal or oral intercourse or penetration by objects other than the penis) when you didn't want to because a man threatened or used some degree of physical force (twisting your arm, holding you down, etc) to make you? (Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987: 167)

Participants who received these questions were also asked, directly, whether they had ever been raped. All questions were administered in reference to participants' adult lifetimes (operationalized as age 14+), and to the previous calendar year.

If Mary (Koss) knows that Participant Y is a rape victim, it is because Participant Y answered "yes" to at least one of the three questions listed above. Fifteen percent of surveyed women did so – approximately 1 in 7. An additional 12% reported one or more attempts (i.e., incidents in which penetration did not occur). Together, these findings produced a lifetime prevalence of 27% for completed or attempted rape among college women –approximately 1 in 4. Notably, Participant Y's answer to the more direct question about experiencing rape would not have affected her categorization. These data served to distinguish among established rape victims who did (27%) and did not (73%) classify themselves as such (Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987). In a previous publication, Koss had theorized the latter group as "hidden" victims whose experiences were rarely captured in federal victimization surveys (Koss 1985)⁶.

What, then, of the counterclaim? What if *Neil knows that Participant Y is not a rape victim*? Perhaps she answered "yes" only to the first question. This would disqualify her if Neil rejects the premise that nonconsensual sex, achieved through involuntary intoxication, constitutes rape. Indeed, Neil Gilbert was quite insistent on that point (1992; see also Roiphe

⁶ As discussed in Rutherford (2017), Koss had originally included direct questions as a reliability check. She soon discovered that many women who reported experiences that legally qualified as rape answered "no" when asked directly whether they had ever been raped. This led her to develop the concept of "hidden" rape victims.

1994/1993) Alternatively, Participant Y might have answered “no” to the direct question. In either event, Neil might dispute her individual history as well as the broader claim of “1 in 4 women.” Eliminating involuntary intoxication measures would shift the lifetime prevalence of completed or attempted rape to “1 in 5 women” (see Jhally 1994). Relying on direct measures would shift the lifetime prevalence of completed rape from 15% (1 in 7) to approximately 4% (1 in 25).

Rape Statistics and the Struggle for Credibility

In this well-publicized controversy – covered in such high profile news outlets as the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* – actors on both sides faced credibility challenges as producers of scientific knowledge (Shapin 1995). In responding, they endeavored to defend the validity of their perspectives (Epstein 1996) and discredit those of their opponents, even while claiming to engage in dispassionate and detached analyses of the “True” nature of rape. As a major figure in the anti-rape movement (in addition to being a scientist), Koss was likely mindful of challenges feminist activists had faced in raising awareness about sexual violence. Many had been accused of promoting “sex wars” by prioritizing emotion and anecdotes over empirical data (Whittier 2009). In response to Gilbert’s criticism, Koss turned neither to personal narratives nor to the emotional trauma suffered by some victims/survivors. This is not to say that she was unmoved by women’s experiences of rape – far from it – but rather, that she may have recognized their limited strategic use in the credibility environment (Waidzunas 2012) of scientific communication and publishing. Instead, Koss noted that she and her colleagues had consulted FBI and state policy in developing their definition of rape. Doing so, she presented the law as authoritative in distinguishing rape from consensual encounters, and bolstered her

credibility as a scientist through indirect appeals to state authority (Jasanoff 2004). She had this to say in regards to women's self-assessments:

Let me just give an analogy. If I went to a chemical dependency treatment program and administered an alcoholism screening test to one of the clients there and I said, "do you drink in the morning to get rid of a hangover? Do you hide liquor around your house?" –and the person responds "yes." "Have people in your family complained that your drinking is interfering with your life?" – and the person responds "yes." "Do you have periods when you can't remember what you've been doing because you were drinking?" – and the person responds "yes." And then I turn around and say, "do you consider yourself an alcoholic?" and the person says, "absolutely not." Do I then turn them out of the chemical dependency program because they don't think they're an alcoholic, or do I pay attention to the characteristics of their behavior as they're describing them, which qualify that person to be an alcoholic? And it's the same thing with the rape victims. The fact that they had intercourse against their consent because a man threatened bodily harm or used physical force means that they qualify as rape victims, and the fact that they don't realize this does not disqualify the experience from happening (interviewed in Jhally 1994).

In this instance, Koss appealed to scientific expertise – her knowledge and skills as a professional researcher in psychology – over and above women participants' accounts.

Gilbert's influence on science was remarkable, given that he was not an accredited scientist, himself. Nonetheless, he faced challenges as a man critiquing feminist efforts to address violence against women. By insisting that women study participants be treated as experts on their experiences and enlisting Roiphe, a feminist-identified woman, as an ally, he guarded against accusations of being antifeminist. His rejection of involuntary intoxication relied on notions of common sense. Allowing that women might be raped by men who employed (physical) force, he asked what "having sex 'because' a man gives you drugs or alcohol signif(ied)" (1992: 5) as though faulty logic were self-evident there.

Rape Statistics as Phenomena

How can an agential realist framework help us understand this controversy (whoever “we” happen to be)? Rather than viewing Koss and Gilbert as engaged in a dispute over the true nature of an external referent called rape, we might approach rape as phenomenal. We might consider the possibility that rape is not reducible to specific experiences or self-assessments, or engagements with prevalence surveys, but rather manifests differently across entanglements with different agencies of observation. This approach provides a means of rethinking the dispute over which survey items come to matter.

In the previous chapter, I briefly reviewed Barad’s discussion of complementary properties, which she draws from the Bohr’s philosophy-physics (Barad 2007). Wave-particle duality provides an example in physics research. Light manifests wave-like properties under particular experimental conditions, and particle-like properties under other conditions; however, it is not possible to observe both simultaneously, as their perceptibility relies on different agencies of observation. What if rape is similar? What if rape has both experiential and identitarian properties, or rather experience-identity duality? What if Koss and Gilbert simply enact agential cuts differently within the “same” phenomenon? And if this is the case, how might an agential realist approach serve to account for those differences, and the “ethico-onto-epistemic” possibilities therein (Barad 2007: 364)?

Barad wrote extensively of other physicists’ use of thought experiments to explore and contest scientific questions. Following their lead, I theorize possibilities for identifying rape victims and nonvictims across different measurement approaches in my own thought experiment with a hypothetical sample. To be consistent with (the logic of) 1980s prevalence research, I envision a sample of gender congruent⁷ undergraduate women. Importantly, these

⁷ Throughout this project, I use “gender congruent” as an umbrella term for individuals who experience congruence or harmony between their assigned gender and gender identification. I use “gender variant”

seven hypothetical women are not intended as a “representative” sample, but are rather envisioned for variation in experience and identity regarding their victimization (non)histories:

Participant A: no history of unwanted sexual contact; does not identify as rape victim/survivor

Participant B: history of nonconsensual digital penetration and oral-vaginal contact by a gender congruent woman, achieved through the use of force; does not identify as rape victim/survivor

Participant C: history of nonconsensual digital penetration and oral-vaginal contact by a gender congruent woman, achieved through the use of force; identifies as rape victim/survivor

Participant D: history of nonconsensual penile-vaginal penetration by a gender congruent man, recalls verbally protesting and then “freezing;⁸” does not perceive of the incident as forced; does not identify as rape victim/survivor

Participant E: history of nonconsensual penile-vaginal penetration by a gender congruent man, recalls verbally protesting and then “freezing;” does not perceive of the incident as forced; identifies as rape victim/survivor

Participant F: history of nonconsensual penile-vaginal penetration by a gender congruent man, achieved through the use of force; does not identify as rape victim/survivor

Participant G: history of nonconsensual penile-vaginal penetration by a gender congruent man, achieved through the use of force; identifies as rape victim/survivor

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 predict the intra-active classification of these women, based on different agencies of observation – not merely in terms of which survey items they receive, but how those items matter for their ontological status as victims or nonvictims (i.e., where/how agential cuts

as an umbrella term for those who experience some variation between these statuses, including those who do and do not identify as transgender.

⁸ Although many think of adrenal responses as characterized by “fight or flight,” tonic immobility or “freezing” is also a common response to actual and perceived threats – particularly threats of sexual violence (see TeBockhorst et al., 2015).

are made). In each hypothetical research scenario, this sample of seven women is divided into “victim” and “nonvictim” groups through intra-action with a particular measurement apparatus. These apparatuses are drawn from different sections of the Sexual Experiences Survey.

Figure 2.1
Apparatus One: Legally Defined, Gender Restricted (experiential)

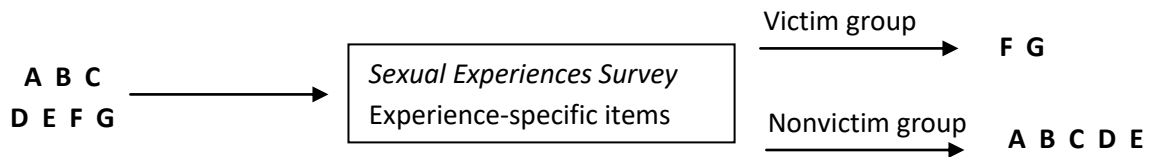
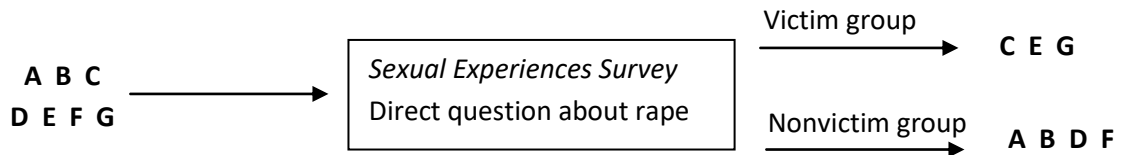


Figure 2.2
Apparatus Two: Self-Assessment (identitarian)



In the first approach, rape is assessed as experiential. Women participants are classified as victims or nonvictims based on their responses to the three items described above, which specify men as assailants and otherwise align with Ohio criminal statutes. The two women who have experienced forcible penile-vaginal assault by a gender congruent man both emerge as rape victims, even though only one of them self-identifies as such. In 1987, Koss favored and reported on this approach. This was likely connected with her training and commitments as a feminist researcher invested in raising awareness of the pervasiveness of sexual violence. She did not seek simply to raise awareness of the struggles of women who thought of themselves as victims, but to draw attention toward all sexual violence perpetrated by men and against women. At the same time, the original Sexual Experiences Survey rendered same-sex violence

imperceptible (Murphy 2006), and further excluded incidents in which assailants did not rely on force or involuntary intoxication to subdue their victims.

The second approach prioritizes personal narratives of victimization. Women who consider themselves rape victims/survivors emerge as such; others do not. Criminality is a non-issue. The perceptions of researchers, police, bystanders, strangers, media consumers, and others are likewise non-issues. Note that this identitarian property is complementary to experience. Numerous scholars have documented that variation in question design produces variation in prevalence estimates (Cook et al. 2011; Fisher 2009; Koss 1993; Wolff et al. 2006). Consistent with Koss and colleagues' 1987 study, individuals who have experienced assaults that legally or otherwise qualify as rape or sexual assault often decline to report on items that directly incorporate those terms. This indicates that estimates of unwanted sexual contact – that is, of specific experiences – are hindered by broad measures that ask participants to endorse particular labels for themselves and their histories. While it is now uncommon for prevalence research to rely on identitarian measures for these reasons, other areas of sexual violence research often do so indirectly. For example, evaluations of on medical and therapeutic treatments tend to rely on participants who seek out support in these arenas – that is, people who desire and see fit to pursue services for sexual assault survivors.

In their criticisms of Mary Koss' work, Neil Gilbert and Katie Roiphe made repeated references to study participants' identities. Yet surely they would not have accepted the outcome of Apparatus Two as theorized here. In my hypothetical sample, two women whom even Koss and colleagues might have described as non-victims were empowered to self-categorize as such – and surely the authors of such works as "Date Rape Hysteria" (Roiphe 1991) and "The Campus Rape Scare" (Gilbert 1991) would be loathe to facilitate an increase in prevalence estimates, or to encourage any ostensible nonvictims to shift into victimhood.

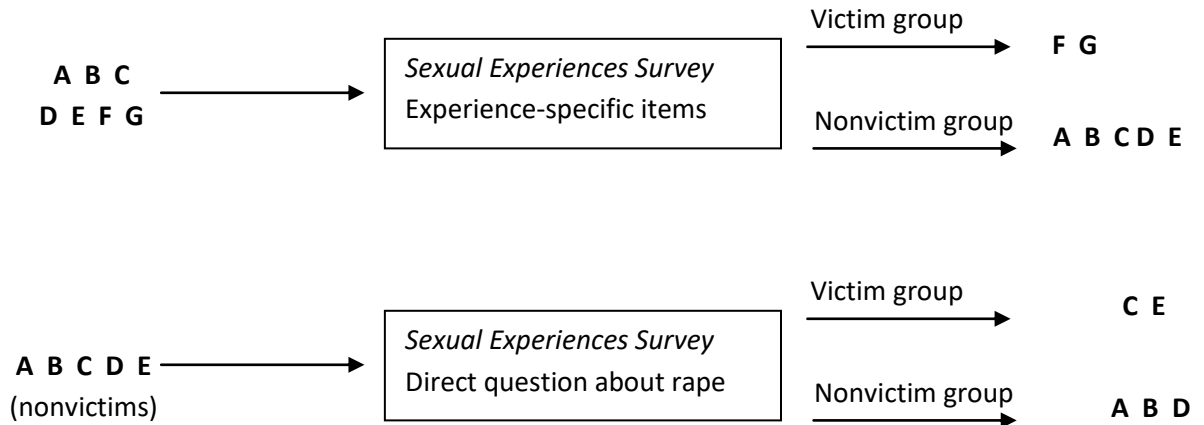
Indeed, both of these authors expressed dismay that incidents they rated as trivial or non-severe might ever be called rape in scholarship or advocacy (Gilbert 1992; Roiphe 1994/1993). They disputed the very existence of date and acquaintance rape and sought to (re)establish rape as a rare, if serious, occurrence. So how might these actors make use of data from the *Sexual Experience Survey*? Where would they make their agential cuts to distinguish victims from nonvictims?

While I argue here that identitarian and experiential properties are complementary, this does not mean that both cannot be assessed within the boundaries of a single psychological study. Researchers might perform a two-step analysis to broaden or narrow the criteria for rape victim status. In the former case, it would be productive to use an “OR” approach: after participants answered experiential questions, for example, established victims could be set aside. Those who emerged as non-victims might then receive experiential questions and potentially be reclassified⁹. In the latter case, it would be productive to use an “AND” approach: after participants answered experiential questions, established non-victims could be set aside. Those who emerged as victims might then receive experiential questions and potentially be reclassified. Figures 2.3 and 2.4 illustrate these potentialities.

⁹ This is a bit of a dramatization – it might be more accurate to suggest that all participants would receive the identity question, but that responses would only matter for individuals who answered “no” to all experience questions.

Figure 2.3

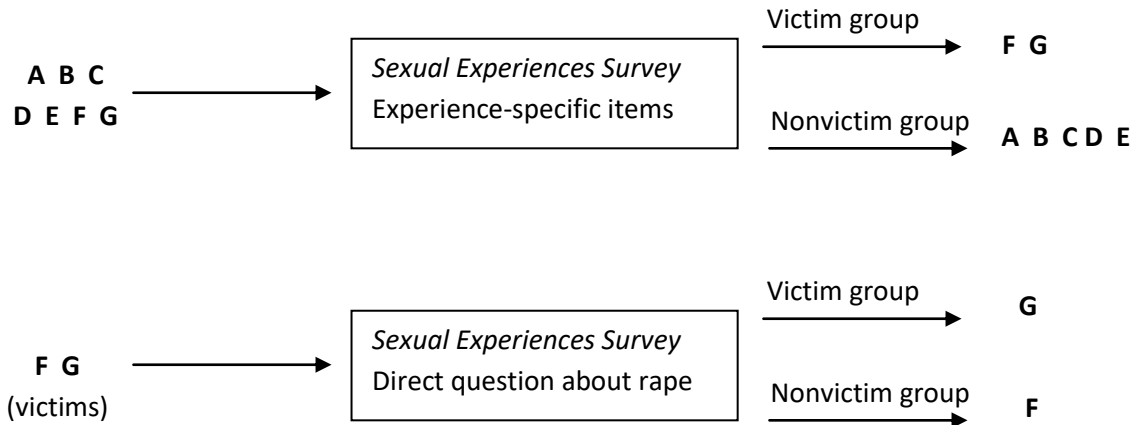
*Apparatus Three: Two-Steps, Broad Approach
(experiential OR identitarian)*



In Figure 2.3, a two-step process ensures that women who identify as rape victims/survivors are included in the victim sample, even if their experiences do not match legal definitions of rape (or researchers' operationalizations of those definitions). The two women initially classified as victims retain this status. Of the five women initially classified as being nonvictims, only three retain this status at the end of analysis. Nancy Wolff and colleagues took a similar approach in a study of sexual violence among incarcerated people (Wolff et al. 2006).

Figure 2.4

*Apparatus Four: Two-Steps, Strict Approach
(experiential AND identitarian)*



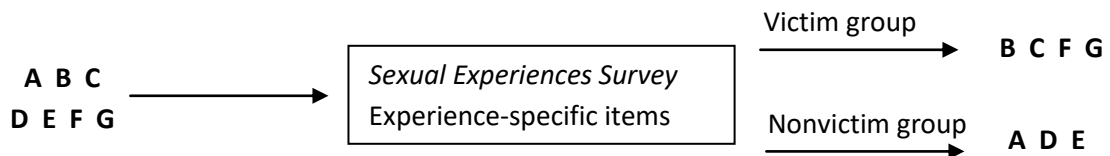
In Figure 2.4, the five women first classified as nonvictims retain this status. Only one of two in the victim sample retains that status at the end of analyses. This thought experiment is particularly useful for exploring the Koss/Gilbert dispute. For Koss, the agential cut that disentangles object (participant) from measurement apparatus (survey instrument) occurs after the experiential question. The second part of Apparatus Four serves to distinguish between “acknowledged victims” (G, in this example) and “unacknowledged victims” (F, in this example). For Gilbert, the experiential question serves, at best, to identify women who might potentially have experienced rape. It is not a definitive assessment tool. Only at the second step, when this pre-screened sample is asked directly about (non)histories of rape, may credible victims be identified.

These models do not exhaust the possibilities for identitarian or experiential phenomena. Within the realm of experiential measures, Koss and colleagues’ initial approach might be read as conservative in spite of the criticism they received. Inconsistent with Ohio state legislation (though, as they pointed out, consistent with Federal Bureau of Investigation definitions at the time), they embraced strict gender criteria for victims and assailants. An

analysis more consistent with state laws – that is, without restriction to men as aggressors, would produce the following:

Figure 2.5

Apparatus Five: Legally Defined, Not Gender Restricted (experiential)

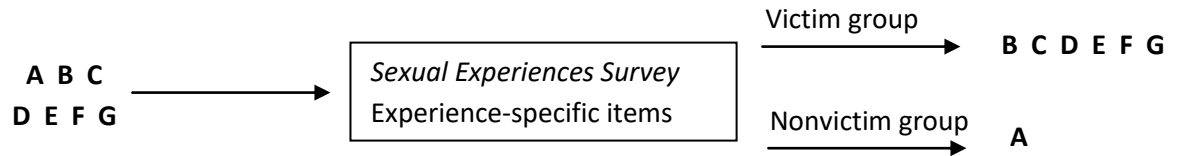


Notably, this is more consistent with the revised, gender inclusive Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss et al. 2007), introduced by Koss and several other established scholars in the field twenty years after the first publication of “1 in 4 women.” This shift in measurement apparatuses is entangled with broader shifts in research, community activism, and other domains toward an understanding of sexual violence as a gender inclusive – though, as discussed in the first chapter, not necessarily gender neutral – issue.

Yet even this approach might be read as conservative. Some criminal statutes, scholars (including several participants in the present study), and antiviolence advocates define rape as encompassing all nonconsensual penile-vaginal, penile-anal, oral-penile, oral-vaginal, and oral-anal incidents. These may loosely be characterized as involving “nonconsensual sexual penetration,” though it is not necessary to associate penetration with perpetration. For example, a gender congruent woman may perpetrate penile-vaginal assault against a gender congruent man by such means as force or threats, persistence in spite of his refusals or lack of expressed consent, exploiting his intoxication, or assaulting him while he is asleep or unconscious. To return to thought experimenting, the “nonconsensual sexual penetration” model has striking implications for estimating prevalence in this hypothetical sample:

Figure 2.6

Apparatus Six: Nonconsensual Sexual Penetration (experiential)



Of course, these models may also be combined with identitarian measures in broad or strict approaches. Table 2.1 provides an overview of all apparatuses described here, including classification criteria and the consequent victim/nonvictim breakdown among these hypothetical seven women.

Table 2.1. Rape Prevalence Counts* in a Theoretical Sample of Seven Nontransgender Women

<i>Apparatus</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Victim: Nonvictim Ratio</i>	<i>Victim Participants</i>
1	Identifies as victim/survivor	3:4	C E G
2	Original Sexual Experiences Survey (Ohio definition of rape, aggressor must be a man)	2:5	F G
3	Meets criteria for Apparatus 1 or 2: Identifies as victim or meets experiential criteria in SES	4:3	C E F G
4	Meets criteria for Apparatus 1 & 2 Identifies as victim & meets experiential criteria in SES	1:6	G
5	Ohio definition of rape	4:3	B C F G
6	Nonconsensual penetration	6:1	B C D E F G
7	Meets criteria for Apparatus 1 or 5: Identifies as victim or experienced rape, as per Ohio state legislation	5:2	B C E F G

Table 2.1, Continued

	Meets criteria for Apparatus 1 or 5:		
8	Identifies as victim & experienced rape, as per Ohio state legislation	2:5	C G
	Meets criteria for Apparatus 1 or 6:		
9	Identifies as victim or experienced nonconsensual penetration	6:1	B C D E F G
	Meets criteria for Apparatus 1 & 6:		
10	Identifies as victim & experienced nonconsensual penetration	3:4	C E G

*Apparatuses 3, 4, and 7-10 all employ two-step processes as described above.

In these ten hypothetical approaches to distinguishing rape victims from nonvictims, only two participants are consistent in status. Participant A, who has never experienced unwanted sexual contact and does not identify as a victim/survivor, is consistently classified as a nonvictim. Participant G, who has experienced nonconsensual penile-vaginal penetration achieved through the use of force and also identifies as a victim/survivor, is consistently classified as a victim. The remaining five women vary in status based on the measurement apparatus; including emphasis on identitarian or experiential criteria; the specific nature of experiential criteria where applicable; and whether the apparatus involves a single measure, a two-step assessment of complementary properties designed to broaden the classification of victims (i.e., an “OR” approach), or a two-step assessment of complementary properties designed to restrict the classification of victims (i.e., an “AND” approach).

It gets more complicated from there. Even these hypothetical phenomena fail completely to involve gender variant identifications, and while they incorporate sexual aggression by (nontransgender) men and women, they do not incorporate aggression toward

men. Several important dimensions of the agencies of observation are also omitted (see Fisher 2009; Koss 1993). Survey administration procedures, including but not limited to the setting in which participants receive questionnaires and whether they offer spoken, hand written, or computer-based responses may all impact responses. The order and precise wording for experiential questions will affect participants' self-assessments and reporting decisions, as will the terminology chosen for broad/direct questions (e.g., participants may report differently when asked about experiences of rape, sexual assault, sexual violence, sexual harassment, sexual coercion, and unwanted sexual experiences, to name but a few possibilities). It is also possible for participants' narratives to shift across time and space in a way that may impact their responses within or across research encounters. Understandings of "forceful" contact, of what does and does not constitute rape, are variable. Understandings of the motivations, actions, and interpersonal dynamics within sexually violent encounters are variable. Identifications are variable. These important points are missed in much literature on reliability testing for survey instruments: inconsistency in responses may be connected with shifts in participants' identitarian articulations and intra-active engagements with questionnaires. Rather than interpret inconsistencies solely as indicative of "faulty instrumentation" or participants' "self-contradiction," they may be (re)envisioned as – at least in part – indicative of variation within and across phenomena.

What does this mean for prevalence research? There is no call here to end such work. The stakes are simply too high, given continued reliance on and credibility awarded to statistical knowledge in arenas such as social policy (Jasanoff 2005; Porter 1995). Moreover, the recognition/assumption that scientific research entails social processes, and that varying approaches produce different matters of fact within and across phenomena, need not be discouraging. Such interpretations would stand in stark defiance of insights from numerous

scholars in feminist science studies (Barad 2007; Haraway 1988; Haraway 1997; Harding 1995; Murphy 2006). The preceding analyses do not tend toward a relativist framework in which all potential apparatuses and estimates appear equally valid, nor an objectivist framework in which one apparatus is somehow deemed the sole arbiter of scientific truth. Rather, they demonstrate a need to consider the inseparability of ethics, epistemology, and ontology within science. Quantification projects informed by agential realism will prioritize transparency, including detailed descriptions of measurement approaches and the logics behind them. Scholars engaged in such work might understand themselves as intra-acting within phenomena, and enacting agential cuts that might have been made differently.

Forty Years of Quantification

The controversy over “1 in 4 women” looms large within the history of rape research (Rutherford 2017). Public and scientific disputes between Koss and her supporters on the one hand, and Gilbert and his supporters on the other, speak to broader historical trends in public understandings of science, sexual violence, and sexual and gender politics; as well as the various markers of credibility and ethics within scientific domains. But what about the larger field? How dominant was Koss’ approach within science in the 1980s, and has this shifted over time? Was her emphasis on college men’s violence toward college women typical of prevalence research, and has it remained so? How else of scholars located the problem? To answer these questions, I turn to a historical overview of scientific efforts to quantify sexual violence.

Figures 2.7-2.10 present some comparisons of quantification pieces with the broader field of scientific research on sexual violence, stratified by decade. Table 2.2 provides frequencies and percentages, along with chi-square tests to assess statistical significance. Out of the 1,313 studies assessed, only 125 sought to quantify sexual violence through the calculation

of incidence and/or prevalence rates. This was somewhat surprising, given the cultural significance awarded to statistics in the U.S. (Jasanoff 2005; Porter 1995; Waidzunus 2012; Woodward 1999), and the attention given Koss and colleagues' 1987 study –with more than 1,100 citations to date, it was the second most-cited piece across all four decades. Indeed, such works have been consistently outnumbered by inquiries into the causes and effects of sexual violence, as well as by evaluation studies and critical assessments of theoretical frameworks and methodologies. Effects research has ebbed and flowed significantly, and theoretical/methodological works have grown increasingly common; otherwise, overall study aims have been consistent. Within the subfield of quantification, most works embraced multiple aims. Studies frequently paired incidence/prevalence estimates with data for risk factors (causes) or health outcomes (effects). There were no statistically significant trends in the incorporation of additional study aims within this subfield.

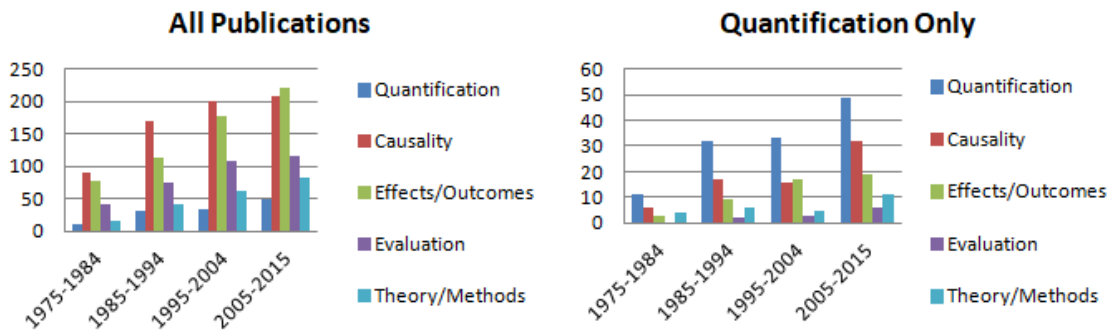


Figure 2.7. Study Aims.

Scientists have consistently prioritized victims/victimization over other areas of focus. These trends have intensified over the past four decades, as evidenced by increasing attention toward victimization and declining attention toward perpetration and bystanders/general publics. Quantification works have also emphasized victimization, and to a greater extent than the broader field of sexual violence studies. There has been a notable decline in perpetration studies over time. Research with bystanders (e.g., studies investigating the number of known

victims/survivors in participants' social networks), while a consistently minor aspect of quantification, has varied substantially in scope.

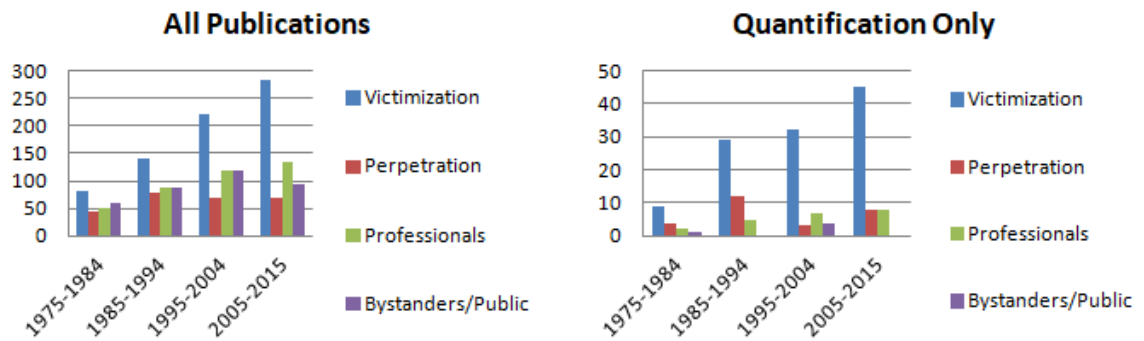


Figure 2.8. Areas of Focus.

Gendered approaches in quantification appear relatively consistent with the broader field. Women's victimization has received the greatest attention, followed by men's aggression, men's victimization, and women's perpetration. Perhaps owing to the greater emphasis on victimization in general, quantification studies have more consistently addressed men's victimization and less consistently addressed men's aggression. These patterns persist in spite of increasing emphasis on men's victimization in the broader field, and decreasing emphases on men's aggression in both the broader field and quantification.

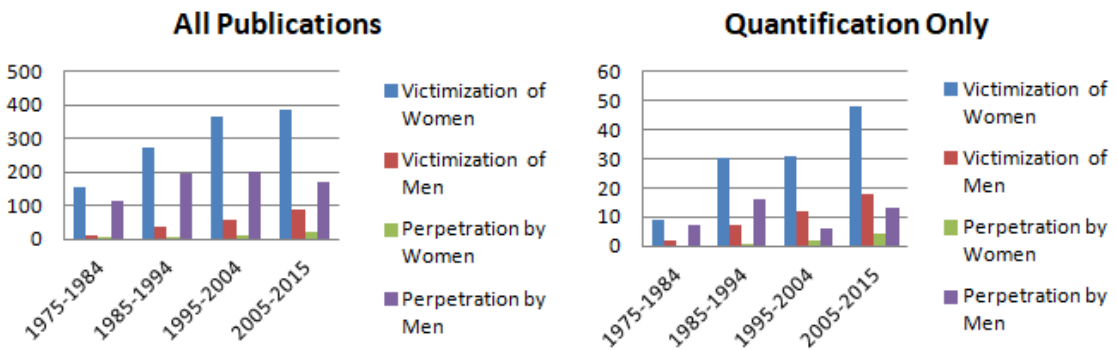


Figure 2.9. Gendered Patterns.

In the broader field, researchers have prioritized student populations. This is likely due to numerous factors, two of which I will tentatively outline here. For several decades – certainly

since the emergence of “1 in 4 women” – college women have been regarded as a priority population for sexual violence prevention (Anderson and Whiston 2005; Krebs et al. 2007; Krebs et al. 2009; Morrison et al. 2004; White House Council on Women and Girls 2014). Additionally, a substantial proportion of scientific research on sexual violence has been produced by psychologists, whose discipline relies heavily on undergraduate study participants (Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan 2010). Studies targeting the general population and/or community samples ranked consistently second. Essentially nonexistent from 1975-1994, research with military populations emerged in the following decade and appears to be on the rise. Over time, scientists have conducted proportionately fewer investigations with care facility and inmate/convicted populations. Research specific to demographic populations, such as studies of rape among people with disabilities, has comprised a relatively minor proportion of publications (single-gender studies were not classified as “demographic” unless they were also explicitly focused on other demographic populations).

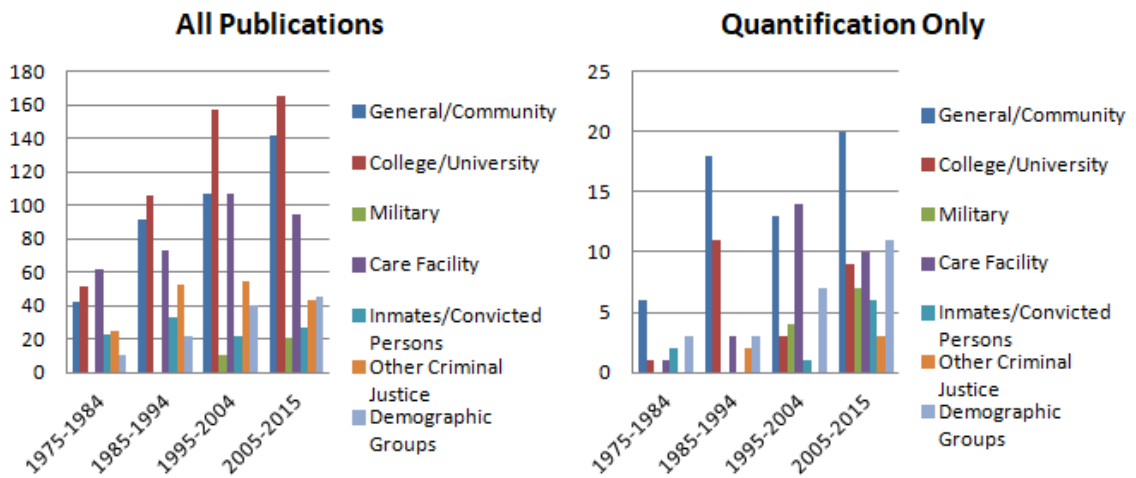


Figure 2.10. Study Population.

Quantification studies depart considerably from these patterns. Scientists seeking to count incidence/prevalence rates have most consistently turned to the general population.

Research specific to demographic populations has been far more prominent in this subfield, particularly over the past two decades. Investigations with military and convicted populations show a more striking increase. As with the emphasis on college students in the larger field, some of these patterns may be connected with researchers' characteristics. Quantification tends more toward collaborations between scientists and state institutions, such as the CDC and the Department of Justice (e.g., Black et al. 2011; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). It would be unsurprising if state (or state-funded) scientists were comparatively invested in populations employed by or under the care of state institutions (e.g., military and inmate populations). Moreover, such agencies are often tasked with monitoring and ensuring the welfare of the general population, and may therefore be more inclined to approach sexual violence as a community problem. Even the comparative emphasis on demographic-based studies might be understood through the idiom of coproduction. This concept emphasizes the simultaneous production of scientific knowledge and social order (Jasanoff 2004). Within research on rape, agencies such as the Office on Violence Against Women regularly receive grant applications for community-specific services and must be prepared to assess populations' relative need and/or worthiness of state support. In this sense, state actors would be invested not only in supporting state institutions but in determining and (re)inforcing state-approved understandings of which populations were most "in need" of scientific attention. The only significant trend over time concerned research with care facilities, which was relatively minor from 1975-1994, rose from 1995-2004, and fell somewhat in the following decade.

Table 2.2. Descriptive Statistics for All Publications and Quantification Studies, By Decade.

	All Publications				Quantification Pieces			
	1975-1984	1985-1994	1995-2004	2005-2015	1975-1984	1985-1994	1995-2004	2005-2015
<i>Study Aims</i>								
Quantification	11 (6.25%)	32 (10.39%)	33 (8.27%)	49 (11.40%)	-	-	-	-
Causes of Rape	91 (51.70%)	169 (54.87%)	200 (50.13%)	209 (48.60%)	6 (54.55%)	17 (53.13%)	16 (48.48%)	32 (65.31%)
Effects of Rape ^b	78 (44.32%)	113 (36.69%)	177 (44.36%)	221 (51.40%)	3 (27.27%)	9 (28.13%)	17 (51.52%)	19 (38.78%)
Evaluation	41 (23.30%)	76 (24.68%)	108 (27.07%)	115 (26.74%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (6.25%)	3 (9.09%)	6 (12.24%)
Theory/Methods ^b	16 (9.09%)	42 (13.64%)	63 (15.79%)	83 (19.30%)	4 (36.36%)	6 (18.75%)	5 (15.15%)	11 (22.45%)
<i>Overall Focus</i>								
Victimization ^b	82 (46.59%)	140 (45.45%)	221 (55.39%)	283 (65.81%)	9 (81.82%)	29 (90.63%)	32 (96.97%)	45 (91.84%)
Perpetration ^{bc}	43 (24.43%)	77 (25.00%)	69 (17.29%)	68 (15.81%)	4 (36.36%)	12 (37.50%)	3 (9.09%)	8 (16.33%)
Professionals	49 (27.84%)	88 (28.57%)	118 (29.57%)	134 (31.16%)	2 (18.18%)	5 (15.63%)	7 (21.21%)	8 (16.33%)
Bystanders/General Public ^{bc}	59 (33.52%)	88 (28.57%)	118 (29.57%)	93 (21.63%)	1 (9.09%)	0 (0.00%)	4 (12.12%)	0 (0.00%)
<i>Gendered Patterns</i>								
Victimization of Women	154 (87.50%)	275 (89.29%)	367 (91.98%)	387 (90.00%)	9 (81.82%)	30 (93.75%)	31 (93.94%)	43 (87.76%)
Victimization of Men ^b	12 (6.82%)	37 (12.01%)	60 (15.04%)	90 (20.93%)	2 (18.18%)	7 (21.88%)	12 (36.36%)	18 (36.73%)
Perpetration by Women	3 (1.70%)	8 (2.60%)	14 (3.51%)	21 (4.88%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (3.13%)	2 (6.06%)	4 (8.16%)
Perpetration by Men ^{bd}	115 (65.34%)	196 (63.64%)	202 (50.63%)	172 (40.00%)	7 (63.64%)	16 (50.00%)	6 (18.18%)	13 (26.53%)
<i>Study Population</i>								
General/Community	42 (23.86%)	91 (29.55%)	107 (26.82%)	142 (33.02%)	6 (54.55%)	18 (56.25%)	13 (39.39%)	20 (40.82%)
College/University	51 (28.98%)	106 (34.42%)	157 (39.35%)	165 (38.37%)	1 (9.09%)	11 (34.38%)	3 (9.09%)	9 (18.37%)
Military ^b	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	10 (2.51%)	21 (4.88%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	4 (12.12%)	7 (14.29%)
Care Facility ^{bd}	62 (35.23%)	73 (23.70%)	107 (26.82%)	95 (22.14%)	1 (9.09%)	3 (9.38%)	14 (42.42%)	10 (20.41%)
Inmates/Convicted Persons ^b	23 (13.07%)	33 (10.71%)	22 (5.51%)	27 (6.28%)	2 (18.18%)	0 (0.00)	1 (3.03%)	6 (12.24%)
Other Criminal Justice	25 (14.10%)	52 (16.88%)	55 (13.78%)	43 (10.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (6.25%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (6.12%)
Demographic Groups	10 (5.68%)	22 (7.14%)	40 (10.03%)	45 (10.47%)	3 (27.27%)	3 (9.38%)	7 (21.21%)	11 (22.45%)

^ap<.05, ^bp<.01 for full sample of publications in chi-square analysis; ^cp<.05, ^dp<.01 for quantification pieces.

Four Approaches to Locating the Problem

After completing content analysis of scientific publications, I selected four pieces for intensive textual analysis. Considering overall trends in quantification, I sought pieces that addressed victimization and varied in target population and space. To gain a sense of their relative dominance in different arenas, I supplemented textual analysis with an investigation of institutional and popular reception including academic citations, press coverage, and other less formal coverage in agency websites and online communities. In this section, I present an overview of study design, major findings, and reception for these four studies. I further discuss markers of scientific credibility within manuscripts, and assess gendered precasting in study design and data interpretation.

Establishing the Scope of Rape

Given its historical significance, I began with Koss and colleagues' 1987 study from the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, "The Scope of Rape: Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization in a National Sample of Higher Education Students." The sampling frame included students in postsecondary institutions in the U.S., stratified by several criteria including region, racial/ethnic minority representation, proximity to urban settings, and type of institution (private, public, religious). The final sample included 3,187 women and 2,972 men from 32 schools. Participants completed written surveys in classroom settings. In addition to gender and sexual violence histories, researchers collected data on religious affiliation, family income, and race/ethnicity.

As mentioned above, Koss and colleagues drew on FBI and Ohio legislation to classify experiences of sexual violence, and to identify women as potential victims and men as potential aggressors. When calculating incidence and prevalence rates, they classified participants

according to the most severe incident reported (e.g., a woman who reported two incidents of unwanted sexual contact and one attempted rape was classified as a victim of attempted rape). Women reported lifetime rates of 54% for any sexual victimization, including 12% for attempted and 15% for completed rape; men reported rates of 25% for lifetime perpetration, including 3% for attempted and 4% for completed rape. Study authors calculated six-month incidence rates of 83 victimizations per 1,000 women (38 meeting FBI definitions of rape), and 34 perpetrations per 1,000 men (9 meeting FBI definitions of rape). The highest rate of victimization was reported by Native American women, followed by Whites, Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians. The highest rate of perpetration was reported by Black men, followed by Hispanics, Whites, Asians, and Native Americans. There were no differences by family income or religion.

“The Scope of Rape” featured several identifiable markers of scientific credibility. They appealed to state authority in justifying definitions of rape. They utilized the previously established Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss 1985; Koss and Oros 1982) to document violent incidents and conducted independent reliability and validity testing, adding a sense of standardization and replicability to their work (Timmermans and Epstein 2010). Perhaps anticipating critiques about generalization, they provided an extensive discussion of sampling and recruitment along with comparisons between the study sample and broader population of U.S. undergraduates. Even the tone of the piece may be interpreted as strategic, or at least productive, within the credibility environment of professional scientific publications (Shapin 1995). Whereas many investigations of rape blatantly approach readers’ affect as an object-target (Anderson 2014), seeking to mobilize alarm and emotional investment, Koss and colleagues’ writing was straightforward and unemotional, and thus less vulnerable to critiques of being overly political (Whittier 2009). Finally, study authors sought to identify and discredit potential opponents. Their literature review offered a thorough critique of prior quantification

studies, casting doubt on other scientists' definitions, survey designs, and sampling frames. Their manuscript directly confronted discrepancies between researchers' and participants' assessments, insisting that some rapes are not "acknowledged as rape by the [woman] victim" and speculating that "some men fail to perceive accurately the degree of force and coerciveness that was involved in a particular sexual encounter or to interpret correctly a woman's nonconsent and resistance" (169).

As noted above, these scientists conceptualized rape as a heterosexual phenomenon characterized by men's aggression towards women. Gendered assumptions were so firmly engrained that data for women and men appeared alongside one another in tables; readers were expected to recognize that women's reports concerned victimization (by men) and that men's concerned perpetration (against women). Women's aggression and men's victimization were rendered imperceptible through omission in survey questions and data tables. Sexual orientation and gender variance were rendered "area[s] of silence and difficulty," omitted from the narrative altogether (Clarke 2004: 74). Additionally, although findings varied significantly by race/ethnicity, the narrative presented rape as a gendered phenomenon without calling for a theoretical model that engaged both racism/White supremacy and sexism/patriarchy as causal forces (see Collins 2004; Combahee River Collective 2006/1977; hooks 2000/1984). Finally, in seeking "the scope of rape" through a study of college students, these scientists implicitly located this social problem among undergraduates and, to a lesser extent, on campus.

It should be noted that Koss has since moved toward approaches that incorporate the possibility of sexual victimization toward and sexual aggression by people of all genders. Twenty-five years after introducing the Sexual Experiences Survey and 20 years after publishing "The Scope of Rape," Koss collaborated with an accomplished team of sexual violence scholars to revise the instrument (Koss et al. 2007). Revisions included "conversion to gender neutrality"

(357), with options to (re)adopt gender-specific approaches “with minimal wording substitutions or deletions” (360). For example, one item now asks participants to indicate whether “someone had oral sex with me or made me have oral sex with them without my consent” under a range of coercive and forcible circumstances. It is difficult to assess the impact of such changes to date. Researchers may easily reintroduce gender-specific items or administration procedures to the SES, as encouraged by Koss and colleagues, or employ restrictive sampling frames that negate the more inclusive approach of revised measures. Nonetheless, researchers now have the option to utilize the SES without relegating men’s victimization and women’s aggression to a “lost realm” (Proctor 2008).

Koss and colleagues’ 1987 study received immense attention within and beyond the scientific field. To date, it has received more than 1,100 academic citations. Initially published in an academic journal, findings were quickly expanded and repackaged for general consumption in Robin Warsaw’s *I Never Called It Rape* (Warsaw 1994/1988). A Lexis-Nexis search for “Mary Koss” and “rape” uncovered more than 80 pieces from multiple nations including the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. A substantial majority seemed to reference the 1987 study, including several published in recent years.

Study findings were controversial, and this was evident in the press coverage. Works alluding to an epidemic of violence gave way to more skeptical pieces within a few years. This shift was even the subject of an academic documentary, *The Date Rape Backlash* (Jhally 1994). More recently, particularly post-2000, there seems to have been a return to more supportive press coverage. It is also worth noting that Mary Koss’ affective engagements in journalistic texts differed sharply from the academic manuscript. When quoted directly, she made consistent efforts to mobilize support for social change. Such approaches were likely better suited to the credibility environment of news media, in which overtly political and emotional

narratives – including emotional calls to alarm in response to statistical knowledge – might hold equal or greater sway than dispassionate rhetoric (Epstein 1996; Woodward 1999).

Koss and colleagues' work has also received a great deal of attention among bloggers and in activist communities; a Google search, using the same terms, produced more than 11,000 hits. Many individuals and institutions draw supportively on the 1987 study, and utilize its findings to (re)establish rape as an urgent problem. Others draw critically on this work, either to discredit anti-rape activism altogether or to pose specific criticisms concerning theoretical and methodological approaches. Overall, "1 in 4 women" remains a rallying point for antiviolence work. Numerous authors within and beyond the academy continue to cite this statistic. "One in Four" is even the name of a national campus-based sexual violence prevention organization in the United States, despite subsequent studies' having produced different estimates (e.g., Krebs et al. 2007).

Sexual Violence and Incarceration

Controversy notwithstanding, Koss and colleagues' work helped to establish date rape as a concept in popular consciousness, and to garner institutional support for addressing rape on campus (Rutherford 2017). With the publication of *No Escape: Male Rape Inside U.S. Prisons*, the Human Rights Watch achieved something similar for rape among incarcerated persons (Human Rights Watch 2001). The report provided numerous case studies of men who had been assaulted by fellow inmates, a thorough consideration and critique of conditions that promote sexual violence in prison, and a call for better prevention and care services as well as rigorous investigations into the scope of inmate-on-inmate sexual violence. Institutional support followed through coverage in news and fictional media, and the passage of the *Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)* in 2003.

As its title suggests, *No Escape* did more than extend the problem of rape to prisons. This report located that problem among inmates in men's facilities. Authors stated that they had declined to consider staff-on-inmate violence, that data for staff-on-inmate violence in women's prisons had been published elsewhere, and that they had discovered no information regarding sexual violence among women inmates: "if the problem of prisoner-on-prisoner sexual abuse exists in women's institutions--a possibility we do not exclude--it is likely to take somewhat different forms than in men's prisons." While the Human Rights Watch was upfront about gendered assumptions in the introduction to *No Escape*, much of the remaining text obscured this through nonspecific references to "inmate-on-inmate" violence. The problem of inmate-on-inmate rape, if not rape in prison more broadly, was rendered practically synonymous with rape among incarcerated men.

Answering the call for quantification and funded by *PREA*, Nancy Wolff and colleagues set out to determine the prevalence of sexual violence in a state prison system. This system included one women's prison and 12 men's prisons. They invited all inmates in the general population and 10% of those in segregation units to complete a survey about the quality of life in prison; 6,964 men and 564 women agreed to participate. Victimization items addressed inmate-on-inmate and staff-on-inmate violence. Measures for sexual violence were separated by perpetrator (inmate-on-inmate vs. staff-on-inmate violence) and time frame (prior six months vs. the present bid/conviction). Given variation in bids/sentences, I focus here on data for 6-month incidence rates. Other measures addressed gender, age, race/ethnicity, incarceration history, substance use history, and mental and physical health. The resulting study, "Sexual Violence Inside Prisons: Rates of Victimization" was published in the *Journal of Urban Health* in 2006.

Like “The Scope of Rape” (Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987), “Sexual Violence Inside Prisons” employed two approaches to documenting victimization. Participants were asked directly whether they had ever been sexually assaulted by an inmate or member of staff. Ten additional questions addressed specific experiences, and were intended to document histories of nonconsensual sexual acts (forced oral, anal, and vaginal sex acts; the closest equivalent to “rape” in this study) and abusive sexual contact (unwanted sexual contact that did not qualify as forced sex). Participants reported lower rates of victimization through general measures than through experience-specific measures; in other words, many would have been classified as “hidden victims” by Koss. Wolff and colleagues calculated prevalence rates using unduplicated positive responses to general and specific measures. In other words, they employed a combined “narrative/identity as victim OR qualifying experience” approach to quantification.

Women reported significantly higher rates of inmate-on-inmate sexual assaults for all measures (21% vs. 4.3% for any sexual violence, 3% vs. 1.5% for nonconsensual sex acts, and 20% vs. 3.5% for abusive sexual contact in the previous 6 months). There were no significant gender differences in reported staff-on-inmate sexual assaults (7.6% vs. 7.6% for any sexual violence, 1.7% vs. 1.9% for nonconsensual sex acts, 6.6% vs. 6.6% for abusive sexual contact). Overall, women were more likely to be assaulted by inmates than staff; the reverse was true for men. Younger inmates were also more likely to report victimization than older inmates.

Wolff and colleagues’ manuscript featured several notable markers of scientific credibility. General victimization questions were adapted from the DOJ’s *National Violence Against Women and Men Survey*, and specific items were based on definitions from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. These choices, along with repeated references to *PREA*, engaged state authority and scientific standardization (Timmermans and Epstein 2010). Perhaps anticipating skepticism, given the extent to which findings contradicted common

understandings of prison rape, study authors offered a thorough critique of prior quantification studies with inmates. They argued that their approach would produce “more accurate estimates” (836) due to improvements in representativeness (sampling frame included all state prison inmates), validity (improved question design), and reliability (improved administration procedures, including computer-assisted methods). Acknowledging over-reporting as a possibility, they tied this to credibility issues among participants in noting that even the most reliable methods would “not correct for bias motivated by custody officers or the prison system” (843). This point stood out within the broader field of quantification, as researchers are more likely to note under-reporting but not over-reporting as a concern¹⁰.

In designing this project, Wolff and colleagues seemed to begin with the understanding that sexual violence was a problem inside prisons, and with recognition of two common perceptions about gendered patterns in aggression and victimization: first, that sexual violence was often conceived as a matter of non-institutionalized men’s violence toward non-institutionalized women, and second, that the concept of prison rape was largely confined to men’s violence toward other men in the popular imagination. Their research suggested a relocation, or at least a broadened location, of the problem of rape. Wolff and colleagues drew on preexistent structures of feeling (Anderson 2014; Woodward 1999) – collective senses and expectations of fear, concern, and hope for a less violent world – and redirected these affective resources toward incarcerated women. Regarding violence against women more broadly, they pointed out that the “percent of inmate-on-inmate rape in women’s prisons was over ten times higher than rape rates of adult women in the total population, and the rates for staff perpetrated rape is almost six times higher” (844). Regarding rape in prison, they noted that

¹⁰ I should note that I, myself, have done this. My first journal publication explored the prevalence of peer sexual victimization and aggression in middle school, and recognized under-reporting but not over-reporting as a likely limitation (Levine 2015).

studies with incarcerated men outnumbered studies with incarcerated women at a rate of three-to-one. Regarding rape in men's prisons, they called for greater attention to staff-on-inmate violence.

In the decade since its publication, "Sexual Violence Inside Prisons" has received nearly 30 academic citations. Wolff has been interviewed and referenced numerous times before and since, though not clearly in reference to this particular study. The only non-academic reference I located was a 2006 article from the *New Jersey Star-Ledger* (Schwaneberg 2006), no longer accessible through the periodical's site. The journalist referenced Wolff and colleagues' data to argue that NJ had relatively low rates of prison rape, and repeated concerns about potential over-reporting of staff perpetration. The piece also quoted a Department of Corrections spokesperson who described women's reports as "surprising" and shared plans to increase surveillance in women's prisons.

Quantifying Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Victimization

Quantification rarely occurs in isolation. Scientists often include a series of demographic measures as a means of assessing relative risk, and to improve multivariable models by controlling for selected characteristics. This dimension of study design entails heavy demands in methodological decision making. Once scientists have selected variables for inclusion (e.g., race/ethnicity), they must develop strategies for operationalizing them (e.g., which categories to include, whether to provide an "other" option and/or to allow for multiple identifications). Subsequent decisions concern approaches to model building (e.g., whether to incorporate race/ethnicity as a predictor for sexual victimization), data interpretation (e.g., whether to approach racial variation in victimization as a consequence of racism), and presentation of findings (e.g., whether to call for a theoretical model that incorporates race/racism, or for

further studies with particular race/ethnic populations, or simply report racial variations without further explication).

Rothman and colleagues began with a demographic focus (Rothman, Exner and Baughman 2011). Noting the widespread conceptualization of rape as a heterosexual phenomenon, but also recognizing a growing body of research concerning sexuality and victimization risk, they conducted a systematic review of literature quantifying sexual violence against gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) individuals in the U.S.. The review was published in *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* in 2011. Studies were selected for inclusion if they documented the incidence or prevalence of lifetime sexual assault, adult sexual assault, childhood sexual assault, intimate partner sexual assault, or hate crime sexual assault among gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual persons in the U.S.; had response rates of 30% or greater; and stratified findings by gender (i.e., did not combine data for men and women). After finding 4,511 potential works in an initial literature search, study authors identified 71 articles with data for 75 studies that met all inclusion criteria. Sample sizes ranged from 29 to more than 60,000, with a mean of 499. One-third of studies reviewed utilized probability or census-based sampling, whereas the remaining two-thirds utilized non-probability or convenience samples. I focus here on findings for lifetime and adult victimization.

Different studies employed different approaches to defining sexual violence, question design, recruitment, and survey administration. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was striking variation in prevalence estimates. Among gay and bisexual men, estimates ranged from 12-54% for lifetime sexual assault and 11-45% for adult sexual assault. Among lesbian and bisexual women, estimates ranged from 16%-85% for lifetime and 11-53% for adult sexual assault. Overall, non-probability samples yielded higher estimates than probability samples.

Study authors devoted considerable attention to methodological critique, which served to advance analyses and establish scientific credibility. More specifically, they drew attention to widespread reliance on non-probability samples and variation in definitions of sexual violence, definitions of sexual orientation, recruitment strategies, and survey design. When arguing that GLB individuals face an elevated risk, they justified this through comparing GLB prevalence studies to data from established, highly cited studies with heterosexual or general populations.

More than any other publication selected here for close analysis, Rothman and colleagues' review contested assumptions underlying the production of scientific knowledge. The most central of these, certainly, was frequent omission of sexual orientation measures. Even among GLB prevalence studies, the authors noted a lack of data concerning assailants' gender and sexuality¹¹. Overall, Rothman and colleagues described GLB individuals as "vulnerable" to sexual victimization (63) and insisted that quality data were "urgently need[ed] in order to proceed with funded initiatives" (56).

"The Prevalence of Sexual Assault Against People Who Identify as Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual in the U.S.: A Systematic Review" has received nearly 70 academic citations in the 5 years since its publication. The study has received modest non-academic attention. Boston University, Rothman's home institution, published a short overview. Boston's NPR station also quoted Rothman regarding sexual violence toward GLB individuals, in connection with a case at Brandeis University. While she has been quoted or consulted in several other news pieces, most concerned different work.

Surveying the General Population

¹¹ Based on my own content analysis, I might add that studies of perpetration rarely incorporate any measures for sexual orientation. It is also rare for such investigations to regard women of any sexuality as potential assailants.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has conducted and published data from two rounds of the *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey* (NISVS, Black et al. 2011; Breiding et al. 2014). Researchers employed random digit-dialing to survey English and Spanish-speaking members of the non-institutionalized adult general population. Data for the second round were collected in 2011 and published by Matthew Breiding and colleagues in 2014. The final sample included 6,879 women and 5,848 men. Victimization measures addressed sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and stalking; I focus here on data for sexual violence. Other items addressed demographics, contextual factors (e.g., age at first assault) and outcomes (e.g., police contact) for violent experiences.

The *NISVS* defines rape as completed or attempted forcible penetration by an assailant, or completed drug-facilitated penetration by an assailant (penetration may be oral, anal, or vaginal; and committed with a penis, other body part, or object). Other measures for victimization included being made to penetrate an assailant, coerced unwanted penetration, unwanted sexual contact, and unwanted noncontact sexual experiences. Participants were asked to report lifetime experiences, as well as any victimization within the previous 12 months. Women reported lifetime rates of 19% for rape and 1% and 44% for other forms of sexual violence (including 1% for being made to penetrate an assailant), and 12-month incidence rates of 2% and 6% for other forms of sexual violence (case count for being made to penetrate was too small to estimate incidence). Approximately 99% of women rape victims and 95% of women victims of other forms of sexual violence had exclusively male perpetrators. Men reported lifetime rates of 1.7% for rape and 23% for other forms of sexual violence (including 6.7% for being made to penetrate an assailant). The case count for rape was too small to calculate a 12-month incidence rate; however, 5.1% of men reported other forms of sexual violence, including 1.7% who reported being made to penetrate an assailant. Approximately 79% of men who

reported rape had only male perpetrators, whereas a majority of those who reported other forms of victimization, including 83% of those where made to penetrate an assailant, had only female perpetrators.

CDC researchers emphasized racial patterns in victimization. Among women who reported rape, multiracial persons reported the highest rates, followed by Native Americans/Alaska Natives, Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics; case counts were too small for other racial/ethnic groups to determine relative estimates. Among women who reported other forms of sexual victimization, multiracial persons reported the highest rates, followed by Native Americans/Alaska Natives, Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians/Pacific Islanders. Among men who reported rape, counts were too small to determine relative prevalence estimates. Among men who reported other forms of sexual violence, multiracial persons reported the highest levels of victimization, followed by Hispanics, Native Americans/Alaska Natives, Blacks, Whites, and Asians/Pacific Islanders. The academic manuscript called for investigations into risk and protective factors that might vary by race/ethnicity and greater attention towards multiracial persons and American Indian/Alaska Native women.

The introduction and discussion of Breiding and colleagues' publication aimed to raise alarm and motivate action. The narrative also featured several markers of credibility over and above that conveyed by the scientific and governing authority of the CDC. Prior to survey launch, study authors noted that data from 1995-1996 provided the best national prevalence estimates (see Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). The first *NISVS* thus provided a noteworthy update with data from 2010. For the 2011 round, Breiding and colleagues pointed to improvements in survey design (e.g., dividing an item that addressed multiple forms of victimization into several items that each addressed a single form). This served to establish the scientific value of the *NISVS* in general and the second round of data in particular.

Even ostensibly gender inclusive projects may adopt definitions, research instruments, and/or sampling frames that draw heavily from dominant rape scripts. In the cultural scenarios designated as “typical date rapes” in such research, gender congruent heterosexual men assault gender congruent heterosexual women, and engage in penile-vaginal assault. Scientists who engage these scenarios may incorporate those elements directly into vignettes or survey guides. Others may reject some components, such as the notion that only women can be raped or the restriction to penile-vaginal acts, but assume that other dimensions of sexual violence are otherwise relatively consistent. This occurs in vignette studies that incorporate male and female victims, while featuring only male aggressors who engage in penile penetration (Ford, Liwag-McLamb and Foley 1998; McCaul et al. 1990; White and Kurpius 2002). Such work modifies the ontological gerrymandering evidenced in other forms of precasting: the sex assignments and gender identities of victims are allowed to vary, while those of aggressors are fixed as male/masculine. Studies that prioritize inclusivity, that embrace openness toward all gendered patterns in sexual violence, may subtly precast if aggression is presumed synonymous with penetration. Such was the case with the *NISVS*.

In both rounds of the *NISVS*, researchers restricted rape to the penetration of a victim by an assailant. In forcible contexts, even an attempt at penetration was sufficient to constitute rape. To put it more bluntly, a forcible penile-vaginal assault qualified as rape only if the person with the penis was the assailant; if the person with the vagina was the assailant, this incident constituted a less serious form of sexual assault. This put CDC definitions at odds with numerous criminal statutes (Levine 2017; Whitman 2012), though it was consistent with FBI definitions and the Campus Sexual Assault Study (Krebs et al. 2007). Moreover, this definitional approach had distinct consequences for documenting gendered patterns in sexual violence. Figure 2.11 depicts the prevalence of rape reported in the 2011 *NISVS* (Breiding et al. 2014) using both the

CDC definition and an expanded definition that includes being made to penetrate (the former is consistent with federal definitions including that of the FBI, the latter is consistent with many state-level criminal statutes). Values for the latter represent upper estimates (i.e., sum of reports for both forms of assault). Figure 2.12 provides the same comparison for 12-month incidence rates.

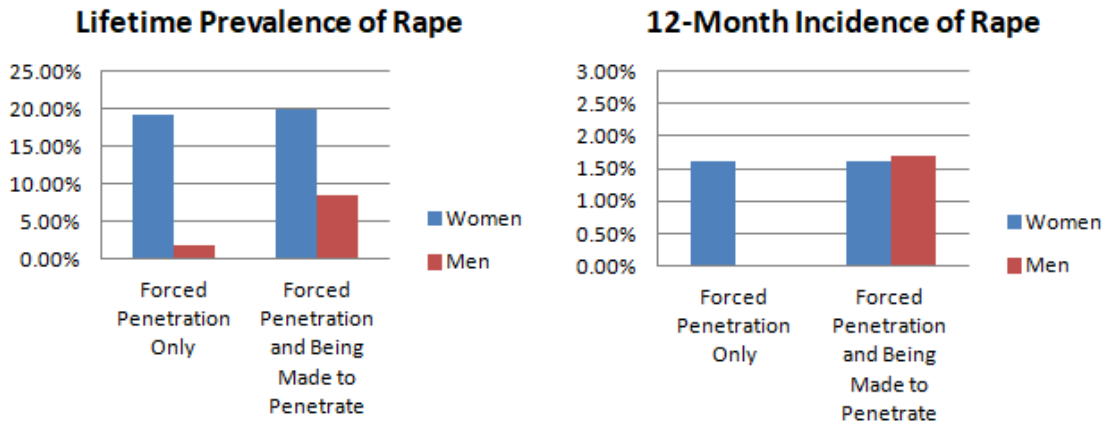


Figure 2.11. NISVS lifetime estimates.

Figure 2.12. NISVS annual estimates.

Estimates for women are minimally affected by this definitional shift. Lifetime rape estimates increase from 19.3% to 19.9%, whereas 12-month incidence rape estimates remain at 1.6%. Estimates for men change substantially. When being made to penetrate is classified as rape, men’s lifetime prevalence increases nearly fivefold from 1.7% to 8.4%. Men’s 12-month incidence moves from 0% to 1.7%. Gender differences in 12-month incidence essentially vanish. Definitions have further consequences for estimates of sexual aggression. Based on victims’ reports, men comprise nearly the full population of rapists provided that rape is restricted to forced penetration. If the definition expands to include forced envelopment/being made to penetrate an assailant, women comprise more than 80% of rapists who assault men.

The NISVS has received a great deal of academic and non-academic attention. Breiding and colleagues’ piece in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* received more than 30

academic citations in the first two years after publication. Breiding also published an abridged version of this paper in the *American Journal of Public Health* (Breiding 2015). Outside of academic contexts, it was challenging to distinguish between references to the 2010 and 2011 surveys. A Lexis-Nexis search for produced more than 80 relevant works from multiple countries including the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, Turkey, Ireland, India, and England (approximately one quarter seemed to draw specifically on the 2011 round) A Google search for “National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey,” using quotation marks, produced over 30,000 hits. Most engaged CDC data to establish interpersonal violence as a widespread problem. The “1 in 5 women” figure for lifetime prevalence of rape, reported in both rounds, was often cited as evidencing an epidemic.

Not all press coverage was supportive. After the 2010 round, Christina Hoff Sommers of the American Enterprise Institute accused CDC researchers of vastly overstating the prevalence of rape in the U.S., going so far as to argue that the study demonstrated “the devastating impact that careless advocacy research can have on truth” (Sommers 2012). Her critique was published in the *Washington Post* and *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. Much like backlash critics in the 1990s, she did not dispute the CDC’s implicit assumption that, of all gendered manifestations of sexual violence, men’s violence toward women was most worthy of being called rape. Instead, she accused the researchers of political bias and poor methodology in order to challenge the accuracy of “1 in 5 women.”

Participants’ Insights

Few participants in this project had worked directly on incidence and prevalence research. This seems unsurprising in retrospect, given that only 125 of the 1,313 abstracts identified concerned quantification. Nonetheless, most if not all were quite familiar with this

literature and the cultural power of rape statistics. Participants and I also engaged in numerous discussions of definitions (see Appendix A for the interview guide). Scholars shared personal and professional definitions of rape, sexual assault, sexual violence, and consent; and often spoke at length about the need (or lack thereof) to standardize definitions across scientific inquiries. Several individuals addressed the politics of defining rape, and the promise and limitations of quantification as a scholarly and activist project.

When asking directly for definitions of rape and other forms of sexual violence, I encountered varied and complex responses. Several individuals spoke of legal definitions as a reference tool, though no one seemed to endorse any particular federal or criminal statute(s) as comprehensively capturing these phenomena. Several participants restricted the notion of “rape” to penetrative assaults, which is consistent with most legislation in the United States and Canada. Others endorsed farther-reaching definitions. Madeline, a sociologist, commented that “I work with a broad definition of rape – I use it interchangeably with sexual assault. It is bodily violation of a sexual nature, and it is not about sex, but about power.” Stacey, a psychologist, shared that “with my participants, I talk about sex they didn’t agree to, because I know that most of them don’t call it rape or sexual assault, even if it legally qualifies.” Stacey was also critical of the term “sexual violence,” which I use most often in this project, based on concerns that such language “contributes to stereotypes of all sexual assault as physically violent and forceful.”

Some participants declined to provide definitions altogether, or instead emphasized the complexities of sexual consent and violence. These individuals described a tremendous range of factors that might exert pressure or coercion, and what seemed to be an ever-growing scope of possibilities for sexually violent behaviors. Audrey, a public health scholar, shared that “these definitions change as we think about...new ways of committing violence.” She worried that

sexual aggression in social media and other online spaces was increasingly prominent, particularly in students' and other young people's lives, but had not yet been adequately addressed in scholarly work. Julia, a social work scholar, struggled to incorporate alcohol and other substance use into prevalence measures due to variation in individuals' tolerance as well as concerns about mitigating aggressors' culpability:

I do think the area where we still need some more work done is trying to understand alcohol and incapacitation, especially within the context of college campuses. These are the questions that have come up sometimes. Like exactly when is it that you're unable to give consent when you're drinking? And it's really hard to put that into a quantifiable formula, since everybody's different. It becomes really challenging to talk to students about these issues in a way that will meet the reality of what their socializing and their drinking behaviors are. So I think that's an area where we still have a lot of work to do.

When I asked whether this complexity informed her approaches to study design and interpretation, she elaborated:

Yes. And also the concern that I think sometimes alcohol becomes a focus, and takes away from the fact that there's still accountability for someone's behaviors. So if the person who is the offender was drinking, that that needs to be understood as something we need to address with prevention, but it also doesn't necessarily excuse the behavior. So I think it's really tricky.

Participants whose work included alcohol and other substance-related sexual violence repeatedly echoed these concerns. Audrey, quoted above, commented that "we want one definition that fits every situation, and I don't know if we can ever get there."

As my interview research progressed, I found that participants' investment in defining rape and other forms of sexual violence – as well as their political and methodological concerns about such efforts – varied along several dimensions including discipline, project aims, and institutional context. Those with experience in quantification emphasized the value of experiential questions. Karen, a criminal justice scholar quoted at the beginning of this chapter, was insistent on this point. Margaret, a public health scholar, went so far as to say that her personal definitions were unimportant for her research, and that it might not even be necessary

to produce standardized definitions for various forms of sexual violence. What mattered, instead, were methodological clarity and rigor in “capturing sexually coercive behaviors that range from what we might call ‘non-severe’ or ‘non-injurious’ to the ‘most severe’ or ‘most injurious.’” In contrast, Julia suggested that some hierarchical approaches to quantification “reflect this sort of lack of understanding that something that may not involve penetration, but is still a form of sexual violence, can still have really negative consequences.” However, she shared Margaret’s investment in clearly defining and documenting a range of sexually violent acts that reflected the tremendous variation in study participants’ experiences.

Whereas quantification scholars emphasized precise and experiential questions, others focused more on individuals’ self-identification and personal narratives of (non)victimization. Kristen, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, found value in encouraging people to “define it for themselves.” Susan, a sociologist, worried that self-definition might be a prerequisite to seeking support services:

If you don’t call it rape, you’re probably not going to call rape crisis. So language is incredibly important. And you know, it’s just as important to a person that you might study as it is to the person who is doing the studying. That’s why survey construction is so important. You might be saying the wrong thing. People might misunderstand you. And I’m sure it happens, even in the best survey.

Significantly, Susan ties this matter of self-definition back to the challenge of designing quantification surveys. Even “the best survey,” with the most carefully crafted and evidence-based experiential and/or identitarian measures, might miss some experiences of violence. She elaborated that this was particularly concerning for those whose experiences diverged from dominant scripts, such as survivors of same-sex rape.

Researchers in prevention were comparatively less invested in precise or standard definitions, as their work sought to reduce sexual violence more broadly. Jenna, a public health scholar, shared the following:

Before, I was trying to define each [FORM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE] individually, give specifics for each of them, and I still do sometimes. But for the most part, I'm addressing sexual violence overall. You know, whether that means harassment, whether that means touching, whether that means penetration...It doesn't really change what I'm trying to do.

Scholars who specialized in bystander prevention, many of whom were in public health, social work, and psychology, echoed Jenna's point. These researchers were invested in building a culture of prevention in which individuals recognized and intervened in attitudes and behaviors that constituted or otherwise contributed to sexual violence. It wasn't essential that people thought of themselves as specifically preventing rape, sexual assault, coercion, or harassment so long as they sought to recognize and intervene in aggressive or otherwise oppressive actions.

Definitions and measurement strategies were sometimes dictated by institutions or disciplinary conventions. Scholars who had collaborated with police or attorneys often found themselves compelled to work with legal discourses, even if they and their community partners found those discourses wanting. Diana, a public health scholar, described one such scenario:

We talk about every type of sexual violence in the context of "what case made it to the DA's office" or "which case then made it to [POLICE]."...So we're always keeping in mind that there are all these different types of sexual violence, and we're definitely seeing them, but we know also that we're limited so much by what we can do because of those criminal justice definitions.

Even though she and the criminal justice professionals with whom she collaborated wanted to address and document a substantial range of aggression and victimization, they felt constrained given their larger goals of improving reporting, police and prosecutorial processing, and court outcomes for sexual assault cases.

Funding agencies and disciplinary differences also exerted pressure on scholars' articulations of this social problem. Even while discussing her dislike for the term "sexual violence," Stacey noted that she might well (have to) use this language if she ever pursued Centers for Disease Control funding. Rebecca, a public health scholar, elaborated on this issue:

In order for us to be competitive and responsive to federal grants coming from the CDC or DOJ, we have a certain set of language that we use when we apply to those places. CDC, we're going to use the term "sexual violence." We're going to talk about survivors and perpetrators. If we're applying to the DOJ, we're going to talk about "rape and sexual assault" and we're going to talk about victims and perps.

These language shifts also entailed definitional shifts. Public health understandings of sexual violence constitute a broader range of actions than criminal justice understandings of rape and sexual assault. Rebecca commented that she often ran into conflicts with scholars from women's and gender studies programs who preferred the language of "gender-based violence." In these moments, she found herself torn between improving her chances of funding and maintaining mutual and effective scholarly collaborations. Further complicating matters, Miranda, an anthropologist, commented that different projects – and scholars affiliated with different disciplines and institutions – might tend toward fundamentally different conceptualizations of rape and other forms of sexual violence, and that this might impact definitions and overall study designs. Someone approaching rape as a "therapeutic object" might focus on people who self-identify as victims/survivors, as is common in projects that sample through victim support services; alternatively, someone approaching rape as a "legal object" might prioritize experiences that align with criminal statutes.

Gender came up again and again in conversations about sexual violence definitions. More often than not, this occurred without immediate or direct prompting from me. While participants shared a range of personal approaches to this matter, many believed that the field was shifting toward an increasingly gender neutral approach. Stacey mentioned that although she sometimes "still see[s] people writing things like, 'women can't perpetrate rape against men because it's only the penetration that defines it as rape, and defines it as that level of trauma,'" she also believed that scholars "usually now try to make [MEASURES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE] gender neutral." Tanya, a criminologist, spoke positively of "new gender neutral statutes" and

“definitions that incorporate the fact that sexual assault can be committed by and against men and women, boys and girls. And that it is not simply penile-vaginal intercourse.”

Across these discussions, one particular tension stood out to me. Several participants expressed support for what they termed “gender neutral” definitions, while also sharing concerns that neutrality might obscure the reality of pervasive gendered patterns in sexual violence. Rebecca commented that:

We have, I think, a little bit of a double-edged sword with intersectionality. In that sexual violence prevention and response has to be intersectional, right? Our women’s movement was largely white educated women saying “here’s what’s what.” And women of color have been ignored. LGBTQ folks have been ignored. And I think that we have to be intentionally intersectional with our work. The other side of that, I think, is that when we try very hard to be inclusive in a lot of ways, we also lose sight of the fact that most victims of sexual violence are cisgender straight women and most perpetrators of sexual violence are cisgender straight men.

In a similar vein, Leigh, a psychologist, remarked that:

While I would argue rape is very much gendered, the hetero model of “man rapes woman with penis in vagina” is obviously [PROBLEMATIC]...The FBI changed their definition. So that’s good, right, we’re getting somewhere, but we have a long way to go to capture people’s experiences.

It is critical to note here that both Rebecca and Leigh – and other participants who expressed similar perspectives – were invested in documenting, preventing, and responding to all incidents of sexual violence regardless of who the perpetrators and victims were. The challenge was finding a way to do this without sacrificing a gendered analysis altogether.

The concept of “gender inclusivity” may be of value here. Whereas gender neutrality is essentially incompatible with a gendered analysis – provided that “gender neutrality” is equated with the assumption that “gender is irrelevant” – inclusivity offers a more nuanced intervention. Rather than precast individuals and communities in gender-specific trajectories, an inclusive approach would allow scholars and activists to retain emphases on patriarchy and violence

against women while simultaneously acknowledging that people of any gender might enact the status of aggressor/perpetrator or victim/survivor. Patriarchal accounts of rape comprised and continue to comprise a profound feminist intervention in scientific and other social discourses (Brownmiller 1975; Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994; Russell 1975; Yodanis 2004). Some opposition to Koss and others' projects is undoubtedly due to their association with feminism (Jhally 1994; Rutherford 2017). I believe that gender inclusive accounts, particular those that incorporate but do not restrict themselves to patriarchal forces, will comprise a further feminist intervention into scientific knowledges of sexual violence.

Counting with Accountability

The question, "how common is rape?" is not inconsequential. Scientists' approaches to defining rape, developing sampling frames, designing and administering surveys, and interpreting findings serve to locate the problem in different populations and spaces. Once scientists have published their work, other actors may determine the impact of their efforts. Colleagues effectively shape the lifespan of publications and the scientific facts therein through opting or declining to cite them (Latour 1987). Journalists, state officials, activists, and other consumers of scientific knowledge may influence the trajectory of those facts outside the academy. Given the credibility and overall significance awarded scientific knowledge in the U.S., particularly statistical data (Epstein 1996; Jasanoff 2005; Shapin 1995; Waidzunus 2012; Woodward 1999), scientists who study rape have the potential to shape institutional policy, data collection practices, resource distribution, targeted prevention efforts, and the availability of services for people who have experienced and/or committed acts of sexual violence. The very perceptibility of violence, of victims and aggressors, is at stake (Murphy 2006; Proctor 2008).

Content analyses revealed substantive differences between the overall field of scientific research on rape and the subfield of quantification. Whereas the broader field has consistently favored research with college students, quantifiers have favored the general population. Those counting rape have been more inclined to target smaller and/or marginalized populations, particularly in the past two decades. It seems that populations prioritized for quantification may receive comparatively limited attention from researchers who investigate individual and collective risk factors; social, health, and behavioral outcomes; and the impact/efficacy of policy and interventions. Equally if not more importantly, although scientists who study rape have consistently emphasized victimization over perpetration, this emphasis is more pronounced among quantification studies. This limits the capacity of incidence/prevalence studies to inform perpetration prevention.

Textual analyses served to illuminate the scope of decision-making required for quantification, and the capacity of these processes to shape conceptualizations of rape. In Koss and colleagues' "The Scope of Rape" and the 2011 *NISVS*, definitions ensured the documentation of (men's) sexual violence against women and reduced or foreclosed the documentation of other gendered patterns. Wolff and colleagues reaffirmed Koss' finding that question wording affects estimates, in that general measures (e.g., "have you ever been raped") produce lower counts than experience-based measures (e.g., "have you ever been forced to have oral sex").

Study authors held different perspectives regarding which variables to address, and how to interpret (non)significance. Only one of the four studies assessed here directly addressed sexual orientation (Rothman, Exner and Baughman 2011), and only one addressed religion (Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987). While all four empirical studies addressed race/ethnicity, operationalization varied. This was likely due to a range of factors including study population

and sample size concerns (e.g., smaller proportions of Asian American and Native American inmates relative to the general population), varying consultations of Census forms and other state projects (which are themselves subject to change), and disciplinary conventions. When scientists found significant variation by race/ethnicity, they provided different interpretations. Koss and colleagues and Breiding and colleagues documented elevated rates of victimization among Native American women (Breiding et al. 2014; Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987). In the former study, researchers noted this briefly in the results section, and concentrated on gender and heterosexual dynamics when interpreting data. In the latter case, researchers emphasized racial variation, and advocated that Native American women be considered a priority population for targeted interventions.

To return to the matter of location, such decision-making produces different answers to the question “how common is rape,” and related questions such as “who can rape,” “who can be raped,” and “where does rape happen.” Is rape fundamentally a matter of violence against women? Of men’s violence against women? And if so, which women are most in need of support? Are women capable of raping anyone? Is it sufficient to consider patriarchy and sexism as causal forces? Do other forces of oppression such colonialism and homophobia bear consideration? Would care services be more effective if they targeted particular regions, institutions, or demographic populations? These are empirical questions, surely. Yet it would be a mistake to presume that any of them have a single True (or even Truest) empirical answer. Answers will vary along with scientists’ approaches to study design and data interpretation, which are themselves subject to influence by peers, institutional pressures, resource constraints, disciplinary conventions, gatekeeping in publishing, social movements, historical events, and (perceptions of) public opinion (Bourdieu 1975; Epstein 1996; Epstein 2006; Jasanoff 2004; Latour 1987; Shapin 1995; Shapin and Schaffer 2011/1985; Waidzunas 2012).

Analyses of reception reaffirmed prior scholarship on the gravity awarded statistical knowledge (Jasanoff 2005; Porter 1995). However, simply utilizing “the language of numbers” was insufficient (Jasanoff 2005: 265). Figures that lent themselves toward compelling headlines and calls to alarm were more impactful. “The Scope of Rape” was widely praised and critiqued for documenting that “1 in 4 women” had experienced completed or attempted rape, whereas the perpetration finding of “1 in 12 men” was largely overlooked. Coverage of the *NISVS* frequently emphasized “1 in 5 women” without dwelling on “1 in 59 men.” Yet headline-worthiness, too, seems insufficient to explain variation in academic and other reception. Some studies garnered minimal attention in spite of high estimates. Rothman and colleagues reported that up to 85% of queer women and 54% of queer men report lifetime sexual violence (Rothman, Exner and Baughman 2011). Nonetheless, “4 in 5 queer women” and “1 in 2 queer men” have yet to attain anything close to the status of “1 in 4 women.” Whereas the Human Rights Watch’s *No Escape* received immense attention from state officials and journalists, and was a driving force behind the *Prison Rape Elimination Act*, Wolff and colleagues’ prevalence study has had far less of an impact in popular contexts (Human Rights Watch 2001; Wolff et al. 2006). Dominant conceptualizations of prison rape continue to locate this problem in men’s facilities. Dominant conceptualizations of rape more broadly, particularly outside of such institutions, continue to locate this problem in heterosexual encounters with nontransgender male aggressors and nontransgender female victims.

While I hesitate to draw overly firm or sweeping conclusions from such a limited inquiry, I suspect that quantification studies attract attention to the extent that they (a) produce noteworthy figures, such as “1 in 4 women” and (b) otherwise do not disrupt dominant conceptualizations of rape. More specifically, based on my broader content analysis and in-depth review of these four studies, I argue that incidence/prevalence estimates receive more

coverage to the extent that they do not disrupt the patriarchy model of rape (sometimes referred to as the "classic feminist model" or "feminist hypothesis"; see Eschholz and Vieraitis 2004). This model attributes the problem of rape wholly or predominantly to patriarchy, and envisions individual men's acts of sexual aggression toward women as an interpersonal manifestation of societal male dominance and female subordination (see also Fassin 2007; Haag 1996). While it has been expanded to incorporate other dimensions of oppression (e.g., Eschholz and Vieraitis 2004), such as race and class, it relies on an understanding of rape as a subset of men's violence toward women. Of the works selected for textual analysis, those most widely cited within and beyond academia were those that most supported the patriarchy-only model. This may further account for the failure of rape among incarcerated women to achieve the social recognition awarded rape among incarcerated men. Scholars investigating sexual violence in men's facilities may presume that inmates would target women, were any available, and commit same-sex rape merely as an adaptation to prison conditions. Victimized men are thereby (re)envisioned as surrogate women whose suffering may be accounted for by patriarchy (Brownmiller 1975; Collins 2004). To consider that "the rage that motivates violence and the desire to dominant [sic] that motivates rape [may be] traversing the gender divide," would represent a far greater challenge to dominant perspectives (Wolff et al. 2006: 844).

Interview participants further illuminated the complexities of quantification. For the sake of consistency and comparability, it can be valuable to standardize experiential measures for pre-defined "types" of sexual violence. Yet discursive variation can make it difficult to standardize across disciplines and (grant-providing) institutions. There are also political dimensions to these differences. Terms such as rape, sexual assault, sexual violence, unwanted sexual contact, and nonconsensual sex carry different connotations and are apt to affect producers and consumers of scientific knowledge differently. The definition of rape is

particularly high-stakes (Spohn and Horney 1992). Moreover, although experiential measures are widely considered to produce “better” estimates – and are necessary to ensure that individuals whom some scholars might classify as “unacknowledged” victims are counted – such approaches may run counter to study participants’ perceptions, and deprive individuals of the capacity to define their experiences for themselves. Even some individuals who do “acknowledge” their experiences as rape or other forms of sexual violence may go uncounted if experiential measures exclude them. Related, several participants expressed a strong investment in building approaches that were inclusive of all genders and sexualities, but also worried that “gender neutral” measures might mitigate efforts to combat patriarchy and to align anti-rape efforts with efforts to end violence against women.

For all the concerns raised here, locating the problem of rape is not inherently problematic. This may be an unavoidable consequence of quantification, which remains central to raising awareness and developing effective prevention and response measures. The analyses here do not so much support a rejection of such research as a move towards more critical scholarship. Scientists should continue to count rape. They/we must also pursue accountability. This means embracing reflexive approaches, acknowledging our own partial perspective(s) as well as those of study participants and others who produce and consume knowledge about rape. It means striving for transparency in presentations and publications. Perhaps most importantly, it means recognizing our capacity to produce knowledge and ignorance, to draw attention toward some forms of violence while rendering others imperceptible. Accountable scholarship demands openness to change and diverse perspectives, including a willingness to reassess and sometimes revise our own definitions and assumptions. These aims align with a feminist successor science that regards objectivity as situated knowledge; recognizes intra-active connections among scientific observers, surveys and other instruments of measurement,

and objects of study in the generation of scientific knowledge; and favors responsibility and justice over appeals to detached or innocent truths (Barad 2007; Flax 1992; Haraway 1988; Haraway 1997; Harding 1995; Harding 1986). Rather than shy away from quantification, or obscure the limited generalizability of particular findings, scientists might consider and transparently address the social influences, ethical concerns, and theoretical and methodological decision-making processes behind our efforts to count incidents of rape.

CHAPTER 3

ACCOUNTING FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The only way [BIOLOGISTS] fit into the conversations was that we were completely in agreement with the people who had thought and written about rape, social scientists and feminists, completely in agreement that we wanted to end rape.

Adam, biologist

Presumably, if we're talking about how complicated consent is, one might say we're implying – and probably, in some cases, we are implying – that sexual assault can occur due to communication. And that's a potentially controversial statement.

Stacey, psychologist

Causal inquiries concern the conditions/objects that promote and deter sexual violence.

Some seek to account for the existence of such violence. Others prioritize strategies for prevention, or intervening in social circumstances, cultural practices, ideologies, institutional policies, and other matters that might facilitate sexual aggression or victimization. From an agential realist perspective, “causality” is a rather amorphous concept. The same is true of “effects,” which feature in the next chapter (Barad 2007). Sexual violence may be conceived as a distinct and quantifiable object (or event or outcome), as an object with distinct and identifiable causes, or as a causal force that accounts for other objects. Cause-effect relations are, themselves, entangled within phenomena. Scientists and others must enact particular agential cuts to distinguish an object from its causes or effects or both. Even within “the same” study conducted by “the same” scientist(s), agential cuts may vary in accordance with shifting research questions or professional pressures or even dispositions and curiosities.

The complexity of distinguishing “causation” may be made clearer with an example. It is common in quantitative research to justify causal claims with chronology. If Event A occurs before Event B, then Event A might reasonably be proposed as a cause (e.g., healthcare access and use in high school might be proposed as causal predictors of general health in college, given that the former ends before the latter begins). Alternatively, one might justify causal claims with

claims about relative fixity or “stickiness” of Events A and B, presuming that the more fixed a particular object or characteristic is, the more likely it is to serve a causal function (e.g., diagnosis of a chronic illness might be proposed as a causal predictor of how healthy one “feels,” given that diagnoses do not change as rapidly or readily as “feelings” of wellness). As a statistics professor, I have certainly instructed my students to think along these lines. But how easy is it to distinguish chronology or fixity? To determine when Event A “ends” and Event B “begins,” or which is “stickier?” How many approaches might scientists employ?

Consider the relationship between rape myths and sexual violence (Edwards et al. 2011; Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994; Muehlenhard 2011; Ryan 2011) . If Mitchell, a gender congruent and heterosexual man, believes that “women who say ‘no’ are playing hard to get” and that “it’s the man’s job to initiate sex” and that “sexier” men are more aggressive and that “silence means ‘yes,’” might these beliefs inform his own engagement in sexual aggression? Might he misinterpret a woman as consenting if she says “no” or says nothing? Might he commit an act of rape while simultaneously believing that he is simply “having sex?” Imagine that Gillian, a transgender and heterosexual woman, shares these beliefs to an extent. If Mitchell behaves aggressively with her, might she feel reluctant or even unable to stop him or to even conceive of him as problematically aggressive? Might she feel pressured to “let him be a man” or to downplay his violation of her own boundaries? Might she face additional pressures as a transgender woman to embrace stereotypically feminine sexual behaviors, or feel somehow “grateful” for Mitchell’s attention? If Mitchell knows that Gillian is transgender, and that some of his (transphobic) friends might mock him for pursuing her, might he feel pressured to be particularly “manly” or “dominant” in the encounter?

If any of this is possible, how might a scientist account for an encounter in which Mitchell rapes Gillian? To what extent might “endorsement of rape myths” or “patriarchal

attitudes” or “transphobic attitudes” cause that rape, and to what extent might these forces be part of it? Does the rape “begin” if/when Mitchell breaks the law? When he first interprets refusal as consent? When Gillian first feels violated by him? Perhaps shortly before their encounter, when Mitchell fantasizes about aggressively pursuing Gillian? Or when he makes sexist/sexual comments about her in front of friends, who then reward him by joining in and/or punish him by making transphobic jokes? Or perhaps well before that, when Mitchell and Gillian are both socialized to recognize and (at least to some extent) endorse strict gender roles in (hetero)sexual encounters? Might sexual aggression and endorsement of rape myths come to have a circular or reciprocal causal relationship, such that belief in rape myths facilitates sexual aggression which in turn increases investment in rape myths (particularly if Mitchell is accused of rape, and defends himself by appealing to problematic and sexist/transphobic beliefs about rape and seduction)? Cause and effect, like the beginning and end of events, cannot be disentangled within sexually violent and other phenomena. Nonetheless, scientific inquiries require the enactment of agential cuts that render various objects and relationships perceptible.

For the purposes of this project, I conceptualize “the causes of sexual violence” broadly, and often defer to scholars’ own depictions of their scientific aims. Causal works may explore individual-level risk factors for aggression and victimization, including but not limited to engagement in “risk behaviors,” mental and physical health, and – somewhat circuitously – prior history of violence and traumatic experiences. On a more interpersonal level, causal works might explore the social dynamics that facilitate or prohibit intervention in dangerous circumstances, or the communication of sexual consent and refusal. Individual and peer group beliefs, such as the endorsement of what are broadly conceived as “rape myths,” are also frequently proposed as causal factors due to the (empirically supported) assumption that people

who adhere to rape-supportive attitudes are more apt to engage in or downplay others' acts of sexual aggression.

On more systemic level, causal inquiries might explore the capacity for social institutions to promote or justify rape. This might include school curricula, film and television programs, or religious practices that implicitly or explicitly convey patriarchal and other oppressive ideals. I have also included institutional prevention measures in this chapter. This is consistent with the logic of such measures. Bystander intervention curricula, for example, instruct people to identify social conditions that may promote or deter aggression and victimization. Program participants are not instructed to seek out and intervene in assaults in progress, but rather to intervene in the conditions that facilitate rape. Many further incorporate (hetero)sexual assumptions regarding who perpetrates and experiences sexual aggression. The targets of such interventions include potential bystanders, who ultimately serve as preventive agents in the effort to end sexual violence; potential sexual aggressors, whose aims are meant to be thwarted by those agents; potential victims, whose safety is meant to be an active priority among those agents; and a considerable breadth of social practices ranging from sexist jokes to overt acts of aggression, all of which might arguably contribute to the complex phenomenon of "rape culture." Again, I have largely deferred to scientists' own descriptions of their research as seeking to account (or not) for the existence of sexual violence.

Causal inquiries have not been without controversy. Two particularly contested lines of work concern evolutionary explanations, such as the work of Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer (Thornhill and Palmer 2000); and (mis)communication models that rely on scripted expectations of "token resistance" and complex understandings of consent, as introduced by Charlene Muehlenhard and her colleagues (Muehlenhard and Hollabough 1988; Muehlenhard and McCoy 1991; Muehlenhard and Rodgers 1998; Peterson and Muehlenhard 2007). These scholars and

projects diverge in many respects. Thornhill and Palmer are experts in biology who draw sharp distinctions between scientific research and what they refer to as “social science” work driven by “feminist ideology” (Palmer and Thornhill 2003; Thornhill and Palmer 2000); Muehlenhard is a psychologist who openly aligns herself with feminist scholarship (Muehlenhard 2011). Evolutionary models have also been subjected to immense public scrutiny (Dreger 2015), whereas conflict over token resistance models has been relatively contained within activist and scholarly domains (Muehlenhard 2011). Thornhill and Palmer approached their book with the assumption that human rape was connected with human evolution, though the precise mechanisms remained unknown (2000); when she began working in this area, Muehlenhard seemed to consider the very existence of women’s token resistance behaviors open to question (Muehlenhard 2011; Muehlenhard and Hollabough 1988).

For all their differences, there are important connections between evolutionary and communication-based accounts. Their audiences (if not necessarily their adherents) overlap, as noted by publication in common outlets such as *The Journal of Sex Research* (e.g., Palmer and Thornhill 2003; Peterson and Muehlenhard 2007). Furthermore, both approaches have drawn criticism through their refutation of dominant assumptions in sexual violence research. More specifically, these scholars have faced credibility challenges for questioning closely guarded matters of scientific fact about rape. This is not to say that all criticisms faced by Thornhill and Palmer, on one hand, and Muehlenhard and colleagues, on the other, are attributable to this. Nonetheless, that these scholars faced pushback for challenging presumably settled notions in sexual violence research is valuable for understanding social processes within this scientific field.

In this chapter, I present a brief discussion of these two controversies and their overlapping challenges to established discourses in sexual violence research. Afterwards, I review my own findings regarding historical trends in causal literature via quantitative content

analysis of abstracts, as well as dominant themes over time via in-depth assessments of the 10 most highly cited causal works in each decade from 1975-2015. Finally, I present insights into causal research from interview participants. Throughout this analysis, I argue that causal research been historically dominated by psychological and psychiatric inquiries, and that the most widely-cited works seek to account specifically for men's violence toward women in heterosexual contexts. There is a rich literature on individual-level predictors for this particular gendered pattern in sexual violence, and considerable gaps regarding interpersonal and systemic causes as well as any and all factors that might promote or deter women's aggression, men's victimization, same-sex violence, and incidents involving actors with nonbinary gender identifications. I further argue that fears of misuse comprise a central mechanism within this area of research, influencing many scientists' approaches to accounting for rape as well as their reception and career trajectories within and beyond academia.

Evolutionary Biology and the Controversy over Ultimate Causation

In *A Natural History of Rape*, Thornhill and Palmer (2000) offered a harsh critique of scholars and activists who approached sexual violence as non-biological. More specifically, they rejected patriarchal theories that depicted rape as a cultural product of male domination, driven by efforts to humiliate and subordinate females and wholly unconnected to human evolution and sexual desire. Thornhill and Palmer did not suggest that sexist ideals and social practices were irrelevant to the problem of rape, but rather that such factors were only conceivable as *proximate* or immediate causes. They further argued that scientists, advocates, and other human actors would be unable to meaningfully understand and reduce sexual violence without inquiring into its *ultimate* or evolutionary causes.

By the time they published together, both scholars were already well established in biological research on sexual violence. Working with Nancy Thornhill, Randy Thornhill had previously published “completely testable” evolutionary hypotheses of men’s sexual violence toward women, including variation in victims’ and aggressors’ age and social class (Thornhill and Thornhill 1983a: 168); and a four-part series exploring biological explanations for women’s psychological pain following rape (Thornhill and Thornhill 1990a; Thornhill and Thornhill 1990b; Thornhill and Thornhill 1990c; Thornhill and Thornhill 1991). Two proposals in *A Natural History of Rape* – namely, that rape might be (1) an adaptation among humans or (2) a byproduct of the evolutionary development of male and female sexuality – were previously suggested by Palmer in a 1991 essay. He had also published multiple works challenging the patriarchy-only model of rape (Palmer 1988; Palmer, DiBari and Wright 1999).

As per their own accounts (Palmer and Thornhill 2003), as well as a discussion of their experiences in a recent work on scientific controversies (Dreger 2015), evolutionary models were well received among (biological) scientists. It was expansion to general audiences that drew controversy. Such controversy arose notwithstanding that Thornhill and Palmer anticipated an audience familiar with dominant cultural and patriarchal explanations of rape, but unfamiliar with biological science. Given this, they took pains to introduce core principles in evolutionary theory, including numerous overviews of ultimate and proximate causation. They cautioned against the naturalistic fallacy, which occurs when “the natural” is inappropriately equated with “the morally correct.” This point was reinforced through repeated insistences that understanding the ultimate causes of rape was essential for reducing the incidence of sexual violence and providing support for victims and other affected persons. In other words, they portrayed rape as simultaneously natural and morally reprehensible. In the introduction and conclusion chapters, they spoke of a friend and rape victim who had long been frustrated by

widespread claims that “rape is about power, not sex,” and who had found validation in their model’s connection of human rape with human sexuality. They argued that scientists and others who ignored ultimate causation – that is, whose agential cuts precluded the perception of evolutionary forces – constrained their own capacity to understand and end rape.

From the moment of publication, *A Natural History of Rape* was subjected to immense criticism. Both authors received numerous hate letters and death threats (Dreger 2015). Many academic critics argued that the book provided justification for men’s sexual violence toward women, questioned the authors’ rejection of feminist and/or “ideological” causal models, and portrayed their engagement with evolutionary data as incomplete or unconvincing (Dunbar 2000; Lloyd 2001; Seto 2000; Tang-Martinez and Mechanic 2001; Wolfthal 2001).

In 2003, Thornhill and Palmer published a response in *The Journal of Sex Research*. They argued that many opponents uncritically disparaged the use of evolutionary models to account for human rape, and offered simplistic and misguided interpretations of their argument, rather than offering meaningful challenges to their specific theoretical and empirical analyses. Reiterating the potential for ultimate explanations to inform prevention work, they condemned what they perceived as others’ perpetuation of the naturalistic fallacy and stated that “the question of whether traits such as human rape are adaptations or by-products cannot be answered unless hypotheses about adaptation are proposed” (255). Moreover, they noted that reception to their ideas within and outside of biology had not been strictly negative (see also Dunbar 2000). In her review of the controversy surrounding *A Natural History of Rape*, Alice Dreger (2015) further commented that hate mail and scholarly critiques came in alongside numerous letters from rape victims/survivors who found validation and comfort in Thornhill and Palmer’s work.

Seduction Scripts, Token Resistance, and the Potential for Date Rape

Charlene Muehlenhard became interested in the notion of token resistance, or incidents in which individuals “say no to sex when they really mean yes,” through two personal encounters (as described in Muehlenhard 2011). In her account, she was studying acceptance of the traditional sexual script at the time, and drafting a measurement tool to assess survey participants’ belief that women engaged in token resistance. When discussing this project with the secretary of her psychology department, Muehlenhard was surprised when “she commented that she sometimes said no to sex when she meant yes. I was interested because I did not know that this actually happened” (677). Shortly afterwards, a student disclosed having previously engaged in token resistance behaviors with an ex-boyfriend. Later, when another partner – who happened to be a friend of her ex-boyfriend – declined to take this student’s genuine refusals seriously, she stopped engaging in token resistance altogether.

These experiences inspired what would prove to be decades of research in sexual communication, including real and perceived engagement in token resistance and the complexities of consent more broadly. The first of these studies assessed women’s engagement in token resistance via the following prompt:

You were with a guy who wanted to engage in sexual intercourse and you wanted to also, but for some reason you indicated that you didn’t want to, although *you had every intention to and were willing to engage in sexual intercourse*. In other words, you indicated “no” and you meant “yes.”
(Muehlenhard and Hollabough 1988: 874)

Nearly 40% of women reported doing so at least once. Shortly afterwards, Muehlenhard and McCoy (1991) explored variation in women’s reports of engaging in token resistance (described as “scripted refusal” in this text, as per the editors’ request – see Muehlenhard 2011) as well as “open acknowledgment” behaviors, in which they both indicated and meant yes. Approximately 14% of women reported exclusive engagement in token resistance, whereas 24% reported both

token resistance and open acknowledgment. Women in this latter group seemed to base their actions in part on their partners' perceived values and desires.

Other scholars soon joined this line of research, working to refine operationalizations of token resistance and incorporate a broader range of populations (Shotland and Hunter 1995; Sprecher et al. 1994). Muehlenhard continued to refine her methods and explore complexities in sexual communication. In 1998, she coauthored a study of men's and women's engagement in token resistance (Muehlenhard and Rodgers 1998). In addition to its gender inclusivity, this study was innovative in that participants were asked to consider various contexts (e.g., heterosexual encounters with new partners vs. heterosexual encounters within ongoing relationships), and that participants who reported token resistance were asked to provide open-ended, qualitative accounts of their experiences. These narratives revealed tremendous complexity within sexual encounters, and further cast doubt on previous prevalence work: it seemed that many participants who indicated engagement in token resistance had genuinely meant no when they indicated no. A "yes" to the close-ended question above might pair with a narrative about shifting desires, conflicts between what individuals wanted and what they consented to, or ambivalence regarding a sexual encounter.

That Muehlenhard expected pushback – and may well have received some during peer review processes – is evident from her publications. She seems to have anticipated that readers would perceive her work as reinforcing cultural stereotypes that women "mean yes when they say no," and providing justification for heterosexual men who declined to respect heterosexual women's refusals. Muehlenhard and her colleagues made repeated efforts to name and condemn rape, and to demand that women's (and eventually, also men's) refusals be taken seriously even if they might sometimes constitute token resistance or scripted refusal. The concluding paragraph to her first piece on token resistance in 1988 noted that most participants

did not report engaging in this behavior, that most who had done so reported a small number of incidents, and therefore that “when a woman says no, chances are she means it. Second, regardless of the incidence of token resistance, if the woman means no and the man persists, it is rape” (Muehlenhard and Hollabough 1988: 878). Another piece concluded with a section entitled “A Final Caution,” noting that “we do not want to perpetuate the traditional sexual script by suggesting that women are not to be believed when they say no to sex...Even if a man is certain that a woman’s no really means yes, if she does mean no and he has sex with her, *it is rape*” (Muehlenhard and McCoy 1991: 460, italics in original). The 1998 piece including qualitative narratives ends with an insistence that “all refusals should be taken seriously. Engaging in sex with someone who does not consent is rape” (Muehlenhard and Rodgers 1998: 462).

Notwithstanding these efforts, Muehlenhard and others’ work on token resistance, sometimes referred to as “miscommunication theory,” received considerable pushback. Much of this concerned potential misuse. Critics worried that communication-based theories obscured systemic power inequalities, shifted blame away from sexually aggressive men, and reinforced harmful stereotypes about men’s and women’s sexuality in ways that ultimately contributed to rape culture (Crawford 1995; Ehrlich 2001; Frith 2009; Frith and Kitzinger 1997). In 2011, editors of the *Psychology of Women Quarterly* invited authors of some highly-cited pieces to write reflective commentaries for their 35th anniversary special edition. Muehlenhard was invited to reflect on her 1991 study, originally published with then-student Marcia McCoy. She recalled a particularly dramatic experience in which a discussant whom she had invited to a symposium “criticized our research in front of the entire room of attendees, comparing it to the atomic bomb because of its potential to be misused” (681). Noting that such misuses had not been

documented, Muehlenhard reaffirmed the importance of asking difficult questions about sexual communication and violence:

Indeed, it would be ideal if no one accepted the sexual double standard, if everyone could convey their feelings clearly to potential partners without being judged unfairly, and if no one ever felt ambivalent about sex. That's not the world we live in, however. (681)

Consistent with her own previous work, Muehlenhard further advocated that scholars who study controversial topics be critical about their own and potential readers' assumptions, give participants opportunities to speak for themselves, and strive to anticipate and circumvent potential misuse.

Causation and Scientific Controversy

What can be learned from these distinct controversies? Their similarities and differences are both instructive. In their view, Thornhill and Palmer received pushback for challenging dominant understandings of rape, developed through "ideological" and "feminist" (read: nonscientific) social science scholarship and activism (Palmer and Thornhill 2003; Thornhill and Palmer 2000). In addition to weak understandings of evolutionary theory and endorsement of the naturalistic fallacy, they argued that their critics were unable to tolerate challenges to the notion that "rape is about power and not about sex." Connecting human rape with human sexuality, and merely suggesting (recognizing?) that human beings were biological beings, were thereby rendered dangerous and condemnable.

When discussing her years researching token resistance, Muehlenhard reflected that "some people have found this entire line of research to be objectionable" (Muehlenhard 2011: 681). In her case, it seems likely that the mere decision to study token resistance challenged many scholars' assumption that such behaviors did not exist. Indeed, literature on rape myths has sometimes approached stereotypes pertaining to miscommunication and (women's)

dishonesty as blatantly false and problematic (Burt 1980; Edwards et al. 2011; Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994; Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1995; Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1999). There are strong reasons for this. Individuals who assume that “no sometimes means yes” might feel entitled to cross partners’ boundaries to the point of committing sexual violence, and might also prove unwilling to believe victims/survivors whose accounts do not fit their perceptions of rape. Victims/survivors might struggle with self-blame if they internalize these same stereotypes. If investigating sexual communication as complex and ambiguous seems detrimental to such work, it is logical that the whole project of studying token resistance might seem problematic. Much like some critics of evolutionary explanations, critics of (mis)communication models may worry that such approaches shift responsibility away from aggressors and onto victims.

While all of these scholars faced resistance for challenging widely held assumptions in research (and activism), they also embraced strikingly different approaches in accounting for sexual violence. One might argue that they were engaged with “different” phenomena, even as they strove to account for “the same” social problem. Thornhill and Palmer drew on evolutionary biology. When anticipating and receiving criticism, they endorsed strict boundaries around what they perceived as legitimate science. They argued that “the choice between the social science explanation’s answers and the evolutionarily informed answers provided in this book is essentially a choice between ideology and knowledge” (2000: 189). Feminist ideals were particularly suspect, to the point that “feminist biologists” were depicted as less credible than scholars who were simply “biologists.” The problem of rape was anchored in millennia of human and nonhuman development, and its solutions must lie (at least in part) therein. In contrast, Muehlenhard was trained in psychology and openly aligned herself with feminist ideals. She focused solely on what Thornhill and Palmer would have classified as proximate causes. When anticipating and facing criticism, she aligned herself with the aims of feminist social science than

to dismiss or discredit opponents. Simply put, Thornhill and Palmer perceived themselves as scientists facing critiques from nonscientists, whereas Muehlenhard perceived herself as facing critiques from peers. The problem of rape was social and cultural, and its solutions lay in transforming the sexual double standard and problematic assumptions and communication practices surrounding sexual consent and refusal.

In light of these controversies and the empirical analyses below, it does not seem that controversy in causal research on rape is contained within any particular discipline, theoretical orientation, value system, or methodology. More likely, the decision to challenge widely held assumptions – to subject hitherto unquestioned matters of fact to empirical scrutiny – is what unites these scholars. Within this admittedly vague connection, two further commonalities are worth pointing out. Both evolutionary approaches and communication-based approaches presume that sexuality is relevant to the problem of sexual violence. Anyone who adheres to the belief that “rape is about power, not sex,” whether approaching this as a theoretical assumption or empirically grounded matter of fact, will likely reject both causal frameworks. In addition, both models were treated as dangerous due to perceptions of potential misuse. Thornhill, Palmer, and Muehlenhard have all been accused of providing ammunition for (female/women) victim-blaming and the absolving of (male/men) aggressors. The “truth” of this potential may well be irrelevant; such perceptions are sufficient to foster pushback within scholarly communities.

Empirical Findings from the Present Study

Much like the controversy over “1 in 4 women” in the preceding chapter, scientific and public debates surrounding evolutionary and communication-based models are valuable for understanding the ethical, ontological, and epistemological politics – in Barad’s terms, the

“ethico-onto-epistemologies” – surrounding scientific inquiries on rape. Yet these controversies do not, in themselves, demonstrate dominant trends in scientific literature or reveal much regarding changes in conceptualizations over time. Similarly, published works rarely reveal the social processes “behind” them or “following” them. Have scholars shied away from evolutionary or communication-approaches? Why or why not? Are other causal accounts equally or more prominent among rape researchers, but insufficiently controversial to garner much attention beyond scientific circles? The following sections address these concerns. I begin with quantitative findings from content analysis of forty years’ worth of publications, comparing the subfield of causality to the broader field of sexual violence research; qualitative themes that emerged from in-depth assessment of the most cited works from each decade within this subfield; and insights on causal models and related scientific research from interview participants.

Content Analysis: Forty Years of Causal Research

Causal research ranked first among all study aims from 1975-2004, and was slightly outpaced by outcomes research in the following decade. More than half of the studies analyzed here incorporated causal inquiries (n=669, 51%); this is equal to the combined total of works addressing quantification, evaluation, and theoretical and methodological strategies for studying sexual violence (n=125, 10%; n=340, 26%; n=204, 16%, respectively). Figures 3.1-3.4 present some of the general characteristics of causal works in comparison with the broader field of scientific research on sexual violence, stratified by decade. Frequencies appear in Table 3.1.

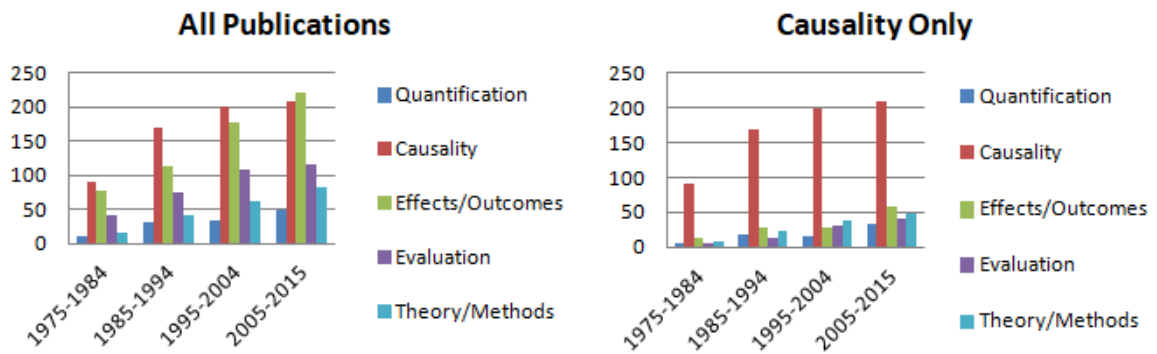


Figure 3.1. Areas of Focus.

Causal inquiries reflect and diverge from different trends in the broader scientific field. In content analysis, it seemed that works with other primary aims regularly incorporated some causal measures – for example, seeking to calculate national prevalence estimates, while also including measures for age and race as predictors of victimization; or assessing students’ sexist attitudes before and after antiviolence programming as a proxy for complicity in rape culture. The reverse occurred less frequently. While measures for quantification ($\chi^2 [3] = 7.91, p < .05$); outcomes/effects ($\chi^2 [3] = 17.57, p < .01$), policy and program evaluation ($\chi^2 [3] = 13.94, p < .01$), and theoretical and methodological recommendations ($\chi^2 [3] = 10.52, p < .05$) have been incorporated increasingly over time within this subfield, particularly since 2005, causal studies were often more singular in focus.

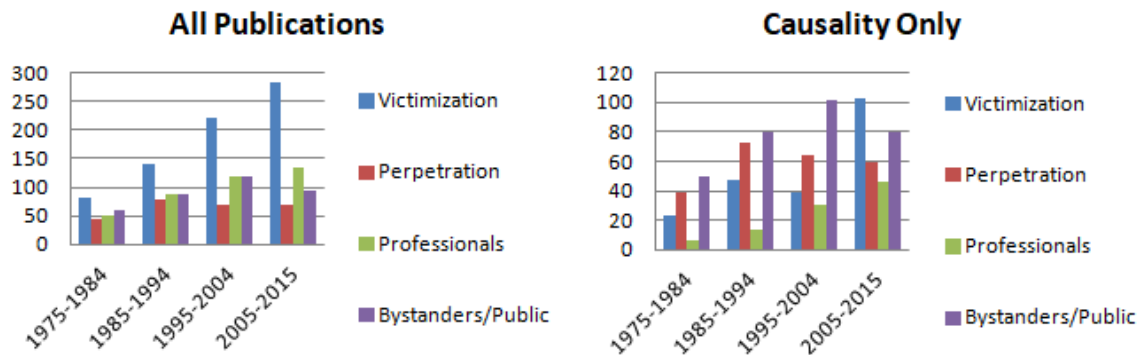


Figure 3.2. Areas of Focus.

Scientists who study sexual violence have consistently prioritized victims/victimization over other areas of focus. These trends have intensified over the past four decades, evidenced by increasing attention toward victimization ($\chi^2 [3] = 36.71, p < .01$) and declining attention toward perpetration ($\chi^2 [3] = 13.58, p < .01$) and bystanders/general publics ($\chi^2 [3] = 11.70, p < .01$). Causal research has been more varied. Scientists seeking to determine “why rape happens” have asked “why are particular individuals and populations victimized,” “why do particular individuals and populations commit rape,” and “how do bystanders contribute to and/or prevent the occurrence of sexual violence” in comparable proportions. Admittedly, these patterns were shaped somewhat by coding strategies. Working with the assumption that rape culture is approached as causal, in that rape-supportive attitudes promote and justify sexual violence, I elected to classify related investigations – numerous works on rape myth acceptance, approaches to distinguishing consensual from nonconsensual contact in response to vignettes – in this category. This is consistent with previous literature, in that concepts such as rape myth acceptance and attitudes toward heterosexual relationships are frequently approached as predictors of aggression and willingness to intervene in violent situations (Loh et al. 2005; McMahon 2010). Relatively few causal studies have focused on professionals, such as therapists and police officers. This indicates that such actors are not often approached as causal or preventive agents. There has also been significant variation over time. Causal works have increasingly emphasized victimization ($\chi^2 [3] = 25.07, p < .01$) and professionals ($\chi^2 [3] = 20.76, p < .01$; albeit still in relatively small proportions), and decreasingly emphasized perpetration ($\chi^2 [3] = 11.77, p < .01$) and bystanders/general publics ($\chi^2 [3] = 9.62, p < .05$).

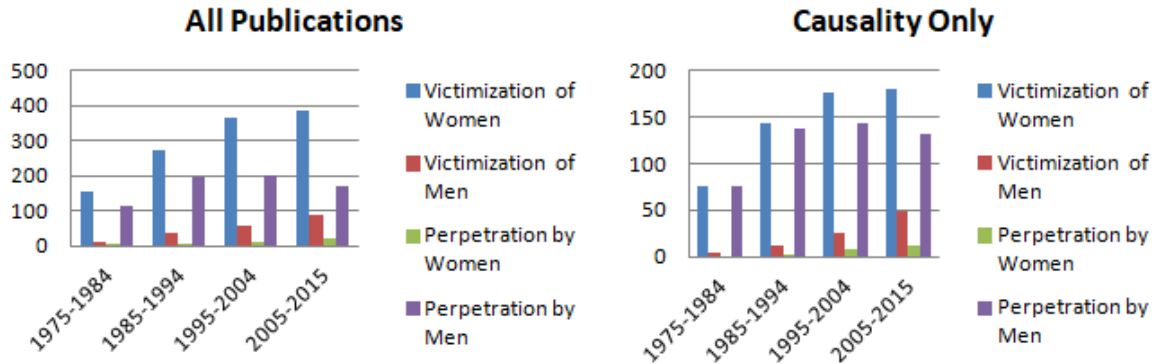


Figure 3.3. Gendered Patterns.

Like the broader field, causal inquiries have favored violence perpetrated by men and/or against women over other gendered patterns. However, this subfield demonstrates proportionally greater attention to (men’s) perpetration, particularly in earlier years. This is likely due to an overall stronger emphasis on assailants/perpetration across efforts to determine the causes of sexual violence. These general patterns persist in spite of increased attention toward violence perpetrated by women ($\chi^2 [3] = 9.25, p < .05$) and/or against men ($\chi^2 [3] = 26.83, p < .01$) over time, as well as significant declines in causal assessments of men’s sexual aggression ($\chi^2 [3] = 20.98, p < .01$). Notably, the sort of precasting assessed in content analysis – in which authors utilize gender nonspecific language in abstracts for gender specific approaches – has declined in the broader field from 30.11% of all studies between 1975-1984 to 21% of those from 2005-2015 ($\chi^2 [3] = 9.33, p < .05$). In causal research, between 25% and 28% of studies embraced this approach across all four decades (not shown in a graph).

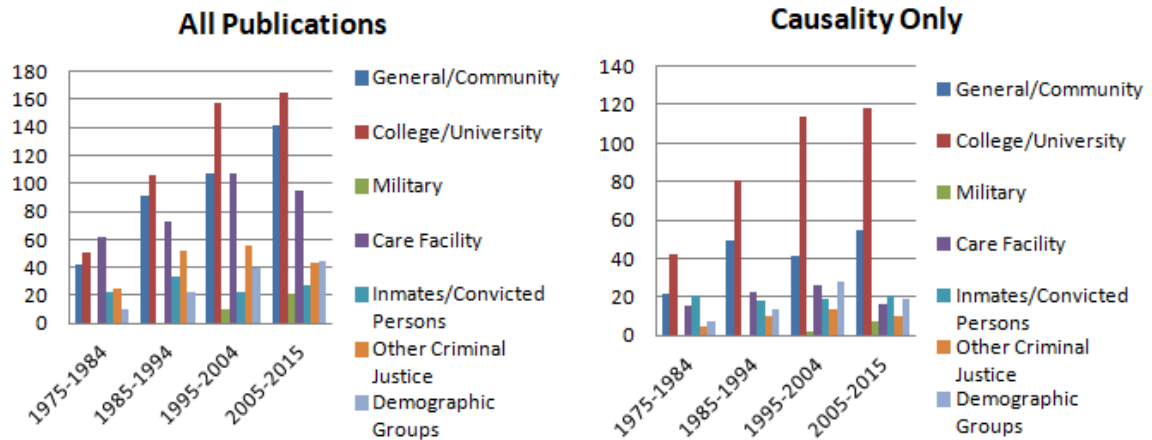


Figure 3.4. Study Population.

Target populations in causal research appear consistent with those in the overall scientific study of sexual violence. The only notable difference concerns a greater emphasis on general population studies in the broader field. Otherwise, as evident in Figure 4, both the broader field and this subfield have prioritized college students and granted only minor attention toward military, inmate, and demographic populations across all four decades. This indicates that the bulk of scientific knowledge regarding the causes of rape has been produced with (if not ostensibly for) student populations. A majority of investigations into such diverse areas as rape myth acceptance, substance use, sexist attitudes, rape proclivity, and sexual (mis)communication – and empirical associations between these phenomena and sexual victimization, aggression, bystander intervention, and the cultural promotion and justification of sexual violence (i.e., rape culture) – have been conducted by college faculty with samples of college students who were often drawn from researchers’ home institutions. While the proportion of causal studies with military populations has increased significantly ($\chi^2 [3] = 10.15, p < .05$), this is largely a reflection of the utter lack of military-specific research prior to 2004. Causal research with incarcerated populations has declined over time ($\chi^2 [3] = 15.14, p < .01$),

notwithstanding public and institutional outcry over prison rape in the early 2000s (Human Rights Watch 2001; Wolff et al. 2006).

Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics for All Publications and Causal Studies, By Decade.

	All Publications				Causality Pieces			
	1975-1984	1985-1994	1995-2004	2005-2015	1975-1984	1985-1994	1995-2004	2005-2015
<i>Precasting^a</i>	53 (30.11%)	91 (29.55%)	102 (25.56%)	90 (20.93%)	23 (25%)	47 (28%)	55 (28%)	53 (25%)
<i>Study Aims</i>								
Quantification ^c	11 (6.25%)	32 (10.39%)	33 (8.27%)	49 (11.40%)	6 (7%)	17 (10%)	16 (8%)	32 (15%)
Causes of Rape	91 (51.70%)	169 (54.87%)	200 (50.13%)	209 (48.60%)	-	-	-	-
Effects of Rape ^{bd}	78 (44.32%)	113 (36.69%)	177 (44.36%)	221 (51.40%)	12 (13%)	27 (16%)	27 (14%)	58 (28%)
Evaluation ^d	41 (23.30%)	76 (24.68%)	108 (27.07%)	115 (26.74%)	6 (7%)	14 (8%)	31 (16%)	40 (19%)
Theory/Methods ^{bc}	16 (9.09%)	42 (13.64%)	63 (15.79%)	83 (19.30%)	8 (9%)	24 (14%)	37 (19%)	48 (23%)
<i>Overall Focus</i>								
Victimization ^{bd}	82 (46.59%)	140 (45.45%)	221 (55.39%)	283 (65.81%)	23 (25%)	47 (28%)	39 (77%)	103(49%)
Perpetration ^{bd}	43 (24.43%)	77 (25.00%)	69 (17.29%)	68 (15.81%)	39 (43%)	72 (43%)	64 (32%)	59 (28%)
Professionals ^d	49 (27.84%)	88 (28.57%)	118 (29.57%)	134 (31.16%)	6 (7%)	13 (8%)	30 (15%)	46 (22%)
Bystanders/General Public ^{bc}	59 (33.52%)	88 (28.57%)	118 (29.57%)	93 (21.63%)	50 (55%)	80 (47%)	101 (51%)	80 (38%)
<i>Gendered Patterns</i>								
Victimization of Women	154 (87.50%)	275 (89.29%)	367 (91.98%)	387 (90.00%)	75 (82%)	144 (85%)	177 (89%)	180 (86%)
Victimization of Men ^{bd}	12 (6.82%)	37 (12.01%)	60 (15.04%)	90 (20.93%)	5 (5%)	12 (7%)	26 (13%)	48 (23%)
Perpetration by Women ^c	3 (1.70%)	8 (2.60%)	14 (3.51%)	21 (4.88%)	0 (0%)	3 (2%)	9 (5%)	13 (6%)
Perpetration by Men ^{bd}	115 (65.34%)	196 (63.64%)	202 (50.63%)	172 (40.00%)	75 (82%)	137 (81%)	143 (72%)	131 (63%)
<i>Study Population</i>								
General/Community	42 (23.86%)	91 (29.55%)	107 (26.82%)	142 (33.02%)	22 (24%)	49 (29%)	41 (21%)	55 (26%)
College/University	51 (28.98%)	106 (34.42%)	157 (39.35%)	165 (38.37%)	42 (46%)	81 (48%)	114 (57%)	118 (57%)
Military ^{bc}	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	10 (2.51%)	21 (4.88%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	7 (3%)
Care Facility ^b	62 (35.23%)	73 (23.70%)	107 (26.82%)	95 (22.14%)	15 (16%)	23 (14%)	26 (13%)	16 (8%)
Inmates/Convicted Persons ^{bd}	23 (13.07%)	33 (10.71%)	22 (5.51%)	27 (6.28%)	21 (23%)	18 (31%)	19 (10%)	21 (10%)
Other Criminal Justice	25 (14.10%)	52 (16.88%)	55 (13.78%)	43 (10.00%)	5 (5%)	10 (6%)	14 (7%)	10 (5%)
Demographic Groups	10 (5.68%)	22 (7.14%)	40 (10.03%)	45 (10.47%)	7 (7%)	14 (8%)	28 (14%)	19 (9%)

^ap<.05, ^bp<.01 for full sample of publications in chi-square analysis; ^cp<.05, ^dp<.01 for causality pieces.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative analysis of the ten most-cited causal works across each decade identified numerous changes in priorities and dominant perspectives. Table 3.2 provides basic information about these 40 publications. Scientists have engaged different sexual scripts and different strategies for identifying sexually violent encounters over the past forty years. Earlier emphases on overt physical violence gave way to emphases on nonconsent and alcohol-facilitated violence. Notwithstanding such variation, top-cited researchers have been consistent in favoring quantitative approaches and precasting men and women as aggressors and victims. There were also notable trends regarding the representation of specific authors and disciplines over time, with individual-focused disciplines (e.g., psychiatry and psychology) better represented than disciplines that favor institutional and systemic inquiries (e.g., sociology).

Decade One: 1975-1984

Dominant works in this decade were divided between efforts to account for individual sexual aggression, in some cases with an emphasis on sexual responsiveness to the concept of sexual violence (often categorized as “sexual deviance” or “deviant arousal,” and measured through penile plethysmography) (Abel et al. 1977; Groth, Burgess and Holstrom 1977, assessed offenders' and victims' perspectives; Malamuth 1981; Malamuth, Haber and Feshbach 1980; Scully and Marolla 1984; Thornhill and Thornhill 1983a, provided analyses connecting the evolution of human sexuality with human rape); and efforts to explore cultural causes of sexual violence through assessments of public/student rape myth acceptance and reactions to rape depictions, including the relative tendency to blame assailants and victims and differential responses to stranger and acquaintance rape (Burt 1980; Calhoun, Selby and Warring 1976;

Check and Malamuth 1983; Feild 1978, assessed perceptions among citizens, police, crisis counselors, and rapists).

In both threads of research, scientists drew on rape scripts featuring the overt use of force by male assailants, along with demonstrable resistance – and in some cases, signs of physical anguish – by female victims. For example, Calhoun and colleagues provided the following information to participants in a study of victim blaming attitudes (Calhoun, Selby and Warring 1976: 20):

Background. Laura S. is a 24-year-old student at a middle-sized university. She was raised in an average-size family, is married, and has no children.

Incident. One night, while crossing the campus on her way from the library, she was accosted and raped. A passerby heard her screams and called the police, who arrived and apprehended the man a few minutes after he had completed his sexual assault.

Students were then provided with anywhere from 0 to all three of the following statements:

- a. Police records show that seven other women had been raped on the campus in the past 6 months before Laura S. was raped.
- b. She was raped once before about 1 year prior to this recent assault.
- c. She had been in class with the rapist the previous semester.

Even the acquaintance rape scenario featured here applied many aspects of dominant “real rape” scenarios in U.S. and Canadian culture (Estrich 1987; Ryan 2011): the assault occurred at night, outdoors and in a public location, and the victim screamed loudly enough for passersby to hear. Other dominant works in this decade depicted force and resistance even more explicitly, sometimes including assailants’ use of weapons (Abel et al. 1977; Malamuth, Haber and Feshbach 1980) and physical struggle between assailants and victims (Check and Malamuth 1983).

Burt’s (1980) “Cultural Myths and Supports for Rape” was the top-cited piece across all four decades and all areas of focus, and provided somewhat of an alternative perspective.

Although she did not provide vignettes depicting (constituting) “typical” scenarios, she

incorporated notions such as voluntary intoxication and misinterpretation of (non)sexual cues into her Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS), and heavily emphasized acquaintance encounters. She further connected acceptance of rape myths with more general attitudes toward gender roles, (hetero)sexuality, and interpersonal violence. The RMAS also comprised an early effort at standardization within sexual violence research (Porter 1995; Timmermans and Epstein 2010).

Two pieces provided causal models that diverged from these patterns. Groth and colleagues (1977) advanced a power and control model over explanations that relied on (deviant) sexual desire, based on reports from victims and assailants. Thornhill and Thornhill (1983b) provided an evolutionary and cultural account of rape, with the latter subordinate to the former. Notably, their model addressed both perpetration and victimization, due to their emphasis on reproductive competition that ensued as particular (relatively unfit or undesired) males pursued particular (relatively fit or desired) females.

Finally, there were notable patterns regarding top-cited authors, disciplines, and publications. Psychiatry and psychology were particularly well represented. Most of the works reviewed above appeared in discipline journals such as the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (3), *Journal of Research in Personality*, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, and the *Archives of General Psychiatry*. Other works appeared in interdisciplinary social science journals such as *Social Problems* and the *Journal of Social Issues*. Professionals in psychology and psychiatry – whether by training or departmental affiliation – contributed to nine of the ten most cited causal works (all except for Scully and Marolla 1984). Among authors, Malamuth appears to have been most dominant in causal research in this period. He was sole author on one piece (Malamuth 1981), first on another (Malamuth, Haber and Feshbach 1980), and second on another (Check and Malamuth 1983). His work emphasized rape proclivity among

incarcerated and so-called “normal” college men, based on associations among diverse measures including self-reported likelihood of raping, acceptance of rape myths, and penile tumescence measures in phallometric tests. He also investigated college men and women’s overall reactions to rape vignettes, and self-reported likelihood of enjoying such an experience (as aggressor for men, and as victim for women).

Decade Two: 1985-1994

Whereas the previous decade emphasized accounts of aggression and featured overtly violent assaults, these years gave rise to a marked departure in priorities and strategies in scientific explanations for sexual violence. Six of the ten top-cited works focused on victimization (Gidycz et al. 1993; Koss 1985; Koss, Dinero and Seibel 1988; Wyatt 1992), and four of these focused solely on victimization. Causal explanations for victimization included a range of individual, interpersonal, and cultural factors including rape myth acceptance, attitudes toward heterosexuality, approaches to dating, sexual history, sexual communication, alcohol and other substance use, engagement in physical and other forms of resistance, victim/assailant relationship, and prior experiences of victimization. Wyatt’s piece on sexual violence toward African American and White women (1992), the first study with a demographic focus to make the top ten, engaged a historical analysis through connecting the sexual victimization of African American women with slavery and broader histories of racial and sexual oppression. As in the first decade, causal works with a bystander focus emphasized rape myths and associated perspectives on gender and sexuality (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994; Martin and Hummer 1989). Warr’s piece introduced a new element through the concept of “fear of rape” (Warr 1985).

As such, while accounting for sexual aggression remained a priority, causal models expanded. Scientists incorporated more institutional and interpersonal factors than represented

in the previous decade. Martin and Hummer (1989) investigated fraternity culture, including practices that facilitated sexual violence toward women (e.g., use of alcohol as a weapon) and protected the “brothers” who perpetrated such violence (e.g., valuing secrecy within the house). These authors further addressed universities’ complicity through support for fraternities and lenience toward assailants involved with them. Bachman and colleagues (1992) investigated relationships between rape proclivity and personal morality, perceived likelihood of social sanctions, and perceived likelihood of university and/or criminal justice sanctions among university men. Muehlenhard and Linton (1987) explored interpersonal dynamics and communication within heterosexual dating. Mosher and Anderson theorized sexual arousal to rape depictions as a major predictor, which was more consistent with research in the first decade (1986); however, they did not use penile plethysmography technology but rather inquired after men’s self-assessments of arousal and genital sensations.

Scientists in the second decade drew on – and perhaps also produced – a broader range of cultural scenarios when conceptualizing “typical” rape scenarios. Acquaintance rape scripts, characterized less by overt violence and more by (male) aggressors’ refusal to acknowledge (female) nonconsent, grew increasingly prominent. Voluntary intoxication was more likely than involuntary intoxication to feature in such scenarios. Muehlenhard and Linton defined rape as “sexual intercourse against the woman’s will” (1987: 189). Bachman and colleagues (1992) approached physical violence as a variable. In their assessment of rape proclivity, they provided stranger and acquaintance rape vignettes featuring varying degrees of force and asked participants to assess the assailants’ behavior, probable interpersonal and institutional consequences, and self-likelihood of committing a similar act. Wyatt defined rape as “the involuntary penetration of the vagina or anus by the penis or another object” (1992: 82). In all

three instances, nonconsensual sexual intercourse might still constitute rape in the absence of physical force, threats of force, and/or involuntary intoxication.

There was a notable shift in dominant voices in this period. Malamuth authored no pieces in the top ten, though one publication relied heavily on his work (Mosher and Anderson 1986). Koss and colleagues' research drew the most attention. In the broader field of sexual violence research, this decade saw the publication of "The Scope of Rape," with its groundbreaking and controversial finding that 1 in 4 college women had experienced completed or attempted rape (Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987). Among causal inquiries, Koss had one sole-authored and one first-authored piece (Koss 1985; Koss, Dinero and Seibel 1988). Gidycz, second author on "The Scope of Rape," published an additional first-authored causal piece (Gidycz et al. 1993). All three works focused on women's victimization, with further emphases on repeat sexual assault, victim-offender relationship, and women's experiences and self-identification as rape victims (or not). These changes in dominant voices, however, did not constitute a shift in dominant discipline. Seven of pieces included psychologists and/or psychiatrists among the authors. Six of those works appeared in psychology and psychiatry journals, including *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (4), *Journal of Research in Personality*, and the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*; the seventh was published in the *Journal of Social Issues*. However, social scientists in other fields – particularly sociology – entered the dominant causal literature in greater numbers. Sociologists Patricia Yancey Martin, Ronet Bachman, and Mark Warr were each first author on one piece in this sample; their works appeared in *Gender and Society*, *Law & Society Review*, and *Social Problems*, respectively.

Decade Three: 1995-2004

Scientists continued to broaden conceptualizations of the causes of rape, including social and psychological conditions that might promote or deter sexual violence. Top-cited works featured increasingly complex and multifaceted models. Alcohol and substance emerged as major predictors of aggression and victimization. Repeat sexual assault, in which prior incidents are understood as “risk factors” for subsequent incidents, received considerable attention. Theoretical and methodological works began to appear, evaluating the merits of various approaches to accounting for rape.

Alcohol and other substance use was conceptualized as a major predictor for both victimization and aggression. Regarding the former, Abbey and colleagues (1996) suggested that that a complex combination of alcohol consumption by women and men, men’s misperception of women’s sexual intentions, and dating experiences contribute to victimization risk among college women, with interactions occurring among some of these factors. Consumption by women might activate seduction scripts for men, and that physical and cognitive impairments associated with intoxication might inhibit women’s capacity to resist. Abbey and colleagues (1998) also explored relationships between alcohol consumption and sexual aggression among college men. Once again, they offered a multifaceted causal model: rape-supportive beliefs, expectations about dating and sexual encounters, expectations regarding alcohol and sexuality, misperception of sexual intent (particularly likely when drinking), and self-reported rape proclivity (i.e., likelihood of committing sexual violence if there would be no punishment) were all associated with risk of perpetration. Mohler-Kuo and colleagues (including Koss, 2004) investigated the prevalence of rape while intoxicated among college women, as well as institutional (i.e., college-level) and individual correlates of overall and intoxicated sexual violence. On the institutional level, high prevalence rates of heavy drinking were associated with

higher rates of sexual violence. On the individual level, heavy drinking prior to college, other drug use, and age (underage women at greater risk) contributed to victimization risk.

The concept of revictimization emerged as a strong theme in this decade. Follette and colleagues (1996) explored the notion of “cumulative trauma,” which accrues over multiple victimizations and may exacerbate the risk of further assault. Humphrey and White (2000) approached victimization as a predictor of (re)victimization. Working with a sample of undergraduate women, they documented an increased risk of adolescent sexual assault for survivors of child sexual assault, an increased risk of freshman year college sexual assault for survivors of adolescent sexual assault, and an increased risk of later college sexual assault for survivors of freshman year sexual assault. In addition, they noted that women who reported more “severe” victimization histories before college (i.e., completed or attempted rape) were more likely to experience more severe assaults in college. Gidycz and colleagues (1995) documented similar patterns, though their longitudinal study also explored additional individual and interpersonal factors including family adjustment, psychological adjustment, sexual behavior, interpersonal functioning, and alcohol use. Of the two pieces focused on perpetration, one focused on recidivism among convicted sex offenders (Rice and Harris 1997). Investigators determined that interactions between psychopathy and “sexual deviance,” as measured through arousal to rape depictions and other “deviant” stimuli in phallometric testing, were effective for predicting sexual recidivism.

The rise of theory/methods literature speaks to the establishment of sexual violence studies as a scientific field, and the development of a rich literature in causality. By the mid-1990s, sufficient work had been published for scholars to conduct critical systematic reviews; debate theoretical models to account for victimization, aggression, and rape culture more broadly; and provide thorough comparative analyses of standardized assessment tools and/or

argue for new standard measures. Rice and Harris' piece on the *Violence Risk Appraisal Guide* fits well within this theme (1997). After publishing a thorough critique of rape myth literature at the end of Decade Two (1994), Lonsway and colleagues confronted ongoing theoretical issues (e.g., conflation of "adversarial sexual experiences" with "hostility toward women" in previous studies, when the latter was a better predictor of rape myth acceptance) and developed the now widely-used *Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale* in two subsequent publications (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1995; Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1999).

The only exception to these three dominant themes was Goodman's (1997) piece on the prevalence, correlates, and outcomes of sexual violence among women with serious mental illness (particularly schizophrenia). While much of this piece focused on prevalence rates and health outcomes, Goodman also wrote about serious mental illness as a risk factor for victimization, given the prevalence documented in prior studies and vulnerabilities associated with impairments in cognitive processing, which might make seriously mentally ill women more "desirable targets" for assailants.

The discipline of psychology was more dominant between 1995-2004 than in either of the previous decades. Several scholars appeared on multiple top-cited causal works, and all of them were trained in and/or working in the field of psychology. These included Antonia Abbey and her coauthors Lisa Thomson Ross and Pam McAusalan, whose work focused on alcohol and risk; Kimberly Lonsway and Louise Fitzgerald, who continued their previous work on rape myth acceptance. Also continuing previous trends, Christine Gidycz and Mary Koss each contributed to top-cited causal works in this decade (as first and third author, different publications). Most of these pieces were published in discipline journals including *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (2), *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, and the *Journal of Research in Personality*. Other

works appeared in more interdisciplinary journals including *Law and Human Behavior*, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, and the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*.

Decade Four: 2005-2015

Alcohol and other substance use (Abbey 2011; Armstrong, Hamilton and Sweeney 2006; Krebs et al. 2009; McMahon 2010), repeat sexual assault (Loh et al. 2005), and theoretical and methodological refinement (McMahon and Banyard 2012; Suarez and Gadalla 2010) continued to appear in top-cited works. Cultural and behavioral expectations featured more than in previous decades. The dominant rape scripts advanced in the literature emphasized parties and other social gatherings involving alcohol consumption by victims and assailants. While notions of physical force were not entirely absent from these pieces, they were far less prevalent than in previous years. Explanatory models that relied on evolution, psychopathology, and sexual arousal (particularly as measured through plethysmography) were entirely absent.

The most notable trend in this decade was the emergence of bystander approaches (Coker et al. 2011; McMahon 2010; McMahon and Banyard 2012). This perspective conceptualizes sexual violence prevention as a community issue. Rather than focus on perpetrators and victims, bystander analyses and programs seek to engage all members of a community – most often college students – as agents in primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Some bystander assessment tools also incorporated perpetration prevention measures, such as stated likelihood of ceasing advances when a partner says “no,” as well as more bystander-specific behaviors, such as challenging a sexist comment, or intervening when a man attempts to bring an intoxicated woman to his room. McMahon and Banyard were key figures in this area of research; although Banyard had only one publication among the top ten causal works, others drew repeatedly on her publications and intervention approaches.

Whereas psychology scholars and journals were remarkably dominant in Decade Three, top-cited causal literature in Decade Four demonstrated unprecedented multidisciplinary. Lead authors included psychologists and sociologists as well as professionals in more “practice-focused” fields such as public health, obstetrics and gynecology, and social work. The two most dominant scholars were psychologist Antonia Abbey and social work scholar Sarah McMahon; each published two works in this sample (for a total of four between them), including one sole-author and one first-author piece. A majority of top-cited causal works were published in interdisciplinary journals including the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* (2), *Violence Against Women* (2), *Journal of American College Health* (2), *Social Problems*, and *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*.

Forty Years of Precasting in Causal Research

The most consistent practice across dominant works may well have been gendered precasting. All studies of sexual aggression were conducted with men, all studies of sexual victimization were conducted with women, and all vignettes and bystander scenarios reflected this pattern. Such gendered patterns were implicitly or explicitly incorporated as baseline assumptions, rather than empirical questions that might be tested and subsequently inform study design. For example, when discussing their decision to restrict a study on rape proclivity to men, Bachman and colleagues asserted that “[s]ince we were interested in those factors that may constrain would-be offenders from committing an act of sexual assault, we restricted the study to males only because females are unlikely to commit sexual assault. Females’ contemplation of the offense after reading the scenarios would, therefore, be highly contrived” (1992: 350-351). Lonsway and Fitzgerald defined rape myths as “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male

sexual aggression against women” (1994: 134), and utilized this definition in subsequent works (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1995; Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1999). Consequently, rape myths such as “men can’t be raped” and “women are never sexually aggressive” were omitted from consideration. In their work on recidivism, Rice and Harris worked with exclusively male participants and further asserted that “sex offenders whose victims come from all categories (adult women, male and female children) are the most dangerous of all” (1997: 239) – as though these were truly all categories of potential victims.

Gendered precasting shifted somewhat in form during the fourth decade, in that researchers began to explicitly reference the possibility of multiple gendered patterns; however, neither same-sex violence, women’s aggression, men’s victimization, nor incidents involving individuals with nonbinary gender identities made it into the ten top-cited pieces. Abbey and colleagues stated that “[a]lthough men can be victims and women can be perpetrators, the vast majority of sexual assaults in involve male perpetrators and female victims who know each other, in relationships that vary from casual acquaintances to marital partners” (2011: 482). Analyses were then restricted to perpetration by men. Suarez and Gadalla noted an increase in reports of sexual violence toward men, and then clarified that their analysis of rape myth acceptance literature was restricted to myths concerning men’s violence toward women.

Table 3.2. Ten Top-Cited Causal Works from Each Decade, as of February 2016.

<i>Lead Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Citations</i>
Burt, Martha R.	Cultural Myths and Supports for Rape	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	1980	1142
Malamuth, Neil M.	Rape Proclivity Among Males	Journal of Social Issues	1981	238
Check, James V.	Sex Role Stereotyping and Reactions to Depictions of Stranger versus Acquaintance Rape	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	1983	219
Field, Hubert S.	Attitudes Toward Rape - Comparative Analysis of Police, Rapists, Crisis Counselors, and Citizens	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	1978	207
Scully, Diana	Convicted Rapists' Vocabulary of Motive: Excuses and Justifications	Social Problems	1984	199
Abel, Gene G.	The Components of Rapists' Sexual Arousal	Archives of General Psychiatry	1977	171
Groth, Nicholas	Rape: Power, Anger, and Sexuality	American Journal of Psychiatry	1977	152
Thornhill, Randy	Human Rape - An Evolutionary Analysis	Ethology and Sociobiology	1983	147
Malamuth, Neil M.	Testing Hypotheses Regarding Rape - Exposure to Sexual Violence, Sex Differences, and the Normality of Rapists	Journal of Research in Personality	1980	129
Calhoun, Lawrence G	Social Perception of Victims' Causal Role in Rape - Exploratory Examination of 4 Factors	Human Relations	1976	128
Muehlenhard, Charlene L.	Date Rape and Sexual Aggression in Dating Situations - Incidence and Risk Factors	Journal of Counseling Psychology	1987	412
Lonsway, Kimberly A.	Rape Myths	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1994	310
Koss, Mary P.	Stranger and Acquaintance Rape - Are there Differences in the Victim's Experience	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1988	249
Koss, Mary P.	The Hidden Rape Victim - Personality, Attitudinal, and Situational Characteristics	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1985	216
Gidycz, Christine A.	Sexual Assault Experience in Adulthood and Prior Victimization Experiences - A Prospective Analysis	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1993	208
Wyatt, Gail Elizabeth	The Sociocultural Context of African American and White American Women's Rape	Journal of Social Issues	1992	156
Warr, Mark	Fear of Rape among Urban Women	Social Problems	1985	145
Martin, Patricia Yancey	Fraternities and Rape on Campus	Gender and Society	1989	135
Bachman, Ronet	The Rationality of Sexual Offending - Testing a Deterrence Rational Choice Conception of Sexual Assault	Law and Society Review	1992	127
Mosher, Donald L	Macho Personality, Sexual Aggression, and Reactions to Guided Imagery of Realistic Rape	Journal of Research in Personality	1986	122

Table 3.2, Continued

Follette, Victoria M.	Cumulative Trauma: The Impact of Child Sexual Abuse, Adult Sexual Assault, and Spouse Abuse	Journal of Traumatic Stress	1996	215
Goodman, Lisa A.	Physical and Sexual Assault History in Women with Serious Mental Illness: Prevalence, Correlates, Treatment, and Future Research Directions	Schizophrenia Bulletin	1997	187
Abbey, Antonia	Alcohol and Dating Risk Factors for Sexual Assault among College Women	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1996	183
Payne, Diana L.	Rape Myth Acceptance: Exploration of Its Structure and Its Measurement Using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale	Journal of Research in Personality	1999	180
Lonsway, Kimberly A.	Attitudinal Antecedents of Rape Myth Acceptance - A Theoretical and Empirical Reexamination	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	1995	179
Gidycz, Christine A.	Prospective Analysis of the Relationships among Sexual Assault Experiences - An Extension of Previous Findings	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1995	179
Rice, Marnie E.	Cross-Validation and Extension of the Violence Risk Appraisal Guide for Child Molesters and Rapists	Law and Human Behavior	1997	170
Humphrey, John A.	Women's Vulnerability to Sexual Assault from Adolescence to Young Adulthood	Journal of Adolescent Health	2000	151
Abbey, Antonia	Sexual Assault Perpetration by College Men: The Role of Alcohol, Misperception of Sexual Intent, and Sexual Beliefs and Experiences	Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology	1998	145
Mohler-Kuo, Meichun	Correlates of Rape While Intoxicated in a National Sample of College Women	Journal of Studies on Alcohol	2004	141
Armstrong, Elizabeth A.	Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape	Social Problems	2006	81
Martin, Sandra L.	Physical and Sexual Assault of Women with Disabilities	Violence Against Women	2006	62
Krebs, Christopher P.	College Women's Experiences with Physically Forced, Alcohol- or Other Drug-Enabled, and Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault Before and Since Entering College	Journal of American College Health	2009	59
Abbey, Antonia	Cross-Sectional Predictors of Sexual Assault Perpetration in a Community Sample of Single African American and Caucasian Men	Aggressive Behavior	2006	58
Loh, Catherine	A Prospective Analysis of Sexual Assault Perpetration - Risk Factors Related to Perpetrator Characteristics	Journal of Interpersonal Violence	2005	56
Suarez, Eliana	Stop Blaming the Victim - A Meta-Analysis on Rape Myths	Journal of Interpersonal Violence	2010	70

Coker, Ann L.	Evaluation of Green Dot - An Active Bystander Intervention to Reduce Sexual Violence on College Campuses	Violence Against Women	2011	40
McMahon, Sarah	Rape Myth Beliefs and Bystander Attitudes among Incoming College Students	Journal of American College Health	2010	36
McMahon, Sarah	When Can I Help? A Conceptual Framework for the Prevention of Sexual Violence through Bystander Intervention	Trauma, Violence, and Abuse	2012	33
Abbey, Antonia	Alcohol's Role in Sexual Violence Perpetration - Theoretical Explanations, Existing Evidence and Future Directions	Drug and Alcohol Review	2011	33

Interviews

Participants expressed support for a variety of causal models. However, there were some patterns regarding which models received unqualified endorsement – that is, support without any explicit justification or seeming expectation of opposition – and which received more qualified or tentative endorsement. More generally, many participants called for more systematic and intersectional approaches to accounting for sexual violence. Several further called for shifts in prevention strategies, primarily through an expansion and/or comprehensive assessment of bystander approaches and investment in sex education.

Qualified and Unqualified Accounts

The extent to which scholars provide qualified descriptions of a scientific idea or fact does not reveal its quality or “truthfulness.” Such patterns rather indicate consensus and controversy among scientists, and the relative capacity of varying discourses to influence thought within and beyond scientific spheres (Epstein 1996)¹². Researchers advancing widely accepted positions may feel little if any need to justify those positions, or even to describe them in detail. Researchers advancing marginal or contested positions may feel compelled to provide more extensive accounts, and may seek to predict and preempt various criticisms.

Scientists who adhered closely to the patriarchy model of rape and/or who argued that aggressors were “made” rather than “born” seemed to anticipate that these views were noncontroversial. Susan, a sociologist, questioned “the reasons why we even produce people who would assault someone in the first place. You know, something’s going on. They’re not born

¹² I am indebted here to Steven Epstein’s analysis in *Impure Science*, in which he demonstrated that the link between HIV and AIDS became “established” in the scientific literature, often presented without qualifications, long before empirical data had sufficiently verified that link. Scientific consensus preceded the evidence.

that way.” Echoing this sentiment, Stephanie, a psychologist, approached gender socialization as a straight-forward causal force in sexual aggression:

Men are not violent because they’re men, necessarily. But society defines maleness and masculinity in terms of violence, therefore, a biological male that wants to be seen as male or masculine may resort to violent behavior, sexually assaultive behavior, as a way of conforming to societal expectations. Rather than being driven by testosterone or something like that.

In this moment, Stephanie both endorsed a cultural and socialization-based account and rejected biological explanations. While their positions were not universal in scholarship on sexual violence, Susan and Stephanie did not seem to expect pushback from me or from fellow researchers. They rather seemed to expect comprehension and agreement.

Scientists who advanced a power and control model that distinguished all sexual violence from sexual desire, that is, who understood sexual violence as violent but not truly sexual, also tended to provide unqualified endorsements of this perspective¹³. Madeline, a sociologist, explicitly defined rape as a “bodily violation of a sexual nature... not about sex, but about power.” Karen, a criminal justice scholar, commented that sexual violence in prisons was “usually driven by something other than just sexual desire, because we know that sexual assault is not about sexual desire.” There was no need to elaborate or argue further; the irrelevance of sexual desire was simply something “we” knew.

In contrast, participants who embraced evolutionary explanations, who emphasized sexual communication and complex notions of consent, and/or who perceived of sexual

¹³ In such models, “power” is complexly proposed as a motivation, resource, and outcome of sexual violence. Aggressors are regarded as individuals who seek to exert power over others, and use sexual violence as a means of exerting that power and taking control. This suggests that aggressors must also be people who have access to power, either in the sovereign (power that is held/carried) or strategic (power that is accessed within encounters, and operates through bodies) sense (Foucault 1982). Ongoing acts of sexual violence contribute to a culture in which people who are perceived or perceive themselves as potential victims (e.g., gender congruent women) are socialized to be fearful and take ongoing pains to avoid “risk”, whereas people who are perceived or perceive themselves as potential aggressors (e.g., gender congruent men) are socialized to feel entitled and superior.

violence as both violent and sexual seemed to anticipate pushback. They were more apt to provide qualified descriptions of their positions. They were also more apt to provide justifications or evidence without my prompting. Such practices relate to credibility struggles that may arise when scholars challenge dominant ideas and individuals in their fields (Bourdieu 1975; Epstein 1996; Latour 1987; Shapin 1995). In striking contrast from Karen and Madeline, Amy, a legal scholar, insisted that sexuality was very much relevant to the phenomenon of rape:

People sort of don't want to admit that sexual violence is about sex, right? There's that whole weird erasure in thinking about sexual violence, like rape is about violence, not sex. Well, no, it's sexual violence. It's actually sexual violence...and you know, we can deal with the sex, or we can deal with the violence, but we can't deal with them together.

Amy demonstrated a keen awareness that her stance was controversial. She incorporated criticism of other scholars(hip) directly into her position, rather than simply state that "sexual violence is about both sex and violence" and move on.

Researchers who studied sexual communication and consent were often somewhat delicate in advancing these as causal forces in sexual violence. Audrey, a public health scholar, expressed concern about college students' capacity to communicate sexual consent and refusal, but presented this as a plausible or likely issue rather than a settled matter:

I think a lot about the college students, because a lot of them are relatively young. These are often in their first few sexual relationships. So talking about things openly may not be, they might not yet have that skill set to say "oral sex is ok, but anal sex is off the table" or something.

Scholars were still more cautious when directly considering potential connections between sexual communication and acts of violence. Wendy, a social work scholar, shared ongoing struggles with research and programming in this area:

Men will say "but she wanted it. I didn't realize that's what I was doing. I was drunk." Whatever. Even if they did realize, they're not going to say that. And there's a disconnect. Because the guys are saying, "I didn't know that's what I was doing" and the women are like, "you violated me, and now I'm having

traumatic symptoms.” So there’s a disconnect, and it’s not like these – I don’t imagine these guys, these college guys being these evil – there are some predators on campus, but most sexual assaults, I don’t imagine these evil guys. I imagine these drunk sloppy guys that aren’t paying attention to cues. Right? This is not to justify it, and it’s still sexual violence because they need to be paying attention to that shit, but how do we give them the space to understand that, and not do it? Some people have been focusing more on hookup culture, how to raise guys to not think they have to score. Maybe that’s part of it, but, I don’t know.

Whereas scholars who believe that sexual violence is entirely about power and not about sex might protest that the men described above were enacting masculine power and knowingly (or at least carelessly) violating women, Wendy offered a more complicated and ambivalent analysis. She incorporated masculine socialization, alcohol, and hookup culture as important variables to account for men’s sexual aggression. She evoked a disconnect between the perceptions of aggressive men and victimized women, and suggested that the former may not always be “evil” or conscious predators. It’s notable that she also took a moment to explicitly state “this is not to justify it, and it’s still sexual violence.” She seemed prepared for the sort of criticism that Charlene Muehlenhard and others have faced in their work, but not so concerned that she shied away from advancing this position.

Adam, a biologist, was the only participant in this study who had incorporated evolutionary theory into his research on sexual violence. Like Wendy, he seemed to anticipate and preemptively respond to criticism for his position:

All features of life, all features of living things are products of some kind of evolutionary process. That’s just a statement of fact. And then from that, you know, rape is a feature of life, and therefore it is caused ultimately by some kind of evolutionary process...And then you can go more and more detailed there, like what kind of evolutionary process? Sexual coercion is a mode of sexual selection, so that’s the body of evolutionary processes. And then, sexual selection is the basic area of evolutionary process that made the psychology and behavior by which men rape. And what I’ve said is not controversial in biology.

Here, Adam prefaced a contested argument – an evolutionary account of rape – by pointing out that the relevance of evolution to “all features of life” was “just a statement of fact.” The “in biology” point here is also crucial. Research that draws harsh opposition in fields such as psychology, sociology, social work, or public health might nonetheless be noncontroversial within biology.

Participants shared a range of approaches for handling opposition among colleagues. These included careful selection of journals for publication and agencies for grant support, and incorporating responses to anticipate critiques more directly into manuscripts. Stacey, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, recalled being accused of reinforcing the very rape myths that she was actively working to dismantle through empirical research. She had taken to reviewing the editor lists of journals before submission, in case anyone might be particularly likely to misinterpret or politically oppose her work; and including statements to the effect of “these findings are in direct opposition to the widespread rape myth that...” into her writing.

Several participants seemed almost to shrug off opposition to their points of view, refusing to restrict “expertise” to particular scientists or journal reviewers. While this approach did not necessarily improve their odds of publication, it did lessen the impact that harsh critiques might have. When I asked about her experiences embracing controversial positions, Amy expressed a willingness to leave the field if “intellectual policing” prevented her from engaging in meaningful and explicitly feminist work. When I asked Adam the same question, he responded by endorsing strict boundaries around science. He insisted that his ideas were entirely noncontroversial among legitimate scientists, and that opponents of evolutionary work on sexual violence were driven by political rather than scientific concerns.

Calls for Systematic and Intersectional Causal Inquiries

As discussed in the preceding qualitative content analyses, psychology and psychiatry have historically and consistently dominated causal inquiries in sexual violence research. Participants across disciplines valued the contribution of psychological and psychiatric investigations of individual predictors of aggression, victimization, and bystander behaviors. Nonetheless, many – including some who were, themselves, trained in these disciplines – spoke to a pressing need for more interdisciplinary and systemic investigations. These concerns often dovetailed with a call for more intersectional approaches in causal research. This is not to suggest that “psychological research” and “intersectional research” are at odds – neither I nor study participants make such claims here – but rather that the complexity and nuance facilitated by multilevel and interdisciplinary work complement the aims and politics of intersectional approaches.

Participants with a range of backgrounds expressed support for multilevel causal models and study designs. Denise, a psychologist, had moved increasingly in this direction throughout her career:

Over time, I take more and more and more of a community point of view... I always knew that was important, but I think for a long time I was very much a product of my training – which, was as a psychologist, which is being focused on not only the individual but what’s happening in their head. And now, I spend enough time collaborating with sociologists and people in social work and people in community psychology, that now I think it’s more of a habit of thinking to really take in that broader perspective. And not just to give it lip service.

Julia, a social work scholar, suggested that multilevel and systemic approaches were necessary for building effective prevention efforts:

We need to be looking not only at the individual, but we need to be figuring out what kinds of peer level and community level and beyond interventions work... How do things like sense of community, how does a campus – in terms of their administration, and the way that they convey their attitudes about sexual violence – how does all of that affect whether or not sexual violence is happening, and the sort of climate that students find themselves in? Moving

beyond the individual to look at the other ecological issues, I think, is a really important issue.

As researchers discussed gender socialization, interpersonal communication, campus climate, the social distribution of power, and other cultural and systemic causal forces, they consistently expressed investment in scholarship and prevention efforts that engage those forces. Notably, such systemic efforts were broadly conceived as compatible with individual-level inquiries. Gretchen, a psychologist, recalled a project on peer violence in schools that combined individual attitudinal and behavioral assessments with ethnographic environmental scans to observe shifts in social norms; her more systemic analysis did not supersede so much as complement her more conventional psychological assessments.

These calls for systemic and interdisciplinary inquiries often emerged alongside calls for intersectional work. Systemic models approached sexual violence as a complex and multifaceted issue, which allowed for the recognition that various causal forces and prevention strategies had varying impacts across individuals and communities. After expressing support for ecological approaches, Julia, quoted above, went on to note that:

We need a lot more research to figure out what works, and for whom it works. So just because a bystander intervention program works for one part of a population on one campus doesn't mean it will for others.

Questions such as "is this program effective" or "does this policy prevent rape" were rarely approached as yes/no matters. Julia and others encouraged scholars to consider that shifting cultural norms might not meaningfully affect all individuals' risk of aggression and victimization, just as preventing a number of potential assailants from doing harm would not automatically eradicate sexist and other oppressive attitudes and practices on campus.

Many participants expressed concerns that causal research focused too much on the experiences of White, middle class, heterosexual, gender congruent, non-disabled college

students. In some cases, this came down to sampling and analytical strategies (i.e., which variables were incorporated and emphasized). Researchers' demographic and experiential backgrounds were also important. Wendy connected such concerns with my own project, when she speculated that "I don't know what the demographics are of the people you've been interviewing, but my assumption is that many of them are White women" (she was correct, and I said as much). Even historical emphasis on individual-level analyses might be limiting here, in that forces such as the systemic feminization and racialization of poverty are difficult to discern in such projects. Miranda, an anthropologist, suggested that researchers' own discomfort might also play a role:

I'm also really interested in thinking about precarities and vulnerabilities. And broader issues of inequality. Because sexual violence is – I think people get uncomfortable thinking about it – I mean, it's not equally distributed across all demographics, right?... So the distribution of vulnerability is something that I've more lately tried to be thoughtful about.

This speaks again to the importance of distinguishing between "neutral" and "inclusive" scholarship. A disability-neutral project on sexual violence against women, for example, might approach disability as wholly irrelevant. A disability-inclusive project would provide avenues for recognizing that, while a substantial majority of victims/survivors might be non-disabled women, disabled women experience sexual violence at disproportionately high rates (Goodman et al. 1997; Martin et al. 2006).

As noted in the preceding quantitative and qualitative content analyses, causal research has overwhelmingly prioritized gender congruent men's violence toward gender congruent women in heterosexual contexts. Participants were divided regarding whether this was an appropriate or concerning pattern. This divide seemed to center on two basic questions: (1) given the pervasiveness of this gendered pattern in sexual violence, is it justifiable to focus time and energy elsewhere? and (2) do the causes of sexual violence actually vary by gender and

sexuality? The first question overlaps considerably with the discussion of precasting and definitions in Chapter 2; consequently, I will not devote space to it here. The second question is of more direct relevance to the subfield of causal research, and warrants further consideration.

If the causes of sexual violence are identical across genders and sexualities, there is no empirical reason to move toward gender inclusive scholarship (though there might be philosophical or political reasons to call for it nonetheless). If the causes vary, all or in part, then present trends are inadequate for understanding same-sex violence, sexual violence involving gender variant people, victimization of gender congruent men, and/or aggression by gender congruent women. Gretchen shared several participants' frustration with polarization among scholars around this issue:

It's like you have people who are just on these opposite ends. Like, women can never be violent – I think most people wouldn't say that. But [THERE ARE] people who say there's absolutely no parallel. And then other people that say it's 100% the same. To me, we're supposed to be academics and thinking about things in more nuanced, complex ways. And both of those seem overly simplistic.

Participants who had studied gendered patterns in sexual violence were somewhat divided on the presence/scope of variation. Max, a criminologist, recalled projects on sexual offending in which "the models for women generally explain less than half of the variance of the models for men." She was staunchly critical of precasting in causal studies:

I think it's that, for so long, we've fixated on males' violence, sexual and psychological and physical, or all three. We really haven't done enough to study women's violence alone to get a sense of what the heck's going on... There are sort of those criss-crosses that take place, and yes, we've myopically focused on women as victims, so we're probably better at predicting women's victimization than men's.

Clara, a psychologist, also expressed support for gender inclusive approaches. However, unlike Max, she was skeptical that people of different genders required different causal models or should be assessed separately:

Certainly, you know, women are far more likely to be sexually assaulted and raped than are men. However, you know, there are a lot of boys and men who are sexually assaulted and raped. And they are completely ignored. And so it seems to me that you almost have to include both just to see what's going on, because both get negated, you know? So what's happening? And [TO SUGGEST THAT] here's this theory for girls and here's one for boys – I don't buy it.

Such questions can only be settled through gender inclusive, empirical research. Of course, this would require researchers (and perhaps also grant funding institutions) to believe that there are questions to settle, and that diverse gendered patterns in sexual violence merit investigation notwithstanding the pervasiveness of male-assigned men's violence toward female-assigned women.

Prevention Strategies: Bystander Approaches and Sex Education

Many scholars who study the causes of sexual violence engage in prevention work. For the past several years, bystander programs have dominated such work in the United States. These programs aim to produce active bystanders through raising awareness of sexual violence, training people to recognize risky situations, and to develop individuals' skills for actively intervening. The concept of "risky situations" is often quite broad, encompassing imminent and in-progress acts of sexual violence as well as more subtle behaviors such as telling sexist jokes, or expressing victim-blaming attitudes when discussing a high profile sexual harassment case. Bystander trainees are often provided with a range of tools for intervening in such situations, such as verbally challenging the use of sexist language, checking in with people who seem uncomfortable, and distracting potential assailants and/or victims in higher risk situations. Freshman orientation programs in colleges and universities frequently incorporate sexual violence prevention units, with an emphasis on bystander intervention.

Several participants in this study had worked on bystander programming before, or collaborated with scholars and providers in this area. While they expressed enthusiasm for the

logic of bystander efforts – particularly the notion that sexual violence is a community issue – some shared concerns about the pace with which such programs had become the national standard. It seemed that large-scale adoption of bystander prevention by state and higher education officials had preceded rigorous evaluation and refinement. Wendy commented that “campus climate surveys, bystander intervention, consent trainings are all over in college campuses – but we don’t have a good handle on whether they’re effective or helpful.” Stacey expanded on this sentiment, embracing the community accountability aspect but questioning the impact on actual rates of sexual violence:

I think the cultural climate piece is really good. Sort of this idea that we’re all responsible for changing the environment around us...[BUT] there’s not good data to support that this is actually reducing sexual assaults at all. That doesn’t necessarily mean it’s pointless – like, it still might be worthwhile to change how we all talk, and how we all behave – but it’s not clear that’s changing behavior...It’s not clear that if someone intervenes and stops someone from taking a drunk woman up to the room, that this person doesn’t go find another drunk woman to take up to the room...It’s not that I’m opposed to it, and I think it could be really useful. But I think it needs more testing, and I think we’ve all kind of latched onto it before we have the data.

Audrey was a bit more pessimistic:

I think the evidence shows that we’re not doing a great job with our current efforts, in terms of actually preventing violence. I think a lot of the trainings that we’ve done – I actually don’t have great confidence that even the bystander stuff is going to do it. Because I think so much of this happens in places where there isn’t a third person. And/or the people who are around are not in a position where they could actually bystand. And I say as someone who believes, I don’t think they hurt things, but I don’t believe they’re the solution. They’re not likely to lead to the population level change that we need.

Scholars who shared this sentiment were not arguing that bystander prevention was entirely ineffective or counterproductive, but were rather suggesting that the evidence was too incomplete to justify the present scope of investment in these programs. They called for further evaluation research, continued efforts to adapt existing interventions to address logistical

barriers to effective bystanding such as intoxication and peer pressure against intervening, and investment in tailoring programs to meet the needs of diverse communities.

A single intervention program could never mitigate or eliminate all factors identified in the literature as promoting or justifying rape. Bystander behaviors are largely distinct from issues with sexual communication, for example, such as capacities for conveying and interpreting sexual consent and refusal, that many scholars and activists have written about. Consequently, even participants who were enthusiastic about bystander intervention expressed a need to supplement these programs with additional efforts. Rebecca, a public health scholar, posed an intriguing question in this vein: “does rape prevention have to look like rape prevention?” And if not, what else might it look like? She elaborated:

Let’s talk about sex education, and if we can teach people how to have – not just healthy and consensual sex, but also fulfilling orgasmic sex. Like, will we still see rape? Why don’t we go to an assets-based approach instead of a deficits-based approach? And why don’t we also consider the fact that even comprehensive sex education is values-based in a lot of ways? A lot of it is very heteronormative. And a lot of it also is based on this idea of healthy relationships, and there are many young people –whether they’re in middle school, high school, college – that don’t necessarily want to have a relationship, but they still want to have sexual interactions.

Significantly, Rebecca proposed an emphasis on pleasure and personal fulfillment, and for recognizing and valuing diversity in sexual desires and behaviors. She argued that this might comprise a powerful approach to reducing sexual violence.

While many curricula prioritize abstinence or, in the case of what is often called “comprehensive” sex education, understanding and avoiding sexual risk, sex education programs can and sometimes do encourage nuanced and reflective engagement with concepts such as sexual consent and sexual autonomy. Jeff, a philosopher with a background in sexuality research, commented that:

Through all those sex education programs, I’ve always found something missing. And the thing that I think is missing is broadly construed as some sort of

character building, or certain techniques of the self where people have to realize what they want and what they desire. Instead of following the same sort of sexual or relationship script.

When I asked him to envision a more ideal program, he elaborated:

I think having a very robust picture of consent would be great. They could go through philosophical case studies, and then just bring up whether this is an instance of consent or there's something problematic with it. Because I think a lot of students don't recognize how complicated consent can be. And I think just bringing up various scenarios would help. I also think that they can bring in a gender dynamic...especially [FOR] young men who think consent is, "well, I heard a 'yes' and I got a 'yes,' so now it's ok," without recognizing that there's a whole context about why, usually, the woman said yes. Is it because she genuinely wanted to, or because that was the least option available, or she was pressured, or she was afraid of the alternatives? And I think bringing those out into the classroom, the framework helps students recognize that consent is much more complicated. And hopefully gets them to thinking about how they, themselves, would exercise consent when that time comes.

This approach to sex education might work for children, adolescents, or young adults, provided that content and language were tailored appropriately.

Participants with backgrounds in sex education and sexual violence research consistently portrayed these fields as complementary. Marion, a public health scholar, recalled that her experiences in sex education provided "the perspective of knowing what people don't know...and the interests people have around healthy relationships and communication styles."

Stacey advocated strongly for sex education as a means of preventing sexual assault:

How do people talk about consent when they don't even have terms for sexual acts? So many of these college students, really the first formal sex education they get is like this online rape prevention program, which seems like not the place to be starting.

Echoing Rebecca's comments about whether rape prevention needs to look like rape prevention, Stacey further suggested:

...framing it as kind of sex communication and pleasure training. But with a sort of hidden agenda that we think this is also helpful in terms of better consent communication and other things.

Of course, these approaches would require the same sort of rigorous development, refinement, tailoring, and evaluation that Stacey and others advocated for bystander interventions.

Complex and Contentious Accountings

Causal inquiries comprise a rich and vibrant subfield in sexual violence research. In as little as four decades, scientists have moved through a range of research priorities and theoretical frameworks to account for sexual violence. Whereas research by Malamuth and colleagues (Malamuth 1981; Malamuth, Haber and Feshbach 1980), emphasizing sexual arousal and using penile plethysmography to predict men's aggression, was dominant in the late 1970s and early 1980s; investigations by McMahon and Banyard (McMahon 2010; McMahon and Banyard 2012), emphasizing bystander intervention as a preventive approach, reached farthest in recent years. Accounts that rely on sexual (mis)communication or evolution remain controversial, largely due to (empirically unexamined) fears of misuse – yet the former remains relatively prominent in sexual violence research, and the latter seems to have declined. At the same time, the most widely cited research has consistently situated rape within – or rather, engaged cultural scenarios that presume – heterosexual encounters, informed by men's sexual aggression and women's vulnerability to assault. The historical, though presently declining, dominance of psychological and psychiatric research has produced an immense body of knowledge on individual-level predictors of aggression, victimization, and bystanding. Causal research has also consistently prioritized research with college students, even more than the broader field of sexual violence research.

Collectively, these historical trends indicate that scientists are well-poised to account for sexual aggression by individual heterosexual and gender congruent undergraduate men, sexual victimization of individual heterosexual and gender congruent college women, and bystander

attitudes and behaviors in both groups. If the forces that promote and deter violence within undergraduate communities also apply in other contexts, the emphasis on campus research is not necessarily a problem. If this is not the case, there are scientific reasons to expand causal inquiries to encompass a broader range of environments. Likewise, if the forces that promote and deter violence do not vary by gender and sexuality, there may be little cause for more gender inclusive scholarship. If this is not the case, scientists should work to broaden dominant conceptualizations regarding who may enact/fill the roles of “aggressor” and “victim/survivor.”

Interview participants offered several promising directions for causal research that are worth reiterating here. Many scientists and other scholars called for more interdisciplinary scholarship, as well as overall greater involvement among scholars in disciplines such as sociology and anthropology who are trained to consider institutional, cultural, and other systemic dimensions of social problems. This suggestion was accompanied by support for more intersectional research. Even if the individual and systemic causes of sexual aggression and victimization do not vary by gender and sexuality, the populations of “gender congruent heterosexual men” and “gender congruent heterosexual women” are hardly monolithic. Their members vary by race, ethnicity, skin color, disability status, education, class background, immigration background, citizenship status, place of origin, place of residence, political orientation, alignment with or divergence from normative beauty standards, and more. These and other factors may affect what Miranda referred to as “the distribution of vulnerability.”

In the realm of prevention, many participants expressed support for bystander intervention while also calling for critical and rigorous evaluation of such approaches’ impact on rates of aggression and victimization. Several also pointed to sex education as a promising avenue for social change. Programs labeled as “sex education” might be more effective than those labeled “rape prevention” for promoting critical engagement with sexual consent.

Moreover, some participants suggested that prioritizing the development of sexual subjectivity and fulfillment – and recognizing and valuing a substantial range of sexual desires, behaviors, and discourses – might ultimately serve to promote agentic sexuality and reduce violence.

CHAPTER 4

AFTER ASSAULT: THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

For sexual violence generally, I mean there are things we know. We know the criminal justice system is shitty. So do we need to spend more [GRANT] dollars learning that?

Wendy, social work scholar

... the assumptions made about forensic evidence and rape kits have been problematic. These are not “black-boxed” neutral tools or facts – they are socially constructed in their production and use, and, as such, are infused with the cultural biases inherent in a society that is imbued with rape myths and a fundamental distrust (and often disdain) of and for women... I am also surprised that there is so little critical questioning of forensic evidence and such trust (and “magic”) placed in it by the general population, and also by many criminal justice system professionals.

Madeline, sociologist

This chapter concerns scientific efforts to address the aftermath of sexual violence. I conceptualize “the effects of sexual violence” broadly. This includes individual-level outcomes for aggressors and victims/survivors, such as changes in mental and physical health; as well as broader impacts for these individuals, such as changes in social networks and interpersonal relationships, or education and professional trajectories. Effects also include the impact of disclosures and publicized incidents on aggressors and victims’ social and professional networks, larger social communities, and institutions. Thinking back to the agential realist analysis in Chapter 2, effects research also encompasses the labeling of experiences. When a sexually violent incident occurs, one dimension of its impact concerns whether and how consistently the victim/survivor, aggressor, personal acquaintances of these individuals, local community members, jurors, and other actors call it rape or sexual assault¹⁴.

¹⁴ This dimension of effects research speaks to the entanglements among broader historical contexts (controversies over the scope and “real” nature of rape), researchers’ backgrounds and values/politics commitments (e.g., training in psychology and quantitative methods, feminist commitments to identifying

Effects research may also address help-seeking behaviors by survivors and their significant others, and institutional responses in domains such as police departments, courts, prisons, schools, rape crisis centers, workplaces, colleges and universities, hospitals and clinics, and legislatures. As with evaluations of bystander interventions in Chapter 3, I have included evaluations of clinical and criminal justice processes in this chapter. Such works often concern a range of outcomes or aftermath events, more so than may be immediately apparent. A study on the treatment of PTSD among rape survivors, for example, concerns mental health outcomes (the development or not of PTSD), support seeking behaviors (pursuit of mental health resources, including those that require a waiting period), persistence in therapeutic programs (particularly through the measurement and analysis of attrition before and during treatment), and the ultimate impact of various therapies on post-rape diagnosis or symptomology. Some scholars in this subfield also consider the capacity for sexual violence to influence the social distribution of power and other resources. Rather than conceive of patriarchy as a solely causal factor, they might consider the extent to which men's violence against women perpetuates gender inequality and the cultural devaluing of women.

Much like causal inquiries, effects research appears somewhat murky or amorphous through an agential realist lens. Such work requires scientists to distinguish

and supporting survivors, and investment in linking survivors with services), research instruments (e.g., quantitative survey informed by discreet definitions for various forms of victimization), and "objects" of study (e.g., "rape" and "the effects of rape"). The question of "whether Victim Y acknowledges her rape" only makes sense if an observer can say, definitively, that "Victim Y has been raped." As sociologist Susan pointed out regarding her work with queer survivors, Victim Y is more likely to pursue rape crisis services if she considers herself a victim/survivor. Encouraging people to claim identifications such as "rape victim" can be a powerful means of demonstrating that rape is a widespread phenomenon and ensuring that people who have experienced violence receive support. Simultaneously, this logic attributes definitive authority to researchers (and others that they draw on, such as state legislators). Individuals whose experiences meet scientists' criteria for rape, but do not think of themselves as having experienced rape, "fail to acknowledge" what has "really happened" to them. Individuals who do think of themselves as having experienced rape, but whose experiences do not meet scientists' criteria, are rarely acknowledged by the researchers, themselves and are thereby relegated to a sort of liminal or imperceptible status.

the object of sexual violence from its aftermath. Assessing “institutional responses to sexual violence,” a common theme in this research (not to mention a categorization that I, myself made when describing scientists’ various roles in this field in Chapter 1), requires enacting agential cuts between those institutions’ actions and the events/practices/objects that came “before.” But when, truly, does sexual violence end? And when does the institutional response begin – and can this be distinguished from individual and interpersonal responses?

Sexual assault forensic examinations (SAFEs), “rape kits” in everyday discourse, are instructive here. These exams are quite involved, and can feel as if not more invasive and traumatizing as the assaults that precede them. Completing a SAFE requires telling and retelling one’s experience of sexual victimization. Victims/survivors who pursue care in the immediate “aftermath” are advised not to bathe or change their clothes, and to neither consume anything nor relieve themselves before the exam lest they lose evidence. If assailants committed oral, anal, or vaginal penetration – with fingers, penises, tongues, or other body parts or objects – victims will be asked to submit to medical penetration (e.g., with a speculum and/or cotton swabs). In some states or municipalities, survivors may have to speak with law enforcement in order to access medical care. Advocates may or may not be available. If these experiences feel like a “second rape,” is it necessarily accurate to locate SAFEs solely within the aftermath? To describe forensic examinations solely as a response to, rather than a furtherance or enactment of, sexual violence? Can the same object/event/practice be both a continuance of and an institutional response to sexual violence? As with Chapter 4, I have largely deferred to scientists’ own characterization of their work in determining

what counted as an effect or aftermath event. I conceive of these characterizations as enacting agential cuts within the phenomena of (scientific research on) sexual violence.

Throughout data collection and broader literature searches, I could not find a public or scientific controversy in effects research comparable to those around communication-based models, evolutionary accounts, or the “1 in 4 women” statistic discussed in previous chapters. Given this, I was surprised when participants shared more frustrations with this subfield than any other. Some criticism concerned a perceived tendency toward needless repetition /replication. Wendy, quoted above, was joined by several others in worrying that scholars repeatedly looked to confirm “things that we know” rather than pursuing new or hitherto neglected inquiries. Participants who had studied legal responses were often disappointed with scholarship that seemed to uncritically endorse forensic examinations and criminal prosecution as inherently positive and necessary. Madeline, quoted above, was joined by several others in suggesting that criminal justice professionals and the general public were misguided in approaching forensic evidence as providing “magic” access to the truth or automatically improving the odds of prosecution and conviction. Finally, consistent the previous chapter on casual work, many participants called for more systemic and intersectional approaches.

In this chapter, I argue that the subfield of effects or aftermath research has been dominated by psychological inquiries regarding the outcomes of sexual violence in studies that precast gender congruent men as aggressors and gender congruent women as victims. Psychological effects inquiries have also focused primarily on the outcomes of victimization at the individual level. Consequently, systemic outcomes, as well as the outcomes of other gendered manifestations of sexual violence, have been relatively

neglected. Whereas there is a substantial literature on assault survivors' potential to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and demonstrate other mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depressive symptoms, the psychological effects of perpetrating sexual violence remain largely unknown. Finally, more so than other subfields, I argue that effects research has been characterized by a tendency to endorse and reform existing institutional resources, such as criminal investigation and prosecution, with relatively minimal attention toward alternatives such as restorative justice. To justify these arguments, I review statistical trends in effects research and provide close assessments of the ten most-cited works from each decade. I then turn to participants' insights on this subfield, and consider their criticisms alongside the quantitative and qualitative trends in my own analysis.

Forty Years of Effects Research

Effects research ranked second among all study aims from 1975-2004, and barely surpassed causal inquiries from 2005-2015. Approximately 45% of all studies analyzed here investigated the effects of sexual violence (n=589). Figures 4.1-4.4 present some of the general characteristics of effects pieces in comparison with the broader field of scientific research on sexual violence, stratified by decade. Frequencies appear in Table 4.1. As quantitative trends for the broader field have been reviewed previously, I do not discuss them here except to make comparisons with the subfield of effects research.

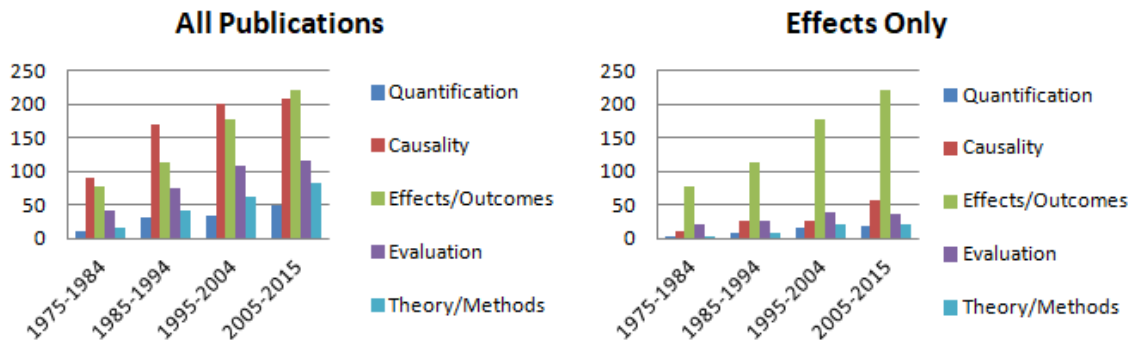


Figure 4.1. Study Aims.

Effects pieces incorporated other study aims infrequently. When they did, causality and evaluation were most likely to be included. The former might occur when investigators classified victims and nonvictims by demographic characteristics and pre-assault behaviors (often conceptualized as risk and protective factors), and further documented variation in medical and mental health across both groups. The latter might occur in studies that assessed the impact of different approaches to therapy, or secondary or tertiary prevention strategies, for individuals who had experienced or perpetrated sexual violence. There was significant variation in the relative proportion of effects studies that also embraced causal inquiries, with higher incorporation between 1985-1994 and 2005-2015 ($\chi^2 [3] = 9.22, p < .05$); otherwise, there were no significant changes over time.

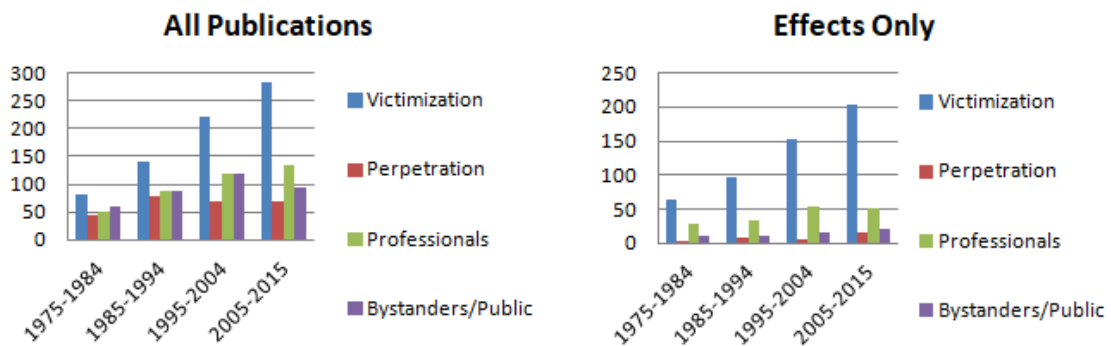


Figure 4.2. Areas of Focus.

An emphasis on victimization, while present within the broader field, is particularly pronounced within effects research. In other words, scientists seeking to document the outcomes of rape have prioritized outcomes for victims/survivors of violence. These include the impact of sexual victimization on such diverse personal and social matters as personal relationships, medical and mental health, sexual functioning, and broader perceptions of consensual and nonconsensual sexual scripts. Professionals consistently ranked a distant second. Such studies investigated the impact of sexual violence on therapists, crisis counselors, and other professionals who serve victims and/or aggressors. The remaining populations (perpetrators and bystanders) have received minimal attention in this subfield. In other words, the impacts of committing sexual aggression, of directly or indirectly witnessing sexual violence, constitute relatively low priorities. These patterns have not varied significantly over time.

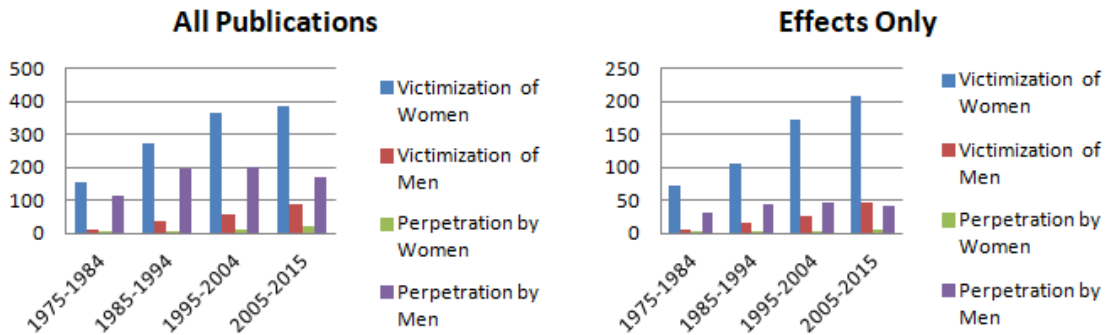


Figure 4.3. Gendered Patterns.

Much like the broader field, effects inquiries have consistently prioritized the victimization of women. Perpetration by men, victimization of men, and perpetration by women ranked second, third, and fourth, respectively, in the first three decades considered here; work on men’s victimization slightly outpaced work on men’s perpetration in effects research between 2005 and 2015. The most notable difference between overall research on sexual violence and effects inquiries concerns comparatively limited attention toward men’s aggression

in the latter; however, this is likely due to the general emphasis on victimization (and corresponding de-emphasis on perpetration) in the subfield. This pattern has intensified over time. Indeed, the only significant shift in gendered patterns concerned a decline in studies with direct references to men’s aggression, which peaked at 40% for the effects inquiries from 1975-1994, dropped to 26% in the following decade, and fell further to 19% of publications from 2005-2015 ($\chi^2 [3] = 23.49, p < .01$).

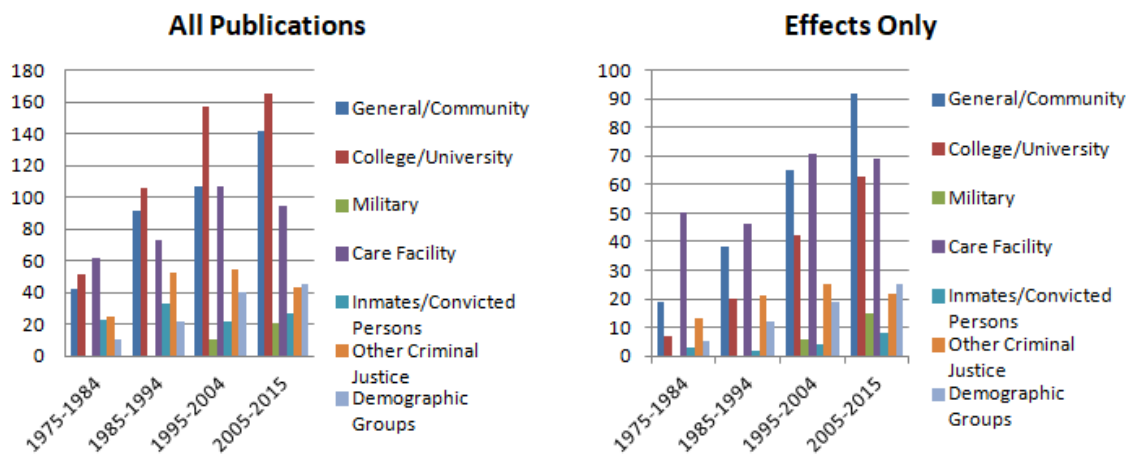


Figure 4.4. Study Population.

Effects research seems to have diverged most from the broader field in terms of target populations. Whereas most studies of sexual violence have focused on college/university students across all four decades, with general population and community samples coming in second, this pattern was reversed in the effects subfield. Whereas research with inmates and convicted persons consistently outpaced research with military personnel in the broader field from 1995-2015 (no military studies met inclusion criteria in earlier decades), this pattern was also reversed in outcomes research. Several shifts in target population reached significance within the effects subfield. These included an ongoing increase in emphasis on college students, who comprised the target population in 9% of effects pieces from 1975-1984 and 29% of effects pieces from 2005-2015 ($\chi^2 [3] = 14.44, p < .01$, inconsistent with the broader field); an increase in

military studies beginning in 1995 ($\chi^2 [3] = 13.75, p < .01$, consistent with the broader field); and a decline in studies with care facility populations, which peaked at 64% in 1975-1984 and dropped to 31% by 2005-2015 ($\chi^2 [3] = 25.98, p < .01$, more pronounced than but otherwise consistent with the broader field).

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics for All Publications and Effects Studies, By Decade.

	All Publications				Effects Pieces			
	1975-1984	1985-1994	1995-2004	2005-2015	1975-1984	1985-1994	1995-2004	2005-2015
<i>Precasting</i> ^{ac}	53 (30.11%)	91 (29.55%)	102 (25.56%)	90 (20.93%)	22 (28%)	24 (21%)	37 (21%)	28 (13%)
<i>Study Aims</i>								
Quantification	11 (6.25%)	32 (10.39%)	33 (8.27%)	49 (11.40%)	3 (4%)	9 (8%)	17 (10%)	19 (9%)
Causes of Rape ^c	91 (51.70%)	169 (54.87%)	200 (50.13%)	209 (48.60%)	12 (15%)	27 (24%)	27 (15%)	58 (26%)
Effects of Rape ^b	78 (44.32%)	113 (36.69%)	177 (44.36%)	221 (51.40%)	-	-	-	-
Evaluation	41 (23.30%)	76 (24.68%)	108 (27.07%)	115 (26.74%)	22 (28%)	27 (24%)	39 (22%)	36 (16%)
Theory/Methods ^b	16 (9.09%)	42 (13.64%)	63 (15.79%)	83 (19.30%)	2 (3%)	9 (8%)	20 (11%)	20 (9%)
<i>Overall Focus</i>								
Victimization ^b	82 (46.59%)	140 (45.45%)	221 (55.39%)	283 (65.81%)	64 (82%)	96 (85%)	153 (86%)	203 (92%)
Perpetration ^b	43 (24.43%)	77 (25.00%)	69 (17.29%)	68 (15.81%)	3 (4%)	9 (8%)	6 (3%)	15 (7%)
Professionals	49 (27.84%)	88 (28.57%)	118 (29.57%)	134 (31.16%)	29 (37%)	34 (30%)	53 (30%)	52 (24%)
Bystanders/General Public ^b	59 (33.52%)	88 (28.57%)	118 (29.57%)	93 (21.63%)	10 (13%)	11 (10%)	16 (9%)	22 (10%)
<i>Gendered Patterns</i>								
Victimization of Women	154 (87.50%)	275 (89.29%)	367 (91.98%)	387 (90.00%)	72 (92%)	106 (93%)	171 (97%)	207 (94%)
Victimization of Men ^b	12 (6.82%)	37 (12.01%)	60 (15.04%)	90 (20.93%)	7 (9%)	17 (15%)	27 (15%)	46 (21%)
Perpetration by Women	3 (1.70%)	8 (2.60%)	14 (3.51%)	21 (4.88%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)	6 (3%)
Perpetration by Men ^{bd}	115 (65.34%)	196 (63.64%)	202 (50.63%)	172 (40.00%)	31 (40%)	45 (40%)	46 (26%)	41 (19%)
<i>Study Population</i>								
General/Community	42 (23.86%)	91 (29.55%)	107 (26.82%)	142 (33.02%)	19 (24%)	38 (34%)	65 (37%)	91 (41%)
College/University ^d	51 (28.98%)	106 (34.42%)	157 (39.35%)	165 (38.37%)	7 (9%)	20 (18%)	42 (24%)	63 (29%)
Military ^{bd}	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	10 (2.51%)	21 (4.88%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (3%)	15 (7%)
Care Facility ^{bd}	62 (35.23%)	73 (23.70%)	107 (26.82%)	95 (22.14%)	50 (64%)	46 (41%)	71 (40%)	69 (31%)
Inmates/Convicted Persons ^b	23 (13.07%)	33 (10.71%)	22 (5.51%)	27 (6.28%)	3 (4%)	2 (3%)	4 (2%)	8 (4%)
Other Criminal Justice	25 (14.10%)	52 (16.88%)	55 (13.78%)	43 (10.00%)	13 (17%)	21 (19%)	25 (14%)	22 (10%)
Demographic Groups	10 (5.68%)	22 (7.14%)	40 (10.03%)	45 (10.47%)	5 (6%)	12 (11%)	19 (11%)	25 (11%)

^ap<.05, ^bp<.01 for full sample of publications in chi-square analysis; ^cp<.05, ^dp<.01 for effects pieces.

Qualitative Content Analysis

As with causal works, qualitative analysis of the ten most-cited effects pieces from each decade revealed several shifts in priorities and perspectives. Whereas victims/victimization received consistent attention, professionals such as jurors and medical providers received more intermittent attention; none of the pieces analyzed here explored the impact of perpetrating sexual violence on aggressors or their interpersonal networks. Consistent with causal research, scholars embraced increasingly social and multifaceted models over time. Other trends were more unique to this subfield. Sexual violence committed against men and/or by women was addressed with some regularity in the earlier years, although this social problem was largely and increasingly conceptualized as a matter of men's violence against women ("women" and "female" were treated as synonymous in this literature across all four decades, and this is reflected in the overviews below). Scholars studying the impact of sexual violence also seemed less likely to recruit participants or assess their experiences through the use of explicit definitions; instead, sampling frames such as "women who have sought services at rape crisis centers" served to identify victims¹⁵. Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, top-cited effects works did not always emphasize sexual violence as a key issue in itself; several studies rather conceived of rape victims/survivors as an ideal population for advancing certain forms of scientific knowledge. Illuminating the complexities of PTSD or promising therapeutic techniques might be prioritized as major contributions over and above – or perhaps even without direct mention – of refining responses to the problem of sexual violence. Table 4.2 provides basic information about all 40 publications.

¹⁵ This does not mean that no definitional work occurred, but rather than any efforts to distinguish victims from nonvictims would have been carried out by other institutional actors such as crisis counselors and hospital staff. Criteria might still be as simple or vague as "anyone who pursues a sexual assault forensic exam counts as a victim" or "anyone who calls a rape crisis center for support around their personal history counts as a victim," but again, these would be decisions made by professionals at these institutions and then passed along indirectly to researchers.

Decade One: 1975-1984

Broadly speaking, dominant effects inquiries prioritized two areas in these years: (a) health outcomes for victims of sexual violence such as depression and substance use (Atkeson et al. 1982; Burgess and Holmstrom 1979; Groth and Burgess 1980; Janoff-Bulman 1979; Kaufman et al. 1980; Kilpatrick, Resick and Veronen 1981; Kilpatrick, Veronen and Resick 1979), and (b) empirical or speculative criminal justice outcomes such as reporting, conviction, and sentencing (Deitz et al. 1982; Olsen 1984 provided a feminist critique of legislation that touched on these matters; Williams 1984). Among health outcomes studies, one approached rape victims as an ideal population for understanding different forms of self-blame (Janoff-Bulman 1979); others established depression as a psychological outcome of rape, setting the stage for subsequent studies that would rely on rape victims as an ideal population for investigating major depression and PTSD (e.g., Kilpatrick, Resick and Veronen 1981)

As noted above, gendered patterns across these works diverged somewhat from their causal counterparts. Two pieces focused on sexual violence toward men; both were published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* in 1980 (volume 137, issues 2 and 7). These pieces explicitly mentioned “male rape” in the titles; while this read (to me) like a qualified version of “rape,” it nonetheless established the possibility of male victimization in the literature (Groth and Burgess 1980; Kaufman et al. 1980). The remaining works conceived of sexual violence primarily or completely as a subset of men’s violence toward women. Some employed language that rendered “rape” indistinguishable from “the rape of women” and “rape victim” indistinguishable from “female rape victim” – for example, the abstract for Kilpatrick and colleagues’ (1981) longitudinal assessment on the psychological impact of rape specifies 20

“adult victims” who are not revealed to be all female until the methods section (see also Atkeson et al. 1982).

Sampling frames in this decade and subfield stood out relative to causal research, quantification studies, and the larger field of sexual violence research. College students were minimally represented. Scientists often recruited victims/survivors through care facilities such as rape crisis centers and hospitals (Atkeson et al. 1982; Kilpatrick, Resick and Veronen 1981; Kilpatrick, Veronen and Resick 1979). This recruitment strategy allowed researchers to bypass the challenge of defining rape or other forms of sexual violence; individuals (women) who sought rape crisis services or sexual assault forensic examinations were presumed eligible. These same researchers routinely recruited “nonvictim” comparison samples from the general population or agencies that were not directly associated with violence prevention such as the YWCA. As far as I could surmise, “nonvictim” samples were not asked about their victimization histories. This reveals an assumption that women who experience rape (all three pieces had exclusively women participants) will seek treatment, and further demonstrates that these studies predate the (re)conceptualization of rape as a common occurrence.

Several scholars and disciplines seemed particularly dominant across these ten studies. A majority featured psychologists and/or psychiatrists among the authors. Moreover, seven of the top-cited works were published in psychology and psychiatry journals, including the *American Journal of Psychiatry* (3 pieces), *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (2), *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, and the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. A team of researchers led by Dean Kilpatrick was particularly well-cited; he was lead author on two studies (1981; 1979); his coauthor, psychiatrist Patricia Resick was coauthor for both of these as well as a third piece led by psychologist Beverly Atkeson (1982). Nursing scholar Ann

Burgess was lead author on one piece (Burgess and Holmstrom 1979) and second author on another (Groth and Burgess 1980), both published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*.

Decade Two: 1985-1994

Whereas top-cited works in the previous decade were somewhat split between health and criminal justice outcomes, all ten pieces in this decade prioritized victim health outcomes. These included various indicators of mental wellbeing (Burnam et al. 1988; Foa et al. 1991a; Foa et al. 1991b; Gidycz et al. 1993; Kimerling and Calhoun 1994; Koss 1985; Koss, Dinero and Seibel 1988; Resick and Schnicke 1993; Rothbaum et al. 1992) and physical wellbeing (Golding 1994; Kimerling and Calhoun 1994). One piece approached treatment seeking as an additional major outcome, with social support as a mediating factor (Kimerling and Calhoun 1994).

Several studies here relied on treatment-seeking victims for recruitment, consistent with the previous decade (Kimerling and Calhoun 1994; Resick and Schnicke 1993; Rothbaum et al. 1992). However, there were also notable expansions in recruitment strategies for victim and nonvictim samples. The Los Angeles Epidemiologic Catchment Area study, a population-based investigation of public health with a special section on sexual violence in Latino and non-Latino communities, produced two top-ten effects pieces in this decade (Burnam et al. 1988; Golding 1994). A study of PTSD treatment recruited female rape victims from victim-serving community agencies and through advertisements in local newspapers, suggesting an assumption that sexual violence victims do not necessarily seek treatment (Foa et al. 1991b). Mary Koss and her colleagues published two top-cited effects pieces with college populations (Koss 1985; Koss, Dinero and Seibel 1988). Kimerling and Calhoun (1994) recruited female rape victims through a hospital rape crisis center and recruited a comparison sample from social service agencies and public housing projects; however, all women in the latter group were surveyed for victimization

histories, and excluded from the comparison sample if they reported prior adult or child sexual assault. This reflects an increasing tendency to approach sexual violence as a widespread problem, likely informed by the work of Mary Koss and her colleagues (both pieces cited above, as well as Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987 which featured the "1 in 4 women" statistic).

Definitions of rape and other forms of sexual violence appeared in approximately half of the top ten effects pieces. Studies that relied on treatment-seeking samples were again able to bypass definitions, as individuals who sought sexual assault forensic exams or pursued therapy for sexual victimization were simply presumed to be victims. Kimerling and Calhoun screened comparison participants for victimization histories, but did not provide explicit definitions or survey items employed in this process (1994). The studies that directly confronted the matter of what "counts" were those connected with quantification projects (i.e., Koss and colleagues' work, and the Los Angeles public health study). These pieces took strikingly different approaches – Koss and colleagues relied on the Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss and Oros 1982), with questions adapted from Ohio criminal statutes and FBI definitions, designed to assess men's aggression toward women and women's victimization by men (Koss 1985; Koss, Dinero and Seibel 1988). LA population researchers conceptualized sexual assault as "forced or pressured sexual contact," documented via the following gender inclusive survey question: "In your lifetime, has anyone ever tried to pressure or force you to have sexual contact? By sexual contact I mean their touching your sexual parts, your touching their sexual parts, or sexual intercourse?" (Burnam et al. 1988: 845; Golding 1994).

In the first decade assessed here, two of the ten top-cited effects pieces focused on sexual violence against men. In this second decade, top-cited effects pieces were overwhelmingly focused on sexual violence against women. The original Sexual Experiences Survey, utilized in two pieces, only documented heterosexual incidents with men as aggressors

and women as victims (Koss 1985; Koss, Dinero and Seibel 1988). While the Los Angeles study posed victimization questions to men and women – who reported lifetime sexual assault rates of 9.4% and 16.7%, respectively (Burnam et al. 1988) – men were excluded from analyses in one of the two studies assessed here (Golding 1994). Consistent with the first decade, some scholars rendered “rape victim” synonymous with “female rape victim” by utilizing gender nonspecific language in abstracts to describe samples that were later revealed to be exclusively female (Foa et al. 1991a; Foa et al. 1991b; Resick and Schnicke 1993).

Finally, there were notable patterns in top-cited authors, disciplines, and surveys. Koss and her colleagues emerged as major figures in sexual violence outcomes research; she was lead author on two top-cited pieces (Koss 1985; Koss, Dinero and Seibel 1988), and Christine Gidycz (coauthor on the “The Scope of Rape”) was lead author on another (Gidycz et al. 1993). Notably, all three of those works were also among the top-cited causal pieces in this decade. Jacqueline Golding was sole author on one piece and third author on another (Burnam et al. 1988; Golding 1994). A research team led by Edna Foa and Barbara Rothbaum published three works on mental health and cognitive outcomes of sexual violence, with particular attention toward strategies for diagnosis and treatment (Foa et al. 1991a; Foa et al. 1991b; Rothbaum et al. 1992). Regarding discipline, all ten pieces featured psychologists or psychiatrists – or at the very least, scholars working in psychology and/or psychiatry departments – among the authors. All were published in journals specific to these disciplines, including the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* (4 pieces), *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (3 pieces), *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Health Psychology*, and the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*. Finally, the Sexual Experiences Survey and the Los Angeles Epidemiologic Catchment Area study (and its associated assessment tools) each led to two publications.

Decade Three: 1995-2004

These works revealed a remarkable expansion in scientific understandings regarding the effects of sexual violence. After a decade of overwhelming emphasis on victim health outcomes, the top-cited effects studies broadened to encompass more social and institutional impacts. Moreover, top-cited scholars expanded the scope of what might constitute an outcome of sexual violence. Rebecca Campbell and colleagues (2001) explored the “second rape,” or experiences of victim-blaming and other marginalization that many survivors experience when engaging with institutions. They further noted that such experiences varied across arenas; criminal justice and medical services were particularly lacking, whereas rape crisis centers, mental health services, and religious communities were perceived as more supportive. Sarah Ullman investigated social reactions to disclosure of victimization, and connected these reactions with more established individual outcomes such as PTSD symptoms (Ullman 1996; Ullman and Filipas 2001). In an investigation of vicarious trauma, Laura Schauben and Patricia Frazier demonstrated that incidents of sexual violence do not merely affect victims and their significant others, but also counselors and other professionals.

Investigations of mental health outcomes and therapeutic practices continued to feature within the top-cited effects literature, and sexual violence victims/survivors continued to feature as an ideal population for exploring particular mental health issues such as PTSD. However, this area of research demonstrated several noteworthy changes. Scholars explored novel indicators of recovery, such as the length and composition of survivors’ victimization narratives (Foa, Molnar and Cashman 1995) and the presence of chronic nightmares among survivors with PTSD (Krakow et al. 2001). Resick and colleagues (2002) built on much of the work described above (particularly studies involving Foa, Resick, and/or Rothbaum) to compare treatment strategies – cognitive processing therapy and prolonged exposure – that had already

proven effective. In other words, the research question shifted from “what is effective” to “which effective treatment is most promising.”

Other investigations of individual health outcomes complicated the research questions and findings in previous top-cited work. Victoria Follette and colleagues (1996) introduced the notion of cumulative trauma. Lisa Goodman and colleagues (1997) complemented this research through an exploration of reciprocal associations between sexual violence and health outcomes among women with serious mental illness. The possibility of posttraumatic growth, that positive changes might occur after or even alongside the negative outcomes typically prioritized in sexual violence research, was highlighted in a study by Patricia Frazier, Amy Conlon, and Theresa Glaser (2001).

Top-cited effects works in this decade were overwhelmingly focused on women’s victimization. All samples were entirely female, though some studies employed gender inclusive language in abstracts to describe them (e.g., referencing “rape victims” rather than specifically mentioning “female rape victims”). Schauben and Frazier’s piece on vicarious trauma was somewhat of an exception, in that they focused on professionals who serve victims (rather than on the victims, themselves). Their study also indirectly incorporated male victimization, as psychologists and sexual assault counselors reported that 87% and 94.5% of their sexually victimized clients were female, respectively. Study authors further noted that four male counselors had completed and returned questionnaires, but that their responses “were excluded because there were so few” (Schauben and Frazier 1995: 52).

Notwithstanding an expansion to more social and institutional outcomes, psychology and psychiatry continued to dominate the top-cited sexual violence effects literature. All ten pieces included at least one author from these disciplines. With the exception of Campbell and colleagues’ piece (2001), which was published in the interdisciplinary *Journal of Interpersonal*

Violence, the top-cited effects pieces were published in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* (3), *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* (2), *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (2), *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, and the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. As for individual scholars, Sarah Ullman was the only person who was first or sole author on multiple pieces in this sample; Patricia Frazier was first on one piece and second on another. Three scholars who were already established in top-cited effects literature – Edna Foa, Patricia Resick, and Mary Koss – also contributed to the top-cited works from 1995-2004. Finally, two of the top-cited effects works reviewed above were also among the top-cited causal works in this decade (Follette et al. 1996; Goodman et al. 1997).

Decade Four: 2005-2015

Consistent with the three previous decades, several studies explored health outcomes of sexual victimization. These studies collectively served to complicate and refine scientific knowledge on the complexities of PTSD (Miller and Resick 2007), including relationships between PTSD and other individual and interpersonal factors such as substance use and social support/reactions (Ullman et al. 2005; Ullman et al. 2007), as well as evidence-based practices for therapeutic intervention (Resick et al. 2012; Rothbaum, Astin and Marsteller 2005). Outcomes more typical of public health and medical research also entered the top-cited effects literature in this decade, sometimes alongside investigations of mental health outcomes such as PTSD. These included pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and support-seeking behaviors (McFarlane et al. 2005); and HIV risk behaviors (Stockman, Campbell and Celentano 2010).

For the first time since Decade One, criminal justice outcomes emerged as a priority in top-cited effects research. Daly and Bouhours (2010) studied attrition within the legal process for rape survivors in five English-speaking countries, including the U.S. and Canada (both had

increases in reporting rape to the police from the 1970s-1990s, and declines in the 2000s). Wolitzky-Taylor and colleagues replicated the National Women's Study from the 1990s to assess changes in U.S. women's reporting of rape (few changes were documented). It's important to situate these differences in the broader historical context; studies in the late 1970s and early 1980s predated or occurred alongside widespread rape law reform, whereas these more recent works were produced post-reform and also came on the heels of a considerable surge in academic research and state attention to sexual violence (at least in the United States).

Campbell, once again, was lead author on a project that posed potential challenges to the broader field of sexual violence research as well as dominant understandings of what constitutes an outcome of victimization (Campbell et al. 2010). This study utilized feminist interviewing techniques to explore the impact of participating in research on rape survivors. Many participants reported that taking part in research had been positive, and that they felt supported and heard by the researchers. Taken together with the paper described above in Decade Three, Campbell and colleagues seem to have drawn attention to accountability among professionals (including academic researchers) who engage with victims/survivors in their work.

As mentioned above, effects researchers are often able to bypass matters of definition. Studies of treatment outcomes might utilize a sampling frame of treatment seekers and assume that all people seeking counseling for sexual violence have in fact experienced it. The same goes for studies of criminal justice and medical treatment outcomes to an extent, although in the former case statutory definitions are implicit. Nonetheless, I observed an increasing tendency in Decade Four to explicitly define one or more forms of sexual violence in top-cited effects research. Such definitions often read as somewhat (hetero)normative. These definitional trends were compounded by the fact that all empirical studies of victimization were conducted with entirely female samples, often with explicit or implicit restrictions to incidents with male

aggressors. Stockman and colleagues, for example, restricted analyses to penile-vaginal contact (2010). Using the Sexual Assault Subscale of the Severity of Abuse Against Women assessment tool, McFarlane and colleagues (2005) asked women if their partners had done any of the following: “make you have sexual intercourse against your will? Physically force you to have sex? Make you have oral sex against your will? Make you have anal sex against your will? Use an object on you in a sexual way?” (100). Note that object sexual penetration is rendered synonymous with sexual violence here; in contrast, the instrument assumes that penile-vaginal intercourse, oral sex, and anal sex might all occur in both consensual and nonconsensual contexts. Wolitzky-Taylor and colleagues treated men and women as potential assailants, but only in some contexts. For example, when asking about forcible sexual violence, they asked women whether “anyone, male or female, ever made you have oral sex by force or threatening to harm you” and inquired separately about penile-vaginal and penile-anal assaults with male aggressors (Wolitzky-Taylor et al. 2011: 828). However, when asking about alcohol and drug-facilitated incidents, they only documented those committed by “a man or boy” (828-829).

There were some patterns regarding top-cited authors, all of which continued previous trends. Resick was first author on one piece and second on another, and Ullman was first author on two pieces. In terms of discipline, although psychology and psychiatry were certainly well represented, these fields were less dominant than in earlier decades. As far as I could surmise, only seven of these ten pieces features psychologists or psychiatrists among the authors. Interdisciplinary journals, including *Violence Against Women* and the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*; and public health and medical journals including *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*, and *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*; joined psychology publications such as the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *Psychology of Women*

Quarterly, and the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* as producers of top-cited research on the effects of sexual violence.

Table 4.2. Ten Top-Cited Effects Works from Each Decade.

<i>Lead Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Citations</i>
Janoff-Bulman, Ronnie	Characterological versus Behavioral Self-Blame: Inquiries into Depression and Rape	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	1979	566
Atkeson, Beverly M.	Victims of Rape: Repeated Assessment of Depressive Symptoms	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology	1982	161
Olsen, Frances	Statutory Rape: A Feminist Critique of Rights Analysis	Texas Law Review	1984	120
Kilpatrick, Dean G.	Aftermath of Rape - Recent Empirical Findings	American Journal of Orthopsychiatry	1979	116
Kilpatrick, Dean G.	Effects of a Rape Experience: A Longitudinal Study	Journal of Social Issues	1981	110
Williams, Linda S	The Classic Rape - When do Victims Report?	Social Problems	1984	106
Kaufman, Arthur	Male Rape Victims - Noninstitutionalized Assault	American Journal of Psychiatry	1980	100
Deitz, Sheila R.	Measurement of Empathy Toward Rape Victims and Rapists	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	1982	96
Groth, A. Nicholas	Male Rape - Offenders and Victims	American Journal of Psychiatry	1980	94
Burgess, Ann Wolbert	Adaptive Strategies and Recovery from Rape	American Journal of Psychiatry	1979	86
Foa, Edna B.	Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Rape Victims - A Comparison Between Cognitive Behavioral Procedures and Counseling	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology	1991	655
Rothbaum, Barbara Olasoc	A Prospective Examination of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Rape Victims	Journal of Traumatic Stress	1992	487
Resick, Patricia A.	Cognitive Processing Therapy for Sexual Assault Victims	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology	1992	470
Burnam, M. Audrey	Sexual Assault and Mental Disorders in a Community Population	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology	1988	361
Foa, Edna B.	Processing of Threat-Related Information in Rape Victims	Journal of Abnormal Psychology	1991	254
Koss, Mary P.	Stranger and Acquaintance Rape - Are there Differences in the Victim's Experience	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1988	249
Koss, Mary P.	The Hidden Rape Victim - Personality, Attitudinal, and Situational Characteristics	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1985	216

Table 4.2, Continued

Gidycz, Christine A.	Sexual Assault Experience in Adulthood and Prior Victimization Experiences - A Prospective Analysis	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1993	208
Kimerling, Rachel	Somatic Symptoms, Social Support, and Treatment Seeking Among Sexual Assault Victims	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology	1994	197
Golding, Jacqueline M.	Sexual Assault History and Physical Health in Randomly Selected Los Angeles Women	Health Psychology	1994	182
Resick, Patricia A.	A Comparison of Cognitive-Processing Therapy with Prolonged Exposure and a Waiting Condition for the Treatment of Chronic Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Female Rape Victims	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology	2002	465
Follette, Victoria M.	Cumulative Trauma: The Impact of Child Sexual Abuse, Adult Sexual Assault, and Spouse Abuse	Journal of Traumatic Stress	1996	215
Foa, Edna B.	Change in Rape Narratives During Exposure Therapy for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	Journal of Traumatic Stress	1995	211
Krakow, Barry	Imagery Rehearsal Therapy for Chronic Nightmares in Sexual Assault Survivors with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder - A Randomized Control Trial	Journal of the American Medical Association	2001	199
Frazier, Patricia A.	Positive and Negative Life Changes Following Sexual Assault	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology	2001	192
Goodman, Lisa A.	Physical and Sexual Assault History in Women with Serious Mental Illness: Prevalence, Correlates, Treatment, and Future Research Directions	Schizophrenia Bulletin	1997	187
Schauben, Laura J.	Vicarious Trauma - The Effects on Female Counselors of Working with Sexual Violence Survivors	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1995	151
Ullman, Sarah E.	Predictors of PTSD Symptom Severity and Social Reactions in Sexual Assault Victims	Journal of Traumatic Stress	2001	144
Campbell, Rebecca	Preventing the Second Rape - Rape Survivors' Experiences with Community Service Providers	Journal of Interpersonal Violence	2001	133
Ullman, Sarah E.	Social Reactions, Coping Strategies, and Self-Blame Attributions in Adjustment to Sexual Assault	Psychology of Women Quarterly	1996	128
Rothbaum, Barbara Olasoc	Prolonged Exposure versus Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) for PTSD Rape Victims	Journal of Traumatic Stress	2005	125

McFarlane, Judith	Intimate Partner Sexual Assault Against Women: Frequency, Health Consequences, and Treatment Outcomes	Obstetrics and Gynecology	2005	100
Ullman, Sarah E.	Structural Models of the Relations of Assault Severity, Social Support, Avoidance Coping, Self-Blame, and PTSD Among Sexual Assault Survivors	Psychology of Women Quarterly	2007	89
Ullman, Sarah E.	Trauma Exposure, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Problem Drinking in Sexual Assault Survivors	Journal of Studies on Alcohol	2005	75
Miller, Mark W.	Internalizing and Externalizing Subtypes in Female Sexual Assault Survivors: Implications for the Understanding of Complex PTSD	Behavior Therapy	2007	75
Resick, Patricia A.	Long-Term Outcomes of Cognitive-Behavioral Treatments for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder among Female Rape Survivors	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology	2012	51
Daly, Kathleen	Rape and Attrition in the Legal Process - A Comparative Analysis of Five Countries	Crime and Justice - A Review of Research	2010	37
Campbell, Rebecca	What Has it Been Like for You to Talk with Me Today? The Impact of Participating in Interview Research on Rape Survivors	Violence Against Women	2010	27
Wolitzky-Taylor, Kate B.	Is Rape Reporting on the Rise? A Comparison of Women with Reported versus Unreported Rape Experiences in the National Women's Study - Replication	Journal of Interpersonal Violence	2011	27
Stockman, Jamila K.	Sexual Violence and HIV Risk Behaviors among a Nationally Representative Sample of Heterosexual American Women - The Importance of Sexual Coercion	Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes	2010	26

Citations current as of February 2016.

Interviews

When considering the subfield of effects research, many participants called for more systemic and intersectional scholarship. Some of this criticism was linked with a perceived dominance of psychological/psychiatric and other individual-level inquiries; as with causal inquiries, participants across disciplines appreciated the value of individual-level investigations, but cautioned against treating such work as comprehensive or exhaustive. Some scholars were critical of what they perceived as unnecessary replication in this subfield. Finally, participants who had studied legal responses to sexual violence called for specific shifts in this arena.

Calls for Systemic and Intersectional Effects Inquiries

Psychology and psychiatry have historically and consistently dominated this subfield – even more so than in causal research. Participants across disciplines appreciated the substantial literature on individual outcomes of victimization, including individual experiences navigating criminal justice and care systems (this was less applicable for aggression, in that the impact of committing acts of sexual violence has received minimal attention in science). Once again, this appreciation was paired with a call for more interdisciplinary and systemic investigations, along with greater emphasis on intersectional analyses.

The sociologists and anthropologists in this study often called for more attention toward sexual violence within their own disciplines. Virginia described sexual violence as “kind of invisible” in sociological research on “poverty, eviction, labor market processes, lots of processes of inequality.” When scholars in these fields encountered stories of victimization, even pervasive accounts, sexual violence was analytically “glossed over instead of being a core process in the reproduction of poverty. It’s kind of a peripheral process.” Virginia and other scholars were also critical of the extent to which sexual violence research had emphasized

individual-level outcomes and experiences. A study of individual women's victimization experiences might well control for income or education as a proxy for social class, but this would be insufficient to capture the capacity of sexual violence to reproduce and (re)feminize poverty.

Cynthia, a psychologist, commented that research projects and normative assumptions about "what victims should do" were often based on the lives and experiences of White women in well-resourced communities. She recalled a project on sexual violence in Native American reservation communities that challenged her own "understanding [OF] what it meant to be White" and led her to recognize "how all of these things I had seen as neutral or default...were just really ways of performing race and class and culture that I had not been previously aware of." When I asked her for an example, she elaborated:

The majority of victims, [POLICE INVOLVEMENT] doesn't make things better. But I think with particular regard to a lot of reservation communities, many of them are literally on the verge of extinction. And even compared to other communities of color in the United States or elsewhere, I mean you can talk about the injustices of the criminal justice system with respect to African Americans or Latinos, and there is certainly a lot to say about that. A lot of harms that get taken about the imprisonment of such a huge proportion of those communities. But when you're talking about [SMALL TRIBAL COMMUNITIES], and when you're looking at any particular generation of them, every individual guy that you take out of that community for whatever reason is, like, literally a threat to the whole community in a way that I don't think White people can possibly understand. [OUTSIDERS ASK] "Why don't you just call the police? Why don't you just leave?" And you know, they're trying to preserve their tribe, their culture and their whole way of life. You can't afford to write men off in the way that is such a common response in White culture.

In sharing these insights, Cynthia called for tailoring research and activist projects to specific populations and spaces, and involving in-group participants when possible. Many efforts that might seem promising in predominantly White communities, such as improving procedures for reporting an assault to the police, or even ensuring that victims/survivors have access to supportive advocates at trial, might have minimal impacts when community preservation takes priority over holding particular aggressors criminally accountable. Similar concerns might apply

in other marginalized populations – other ethnic or racial minority communities, queer communities, transgender communities, religious minority communities – that fear losing members, or are wary of inadequate or harmful treatment by criminal justice professionals.

Geographic variation also emerged as an important dimension of institutional and interpersonal outcomes. Max, a criminologist, suggested that institutional support systems vary in impact among urban and rural spaces:

We tend to think of crime as being an urban problem. But when we look at interpersonal crime, it's just as prevalent in rural areas...[IF NOT] more prevalent in rural areas. And a large part of that is because the victim and offender relationship, you know, sexual assaults are more likely to occur among acquaintances. And in rural areas, the acquaintance density rates are much, much higher. Everybody knows everybody. And so consequently, when somebody's assaulted, they may not report to the police, but they're much more likely to go to a rape crisis center. You know? Even, maybe even precisely because everybody knows everybody. So if your car is parked at the cop shop, are they going to call your husband and say "hey, I saw your wife the other day at the cops'. What's going on?" So in other words, is it a safer avenue?

Max's insights reinforce Cynthia's point that, relative to other forms of help-seeking, contacting the police may seem too risky or even counterproductive in smaller communities. Such matters might easily be missed if professional researchers – many of whom are based in urban settings – prioritize local or single-site studies, or do not take sufficient account of social inequalities and demographic variation in sampling and/or data interpretation. It can be dangerous to assume that the criminal justice and other services most often pursued by White, heterosexual, middle class, and gender congruent women in urban spaces may be generalized to sexual violence victims/survivors of all identifications, locations, and backgrounds.

"Settled" and "Unsettled" Questions

In scientific research, it is common for multiple scholars to pursue similar projects and compare findings. "Replication" with similar populations and environments can reveal in-group

consistencies and variation. “Replication” with different populations and environments can aid in identifying the sorts of issues addressed in the previous section. Ultimately, with enough consistency or consensus or other sufficiently compelling evidence, matters of scientific fact may become “settled” or “established.” Scholars in science studies have criticized the practice of replication as circular and problematic, arguing that scientists may selectively engage newer or repeat efforts to confirm theoretical assumptions (Collins 1975; Godin and Gingras 2002; Shapin and Schaffer 2011/1985). If Study B reinforces Study A, the author of Study A may count as a successful replication and thereby strengthen the credibility of Study A. If Study C diverges, this may be strategically attributed to variation in conditions rather than any “real” problems in Study A. More plainly, scientists may opt to reserve the term “replication” for studies that confirm initial findings (if they accept those findings) or challenge them (if they do not).

It is also important to note that the settling of scientific facts is a collective process. There is no universal measurement for determining when this occurs, or definitive moment of settling that closes lines of inquiry. An individual researcher or team may not authoritatively declare some matters decided and others undecided, but must seek to build something close to scientific consensus or at least provide forms of evidence that are considered too compelling to dispute (Epstein 1996; Jasanoff 2005; Shapin and Schaffer 2011/1985). Yet once such consensus has been reached, scientists may draw criticism for pursuing “needless replication” of prior inquiries. If a matter of fact seems settled, or a line of inquiry has been deemed unproductive, researchers may expect their peers to pursue other questions. Some aspects of this “settling” process appeared in the preceding qualitative content analyses, as dominant psychological and psychiatric literature moved from asking whether and to what extent female rape victims develop PTSD towards asking how best to treat female rape victims with post-traumatic symptoms. The former line of research approached survivors’ development of PTSD as an open

question, the latter treated PTSD outcomes as a given. In 2018, it might be difficult to publish work with a central finding that “people who experience sexual victimization may develop mental health issues,” but there is likely still support for refining therapeutic services.

Several participants criticized what they perceived as stagnation or unnecessary repetition in effects research. I heard this criticism most often regarding criminal justice processes and individual responses to sexual victimization. Wendy, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, was frustrated with lines of research that seemed simply to confirm “things that we know,” such as that “the criminal justice system is shitty.” Kristen, a sociologist, offered a similar perspective:

Based on systems and institutions that are failing us – I think we really need to think about how, and this is a conversation maybe with carceral feminism, like how do we get away from that? What can we get into play that will empower people, and heal people, that we do not have to use these broken systems? I’m kind of frustrated with the reform, reform, reform. This goes in hand with some of the Title IX stuff happening. We need to have really important, ground-breaking discussions about transformation and transforming – getting us outside of all that...We need to get together and talk about this. Everyone wants it, but we don’t know how to do it. And everyone’s stuck. We’re stuck. We’ve got to think of something.

It’s notable that Kristen described more transformative scholarship as something “everyone wants, but we don’t know how to do it.” During their interviews, she and Wendy both expressed an interest in more collective engagement among researchers to generate new ideas and critical (re)assessments of sexual violence scholarship.

In some instances, participants connected unproductive lines of research to broader issues within academia. The imperative to “publish or perish” might encourage scientists to pursue projects that seem easy to design and complete, or likely to produce (statistically) significant and thus publishable results, even if they do little to advance scientific knowledge or affect social change. Cynthia raised this concern when I asked what advice she might give a young scholar entering the field of sexual violence research:

So, probably what I would most like to say is that it is really important to "stay woke" not only to the things that violence researchers and others with a social justice bent rail against all the time, but also to the conventions and biases that are part of the academic world too. There are many, many institutional forces that can push people into mediocre, incremental, and even repetitive research. Some 40 years after the phenomenon has been fully established, I still see so many papers on basic findings, such as "people don't like getting victimized." That's no more scientific than another carefully crafted study showing that the earth is round.

While such institutional forces are not restricted to the research on the aftermath of sexual violence, I rarely encountered such criticisms when discussing causal or quantification work with participants.

Legal Responses: Reconsidering Reliance on Forensics and Criminal Prosecution

A range of institutions respond to sexual violence. Criminal justice looms particularly large here, and not merely in more obvious contexts such as police departments, prosecutorial agencies, courts, and prisons. Title IX sexual violence investigations and adjudication proceedings in higher education function as surrogate police and prosecutorial responses, albeit with reduced standards of proof and punitive capacities. Hospitals and clinics that provide sexual assault forensic examinations, commonly known as "rape kits," seek to care for survivors and build evidence for criminal investigations simultaneously (Mulla 2014). Rape crisis centers often provide referrals and basic information for navigating criminal justice processes, and participate more directly through medical and court accompaniment.

Although interview participants touched upon a range of institutional responses to sexual violence, many reserved their harshest critiques and most comprehensive recommendations for law and (criminal) justice. These insights took two general forms. Some scholars criticized what they perceived as overreliance on and misplaced faith in sexual assault forensic examinations. Others called out what they perceived as overreliance on criminal

prosecution and criminal justice conceptualizations of “success” in responding to violence, and advocated for more investment in providing alternatives such as restorative justice.

Some researchers regarded the prosecutorial value of sexual assault forensic evidence as an open question. The broader context of public scandal over untested rape kits (Reilly 2015) lent urgency to the matter. Tanya, a criminologist, commented:

I think the whole rape kit issue is one that needs additional work. We need to know why these kits aren't tested, and what would happen if more of them were. You know, would that enhance the odds of prosecution and conviction.

Note that Tanya did not demand that all untested rape kits be thoroughly processed, but rather wanted to account for testing practices to date and to determine whether testing rape kits would substantively affect prosecution.

Across all interviews, no one offered an unqualified endorsement of forensic examinations. If the matter had been settled, it was settled in the negative. Pam, a criminologist, suggested that overreliance on forensics was not only unproductive but potentially harmful:

We talk a lot about victims getting rape kits completed, but when you look at the research...most of the cases that involve sexual assault involve people known to the victim. And the rape kit doesn't have much value in the cases. And the argument that “well we're doing it because maybe that person raped somebody else,” it kind of almost perpetuates the idea of a serial rapist. And the question is, is that correct? And is that right? And what's the implication for victims who are going through these rape kits, that are pretty intensive and personal and, you know, potentially traumatizing? Are we doing what's right for the victim, or are we doing what's right for what the system wants?

Researchers and providers tend to consider sexual assault forensic exams invasive and potentially traumatizing (Mulla 2014). Pam suggested that this established harm to victims be considered alongside the impact of forensic evidence at trial. She was critical of arguments that justified widespread pursuit of rape kits as a means of identifying serial rapists, and worried that

this deployment of forensic technology might produce the very scientific knowledge that justified its use.

If sexual assault forensic evidence has minimal impact at trial, why is there a controversy over untested rape kits? Many researchers' uncertainty or skepticism toward such exams does not extend to the general public, or the police and prosecutors tasked with addressing sexual violence. Madeline, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, shared frustration with public (mis)trust in forensics. Miranda offered a similar critique of public perceptions, particularly regarding the varying credibility awarded to forensic evidence and individual – particularly individual women's – narrative accounts:

Miranda: The public loves their forensics, right? And then people get very outraged about DNA backlogs, rape kit backlogs, for example. And for me, that is a manufactured crisis. Because you know, it is not important to process a rape kit if you know who the assailant is...And then it is not important to insist that we have some kind of physical evidence, if you have credible testimony. And I think that pushing that narrative forward, that we have to have this forensic evidence – which is actually like, it's really inconclusive often, and people just argue. Even in stranger assaults, what we've seen is that people argue that it was consensual, or it was transactional...The number of times a defense attorney will say "oh, it was transactional sex." And the prosecutor will say "why is she arguing it was sexual assault" and "oh, he didn't pay her, so then it became rape." I mean, it's very ridiculous. But I think part of it is, we're continually demoting testimony, particularly the testimony of women, right? And that's been documented.

Ethan: right, but if the crisis is the backlog, then...

Miranda: yeah, so if you just solve the backlog, then we would solve all the rapes. That's not going to happen. Because that's not what's happening.

When I asked what recommendations she had for future scholarship in this area, Miranda suggested "taking really good research and turning it over to a team of publicists" so that empirically-based doubts about the value of forensic evidence "can make their way into the public."

Many participants also shared concerns regarding police and prosecutorial responses to sexual violence as well as scientific research on those responses. Amy, a legal scholar, noted that conceptualizations of “good outcomes” in criminal justice often favored institutional actors at the expense of victims/survivors:

So the victim witness comes in, and is raked over the coals during cross-examination, but nevertheless they get a conviction. And right, the prosecutor might see that as a success, the victim witness and the advocate might be like, not sure. Not sure about that. If that sends her back to therapy for two years, maybe that wasn't a success, right?

In this scenario, the interests of the victim seem to be at odds with those of the state.

Consequently, it is difficult to conceive of an outcome that would be “good” or “successful” for the prosecutor, complainant, and antiviolence advocate simultaneously.

While there were certainly no calls for an end to criminal investigation and prosecution, several participants expressed a need for alternatives. Madeline noted that “conviction rates have never really increased and are dismally low,” and cautioned that “I also don't really think increased incarceration in general is a great direction for any society.” Lisa, a psychologist, called for alternatives when considering how she and her family might respond to sexual victimization:

I'll tell you personally, if I were raped, if my daughter were raped, I would – we would go and report, and then we would go home. I would not go through this process. Our adversarial legal system is a killer. And I've watched enough rape trials that just, they just go after the victim...

That's why I really like that...restorative justice approach. If the victim and the offender can meet, or come to some common agreement, the victim wants to say “this was not my fault, I was done wrong.” And if somebody would say that with authority, that often is extremely helpful. And yet what family members and friends often say is “why were you there? What did you wear? What did you do to give him that impression? Why did you go out with him? Why did you get in that car?”

Restorative justice repeatedly emerged as a promising alternative. This approach involves meetings facilitated by a third party. The “justice” restored is not comprised of convictions or incarcerations but rather takes varied forms that are tailored to victims' and others' needs. For

example, if a survivor simply wants to have their story heard, and to have the person who harmed them listen and openly admit to that harm, this may be achieved within restorative justice conferencing.

Rebecca, a public health scholar, commented that criminal justice processes tend to center solely on state conceptualizations of harm done by an individual defendant to an individual complainant. She believed that restorative justice offered a way to incorporate broader concerns:

There are many people who are victimized that want to be able to confront the person who harmed them in a place where there's a facilitated meeting to minimize chances of reabuse. And be able to say, this is the harm that you did to me, and here's the impact it had. And I think restorative justice is a promising way to do that.

And I think I like it because it also really looks at the ripple effect of harm. In restorative justice conferencing, you also can include people beyond the direct victim. So you can include the victim's family and friends, you can include the family and friends of the perpetrator. And they can also express how the harm affected them. You know, because it can be really jarring. Let's say we're dealing with a campus sexual misconduct. The person who is admitting that, "yeah, I harmed someone sexually on campus." I mean, their parents, what happens to them? There is an emotional toll that goes beyond the direct people involved. And then community harms. When we hear that a sexual assault happens on campus, it affects people's feelings on campus safety.

Victims and aggressors, as well as other individuals in their social networks who have been affected by an incident (or accusation) of violence, may all participate and have opportunities to share their perspectives.

Studying the Aftermath

Effects research demonstrates considerable variation in study population. Local, municipal, and larger communities; colleges and universities; and individuals pursuing services through rape crisis centers, hospitals and clinics, and criminal justice institutions are all well represented in this literature. In this sense, effects research is particularly well poised to

consider variation in individual, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural aftermaths of sexual violence, particularly if scholars heed the calls for intersectional and multilevel or systemic inquiries featured in this chapter. It is also important to note that such diversity in sampling frame diverges from patterns in other subfields. Broadly speaking, scientists look to different populations to investigate the scope, causes, and outcomes of sexual violence.

Relative to the broader field, and the subfields of causal research and quantification, effects research has prioritized victimization and neglected perpetration. This was evident in quantitative content analysis as well as close examination of widely cited works from 1975-2015. There are ample reasons to focus on survivor experiences, and to develop and refine resources and social responses to experiences of violence. Moving forward, it is worth considering whether and how scholars in this field could explore the consequences of perpetration in greater detail. Hundreds of studies have asked whether and to what extent sexual victimization “changes” people via mental health outcomes and changing perceptions of consent and refusal; a smaller but considerable number of projects have explored the impact of sexual violence on victims’ social relationships and reputations, often through vignettes or inquiries into social responses to disclosure. Might committing acts of sexual aggression also “change” someone? Do experiences of perpetration have substantive effects on aggressors’ mental and physical health, social relationships, reputation, or understandings of sexual consent and refusal? Are there social and institutional consequences beyond conviction and sentencing? How might personal acquaintances and institutional actors such as therapists and educators respond to disclosures of perpetration? Within the field of sexual violence research, are there particular ethico-onto-epistemological entanglements that foreclose such lines of inquiry? Are there practical or methodological or political barriers? If these questions have been explored in

detail, this has not occurred in studies easily recognizable as pertaining to “rape,” “sexual violence,” “sexual assault,” or “rapists” as sampled for this project.

The historical – if somewhat declining – dominance of psychological and psychiatric research has produced a substantial body of knowledge on individual and, to a lesser extent, interpersonal outcomes of sexual victimization. Consistent with the previous chapter, participants in this study drew on those trends to call for greater involvement among scholars in disciplines such as sociology who are trained to consider multilevel and systemic dimensions of social problems. This suggestion was again accompanied by support for more intersectional research. The outcomes of sexual violence, and the accessibility and value of institutional resources such as rape crisis centers and police departments, are difficult if not impossible to generalize. Conceptualizations of “positive” outcomes and “good” institutional resources merit (re)assessment. Scientific projects and investigations might emphasize variation and flexibility rather than striving for universal “best practices” for addressing sexual violence across all geographic and identity-based populations.

Participants expressed some frustrations with effects research. These often concerned a seemingly uncritical endorsement of dominant criminal justice processes, particularly sexual assault forensic examinations and reliance on criminal prosecution. In the former case, several scholars argued that forensic science has been mischaracterized as an invaluable resource for investigating and prosecuting acts of sexual violence. Given that members of the public serve on juries, this public mischaracterization has real consequences for criminal justice. Matters are complicated further by the reality that sexual assault forensic exams may be experienced as invasive and traumatizing. If forensic evidence is of limited value in sexual assault trials, and examinations are harmful to victims – who may or may not ultimately pursue reporting and prosecution – scientists might need to work towards shifting public perceptions. Perhaps

scandals over “the backlog” of untested rape kits might give way to scandals over the widespread practice of subjecting victims/survivors to unnecessary medical procedures. To be clear, participants in this study were not calling for an end to forensic science altogether, but rather for a critical reassessment of the impact and value of forensic examinations specifically in sexual assault cases.

Skeptical of prosecutorial notions of “success,” and wary of the victims’ often profoundly negative experiences at trial, several scholars called for alternatives. Investment in noncriminal resources such as rape crisis centers might support individuals who were unable to pursue – or simply uninterested in pursuing – criminal justice. Restorative justice emerged as another promising approach. It is crucial to note that restorative justice would not be a replacement for criminal prosecution, university adjudication, and other established processes. None of the participants in this project conveyed it as such. Restorative justice conferencing requires that the actors involved agree that harm has been caused, and are willing and able to meet and address that harm, which is neither desirable nor feasible for all people who have experienced sexual violence. What participants in this project have argued – and I agree with them – is that contemporary criminal justice processes in the United States and Canada are not adequate for responding to the problem of sexual violence. Efforts to reform those institutions can and should be accompanied by efforts to provide additional avenues for seeking justice and support.

PART TWO

SOCIAL MECHANISMS

CHAPTER 5

CHOOSING THIS WORK

Rape crisis counselors are often trained to anticipate tough questions. When they/we disclose haven chosen to do “rape work” (Martin 2005), even to strangers or casual acquaintances, we learn to expect inquiries into our personal histories – “have you ever been raped?” or “Was your mother or daughter raped? Maybe your best friend?” – and skepticism toward our volunteer or professional choices – “that sounds awful and depressing, why would anyone do that?” or perhaps, depending on how we are read, “Do you hate men?” or “Isn’t that more of a women’s issue?” We are also encouraged to prepare for sudden disclosures of others’ encounters with violence. These might be brief and straightforward – “oh, well, I was raped” or “my friend was accused of that once” – or they might be in-depth and richly detailed. Such experiences intensify the already substantial emotional work of supporting and advocating for survivors and their significant others, or working to rehabilitate and resocialize aggressors.

These same concerns apply to studying sexual violence. Scholars who choose this work may encounter the same invasive questions, skepticism, and unsolicited disclosures that rape crisis counselors face. Faculty who teach about sexual violence might become known as safe or supportive people to confide in, and receive disclosures from students on a regular basis. The research, itself may involve substantial and direct contact with victims/survivors, aggressors, and their significant others, as well as detailed narratives of violence in such contexts as police reports and court transcripts. Psychologist Rebecca Campbell, who has been active and widely cited in this field for some time (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of some of her contributions to effects research), wrote an entire book on the subject entitled *Emotionally Involved: The Impact of Researching Rape* (Campbell 2002). Psychologist Sarah Ullman, who has also been active and

widely cited in sexual violence research for decades (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of some of her contributions to effects research) devoted an entire chapter of her book, *Talking About Sexual Assault: Society's Response to Survivors*, to the personal challenges of studying rape (Ullman 2010). Yet the education in self-care routinely provided to rape crisis counselors, and the ongoing encouragement to be reflective and make adjustments or take breaks as needed, rarely occur in the domain of professional research.

This chapter explores personal and social mechanisms that encourage scientists to choose this work. I conceive of “choosing” as an ongoing rather than singular or momentary process. Therefore, I do not only consider factors that draw people to the study of sexual violence, but also factors that sustain them in this often difficult work. Participants’ described a variety of pathways into the field¹⁶. Although several were driven by prior investment in addressing sexual violence or political commitments to feminist and other social movements, some were drawn to this work by chance opportunities or intriguing scientific questions about human behavior. Mentoring and collective care work emerged as important social and professional mechanisms that facilitate continued engagement. These mechanisms are essential for the production of any scientific knowledge of sexual violence, as this is an enterprise requiring continued human participation. Moreover, understanding how scientists choose this work may advance the literature in science studies more broadly. Sexual violence research occupies a contested status within science (discussed further in Chapter 6), is a highly feminized

¹⁶As shown in the interview guide (Appendix A), I asked all participants about what led them to study sexual violence. I did not ask about personal experiences of victimization or aggression, or sexual violence within their social networks and local communities. Some participants did share such information (i.e., explicitly stating that they were or were not survivors of sexual violence), but only on their terms and not always in the response to this question. I do not provide an estimate here of the proportion of participants who disclosed being victims/survivors, nor do I attempt to estimate the proportion who were (given that nondisclosure indicates nothing about status). Moreover, I do not theorize a general causal mechanism between victimization and choosing this work. If/when personal encounters with violence appear in the section on “pathways into the field,” it is because participants, themselves, connected those experiences with the decision to study sexual violence.

field in terms of participation and reputation (in that many within and outside of science consider rape to be a “woman’s issue,” and in that the field is itself dominated by gender congruent women), and requires participants to repeatedly confront emotionally heavy and politically controversial content. The overtly political nature of much rape scholarship further contributes to marginalization within science. Many scientists approach the study of rape as value-driven from the outset. Those motivated by commitment feminist and other anti-oppressive ideals and social movements, or who develop feminist ideals through engagement in sexual violence research, often struggle or outright refuse to depoliticize their work. Yet dominant positivist models within science reserve legitimacy for detached and ostensibly “apolitical” ethico-onto-epistemologies. Social mechanisms informed by such conditions will be missed in a literature that prioritizes STEM and other masculine-coded fields. Indeed, although some of the processes identified here may apply to a substantial range of sciences, the heaviness and contested/devalued status of sexual violence research within the larger domain of science lends to a particular urgency to mentoring and care work.

Pathways into the Field

Throughout this project, I strove for transparency and non-hierarchical interactions with participants (Campbell et al. 2010). When someone requested information about the project – in-depth summaries of my aims and methodology, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval paperwork, interview guides, practices for ensuring confidentiality – I provided this. When participants asked that various parts of our conversations be modified in or omitted from transcripts, I did so. I welcomed any questions about my own experiences in sexual violence research and advocacy, as well as my findings to date in the project.

Across all interviews, the question I heard most concerned pathways into the field. Participants wanted to know what led their peers to study sexual violence. I do not presume to know why this question was so popular, though I am confident that the motivations behind participants' inquiries differed sharply from those of the skeptical outsiders described above. Some were simply curious about their peers. Many were actively mentoring younger researchers or working to recruit new scholars or students. Some suspected that the most common pathway would entail years of antiviolence advocacy, or rather that practice would precede research. Some expected strong (feminist) political motivation. Given the emotional and professional demands of academic rape work (Campbell 2002; Martin 2005), it seemed unlikely to these scholars that anyone would enter the field – or at least manage to last for long – without such commitments.

What I found, and thus what I told these participants, was that pathways were variable and sometimes nonlinear. Any number of experiences and opportunities might lead someone to assist with a study of sexual violence, or to design and complete their own. Although antiviolence and/or feminist commitments were certainly important in some cases, much also seemed to depend on graduate assignments and relationships among scientists. Contrary to my and several participants' expectations, I learned that it was quite possible to work for decades in this field without particular investment in the issue of sexual violence. Individuals with and without such investment might enter the field and stay, enter and leave, or move back and forth throughout their careers. In the following paragraphs, I review participants' narratives of choosing to study sexual violence. Given how identifying educational and career trajectories can be, I incorporate minimal direct quotations from participants in this section.

Life experiences often forced an awareness of sexual violence. Several participants recalled hearing disclosures of sexual victimization in their families and peer groups, often in

high school and college. Some disclosed personal histories of victimization. These and other researchers often shared frustrations with institutional responses. Participants who had experienced sexual violence in college, or had provided support to other survivors in this context, were often critical of the support resources and adjudication procedures on campus.

A considerable number of participants had entered ostensibly different pathways and found that sexual violence was persistently relevant to their work. Scholars studying human reproduction or sexual health might repeatedly confront questions about consent and violence. Those studying poverty and other dimensions of social inequality might encounter pervasive narratives of violence in marginalized populations (see Virginia's comments in Chapter 2). Clinical psychologists might hear disclosure after disclosure of sexual victimization or aggression from patients. In these instances, individuals might study sexual violence to further their initial career paths – psychologists and social workers with all specializations may serve clients with victimization histories, and thus may benefit from greater knowledge of its clinical implications – or shift their focus entirely toward this issue.

A small number had served in the military before entering academia, and spoke of pervasive sexual violence in this context as well as institutional practices that seemed to serve aggressors better than victims. Clara recalled an incident in which her commanding officer declined to punish a known sexual harasser for fear that it might “hurt his wife if we take away his money and his rank.” Others participants had initially pursued careers in support services with a focus on interpersonal violence, and encountered challenges that motivated a shift toward academic work. Frustrated that “the system, it’s not set up to be victim friendly,” Wendy had left professional social work for professional research in order to identify and address systemic barriers to supporting victims and rehabilitating offenders. Recalling her years of

providing clinical services to survivors, Julia pointed to “a number of questions...that I wanted to answer through evaluation and research.”

Across the previous examples, participants were committed to the work of ending – or at least improving responses to – sexual violence before they began to study it. In other cases, scholars seemed to “fall into” this line of work. Individuals with no background or prior investment in sexual violence research might be recruited for a project for their expertise in quantitative analysis or grant writing, or simply through proximity or social connections to others already immersed in this field. Several recalled being assigned to a particular advisor, or research or teaching assistant position. Those initial efforts sometimes inspired a strong commitment to addressing sexual violence; other times, researchers found their work in this field sufficiently publishable or well-received to be worth continuing.

Historical events and controversies were also sources of inspiration. Several participants described researchers as having an important capacity to test common assumptions about human behavior and culture. Those who were working in the 1970s and 1980s often referenced widespread debates over the “true” causes of rape – particularly the relative contributions of human biology and evolution, patriarchal values and institutions, and pornography – as scientifically intriguing. Even those who lacked interest in being career researchers in sexual violence might be drawn in by the intellectual challenges of operationalizing and measuring something like “the impact of pornography on sexual aggression.” Those working in the early 2000s, when the Human Right’s Watch’s (2001) “No Escape” report was published and the Prison Rape Elimination Act was passed, were sometimes curious about the empirical justification for and implications of state interventions in prison sexual violence. Criminal justice and legal scholars who were active in academia during or after rape law reform commented on researchers’ capacity to provide empirical and critical analyses of reforms’ impact. More

recently, a similar opportunity has arisen regarding sexual assault forensic examinations. The widespread adoption of such exams in the United States and Canada, and ongoing controversy over “the backlog” (Reilly 2015) have led scholars with and without prior commitments to studying sexual violence to question the medical and criminal justice implications of this technology.

Mentoring

Mentoring is crucial in many career fields. It can also be source of inequality if, as often occurs in science and academia more broadly, support and networking resources are most available for the most privileged individuals. At the same time, mentoring may provide a countermeasure against such inequalities when employed to support people in marginalized communities or “nontraditional” career paths (Beaulieu et al. 2017; Mancl and Lee 2016; Primé et al. 2015). Given this, it was unsurprising that several participants spoke about mentorship. What stood out more, and merited a section in this chapter, was the urgency with which scientists approached mentoring specifically within this field. There seemed to be a sense that studying sexual violence was uniquely difficult, and was neither broadly appealing nor emotionally or intellectually feasible for many students and scholars. Public interest and institutional support were inconsistent, and a substantial range of obstacles within and beyond science might deter engagement. For these reasons, participants depicted mentoring as a vital professional mechanism in the study of sexual violence.

Quite a few participants had faced criticism for choosing this work. Some were told outright that their research was unimportant. Others were told that their research was too biased or unscientific, or that no university or scientific organization would want to hire a “rape scholar” (such challenges will be analyzed in greater detail in Chapter 6). These scholars

emerged with a keen awareness that others might face similar obstacles. As a graduate student, Clara had often been told that sexual violence was unworthy of academic study. Later in her career, she was approached by a graduate student who was struggling a great deal in her own program:

She started telling me how she was really interested in the topic of rape myths, but somebody was trying to dissuade her from going into it – some male faculty – because “it’s not important enough.” And I said I’d heard that. And I just said it is really important.

This encounter provided an opportunity to support an up-and-coming scholar who might otherwise feel pressured to leave the field.

During our conversation, Clara elaborated that sexual violence researchers seemed to face uniquely harsh discouragement relative to others in her field of psychology, that women who studied sexual violence often faced criticism from men who did not, and that these trends were not attributable to disciplinary standards of rigor or significance. She felt particularly suspicious of men in psychology who rejected the whole project of studying rape:

Clara: You’ve got to question his agenda, you know? They study all sorts of things. And some of it is really minute. They don’t say “schizophrenia isn’t important because of how rare it is.” You can’t say anything isn’t important cause it’s rare. I mean, [SEXUAL VIOLENCE] is something that happens to a good 20% of women and, what is it, 10% of men or something like that. That’s huge.

Ethan: Right, and that’s just on the victim side. That’s not considering how many aggressors there are.

Clara: Right. Right. It’s an enormous group of people. So we’re going to focus on something that’s in the 1 to 2% range of the population, that’s important? And I’m not saying it’s not, but anybody that says [SEXUAL VIOLENCE] isn’t important, you’ve really got to question their agenda. And that’s what I told her. And that really resonated with her... I said, any time somebody tells me that, that tells me I’m on the right track. I’ve hit a nerve. I’m totally hitting a nerve with them. And that tells me there’s work to be done.

Clara had come to approach opposition as fuel for motivation. Years of facing opposition had nurtured an investment in mentoring younger scholars, and persisting even (or especially) when she “hit a nerve.”

Some participants shared similar stories about receiving mentorship. Jenna, a public health scholar, had considered leaving sexual violence research due to some discouraging feedback from professors:

I was definitely having a hard time, because I was still new to this and feeling unsure, and getting a lot of backlash from people telling me that it wasn't important...So once I felt supported and in a good place to do it, I feel like I've really just taken off... I think that it's hard when you don't feel like you are supported, or you don't feel like you have people in your circle to help you through it. I think that having a mentor that can just give you some, not like validation, but just to let you know that what you're doing is important or help you along a little bit is helpful.

At first, Jenna recalled feeling “like a lost sheep” in graduate school. Her advisors suggested on numerous occasions that sexual violence was not a priority in public health, and was thus a poor choice of focus. Once she connected with someone who specialized in sexual violence, she found sufficient support and guidance to “take off” as a researcher. It's worth noting here that I was only able to connect with Jenna because she had remained in this field. Any scholars who took the advice that Jenna (and Clara and several other participants) initially received would not have been recruited for this study. Given that, and the nonrandom sampling applied for this project, I cannot speculate on the rates at which such discouragement drives people from sexual violence research altogether.

Although many researchers conceptualize sexual violence as a persistent or even permanent social problem, participants in this study depicted sexual violence scholarship – or, rather, the community of scholars who choose this work – as more contingent or precarious.

Several commented that the field seemed to have expanded and contracted at various points¹⁷. Others worried that academic pressures might stifle innovation (see Cynthia's comments in the previous chapter). In that case, sexual violence research might substantively decline even if participation and publication in the field increased.

Concerns about maintaining a scholarly community often motivated active recruitment and mentoring. When I asked what advice she might give a young scholar who planned to study sexual violence, Gretchen commented that:

I do have students that come to me now that are like, "I'm so passionate about violence prevention" or "I'm so passionate about social justice." And so, first of all, totally validating that. Because it's so exciting. Those are the people – you know, I'm retiring one day. I'm going to be gone. We've got to make sure that all the people doing this work, and this is what my mentor said, we've got to find young, excited enthusiastic people, because we're nowhere near ending this issue. So when I first hear a student say that, of course it's a lot of validation and praise and enthusiasm to really kind of reinforce that.

Even graduate students might face these concerns. While completing her PhD in public health, Rebecca had "realized that my mentor is going to retire at some point" and begun working to develop bolster institutional supports for students who might choose this field. She became more proactive in supporting younger graduate and undergraduate colleagues. The perception that "we're nowhere near ending this issue" made Gretchen, Rebecca, and others feel obliged to take a communal and long-term view of sexual violence scholarship.

Collective Care Work in Science

¹⁷ Although this perception was shared by several participants – including some who lamented a general decline in recent years, and others who expressed excited for what seemed to be a contemporary resurgence in sexual violence research – my own quantitative content analysis found a steady increase in scientific journal publications. Not only has the overall count of relevant publications increased in each decade since 1975, but so too have the publication frequencies in all assessed subfields (quantification, causality, effects, evaluation, and theory/methods). That being said, it is likely that more specialized lines of research, such as the evaluation of rape law reform or assessment of pornography as a causal factor in sexual aggression, have declined or risen & fallen at various times. Quantitative trends in publications are also insufficient for exploring Cynthia and others' concerns about "needless" replication or a general unwillingness to take risks and develop new lines of scientific inquiry.

Scientific research is often intellectually challenging, and the professional demands to publish or carry heavy teaching loads are burdensome for scholars in diverse fields. Those who work on controversial and/or “heavy” social matters may face additional emotional work. As mentioned toward the beginning of this chapter, researchers in this field experience many of the challenges that victim advocates and batterer intervention providers face, including risks of burnout and vicarious trauma (Campbell 2002). When I asked whether her career had involved any emotional labor (Hochschild 2012/1983), Amy described sexual violence research as uniquely burdensome, even relative to other difficult subjects:

I think that is very clear to me. And you know, this may be my own lack of objectivity or intellectual distance from the subject – I have colleagues who study human rights, wartime violence, people who do really heavy stuff...but it doesn't seem to be quite the same kind of emotional labor. And again, I'm totally willing to own that might be my own minimal emotional resources and/or lack of objectivity. But no, I feel that that has been one of the defining aspects of the work as a researcher.

Emotional labor was not a minor or secondary element of studying sexual violence, but rather one of its “defining aspects.”

Some participants described occasions in which students, colleagues, and personal acquaintances had described their work as unimaginably challenging. Colleagues might dismiss sexual violence research as “too political.” Students might struggle when professors incorporated units on sexual violence into their courses. Max remarked that “my colleague teaches about drugs. You know, that's cool, that's fun, that's exciting. My stuff's depressing.” This comparison is striking. A course on drugs might well feature content on mass incarceration, addiction, systemic inequality – and nonetheless be regarded as more “cool” rather than “depressing.” The same was not true for courses with units on rape.

The perception of sexual violence research as uniquely challenging contributed to feelings of isolation in scientific and other professional communities. Colleagues who found such

work exceedingly heavy might be unwilling or unable to have even informal discussions about participants' work, let alone offer to collaborate on projects. Miranda commented that:

I just feel grateful to not be laboring alone on this issue. Because that was very much my experience [PREVIOUSLY]. It's not that my colleagues were doing happy projects... I had colleagues studying human rights abuses, and housing instability, hunger – difficult, heavy things. But I still think those things are somehow easier for people to talk to and discuss, particularly in academic contexts, without this kind of veil of silence that's wrapped around it.

This “veil of silence” among colleagues contrasted sharply with ongoing disclosures of sexual victimization from students. However depressing students found her courses, Max received “4 or 5 disclosures every semester.” This was consistent with the experiences of several other participants; those with backgrounds in social work or crisis counseling sometimes spoke of a direct service component to their teaching. Yet those participants (and their colleagues) who taught courses in other “heavy” areas, such as substance use or crime & deviance, did not describe necessarily hear disclosures of addiction or nonsexual victimization on a regular basis.

The original draft of my interview guide did not address care work. As a longtime antiviolence advocate and crisis counselor¹⁸, I recognized that self care would be essential for sexual violence researchers, but did not appreciate its social dimensions. This changed several interviews into the project, as participants began describing what seemed to be collective care work within science. I modified my interview guide to explore these matters in greater depth. I grew increasingly sure that, in addition to being an important personal practice, care work functioned as a social mechanism that sustained scholars through the intellectual, emotional, and professional challenges of producing scientific knowledge about sexual violence.

¹⁸I began this project with 10+ years of experience in sexual assault and domestic violence crisis counseling. Once I began researching sexual violence fulltime, I stopped doing direct service as a part of my own self care, but maintained active ties to the activist/advocacy community and engaged in other forms of antiviolence work such as public education and volunteer training.

Participants' narratives revealed that self care was learned, and could be difficult to attempt without social support and guidance. Unfortunately, scientific environments were rarely conducive to this. Within academia, particularly in graduate school but also in faculty positions, individuals might feel pressured to distance themselves or maintain high productivity such that self care seemed like a distraction or problematic indulgence. Even scholars with backgrounds in advocacy, social work, clinical psychology, and other care providing fields might struggle to adapt their previous training to academic contexts. Kristen remarked that:

I had zero self care in grad school. Zero. Which doesn't make sense, since I did advocacy work, and I promoted self care constantly to people. I knew what it was. I said "this is the best thing for you, this is how you do it." I think, when people say "oh, do self care," it's really bullshit to say that "it's easy to do" and "if we know how to do it, we're going to do it." Especially in grad school, right?...You've got to know what works for you, and you've got to give yourself time to do it...I would always advocate for that, because I was horrible at it. I think it's just not how grad school is....Cause we think we've just got to keep hustling and keep going, and you've got no time for it.

Several participants echoed Kristen's concern that graduate students were pressured to ignore their own wellbeing in favor of productivity and hastening timelines to graduation. The denigration of self care aligns with positivist and masculinist norms within science. If scientists are presumed to be – or acquire legitimacy through appearing to be – detached observers, they should neither influence nor be influenced by "objects" of study. An agential realist perspective has value here. Barad's (Barad 2007) insights provide an avenue for understanding scholars as entangled within the phenomena they study, and for embracing an ethics that takes researchers' welfare into account.

Supportive colleagues might counter the academic pressures that stifled emotional labor. Whereas Kristen had engaged in "zero self care" as a graduate student, this changed when she developed a mutually supportive relationship with another scholar of sexual violence:

We were just texting today, like "wow, this is really hard." You know? And we kind of feel like bad, we're worried about letting each other down. Like I'll say

that, and she'll say, "wow, no, I just took an hour break, because I just transcribed some notes and I feel sick." Right? And so, to have someone like that to say "this is a lot, and let's be gentle with ourselves." Because most of the time, we're not, and we kind of need someone else to give us permission. So we give each other permission to kind of cool it, to care for ourselves, to be gentle, to go slowly.

When scholars feel obliged to "keep hustling and keep going," self care may not function as a strictly individual process. It may not seem possible to slow down or prioritize our own wellbeing, even briefly. Kristen and her colleague were able to provide "permission" for one another to engage in self care without feeling guilty or unprofessional.

In addition to countering the pressures of academia, scholars sometimes engaged in more communal forms of care work such as actively checking in and monitoring one another. If someone seemed to immerse themselves too heavily in research, or seemed to be burning out, someone else might intervene. Wendy recalled struggling with a project on criminal victimization, and confiding in a friend and colleague who cautioned against becoming too engrossed in the work:

I was looking at rapes, murders, domestic violence, assaults...It was horrible. And I was like, "I want to really honor each woman that had to experience this." And my friend was like, "they're data points. Treat them as data points." And I'm like, "I can't. I literally can't." So I just really had to be good about taking care of myself. And taking breaks. And telling my boss, like, I got to work on something else today.

Although Wendy did not follow her friend's specific advice to "treat them as data points," she shared the concern that self care was essential for completing the work. In larger projects with research assistants, she was "very clear, from interview forward, [THAT] you are going to take care of yourself. And if you're not, you can't work for me...because this is going to be really hard." Leigh had also come to incorporate collective care processes into supervision, particularly when studying victimization:

It's hard to hear these stories, even though it's very rewarding. It does have an impact, and you want to be there fully for the person you're interviewing. So it's

extremely important personally, and for the participants, you know, to do that. So I feel like I know how to do that.

But also, there's that group process. So you can't always know yourself. You have to check in with other people. And with my students, I've had a mentoring model where they can either talk to each other or they can talk in the group. I can't obviously pay for all their therapy, but you know, just making sure that they have the resources.

In this approach, Leigh and her students proactively sought the sort of feedback that Wendy's friend had provided, and developed a culture in which check-ins and self-assessments were integrated into their research practices.

Finally and perhaps most intuitively, sexual violence researchers often simply turned to each other for emotional support. In interviews, this often came up in discussions that were initially unrelated to care work. When I asked about networking among sexual violence researchers, Brenda reflected that:

I think you have to....professionally, but I think also emotionally, you have to. Which I'm sure, many other people, and as an advocate yourself [REFERRING TO ME]. Just the heaviness of this material. And the sense of needing to share, needing to be able to debrief, needing to be able to talk about this. Because it's tough to do in your social circles.

For those who encountered a "veil of silence" around sexual violence in academia, as described by Miranda earlier in this chapter, it was of tremendous value to connect with people who were engaged in similar work and could relate to their struggles. When I asked Miranda about collaboration, she spoke first of the intellectual and practical benefits of collective knowledge production, and then elaborated:

The other piece of it is clearly, when you collaborate, then you have somebody to talk through all of the emotional garbage with. Which, when I was in graduate school, that was my partner...[EVENTUALLY] I also started thinking about, how much of this can I take home? Cause there are ways that I could really sort of deal with this, and have clear boundaries, and I can be like a healthy, happy contributing member of my household...And so having a collaborator – I think both of us wanted that from the outset. We get a lot of questions like, "isn't it hard?" and I'm like, "it's a lot less hard when you have someone to talk to."

Amy shared similar experiences about connecting with a group of scholars in the field:

Finding them and being able to share, both the research and also the personal cost of this stuff was a game changer. And was something that was a real turning point – being able to think about the research, but being able to share it with people who I felt like understood the day-to-day, because they were living it, too.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Amy had felt a sense of isolation and emotional struggle even relative to colleagues studying human rights abuses and other weighted subjects. Finding others in her field was a “game changer” not only in terms of intellectual possibilities, but also for connecting with people who “were living it, too.”

Choosing this Work

Engagement in sexual violence research does not arise from nowhere. Personal dispositions and political orientations, exposure to victimization or aggression, public controversies and policy developments, and encounters with institutional prevention and response efforts may motivate a project or entire career in the field. Even scholars who seem to fall into this work might be better described as being drawn in. Graduate assistant positions, colleagues who seek particular skills or expertise, unexpected patterns in projects or careers that seem unrelated to violence – factors akin to what Dalton Conley (2005) describes as “not so random” differences in interpersonal networks and experiences – facilitate entry.

Choosing to study sexual violence is not a singular or one-time process. Within and after individual projects or assignments, researchers must decide whether to remain immersed or even tangentially involved with the field. Although it is certainly not problematic to move among disciplines and industries, and I do not aim here to promote entry and persistence in sexual violence research for all scholars, it is valuable to explore the factors that encourage persistence and departure. These are critical social processes in science. Perhaps even more so for sexual

violence research; the “heaviness” and social barriers unique to this work may exacerbate the already substantial pressures of academic labor. I have argued here that two social mechanisms, mentoring and collective care work, sustain scholarship in sexual violence. For established researchers, concerns that sexual violence is a persistent social problem may compound with memories of harsh opposition such that recruiting and mentoring new people become urgent priorities. Graduate students and other “younger” scholars may feel pressured to abandon the field altogether in the absence of supportive mentors. Finally, collective processes of care mitigate the numerous personal and professional challenges of studying sexual violence.

CHAPTER 6

DIVIDENDS AND DETRIMENTS OF DISSENT

Infighting is often regarded as a “kiss of death” for social movements. At best, dissent among organizers seems distracting; at worst, it might break coalitions down and foreclose hope of collective action. In *The Dividends of Dissent*, Amin Ghaziani (2008) put these assumptions to empirical scrutiny. He investigated the scope and consequences of infighting in social movements by tracing the histories of four queer marches on Washington – or rather, two lesbian and gay marches; one lesbian, gay, and bisexual march; and one lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender march. He encountered numerous conflicts concerning activists’ conceptualizations of who “fit” within “the community,” whose voices to feature at events, whether to prioritize assimilation or disruption of social norms, and the extent to which ostensibly non-sexual identities such as race and disability shaped queer communities and therefore ought to inform queer activism. Ultimately, Ghaziani argued that dissent was productive under the right circumstances. Far from being a kiss of death, in-group conflict might force activists to recognize and reconcile differences, and to design campaigns and collective platforms that better reflected the interests of diverse communities. Disagreement might be reconceived as a prerequisite to collective identity and strategy.

Scientific research and social movements comprise ostensibly different domains. Nonetheless, scientific/intellectual and social movements sometimes align or overlap, and are shaped by many of the same social forces (Frickel and Gross 2005). Indeed, many activist processes described in *The Dividends of Dissent* apply to the scientific processes of selecting and prioritizing research questions, designing investigations, building professional networks and collaborations, pursuing funding and other resources, and interpreting and distributing findings.

Similarities are even more pronounced for sexual violence research. Many scholars in this field have backgrounds in advocacy, or find that studying sexual violence compels them toward social action. Even those who do not venture directly into activist work are apt to contend with others who do. Whereas the activists in Ghaziani's work (2008) were united against a "common threat" of heteronormativity, researchers in this project were united against a "common threat" of sexual violence. Infighting has also been a constant and arguably (sometimes) productive mechanism in the field.

This chapter explores conflict in sexual violence research. Participants' insights and experiences are loosely organized into "out-group" and "in-group" conflict. Out-group conflict often draws from the feminization of rape research discussed in previous chapter. This field of work is often devalued within science for its association with feminist activism, even for researchers who do not personally identify as feminist, as well as its association with questions of social morality. Skeptical outsiders regularly depict rape researchers as unscientific, sometimes going so far as to dissuade scholars from choosing this work or attempting to control their research agendas and career trajectories. Scientists facing such conflict confront limited options. In some cases, people abandon the field. Many develop strategies to mitigate outsiders' challenges. Those invested in scientific credibility, particularly those whose feminist values motivate rape scholarship but who also embrace positivist understandings of "proper" scientific inquiry, sometimes engage in substantial efforts to establish and defend their credibility among peers. For example, a researcher might favor quantitative methodology or dispassionate writing styles in order to produce convincingly scientific works for publication. Alternatively, those who actively politicize their own and others' research can disinvest in outsiders' perceptions (and potentially lose status within the larger domains of science or academia) and focus on building and supporting a community of insiders.

In-group conflict concerns infighting among scholars of sexual violence. This might concern disagreements over what can and should be studied, what is publishable or presentable in specialist journals and conferences, and several concerns that parallel Ghaziani's observations about queer activism: disagreements regarding who "fits" within the category of "people affected by sexual violence," and who among them merits prioritization; whether scientists ought to politicize their work and actively seek to disrupt social norms, including norms within science; and the extent to which various identities and lived experiences, such as gender and race and disability, are relevant to the phenomenon of sexual violence. Scientists whose work garners fears of misuse, or poses challenges to dominant scholars or widely accepted assumptions within sexual violence research, may ultimately abandon their efforts for fears of controversy or in-group pushback. In these instances, in-group conflict stifles innovation and forecloses lines of inquiry. Yet in-group conflict can also be productive. Disagreements can push scholars to confront unsettled (and perhaps even impossible-to-settle) questions, and promote a scientific culture characterized by accountability and openness to change.

Out-Group Conflict

Sexual violence research occupies a contested position within science. Scholars with other specialties might question whether the study of sexual violence is scientific at all; even those who perceive such work as scientific might question its intellectual or social value. Several participants in this project had faced such challenges. Often times, those with backgrounds in advocacy were further dismissed as "applied" or "public" researchers whose work was presumed less rigorous than others' more "pure" endeavors. Scholars who embraced feminist perspectives and methodologies were further dismissed as lacking objectivity by others who perceived science and politics as wholly separate (or at least wholly separable) fields. Some

participants connected such opposition with a general skepticism toward women and other socially marginalized actors with science and academia.

Out-group conflict often seems to begin in graduate school. Students across disciplines might be dissuaded from projects that seem insufficiently marketable or too overtly political from well meaning – or in some cases, actively dismissive or hostile – advisors. In her public health doctoral program, Alisa was warned that “sexual assault prevention is a very polarizing topic” and that she should wait until tenure to pursue it. Any work that seemed critical of institutional approaches to violence might render her unhireable. When applying to graduate school in philosophy, Jeff was repeatedly warned that “you shouldn’t delve into [SEXUALITY], because no one does that, and it’s not going to be very marketable. So do something else.”

These experiences reinforced the urgency with which many participants approached the work of mentoring younger students. As discussed in Chapter 5, Jenna was told by numerous professors that sexual violence was not a priority in public health during her graduate studies; it was not until she connected with a mentor who specialized in this area that she finally learned otherwise, and felt able to continue in her work.

Those who persisted in studying sexual violence often continued to face out-group opposition. Some concerned a perception that sexual violence research was inherently unscientific. Studies pertaining to social controversies or human values were often discounted as public or ideological. When speaking of psychological research on men’s sexual aggression, Brian commented that:

When one does research in an area such as this, particularly for perceived morals, dealing with sexual morality and violence, there’s a certain attitude among some academics with it not being as important or legitimate as some other areas.

These concerns reflect broader patterns in science, including STEM fields, through which any work characterized as social or political is devalued relative to work characterized as technical or purely scientific (Cech 2013).

Other participants connected out-group pushback with methodological hierarchies in science. Stephanie recalled being marginalized as a psychologist who did not pursue laboratory experiments:

When I was younger and still coming through the ranks, there was still a very strong emphasis on doing very basic, theoretically driven, laboratory-based research. And what I was doing, there was theory there, but it was certainly not laboratory based. It was not through experiments. So it was like I wasn't true to the cannon. And people would make comments, "if you want to do this kind of work, you should go be a sociologist" or "you should go be a social worker. Go to public." So it was a disciplinary kind of thing. And that's not true of all psychology departments, I don't think it's true of the discipline as a whole. But that was my own personal sort of circumstances at that particular point in time.

For all these concerns, shifting toward experimental psychology might not have solved the problem. Stephanie elaborated that her affiliation with women's studies was also an issue, and that "there were certain people in my field who didn't think that doing anything related to gender was really legitimate." Any investigations of violence against women might thus be dismissed as irrelevant to psychology. It was not merely engagement with "sexual morality and violence" as described by Brian, but affiliation specifically with women's studies and feminist politics that drew scientific opposition.

Such matters were not limited to psychology and public health. As discussed in previous chapters, Virginia expressed concerns that her fellow sociologists tended to "gloss over" matters of sexual violence in their own projects, rather than take it seriously as a causal force in the reproduction of social inequalities. Kristen echoed these concerns when recalling the challenges she had faced during and after graduate school, and worried that people might be driven away from studying sexual violence if they relied on others for validation and guidance:

You're so pressured to go here, to say this, and do something different, and something that's going to get you a job and get you published. If I had listened to everyone, I never would have been, I never would have done this work. People were just like, "it's not going to get published, no one cares, it's like this niche field... you're not going to get published, or you're only going to get published in the really low journals." Which, you know what, is true sometimes.

And it's horrible, and our discipline has a lot of self reflection I think it should go through. What to publish, who gets published, the classic sociology of knowledge. Like what kind of knowledge are we actually producing in the world? When is it helpful, when is it not helpful? So now we have public sociology, or public academia – which is really, in my opinion, a way to say "oh you're doing that public stuff that doesn't matter as much as theoretical debates" or something... I think you've got to just turn it off sometimes, and think about what is going to make you whole.

Jeff was similarly critical of intellectual policing and convinced that scholars of sexuality and sexual violence should be prepared to rely on themselves for encouragement. When I asked what advice he might give to an aspiring philosopher who wanted to follow in his footsteps, he commented that:

This is a very small field, and there's definitely a lot of material that you could work with. And that you could try to focus on, and make it your own thing. That could be adventurous. At the same time, because hardly anyone does this, and people in philosophy don't consider this a serious subject, you might be ridiculed. Or you might be seen with scorn because you're not doing "real philosophy." And I would just kind of give that student the warning that you will probably be admired and liked by your students, because students love this material. With people who already do this, you might be considered a good colleague to work with. Other philosophers, they may or may not take you seriously. Until they get to know you – then they will pay attention to your work. But initially, they may not think of you as a philosopher per say.

These and other participants connected skepticism toward sexual violence research with disciplinary values rather than apolitical notions of rigor or objectivity. The persistence of such skepticism meant that scholars of sexual violence needed to prepare for credibility struggles, including challenges to their legitimacy as psychologists or philosophers or sociologists.

Some of the challenges echoed broader political trends within sexuality research.

Sexuality scholars, even those who do not study rape, often face immense personal challenges

from colleagues (Irvine 2012). Individuals might be perceived as perverse or immoral, focused on trivial rather than serious or scientific matters, problematically “obsessed” with sex, or intent on transforming their own sexual lives and experiences into an academic career. The same is true for those who focus specifically on sexual violence. Many participants in this study had been asked repeatedly about their personal histories. Their moral character was challenged alongside their research agendas.

In some cases, participants connected out-group opposition with (anti)feminist politics and widespread investment in maintaining what they perceived as a false notion of scientific detachment. Stephanie’s previous comments on the devaluing of gender-related work in psychology speak to this. Reflecting on her career in antiviolence advocacy and academia, Brenda shared that “many would argue that [I DO] biased research, and I’m not keeping my feminist ideology out of my research,” though she added that “I never spent much time entertaining those arguments.” Clara observed that “you get some people in academia who are actually trying to dissuade women from studying this area of sexual violence.” She recalled a grant-writing workshop in which the facilitator “really got aggressive” and seemed to bait her into disclosing victimization:

It was almost like he wanted [ME TO SAY], “I’m a rape victim myself, and that’s why I’m so focused on this, and that’s why I’m biased, and so hellbent on holding perpetrators responsible.” And I’m like, “yeah...I’m not sharing anything about that.”

When I asked whether other workshop participants faced such treatment, she said:

No. He’s not asking the woman who’s interested in autism why she’s studying autism. You know? Why is this person studying... the experiences deaf people in psychotherapy, or why somebody is interested in chronic pain in old people? He was really focused on me.

Clara was not the only participant to face suspicion and invasive questions. When I asked whether she had experienced pushback from other scholars, Miranda connected her experiences to a broader skepticism toward marginalized scholars and their work:

Some of this falls into that category of like, when women or queer people or people of color do research on women, queer people, or people of color, I think the term is “mesearch,” right? People assume you are doing it because you have some kind of personal stake in it. Whereas when, you know, hetero cis white men study hetero cis white men that’s somehow normative and not marked by the kind of mesearch. Which, you know, now I’m strategizing – oh, do you study the presidency because you’re a man and think you can relate?

So that’s part of it. And I think it’s a way of invalidating people’s research, by some standard of objectivity. Which, you know, I don’t think it’s possible to be objective. That’s the tradition I’m trained in, and also as somebody who does espouse feminist methodology, I don’t think that’s the end goal either.

Just as Clara’s peers had not faced accusations of bias for focusing on autism and chronic pain, Miranda’s colleagues in comparatively socially privileged positions had not been accused of doing mesearch even when studying people within “their own” communities.

In some instances, out-group conflict manifested as support for rape myths (Edwards et al. 2011; Suarez and Gadalla 2010) or hostility toward people (particularly women) who disclosed sexual victimization. Madeline described facing resistance from individuals “who challenge the whole reality of sexual violence against women.” Clara recalled facing substantial pushback against a study of women’s support-seeking behaviors after assault. As she understood it, her colleague “had a whole problem with, just even the idea that women don’t lie about rape. He was really stuck on it.” When she protested that this issue was irrelevant for her project – she was exploring the aftermath of sexual violence, not the veracity of reports – he insisted that he was “just a critical thinker.” Another colleague had accused her of being “sexist towards women, because I’m just letting them off the hook...not holding them accountable for their actions that lead them to get raped.” Brenda described a dramatic incident in which, after

delivering a presentation on sexual violence in relationships, a man in the audience “quoted scripture to me and told me that he had the right to have sex with his wife on demand.”

Consistent with the controversy over “1 in 4 women” described in Chapter 2, participants who had studied the prevalence of sexual violence were sometimes accused of overstating the problem. When presenting work on sexual violence in alcohol-serving establishments, Marion noted “defensiveness” from some men in the audience who argued that high rates of aggression in such spaces were mitigated by the fact that women participants seemed to anticipate a risk of violence:

They said, “aren’t women just asking for it then? If they know that they are going to experience that, and yet they choose to go to these places with loud music, indoor/outdoor seating, like they want that.” And so it was a matter of having a conversation that somebody can want to go to an environment that is maybe sexually charged, or has some sort of sexual energy around it, without wanting sexual aggression or without wanting to experience sexual violence. And so that was interesting to me, to have that kind of, “aren’t they asking for it” attitude when they’re looking at data.

Julia had faced some pushback when documenting victimization among college students. Some critics suggested that quantification should emphasize penetrative assaults, as these were most likely to constitute rape or sexual assault in criminal contexts, rather than document a range of experiences:

I certainly heard from some individuals who thought our definition was too broad, and that it meant that we were inflating sort of this notion that sexual violence is widespread on campus.

And so my response has been, I had multiple responses. Some sort of technical, in that at this point we have some pretty good science on sexual violence research, and sort of know how to ask about these questions behaviorally. And I think that we need to be asking about a broad range of behaviors, because that’s what’s happening to our students. And that sexual violence happens on a continuum. And that certainly sexual assault/rape is a problem, but so too are other sort of forms of sexual violence that might be viewed as lesser or lower on that continuum... I think that it does reflect this sort of lack of understanding that something that may not involve penetration, but is a form of sexual violence, can still have really negative consequences on our students.

Both of these scholars were accused of “inflating” the problem. In Marion’s case, colleagues endeavored to shift responsibility toward women who “choose to go to these places” where they might experience sexual violence, rather than holding aggressive men accountable; according to this logic, even high rates of sexual violence might be deemed unproblematic because women were “asking for it.” Julia resisted hierarchical assumptions when documenting victimization, and was challenged for refusing to restrict prevalence estimates to assaults that might qualify as rape. The fact that she could isolate those incidents – that her survey design enabled her to calculate distinct estimates for “rape” and broader conceptualizations of “sexual violence” – did not necessarily satisfy her critics.

In-Group Conflict

Participants in this project also described some in-group challenges. These did not concern whether sexual violence could or should be studied scientifically, but rather how this might occur. The sociology of knowledge questions Kristen raised above for generalist journals and the larger community of social scientists had counterparts in specialist journals and smaller scholarly communities. Other matters were more particular to this field. Fears over potential “misuse” of research, that scholarship might be employed to promote or justify sexual violence, were particularly salient for scholars who studied the causes of sexual aggression and victimization. Gender politics were consistently fraught.

Amy expressed frustration with “ideological policing around things like how we talk about sexual violence...which things researchers are allowed to say, and which [THEY] are not.” Well-established scholars’ theoretical and methodological preferences might take priority over substantive contributions when evaluating newer or less well-known scholars’ efforts. This often

manifested in peer review processes. She described a collaborative project that was rejected for publication on the grounds that it seemed too interdisciplinary for reviewers:

[WE] got real pushback around things like, what is the disciplinary framework here? You can't use case studies from different research methods. And this was from an interdisciplinary journal. And, you know, we had worked very hard to recognize and bridge things like the different disciplinary approaches... and the issues around research methods. It was frustrating to feel like people in the discipline were unwilling to get past those. What didn't always feel like intellectually significant questions, but more sort of policing around, "this is what research looks like, I'm comfortable and familiar with this, and I'm not really willing [TO DEVIATE]." And I'm not saying that they didn't really have interesting critiques that helped us do a better version of the article. But I think – I'll speak for myself – what I felt was that there was some ideological policing around discipline and method that, to me, missed the point of what we were talking about.

In some cases, these challenges seemed like a simple unwillingness to support novel approaches in research. In others, Amy suspected that scholars who were unsettled or threatened by an argument might offer harsh and sometimes quite detailed methodological criticisms to mask a more personal "rejection of the findings."

Adam also recalled facing opposition from scholars who seemed threatened by or politically opposed to his work. Although fellow biologists and other natural scientists were often responsive to his research, he had received criticism from scholars in social science and humanities fields who rejected the entire project of applying evolutionary theory to rape: "some people again are saying, 'well you shouldn't think about humans as biological phenomena' and that kind of thing." Adam insisted that developing a scientific understanding of sexual violence was prerequisite to eliminating it, and that evolutionary theory comprised a powerful scientific resource for understanding human and nonhuman behavior including sexual aggression. He remarked that a "non-biological" conceptualization of human beings was "pretty naïve, to say the least... basically, they're saying that humans are not alive. Because that's what biology means." Given this, he argued that naiveté or problematic ideologies rather than scientifically

informed criticism must be driving the opposition. Although their disciplinary training and research agendas contrasted sharply, Max had faced similar pushback for investigating the causes of victimization:

One has to be much more delicate when looking at predictive factors of victimization, because people get cranky, and assume that we're victim blaming. And so I have done some of this research, you know, invariably you end up having to write something to the effect of you know, "predictors doesn't mean it's the person's fault." And if you don't – you know, we need to study this stuff to be able to prevent it. You always need some kind of "I'm really not blaming the victims, I swear," kind of comment in there. It's good to be aware of that, but you don't end up having to do that when you're studying offending.

Whereas biological/evolutionary accounts have been dismissed for absolving aggressors, criminological and psychological investigations of individual predictors of victimization have been portrayed as victim-blaming. Yet scholars in both lines of research might protest that their aim is to understand and ultimately eliminate sexual violence.

In Chapter 3 on causal inquiries, I discussed fears of misuse surrounding some lines of research on sexual violence. Evolutionary approaches, as discussed by Adam above, comprised one example. Another concerned scholarship on the complexities of consent. Stacey and her collaborators had faced some accusations of reinforcing rape myths and mitigating aggressors' responsibility for their behavior:

The piece about consent, too, is potentially controversial among sexual assault researchers. And this may be why there are not so many people doing it...So many people's response to that is, "this is not a confusion about consent, this is people knowingly ignoring nonconsent." Which I would say is probably true in most cases. I mean, I think that is probably the case in most sexual assaults, someone is knowingly ignoring or not attending to consent cues.

On the other hand, I do think at least an understanding of consent is the sort of basic minimum requirement for consensual sex. Like you have to have a shared understanding to even begin to do it. And although I think probably [IN] most cases, someone is explicitly ignoring consent, I think that there are probably some cases of miscommunication – see that's a really controversial limb to go out on – but I think that that's probably the case that sometimes there's miscommunication. And at the very least, it can lead to less than ideal

situations. Even if it's not the cause of things we would legally call rape. So that's a potentially controversial area.

As noted here, Stacey suspected that in-group conflict drove some people away from this line of research. Even those who believed that exploring sexual (mis)communication might be valuable, or disputed conceptualizations of sexual violence as always characterized by "people knowingly ignoring nonconsent," might shy away for fear of attracting controversy.

Gendered patterns in sexual violence have been a central theme of this project. Some of this was by design; I opted to focus on gendered assumptions in my theorization and analysis of precasting; incorporated codes for explicit mention of men's victimization, men's aggression, women's victimization, and women's aggression into quantitative content analysis from the outset; and paid close attention to gender restrictions and heteronormative approaches when qualitatively assessing definitions in quantification and top-cited causal and effects studies. Yet even without these decisions, gender would likely have been central. The in-group gender politics of sexual violence research are fraught, such that scholars who prioritize men's aggression toward women and scholars who prioritize other patterns or more gender inclusive approaches often feel scrutinized and challenged by their peers. There is no singular, collective position on this issue.

In the 1970s and 1980s, it was routine for scholars to approach sexual violence as a subset of men's violence toward women. Gender variance was not widely acknowledged in academic literature on this time, and it was consequently standard to use female/woman and male/man interchangeably. Those who studied anything aside from men's sexual violence toward women tended to qualify their terms. Researchers might refer to "male rape" when discussing male victimization, and speak simply of rape when discussing female victimization. The term "rapist" was often synonymized with "male rapist." Indeed, I noted no direct references to "female rapists" across all 1,313 abstracts and 84 full studies assessed for this

project; sexually aggressive females were referred to as “female offenders” or “female perpetrators.”

Many scholars of sexual violence perceive men’s aggression toward women as the most pervasive and urgent dimension of this social problem. However, they seem to have faced increasing pushback for this approach. When I asked whether she had experienced any conflicts or disagreements with scholars in the field, Madeline described facing “the most resistance” from “those that want to talk about male victims.” When pursuing grant funding for a campus-based project, Jenna had initially intended to distribute separate surveys to male and female students that focused on aggression and victimization, respectively. She was advised that her chances of funding would improve considerably if she posed all questions to all participants. As discussed in Chapter 2 on prevalence research, Rebecca had found public health professionals resistant to describing sexual violence as gender-based violence, which made collaboration with gender and women’s studies scholars challenging. She further felt ongoing tension between her desire to produce and support inclusive, intersectional scholarship with her certainty that heterosexual, gender congruent men’s aggression toward heterosexual, gender congruent women comprised the vast majority of (adult) sexual violence.

Scholars who favored gender inclusive or gender neutral approaches, or who prioritized same-sex violence, violence in gender variant communities, women’s aggression, and/or men’s victimization, also faced resistance from their peers. Gretchen, who had done some work on violence in queer communities, expressed frustration with “people who are just on opposite ends. Like women can never be violent...just people who say there’s absolutely no parallel. And then other people say it’s 100% the same.” Stacey recalled hearing from “big names in the field” that “we shouldn’t be attending to that because it really just draws attention away to the bigger problem of men perpetrators and women as victims.” Max spoke at length of criminologists’

tendency to recognize female aggression in the context of child sexual abuse, but not adult sexual assault:

I think that people think that a woman can physically control a child in a way that they don't think that a woman can physically control an adult...I'm always sort of struck [BY]...naiveté that women don't do these sorts of things. If you look, for instance – even the FBI definition only included women victims a few years ago, they only [RECENTLY] made it gender neutral. You didn't see any women offenders in FBI arrest data because they didn't even ask. They didn't even include it. So you know, some poor police officer in Philly or wherever that arrests a female for sexual assault, there's no place in the [UNIFORM CRIME REPORTING] system to include it. There wasn't up until a couple years ago. So it's not surprising people don't realize these things happen.

When it came to acknowledging adult male victimization, Max suggested that misperceptions about sexual arousal and threat response might play a role:

I think another big myth that plays into it as well – and again at the risk of being blunt and gross, well not gross, anatomically correct – is this notion that if men are fearful, they can't stay erect...There's tons of research that shows that that there's excitation transfer. In other words, if you're really afraid or you're really excited, the blood's pumping everywhere. It's not deciding like "god, I'm afraid, heaven forbid the blood's pumping, but it's not going to go to my penis." That's not how it works. And I think if people had a better understanding of that, a better understanding of just the ways in which people can coerce people into doing things they don't want, I think that there would be much more understanding.

Another example, is even among female victims, we talk about fight or flight response. And most people don't think about, well there's the whole freeze response, that you know, many victims freeze. People are finally starting to realize, "oh yeah, women can freeze as a response to sexual violence"... So can men. You know, if I put a gun to your head and say "pull your pants down," you might freeze too. Or even if I'm just very hostile, or I shock you or surprise you, or put you in a situation where you don't expect it.

Not all scholars opposed gender inclusive (or even gender neutral) approaches, just as not all scholars opposed a strict emphasis on men's violence toward women. Participants who explored a range of gendered patterns in sexual violence broadly perceived an increasing openness to their work among in-group peers. Nonetheless, they continued to expect and face pushback.

Dividends and Detriments

Is infighting a “kiss of death” for science? Or the scientific study of sexual violence? Out-group and in-group conflict certainly comprise powerful mechanisms here. For every participant in this project who faced opposition in or after graduate school and chose to persist, there may be one or several who changed course. This might mean abandoning the study of sexual violence, or moving away from scientific or scholarly pursuits altogether. It might mean shifting focus within sexual violence studies as a means of circumventing protest. Someone might change their gendered approach, as described by Jenna; or decline to critically investigate consent, as described by Stacey.

Notwithstanding these mixed or detrimental outcomes, infighting among scientists and specifically among scholars of sexual violence has its dividends. Several participants shared that credibility struggles and even personal challenges motivated them to continue. When told that she should wait until tenure before studying something as “polarizing” as sexual violence, Alisa reflected that such advice “almost makes me want to do it more.” Although she had worked to familiarize herself with the politics of higher education, and become open to broadening her focus to less overtly controversial matters such as “sexual health” or “student welfare,” she had not lost her passion for studying and preventing sexual violence. Whereas her initial struggles “put me in molasses a little bit,” Clara had come to believe that “when I get that kind of visceral reaction from a guy like that, I know I’m on the right track.” She had learned to channel opposition into motivation. She responded to accusations of being “sexist toward women” for holding aggressors accountable, and repeated efforts to discount her research by reinforcing the very rape myths she sought to dismantle, with “moral outrage” that fueled her work.

Under the right circumstances, infighting may also ensure that scholars engage challenging questions and work to collectively face uncertainties regarding the “nature” and

scope of sexual violence. In-group gender politics offer a telling example. Although the vitriolic pushback described by some participants was regrettable and problematic, the struggle over how to engage gender in sexual violence research is a productive one. The struggle over whether to endorse patriarchy as the sole or principle (proximate) causal agent, or whether to incorporate other forces such as racism and poverty and even ultimate causes such as human evolution, is likewise productive. Wendy touched on this when I asked about her vision for the field. She expressed that “we’re not really honest enough about the limitations of our findings,” and wished that she and her colleagues might be “more critical of one another, but in a kind way.” Absent room for dissent among scholars, it will not be possible to produce or accept even “kind” criticism. Yet with sufficient openness, supportive and critical infighting might be as productive as working toward consensus.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In the early 1970s, as Susan Brownmiller researched for and drafted *Against Our Will*, she was repeatedly asked whether she had been raped. She repeatedly answered “no.” The first edition opened with a Personal Statement on these encounters. Brownmiller recalled that neither she nor her questioners seemed satisfied by such a brief and superficial exchange. She contemplated others’ persistent interest in discovering (and probably critiquing) her motivations for studying rape, and wrote thoughtfully about her own shifting conceptualization of sexual violence and gendered power dynamics. She shared that years of work with feminist antiviolence activists transformed her from someone who met victimization narratives with skepticism into someone who believed and advocated for survivors. Ultimately, Brownmiller concluded, she had written *Against Our Will* because she was “a woman who changed her mind about rape” (Brownmiller 1975: 9).

In the mid 2010s, as I have researched for and drafted this dissertation, few people have asked after my history with violence. Yet I have struggled endlessly with whether, and to what extent, I might share it here. I have tried to balance my privacy aspirations with my gratitude for rich and open narratives like Brownmiller’s, and with my ongoing dismay at the scarcity of queer and transgender voices across more than a thousand scientific works. I have tried to think and feel reflexively. Feminist ideals have pulled me in both directions, pushing me to situate my own knowledge production while also reminding me that victims/survivors (should) carry full ownership of their own stories. Logistical and political concerns were likewise muddled. On one hand, disclosure might help me to get ahead of invasive questions, and control the narratives as much as possible. On the other hand, neither disclosure nor nondisclosure would provide sure

defenses against the kind of credibility challenges that sexual violence researchers face. At particularly indecisive times, I've even tried to burden friends and colleagues and committee members with the decision. To their collective credit, most insisted that these decisions were mine to make, and that I faced no obligations in any direction.

Ultimately, it is the social and historical contingency of classification – including my and other researchers' capacity to locate the problem of rape within and outside of various bodies and spaces, and to engage such different conceptualizations and methodologies and audiences – that moves me to speak here. Have I been raped? I said as much, in the opening chapter. And although that passage was initially composed for a feminist science studies conference, where I fully expected (and received) affirmation and trust, I chose to retain it for this writing. I also chose to return to the question repeatedly, as a sort of intellectual exercise, throughout the work of publication searches and content analyses and interviews and meetings and endless drafting and rewriting. Now, asking myself more directly and after several years immersed in this project, I revise:

Have I been raped? I believe so. Or maybe I believe that I have been raped somewhere between zero and three times. It depends on who is asking, and who gets to decide with authority. It depends on what specific acts will count as rape, and whether gender identifications and enactments affect the perceptibility of aggressors and victims/survivors. It depends on whether and how much my own perceptions matter, and how consistent those need to be. It depends on whether researchers or legislators or crisis counselors or activists have a say, and how their classifications measure up against my own narratives, and how much that matters. Rape is a complex phenomenon with numerous potential boundaries and conceptualizations, and my own history is no exception.

If Susan Brownmiller wrote as a woman who changed her mind about rape, perhaps I write here as a researcher and advocate – and also as a queer and transmasculine person with complex and sometimes shifting understandings of my own victimization history – who has faced a range of changing and immovable minds on the subject. I write as someone who does not perceive myself (or others) as socially unified. Even when assessing my own history, which is closer and

more known to me than it would be to a fellow scientist, I produce different “counts” and enact different agential cuts at different moments. As identitarian articulations manifest and shift, I might approach this as a sociologist, as a crisis counselor and advocate, as a queer person, as a White person, as a man, as a transgender person, as someone of Jewish ancestry, as an educator, as someone who was assigned female at birth and raised as a girl, as a middle class person, as a (particular sort/s of) feminist, as someone who proudly claims survivorhood, as someone who resents being at all defined by others’ violence toward me, as any combination of these and other identifications. I cannot produce a singular or innocent “Truth.”

Conceptualizing Sexual Violence

Rape and other forms of sexual violence; and our ways of knowing, accounting for, and responding to them; comprise intra-active phenomena. These “objects” of knowledge are inseparable from agencies of observation. This does not mean that sexual violence is imaginary or trivial. Rather, it means that an understanding of sexual violence requires some understanding of the means through which it is conceived, and how various actors enact agential cuts to distinguish this object from the conditions that make it perceptible (and how the same actor might enact different agential cuts in different moments). In scientific contexts, understanding sexual violence requires a consideration of the complex decision-making processes, disciplinary conventions, research instruments, theoretical and methodological approaches, funding and other resource constraints, collaboration and conflict, broader social contexts and historical events, personal dispositions, and more that contribute to the production of particular scientific knowledges. Agential realism is a form of realism that embraces phenomena as central foci, rather than artificially isolated “objects” and “observers.”

The study of sexual violence comprises a vibrant and complex scientific field. Scholars of innumerable backgrounds have engaged questions regarding the scope, causes, and effects of this social problem, and taken a tremendous variety of approaches in doing so. Notwithstanding this variety, there have also been several patterns in knowledge production over the past four decades that merit some (re)consideration. I will address two of them here. The first concerns a historical, if somewhat declining, dominance of psychological and psychiatric inquiry, and consequent reliance on individual-level approaches. The second concerns gendered precasting, and related controversy over whether to conceptualize sexual violence as a subset of men's violence against women or as a "gender neutral" phenomenon. Addressing these patterns – with the aim of expanding scholarship and avenues for knowledge production, rather than replacing or superseding established work – would complement a broader aim of engaging systemic and intersectional approaches in science and antiviolence work.

The Dominance of Psychological and Individual-Level Accounts

Many participants in this project described rape as an "interdisciplinary problem." In other words, knowledges and skills prioritized across numerous fields – psychology, sociology, anthropology, criminology, criminal justice, social work, public health, biology, communications, medicine, philosophy, and inherently interdisciplinary fields such as gender studies and cultural studies, to name but a few – have value for understanding and addressing sexual violence. At the same time, some participants criticized what they perceived as a dominance of psychological work in the field. My own content analyses reinforce this argument. Psychological works comprised the bulk of the 1,313 scientific abstracts reviewed here. Even more telling were the qualitative content analyses of full texts. Psychology and psychiatry were consistently well-represented among the most cited works in causal and effects research, both in terms of the

study authors' backgrounds and the journals' disciplinary affiliations. Although interdisciplinary journals made the top ten in several instances, as did authors with backgrounds in other fields such as sociology and public health, psychological and psychiatric knowledges of sexual violence seem to have reached farthest for more forty years.

None of the participants in this study called for an end to psychological inquiries in the field, nor do I make any such argument. Yet there is considerable room for interdisciplinary collaboration, and for the inclusion and valuing of perspectives that emphasize interpersonal, institutional, and cultural dimensions of social problems in addition or alternative to the more individual dimensions prioritized in psychology. Many participants expressed an interest in exploring the capacity for sexual violence to arise from and contribute to systemic inequalities, and to consider the role(s) of various institutions such as schools and legislatures and courts in promoting or deterring rape. Assessments of individual risk factors for aggression and victimization may complement systemic efforts – for example, a finding that women from low-income families faced greater risk of victimization than women from middle-class families might motivate an investigation of sexual violence and class inequality, or into the prevention and support services available in schools from neighborhoods with varying economic resources – but individual analyses are insufficient for exploring such matters in depth. Scholars in the field of sexual violence research might work to incorporate a broader range of voices, and to read and cite work across disciplines. Scholars in disciplines such as sociology and anthropology that have been historically less represented in the field or tended to “gloss over” narratives of victimization and aggression might reconceptualize sexual violence as a powerful and pervasive mechanism for maintaining social inequalities.

Some concerns around the dominance of psychology were not particular to that discipline, but rather to a more general interest in diversity of perspective. This was evident in

calls for shifts in causal and effects inquiries, and frustration with what some perceived as needless replication or a tendency to uncritically endorse particular interventions. If individuals within and beyond science have overwhelmingly embraced bystander intervention campaigns or criminal prosecution or sexual assault forensic examinations without sufficient data – suggestions made by some participants in this project – this is surely not due to an emphasis on psychology. Neither is problem of feeling “stuck” and unable to innovate. Singularity of perspective is more at issue, here. Improving preventive strategies will require a range of expertise and resources. Whether scholars seeking to prevent sexual violence opt to refine bystander intervention programs and other measures that “look like rape prevention,” or to emphasize agentic sex education and other strategies that are less obviously connected with ending sexual violence; and whether scholars working on sexual violence response opt to reform existing legal and criminal justice resources, or prioritize alternatives such as restorative justice and greater investment in rape crisis and other noncriminal support services, such efforts may benefit from a plurality of voices.

Precasting in Sexual Violence Research

Precasting, as I have theorized it here, occurs when scientists set boundaries regarding which actors may enact which statuses. This is distinct from simply making assumptions about study participants, which may be reinforced or challenged in subsequent data collection and analysis, in that precasting shapes forecloses lines of scientific inquiry. In sexual violence research, the most high-stakes statuses concern those of actual and potential aggressors and victims. Scientists who suspect particular patterns in aggression and victimization may design a study with those in mind, and intentionally or unintentionally ensure that that the only perceptible patterns are those that confirm their assumptions.

Although precasting may occur along any number of dimensions, I have focused here on assumptions regarding gender and sexuality. These concepts are particularly salient when addressing sexual violence for at least two reasons. First and foremost, large-scale activism and scholarship to address sexual violence in the United States and Canada developed through feminist activism to address men’s violence toward women, particularly (though not exclusively) in the context of heterosexual dating and partnerships. Second, throughout this project – including the quantitative analysis of 1,313 abstracts and in-depth assessment of 84 scientific studies – assumptions concerning gender and sexuality were more likely than assumptions concerning any other characteristic to be built into study designs through restrictive definitions and sampling frames. Scholars might disagree as to the extent that race and disability intersect with violence, but I have yet to encounter a study that excluded people of particular racial/ethnic backgrounds or people with(out) disabilities from enacting the status of victim or aggressor, or claimed to provide information regarding the general scope or causes or effects of sexual violence while restricting to a single-race or single-disability-status sampling frame.

Gendered precasting may take several forms in sexual violence research. All have consequences for the production of scientific knowledge, as well as the development of antiviolence policy and interventions. At the level of sampling, scientists might decide from the outset to restrict a study of victimization to female-assigned women. This would not constitute precasting if researchers set out specifically to consider the nature and scope of female sexual victimization, or to design prevention and response measures specifically for this population; it is rather the conflation of “victim” with “female victim” that becomes problematic. Sexual victimization among all male-assigned people, and all female-assigned people who do not identify as women, are rendered imperceptible by such approaches.

Definitions and survey design provide further precasting opportunities. Researchers might embrace an overtly restrictive approach, as in the original Sexual Experiences Survey which asked women about victimization by men and asked men about aggression against women. Same-sex violence, violence by and against people with gender variant identifications, women's sexual aggression, and men's sexual victimization are imperceptible with such instruments. Even ostensibly inclusive approaches may contribute to precasting if dominant understandings of "typical" sexual violence in heterosexual contexts inform scientists' construction of an abstract "victim" for survey design. This is evident in projects such as the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey and Campus Sexual Assault Study, which ask male and female participants about victimization while restricting "rape" to penetration by an aggressor. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, female study participants are substantially more likely to report nonconsensual penetration by an aggressor, whereas male study participants are more likely to report nonconsensual envelopment by (or being made to penetrate) an aggressor. Moreover, press coverage of prevalence research often focuses on statistics for rape rather than "lesser" experiences such as sexual assault or unwanted sexual contact. Restricting rape to penetration by an aggressor makes it comparatively difficult for male-identified people to qualify as rape victims, even if it does not altogether preclude this possibility. Again, such scientific approaches only constitute precasting if the larger problem of rape or sexual violence is synonymized with gender congruent men's sexual violence toward gender congruent women – or, in its more subtle form, if "real" or "serious" victimization is rendered synonymous with penetration by an aggressor, whereas envelopment or being made to penetrate an aggressor is relegated to a lower status.

Gender politics are particularly fraught in the study of sexual violence. This was evident in many of the conversations I had with researchers regarding their own approaches in research

and advocacy (where applicable), as well as broader conflicts within the field between two seemingly polarized camps: those scientists who believed that there was absolutely nothing gendered about sexual violence, and that all research should embrace gender neutral approaches; and those scientists who believed that the real problem of/behind sexual violence was masculinity or patriarchy, and that any discussion of anything aside from (presumably heterosexual and gender congruent) men's violence against (presumably heterosexual and gender congruent) women was a politically suspect and dangerous distraction. As with many binaries, these rather extreme positions did not necessarily reflect many scholars' positions. Nonetheless, this sense of polarization was constraining regardless of individuals' personal conceptualizations and scientific approaches.

Can this tension be resolved? And should it be? Dissent can be productive in science, including dissent regarding how best to approach gender and sexuality in the study of sexual violence. Yet precasting is counterproductive. Precasting forecloses scientific inquiry, and treats empirical uncertainties as resolved matters unworthy of investigation. The opposite of precasting is not neutrality, so much as openness or inclusivity. I suspect that the concept of gender inclusivity may be of value in this field, not necessarily to eliminate disputes or provide a definitive "true" or "truest" answer to the question of gender and sexual violence, but rather to resolve the sort of false binary described above. A gender inclusive approach would presume that people of all genders and sexualities may experience sexual victimization and commit acts of sexual aggression. At the same time, such an approach would not necessarily presume that gender was irrelevant to sexual violence, or demand "gender neutral" theoretical and methodological decisions.

When designing a study of rape, scholars might consider gendered and other forms of precasting as an intellectual and ethical practice. We might ask ourselves a series of questions –

who am I regarding as a potential assailant, victim, or bystander? What variables and levels of analyses have I included? What is perceptible here? What am I prioritizing or making most visible? Where am I (not) locating the problem? What ethico-onto-epistemologies am I embracing or rejecting? – and seek to account for our choices. In asking such questions, we should attempt to consider a broad range of personal and systemic factors, and be open to new ideas and information. It is not problematic to design and conduct a study of heterosexual, male-assigned men’s sexual aggression toward heterosexual, female-assigned women. It is problematic to assume that this pattern in sexual violence is the only pattern, or the only pattern that matters. It is not problematic to conduct a study of campus-based prevention at a predominantly White and middle-class urban university. It is problematic to assume that the successes and struggles in such spaces and populations apply seamlessly to all campuses, and to render the abstract notion of “college student” synonymous with “White, middle class student at an urban university”. When we design gendered and otherwise restrictive projects, we should be prepared to explain why, and to consider the impact of the partial knowledges we produce. We should recognize our and other scientists’ (constrained) agency in selecting definitions, embracing quantitative or qualitative or mixed methods approaches, selecting or designing research instruments, building and employing sampling frames, selecting research sites, analyzing data, and presenting our work to individuals and institutions within and beyond science and academia.

Such matters are not strictly theoretical or even scientific. Rape is a pervasive social problem. Its causes and consequences are diverse and variable, transcending individual, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural dimensions of human life. Scientific knowledge shapes public understandings and institutional prevention and response efforts in a range of domains including criminal justice, legislation, medicine, labor, news and fictional media, and social

services. In the United States, years of grassroots activism were unable to achieve what a single statistical figure – “1 in 4 women” – accomplished practically overnight (Jhally 1994; Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987; Rutherford 2017). But that figure did more than establish rape as a widespread problem. That figure established rape as a heterosexual problem. That figure established rape as an adolescent and young adult – or more specifically, a college and university – problem. That figure established rape as gendered, characterized by men’s violence toward women. That figure indicated that patriarchy – but not necessarily racism or homophobia or classism or ableism – was a driving force behind sexual violence in the United States. Law and policy responses were informed by all of these messages. Campus sexual assault emerged (and has recently reemerged) as a major social problem, and activists and policymakers worked to identify and address sexist practices in Greek life and campus cultures more broadly. Feminist activists and academics worked to reform sexist criminal statutes, police investigation practices, prosecutorial decision making, trial procedures, and campus adjudication procedures.

For all these innovations, many individuals and populations and spaces were left out. More concerning is that many of those rendered imperceptible through “1 in 4 women” – and much of the dominant sexual violence scholarship since then – experience elevated rates of sexual violence and substantially restricted access to social support. Researchers may also inadvertently reinforce (or at least fail to challenge) oppressive ideals that contribute to or stem from sexual violence. What does it mean, for example, to approach sexual violence as a race-neutral phenomenon? Numerous studies over numerous decades have revealed that Black, Latinx, and Native American women experience higher rates of sexual violence than White women (Black et al. 2011; Breiding et al. 2014; Deer 2015; Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski 1987). Ten years before “1 in 4 women” established rape as a widespread social problem, the

Combahee River Collective's *Black Feminist Statement* connected the legacy of White male slaveholders' violence toward Black female slaves with contemporary racist and sexual oppression in the United States (Combahee River Collective 2006/1977). More recently, Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Sexual Politics* connected legacies of sexual violence toward Black female slaves and lynching of Black male slaves to contemporary controlling images (Collins 2004). Stereotypes of Black women as insatiable temptresses render them socially acceptable targets for violence, and undermine these women's credibility if and when they disclose victimization. Stereotypes of Black men as dangerously sexually aggressive – particularly towards White women – make it socially acceptable to approach Black men as predatory, credible as rapists but never as victims/survivors. Sarah Deer has drawn attention to centuries of Native American activism to address White European men's violence toward Native women (Deer 2015). Scientific research that approaches rape as a race-neutral issue may inadvertently contribute to the erasure of these legacies. State officials who draw on such work may embrace race-neutral approaches and decline to support policies and interventions tailored to addressing violence in communities of color – particularly in non-campus spaces. White activists and social services agencies may fail to partner or ally with people in Black, Native, and other racial minority communities when designing interventions and outreach materials. Ultimately, women of color may feel erased and unwelcome as survivors of sexual violence.

Yet even these critical intersectional feminist insights often approach sexual violence as a heterosexual and predominantly patriarchal (and White supremacist) phenomenon. Women's sexual aggression toward men, and any violence beyond what Gayle Rubin has theorized as the "charmed circle" of normative sexuality (Rubin 1993/1984) is rendered imperceptible. Violence toward and against transgender and gender nonconforming people is likewise rendered imperceptible. This can have drastic consequences. Prevention and response curricula rightly

train boys and men to recognize and avoid perpetrating sexist behaviors, including sexual aggression toward girls and women. Less often are men boys trained to avoid perpetrating sexual violence toward each other, or to consider themselves as actual or potential targets of rape. Simultaneously, women and girls are trained to recognize themselves as potential targets of men and boys' violence, but not as targets of women and girls' violence or as potential aggressors (Levine 2015; McMahon and Banyard 2012; Taylor et al. 2012). As sociologist Susan pointed out in this study, people who have experienced same-sex assaults may be less likely to identify as rape survivors, and thus less likely to pursue and receive rape crisis services. If the providers of such services are trained to recognize rape as a problem of men's violence toward women, they will be unprepared to adequately support anyone whose experience is different. This is all the more concerning given that queer and transgender communities report substantially elevated rates of sexual violence (Griner et al. 2017; Rothman, Exner and Baughman 2011; Stotzer 2009; Walters, Chen and Breiding 2013).

Social Mechanisms

Science studies scholars have long argued that scientific research is a social domain, and that cultural and interpersonal forces guide the production of scientific knowledge and the distinguishing of fact from falsehood (Barad 2007; Bourdieu 1975; Epstein 1996; Haraway 1997; Jasanoff 2005; Jordan-Young 2011; Latour 1987; Rutherford 2017; Shapin and Schaffer 2011/1985; Waidzunas 2012; Waidzunas 2015). My claims to that effect are hardly novel. Several of the social forces documented in this project – the involvement of actors who are not trained as scientists, credibility struggles within and across disciplines, the tendency to devalue work associated with social or political matters – are well established in the science studies literature (Cech 2013; Epstein 1996; Latour 1987; Waidzunas 2015). Nonetheless, some aspects

of the scientific study of rape offer contributions to that literature. One concerns the fact that sexual violence research maintains a feminized and contested status within science, which has implications for the particular in-group and out-group conflicts faced by professionals in the field. Another concerns care work as a social mechanism within science.

Contested Legitimacy and Multifaceted Credibility Struggles

Much of the literature in science studies emphasizes science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, many of which are dominated by gender congruent (and often White, highly educated, middle class) men, and many of which might be conceivably described as apolitical by insiders (e.g., Barad 2007; Cech 2013; Epstein 1996; Jordan-Young 2011; Shapin and Schaffer 2011/1985). Even if science studies scholars politicize physics and chemistry, physicists and chemists may claim to engage in detached and objective work, seeking and retrieving external knowledges rather than producing them through the social processes of research. Even if science studies scholars argue that physics and chemistry research carries moral implications, physicists and chemists may claim detachment from moral concerns and sole investment in seeking "pure" truths.

Few sexual violence researchers are STEM professionals. Many have backgrounds in social science fields, which are less prestigious and less masculine-dominated. Many embrace political affiliations, aligning with feminist or queer or antiracist aims as a part of their scientific work. All contend with unavoidably value-laden subjects. In other words, even scholars in fields such as evolutionary psychology who reject the notion that their research on rape is political or social in character must navigate contentious political landscapes as they conduct and publish their work (Dreger 2015). Many scientists who study rape do so with consciously feminist and

social justice aims, which can cause personal and professional tension for those who also adhere to or regularly confront positivist epistemologies.

The participants in this study faced out-group and in-group challenges that I believe are particular to more overtly political scientific fields. Regarding the former, some scientists argue that sexual violence research is inherently unscientific. Those who believe that science and social issues are altogether separate (or at least separable), or that feminist or other value-driven work cannot comprise real science, are particularly apt to pose credibility challenges. Consequently, scientists who study rape must be prepared to defend the scientific character of their work, and perhaps their own legitimacy as scientists, in addition to facing the sort of methodological and theoretical and innovative challenges common to scientific criticism. When Neil Gilbert and Katie Roiphe sought to challenge the veracity of “1 in 4 women,” they attacked Mary Koss’ credibility as a statistical researcher. They portrayed Koss and her supporters as corrupted by “rape crisis feminism,” driven by problematic ideological concerns to the point of producing bad science (Gilbert 1991; Gilbert 1992; Jhally 1994; Roiphe 1994/1993; Rutherford 2017). When Christina Hoff Sommers sought to challenge the veracity of “1 in 5 women,” in reference to the Center for Disease Control’s *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey*, she accused CDC scholars of engaging in “careless advocacy research” (Sommers 2012) rather than rigorous scientific analysis. These critics reject the very premise of feminist science. They express skepticism toward any scholarship in the field, wary that research on sexual violence might be somehow politically contaminated from the outset.

Field insiders rarely make such claims. These individuals have already endorsed the project of studying sexual violence, and either accepted such work as (at least potentially) legitimately scientific or disinvested in such categorizations. Yet the connection of sexual violence with social morality remains a source of conflict, as scholars dispute the boundaries of

acceptable research. Concerns over scientific legitimacy give way to concerns over misuse. In-group conflict seems particularly high stakes as researchers are held accountable for the political and moral implications of their work. It is telling that a colleague likened Charlene Muehlenhard's research on token resistance to research on the atomic bomb (Muehlenhard 2011) – the latter being an unquestioningly scientific project with devastating global consequences.

Such struggles comprise two sides of the same coin. Overtly political and value-laden scientific work carries the dual risks of credibility challenges and dismissals over perceived scientific (il)legitimacy from colleagues beyond one's field of specialization, and character challenges and moral attacks from field insiders.

Care Work in Science

Many of the social processes emphasized in science studies literature – credibility struggles, competition, intellectual opportunities, evidentiary hierarchies, the distribution of power and other resources, opportunities for advancement and funding – align with masculine-coded skills and practices such as acquiring and demonstrating superior technical knowledge. Yet more feminine-coded processes, such as emotional labor and interpersonal communication, also play a role. In this project, care work emerged as a crucial social mechanism in the production of scientific knowledge about sexual violence, and the maintenance of an engaged and active scholarly community. To appreciate the value of this social mechanism within science studies, and the relative lack of attention to care processes in previous works in that field, it is worth a short detour through feminist research on gender and labor.

Feminist researchers have long been critical of supposedly non-gendered notions of an "abstract laborer" that seem to benefit gender congruent men to the detriment of gender

congruent women. Acker (1990) challenged discourses that portrayed organizations as gender-neutral and asexual. She argued that gendered logic drove the production and ranking of positions, as well as the workers who sought and filled them. Consequently, job descriptions and compensation were not characterized by detached objectivity, but rather implicitly gendered logic whereby “advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine” (146).

Such gendered logic was readily apparent in comparable worth evaluations. The skills required in male-dominated positions, such as managing money, were consistently recognized and highly valued. The ‘softer’ skills required for female-dominated positions, such as providing emotional support to supervisors and clients, were either devalued or overlooked altogether. Masculine-associated traits and experiences, such as competitiveness and military experience, were regarded as desirable. Feminine-associated traits and experiences, such as emotionality and childbearing, were grounds for exclusion from the upper ranks. Masculine-associated positions were granted more prestige and higher compensation, whereas feminine-associated positions were devalued (see Cech 2013 for a recent example within science and engineering professions). Furthermore, when managers envisioned the workers who would fill each position, they imagined persons whose primary obligations were professional. These abstract workers were implicitly free from the obligations associated with women’s roles in heterosexual partnerships (Hochschild 2003/1989; Legerski and Cornwall 2010); that is, they did not need to “balance” household and childcare responsibilities with professional ones.

Expanding these arguments, one might add that managers also envisioned laborers who were unburdened by discrimination and hostility in the workplace, and might thus focus their energy entirely on assigned tasks. In this case, any marginalized identification might detract

from the archetypal “abstract laborer.” The challenges of navigating sexual harassment, queer and gender variant (in)visibility, racism, ableism, and other oppressive forces at work might contribute to poor performance evaluations for individual laborers, rather than indicate a need for institutional and cultural change. Care work might be perceived as a distraction or personal indulgence, rather than a necessary practice for sustaining labor participation.

Feminist science studies scholars have worked tirelessly to demonstrate that gendered and sexual logics inform the production of scientific knowledge, as well as scholarship within the field of science studies (Barad 2007; Haraway 1989; Haraway 1997; Harding 1995; Jordan-Young 2011). In proposing care work as a social mechanism, I offer a further feminist intervention to this literature. Self care is a collective and power process within science. Scholars in any scientific or scholarly field may face substantial emotional challenges; sexual violence work is particularly heavy, even perhaps in comparison with other difficult subjects such as wartime violence and substance use. Those who study rape may rely on one another to offer formal or informal “permission” to engage in self care, and to find effective strategies for supporting themselves and others in their work. Moreover, scientific collaborations in this field are characterized by intellectual and emotional processes that cannot be disentangled. The care work of sharing and hearing narratives of struggle is connected with the analytical work of documenting and assessing victimization narratives and institutional responses to violence.

Studying Rape as an Agential Realist

Scientific research on rape, like scientific research more broadly, is a human enterprise. Such research is shaped by the social conditions that produce it, including entanglements among researchers and funding agencies and cultural values and “target” populations within phenomena. These realities do not indicate a need to abandon science, or to dismiss scientists

as irrelevant or harmful to the work of addressing sexual violence. Scholars such as Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, and Sandra Harding have proposed epistemologies that engage a love of science alongside critical attention toward the conditions that produce and preclude scientific knowledges (Barad 2007; Haraway 1988; Haraway 1997; Harding 1995; Harding 1986). Situated knowledge and strong objectivity provide alternatives to the “god tricks” of “viewing from nowhere” and apolitical relativism. Agential realism facilitates critical engagement with the ethical, ontological, and epistemological perspectives within and surrounding science, as well as the entanglement of researchers and research instruments with the objects they study.

Following these feminist scholars of science, I end here with a call for agential realist perspectives in the study of rape. Rather than accept detached objectivity as the ideal and most credible standard, I argue that agential realism facilitates more comprehensive and more credible scientific inquiry. Such scholarship engages entanglements among observers and objects of study, recognizes discreet “objects” and “findings” as products of particular agential cuts, provides for the recognition of scholars’ and participants’ welfare within scientific ethics, and approaches scientific facts critically without equating “socially produced” with “imaginary” or “false.” These are not deficits. These are assets.

While such insights may well apply to all scientific enterprises, scholarship on rape is a particularly powerful place to begin. Scientists and activists who work on this issue are well equipped to challenge normative conceptualizations of truth. Research on Rape Trauma Syndrome and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Burgess and Holmstrom 1974a; Ullman et al. 2007), for example, have long provided tools to challenge victim-blaming attitudes in public and criminal justice contexts. Memory gaps and self-doubt have been recast as markers for rather than against credibility. Scientists have demonstrated (and continue to demonstrate) that rape is often experienced as traumatic, that trauma impacts memory formation, and that a

victim/survivor's struggle to recall specific details may just as well serve to bolster their narrative – consensual, non-traumatic sexual encounters simply do not produce the same difficulties that traumatic assaults do. A similar logic applies here. Rather than accept that scientific truth relies on detached and apolitical observation, scholars of rape should pursue and demand better science.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Tell me a bit about your work.

What led you to focus on rape as a researcher?

Generally speaking, how would you define rape? How would you define consent? Has any of this changed over the course of your career?

I'd like to hear about some of the work you've done in this area. Is there a specific project or publication you would like to discuss? [If not, mention one or more specific works].

What was the goal of this research? Were you surprised by any of the findings? If you had a chance to repeat this study, would you do anything differently? Broadly speaking, how was your work received? How did others, in and out of your field, react?

Have you looked to any particular institutions – criminal law, or rape crisis centers for example – in designing and conducting your research?

Have you collaborated with other people in studying rape?

How have you found (or been found by) collaborators? Can you tell me a bit about how that went? Did you have similar understandings of what rape was, what research questions to pose, and how to answer them? Did you and your co-researchers have any disagreements?

Have you had conflicts or pushback from other scholars in this area?

Anyone you've directly collaborated with? Any conflicts with other scientists, perhaps people who have disagreed with your work, or whose work you have challenged?

I'm also interested in hearing about people that influenced your work, but are not necessarily scientists. Can you think of anyone in other fields who has made a difference?

Have you pursued grant funding? If so, how have you approached that? Have you used different approaches for different funding agencies?

Sexual violence can be a difficult and weighted subject to study. Over the course of your career, have there been emotional components, or maybe emotional challenges, in your work? Have you engaged in any sort of self care?

What advice would you give to a young scholar who was thinking about entering this field?

What recommendations do you have for future scholarly work in this area?

Is there anything else that I should have asked, or mentioned, to understand your work in this area?

APPENDIX B

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY:

BUILDING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS IN SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION¹⁹

In January 2014, The White House Council on Women and Girls published a report demanding greater attention to sexual violence (White House Council on Women and Girls 2014). While council members depicted sexual violence as a national problem, they emphasized college campuses as a key site for intervention based on quantitative data from the Campus Sexual Assault Study (Krebs et al. 2007; see Muehlenhard et al. 2017 for a review of the one-in-five figure), in which 19% of women reported experiencing sexual assault during their college years. Then-President Obama responded by forming a task force to identify best practices for preventing and responding to sexual violence on campus, and to ensure that colleges were complying with existing federal policy. This was not the first time that college students had been identified as a priority population. Nearly 30 years earlier, Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski (1987) found that 1 in 4 college women reported having experienced attempted or completed rape in their lifetimes, whereas approximately 1 in 12 college men reported having committed attempted or completed rape. More recently, the renewed Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) had established a Campus Program requiring grantees to provide prevention education for all incoming students, and to demonstrate collaboration with on- and off-campus partners in violence prevention. Native Americans in reservation communities; undocumented immigrants; and members of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations were also identified as priority groups for intervention and support.

Few have disputed the need to address sexual violence on college campuses and in socially marginalized communities. Perhaps fewer have disputed either the Council or Obama's

¹⁹ As described in the introduction, this is included as a standalone essay. It is also presently under review (revise and resubmit stage) at the *Journal of Applied Social Science*.

reliance on statistical data to promote changes in antiviolenace policy. Indeed, it is common for scientific research to influence state and other institutional priorities. Since the emergence of large-scale anti-rape activism in the 1970s, scientists and other scholars have collaborated with community activists, practitioners, and fellow scholars in raising awareness of rape and promoting reforms in law and social policy (Corrigan 2013; Martin 2005; Mulla 2014; Spohn and Horney 1992; Whittier 2009). Furthermore, scientists play unique and important roles in producing knowledge about rape (Rutherford 2017). They are tasked with determining the incidence and prevalence of rape (Breiding et al. 2014; Muehlenhard et al. 2017; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000), identifying factors that promote or deter individual risk or communal rates of perpetration and victimization (Abbey 2011; Armstrong, Hamilton and Sweeney 2006; Gervais, DiLillo and McChargue 2014; Hines et al. 2012), and evaluating prevention and response efforts (Alderden and Ullman 2012; Coker et al. 2011; McMahon 2014; Morrison et al. 2004). Service providers and state officials may request, challenge, or draw from scientific research in order to improve upon their own efforts to address rape.

While scholars of rape have provided rich accounts of feminist anti-rape activism, legal reforms, and social and medical services (Bevacqua 2000; Corrigan 2013; Martin 2005; Mulla 2014; Spohn and Horney 1992); as well as the capacity of sexual violence to maintain power relations (Collins 2004); there have been minimal investigations of scientific work (see Rutherford 2017 for an exception). Researchers have devoted considerable attention to popular and institutional support for rape myths (Edwards et al. 2011; Ryan 2011), and approaches to sexual communication and the interpretation of sexual consent and refusal (Muehlenhard 2011; Muehlenhard et al. 2016), without exploring their (our) own potential role in shaping such matters. Yet scientists can and do have influence. Decisions regarding study design, recruitment, and theoretical foundations guide the production of knowledge. Published works may impact

popular and institutional approaches to rape and consent (Rutherford 2017). Ongoing reliance on statistics in the United States policy arena ensures ongoing influence for scientists who produce and interpret statistics (Jasanoff 2005; Porter 1995). Ultimately, if the construction of scientific knowledge matters for social policy, as well as popular understandings of rape, it is necessary to investigate the social processes happening within science. It is further important to consider relationships between science and such external influences as social movements, community institutions, and members of “target” populations.

The processes of incorporating scientific knowledge into concrete and feasible strategies for social change are complex and challenging. Researchers who wish to impact prevention and response efforts beyond the academy must work to build relationships with diverse professionals. In some instances, the commitments that motivate researchers may be insufficient for engaging institutions. The aim of ending violence, in itself, may not be enough. Narratives of trauma, of risk and safety, may not be enough. Concerns about limited resources and potential backlash or liability may dissuade institutions from partnering with researchers in prevention. Distrust between researchers and institutional actors may also pose a barrier.

This paper explores scientists’ and other scholars’ efforts to engage community partners in sexual violence prevention and response. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 30 researchers, I present an overview of challenges with building and maintaining relationships, as well as three promising strategies for effective collaborations: *cultivating mutual partnerships*, in which researchers prioritize others’ input and commit to giving back to their partners and surrounding communities; *combining awareness and prevention*, in which efforts to raise awareness through institutions are coupled with the development of concrete action plans; and *reframing the problem*, in which sexual violence or its outcomes are connected with established institutional priorities.

Methods

This study emerged from a larger project on scientific approaches to sexual violence in the United States and Canada from 1975 to the present. I developed an initial recruitment list after conducting a comprehensive review of scientific journal publications, and began reaching out via phone and email. On completing interviews, I asked participants for referrals for individuals (including, but not necessarily limited to, other scientists) who had influenced, collaborated with, or otherwise affected their research on sexual violence. Finally, I engaged in networking at meetings for professional associations in various disciplines to identify potential participants. This was particularly helpful for identifying “younger” scholars who had not yet published or received many citations, as well as scholars whose publications on sexual violence were missed in my initial Web of Science search.

Throughout interview recruitment, I strove for variation in perspective and background. I reached out to widely cited scholars whose work had demonstrably influenced the field, and to scholars who focused on relatively marginal or neglected aspects of this work (e.g., sexual violence within intimate partnerships). I reached out to established researchers, early career scholars, and graduate students. I sought out scholars who were trained in different disciplines, employed different methodologies, and who worked in different fields within and outside of academia. Across all of these approaches, I contacted 82 scholars. Forty-eight (59%) responded, including 42 (51%) who expressed interest in completing an interview. I was able to schedule and conduct interviews with 30 of these scholars (37% of the initial recruitment list, 71% of those who expressed interest). All recruitment and interviews took place between October 2016 and September 2017.

Interviews were semi-structured. They began with broad questions about participants' work (e.g., what led you to study sexual violence?), which were often sufficient to generate rich discussions on a range of subjects including priorities for the field, collaboration and conflict among scholars, varying methodological approaches, and strategies for building and maintaining relationships with community partners. Interviews ranged in length from approximately half an hour (this occurred when researchers had severe time constraints, but still wanted to participate) to two hours; most conversations were between 50-70 minutes.

All participants provided oral consent to participate and, provided that they were comfortable with this, for me to audio record our conversations. I transcribed all recordings, and removed identifying information as thoroughly as I could in order to safeguard anonymity. I also encouraged participants to assist me in recognizing aspects of their work and experiences that might be difficult to write about without revealing their identities, and further to let me know whether of any content they wished me to omit from transcripts or subsequent writings for any reason. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Temple University.

Throughout the processes of recruiting, interviewing, and transcribing, I wrote memos to reflect upon emergent patterns/themes and interpersonal dynamics across interviews (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011). I then developed a coding scheme based on my primary research questions, previous strategies for analyzing abstracts and full texts, and concepts that seemed more specific to these qualitative data. All transcripts were then analyzed in *Atlas.ti*.

Results

The 30 researchers who took part in this study offered a wealth of experience with community partnerships. Across their careers, these scholars had collaborated with diverse community members including individuals in well-resourced localities, individuals in more

socially and economically marginalized areas such as low-income rural communities and reservation-based Native American communities, and institutionalized populations such as prison inmates. Participants had also collaborated with numerous institutional partners such as practitioners, including community-based advocates, social workers, and medical professionals such as doctors and nurses; criminal justice professionals, including prison staff, police, prosecutors, and defense attorneys; and education professionals, including administrators, student services providers, and teachers at the college/university and high school levels. In the following sections, I provide overviews of challenges in building and sustaining researcher-community partnership, along with strategies that have been effective in previous research and seem adaptable to further endeavors.

To preserve anonymity, I use pseudonyms to refer to all participants. As discussed above, I have also attempted to remove all identifying information from excerpts and my own descriptions of participants' perspectives and backgrounds, and to omit content concerning projects and collaborations so distinct that any mention might risk confidentiality.

Challenges in Building and Sustaining Community Partnerships

While many participants had developed long-lasting and valuable relationships with community partners, many had faced challenges in doing so. I have organized these loosely into three (somewhat overlapping) categories: *building trust* with individuals and institutions who are reluctant to work with researchers, *competing priorities* that arise when the motivations or ultimate goals of those studying sexual violence conflict with those of community partners, and *resource constraints* that impede the often time-consuming and otherwise costly work of building sustainable relationships.

Building Trust

“When you come in from the outside, you look like a person of privilege and you’re looking at them as a wretch, and they’re going to be some wretch in some experiment and they don’t want to do that... researchers have such a bad reputation inside prison because we take, and we don’t give.”

Karen, criminal justice scholar

“I think there was some sense that I was a woman, and that I probably had an axe to grind, and wanted to confirm my own prejudices about the way that the criminal justice system handles sexual assault...one has to be careful to present the project as a quest for knowledge. And for pushing back the boundaries of what we know about the response of the criminal justice system to this crime. And not with a preconceived notion that nothing has changed, and that we know that the response of the criminal justice system to sexual assault is awful and want to collect data to prove that.”

Tanya, criminologist

Community members and professionals outside of academia are sometimes wary of partnering with researchers. Several participants spoke about a concerning history of scholars across multiple disciplines exploiting vulnerable communities. Stephanie, a psychologist with decades of experience studying interpersonal violence, criticized ‘helicopter research’ approaches in which “you zoom in, you collect your data, and you leave.” She went on to explain that “when you do that, you’re really exploiting the community. And they catch on very quickly, so the mistrust among these marginalized communities for mainstream folks is real and palpable. And you have to work to overcome it.” This issue might arise through any number of power/privilege disparities between researchers and community partners. Stephanie, herself, was a White woman and professor who had been involved in antiviolence projects geared towards low-income communities of color. As an intersectional feminist, she noted that race and class dynamics in these projects were further connected with sexuality, gender identity, disability, citizenship status, and other dimensions of identity and social inequality, and that all such matters were relevant to the work of building trust and conducting ethical research.

Karen, quoted above, commented that incarcerated people have been repeatedly mistreated by

scholars seeking to advance their own careers without paying much mind to the concerns and experiences of inmates.

These same issues might also pose barriers to collaborating with advocates and other practitioners. Lisa, a sociologist with a rich history of institutional collaboration, recalled having once been told that “we don’t have time for research. We’ve got work to do.” While she was able to build numerous productive relationships with advocates, she also expressed sympathy for some providers’ reluctance to take part in academic studies that might not necessarily benefit them or the communities they serve.

Some barriers to trust concerned researchers’ actual or perceived values. Criminal justice institutions, such as police departments and district attorneys’ offices, were often suspicious of researchers’ motives. Tanya, quoted above, had faced skepticism as a woman studying police and prosecutorial responses to violence against women. Diana, a public health scholar who often collaborated with criminal justice professionals, noted the importance of conveying that she and her colleagues were seeking “to improve things, not to catch them doing bad things.” Pam, a criminologist, commented that police and prosecutors were sometimes reluctant to partner with researchers with connections to activist groups that were perceived as hostile to law enforcement. Scholars who publicly aligned with feminist activism or ideals frequently faced considerable scrutiny. Gretchen, a psychologist whose work often involved partnerships with high schools, shared the following:

I have had parents bring up my affiliation with women’s studies...I think they want to know, “what are you teaching my kids? And are you teaching them from this kind of feminist perspective?” ... We do get parents occasionally, particularly dads I guess, who worry, “is this going to be about how all men are bad?” again, that’s not that common, but I would say, for every study we do in a school that we do, I get one or two dads that call. And that’s a fair question. Because I think, historically, violence prevention has really been very much about men’s use of violence against women. And while that’s important, there’s so many other ways in which violence happens.

To address these concerns, Gretchen often emphasized the scientific basis of antiviolenace interventions in schools, and the priority of improving the safety and wellbeing of all students.

Finally, some participants expressed concerns about being worthy of trust, even if they had not developed community partnerships or faced opposition. Alisa, a public health scholar, worried that her own identity as a heterosexual nontransgender woman limited her capacity to study victimization among sexual and gender minorities: “I don’t want to speak on behalf of people. I can’t make assumptions – I mean I can make assumptions about why [SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THESE COMMUNITIES] is happening, but I don’t have personal experience.” She elaborated that community input would be essential for translating research into substantive, specific implications.

Competing Priorities

It just doesn’t work to try to convince bars to do this out of the kindness of their heart because “rape is bad.” I mean, it just doesn’t work. They’re not going to look at it that way. I mean they do, but they’re kind of like, “that’s not our problem...people come in here for a sexualized environment. They come here dressed a certain way.” They’re still dealing with those rape myths, so you can’t come in with that attitude.

Rebecca, public health scholar

I feel extremely fortunate because [UNIVERSITY] has been on board from the beginning with doing campus climate surveys... But I’ve heard many times from others, “my administration is not interested in doing this” or “my administration is interested in doing this, but I don’t think they’re going to do anything with the findings.” ... And I do think the issue of transparency is one that’s tough, and I can understand that colleges and universities have some fears or some hesitancy, the nervousness that comes with “what, we’re going to publish statistics about how many students are raped at our institution?” and that certainly needs to be acknowledged and then put in context.

Julia, social work scholar

Many scholars are drawn to this field by their desire to end sexual violence. Max, a criminologist with considerable academic and professional experience in the area, felt that “the nature of the research is such that you just can’t help but want to help.” In her experience,

researchers with and without backgrounds in activism seemed to become antiviolence advocates through the work of studying rape. However, scholars who collaborate with community members and institutions often find that these commitments are not consistently shared by their community partners. Rebecca, quoted above, noted that one barrier to prevention work with alcohol serving establishments was that many bar owners and staff thought of sexual violence as someone else's problem. More concerning was her observation that some individuals actively reinforced rape myths, such as "women who go to bars are 'asking for it,'" in expressing reluctance to intervene. Discussing her efforts to collaborate with university officials, Audrey, a public health scholar, shared that "as much as I want them to just care about violence because violence is bad and they should want to, I also know the reality is there are lots of bad things that happen on college campuses, and they need to understand why this one in particular needs to be on their agenda." Once again, the problem of sexual violence was not enough, in itself, to secure buy-in among community partners.

Even institutional investment might not guarantee engagement. Many scholars who worked on campus sexual assault expressed frustration at universities' competing interests in safeguarding students' wellbeing, on one hand, and maintaining a good reputation, on the other. These concerns are quite pronounced regarding prevalence estimates. For example, many scholars noted that Campus Climate Surveys produce substantially more accurate data than campus police records; however, those "better" estimates are consistently also much higher. Julia, quoted above, had spoken with numerous researchers and advocates who struggled with this issue. Audrey spoke to a need for researchers to educate administrators about the fact that higher prevalence estimates might indicate better data. She also encouraged researchers to consider administrators' perspectives: "Suddenly you have a hundred rapes reported on campus last year, but every other college in your state reporting one or two... we

need to think about [WHAT] college administrators think about in terms of recruitment, having donors contribute money to the school.” Rebecca echoed these concerns, commenting that “every institution is afraid of being labeled as ‘the rape institution.’”

Still another challenge concerned disagreements among external partners. This issue was particularly pronounced for scholars whose work addressed multiple forms of sexual violence. Brenda, a sociologist, insisted that “you don’t compartmentalize women’s experiences. You just, you talk about it all.” Yet her experiences working with sexual assault and domestic violence advocates were fraught with compartmentalization. For example, among advocates who specialized in domestic violence:

[SEXUAL VIOLENCE] just feels different somehow. More invasive, more private. Even as some of these advocates I interviewed would talk about the language. Like you know, not comfortable saying the word “penis.” So I’m thinking, “you can help a battered woman who’s had her face just massacred, but you don’t feel comfortable with the word penis?” it’s just, kind of mind blowing...I think it’s just so individualized. Some [DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT] programs are coming together and realizing this is a great collaboration, we should be doing both. And others, because they’ve competed for the same funding pot for so many years, that it’s more acrimonious.

Stephanie expressed similar concerns about collaboration with sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking prevention advocates, and further echoed Brenda’s point that such compartmentalization did not reflect victims’/survivors’ lived experiences:

[SERVICES ARE] completely segregated all the time...Women who are victims of domestic violence are often sexually assaulted within the context of that relationship, and yet a lot of the domestic violence people are not really trained to deal with sexual assault. Sexual assault, sometimes, occurs in the context of dating relationships. Often times, people who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, were victims of childhood abuse. So from a victim perspective, it’s messy and complicated. But from a service provision side, it’s a lot more siloed.

Echoing Brenda, Stephanie went on to elaborate that specialization and competition over funding fostered conflict among practitioners, often to the detriment of people who sought

services. She compared this with a tendency among academics to remain in their fields rather than collaborate across disciplines, and therefore to limit their capacity to comprehensively understand individual and social phenomena.

Resource Constraints

There's so much pressure on faculty members to get grants and publish, that to become immersed in the community and do community-based work is difficult, because it's very time consuming...I worked on one project back in [CITY], kind of a women's empowerment project, and we wanted to – it was a low income community, a community of color. So here we were, two White women doing this. So that was our number one challenge. We were definitely outsiders...and we probably spent a year going to the community, having pizza with them, doing little programs. I mean we would do small programs on domestic violence and sexual assault, and just talking. It might only have been 3 or 4 women we would go and meet with for a couple of hours. Well you know, you don't put that on your vita. That doesn't "count" in academia at all.

Stephanie, psychologist

Building relationships with bars is really challenging, because our program is multisession...and we require them to train [A SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY] of their staff who have face-to-face contact with patrons regularly as part of their job duties... we get bar owners who say "I think this sounds cool, I want to do it, but I just don't know logistically when or how I'm going to get all my staff together for this." And they're worried that bar staff are not going to want to do it, because it takes time out of their personal life. They want to be paid for it, and managers don't necessarily want to pay them for it. So they're worried from like a logistical side.

Rebecca, public health scholar

Much like the advocates, educators, medical providers, and criminal justice professionals with whom they partner, professional scholars face ongoing resource constraints. Yet it can take tremendous time and effort to create partnerships. Researchers must confront the trust issues and competing priorities noted above, and do the more human work of building interpersonal relationships with community members, activists, and professionals in various domains. Those who wish to avoid 'helicopter research' approaches must also think about how to develop mutually beneficial partnerships, some of which will continue well beyond the end of

a project. Karen took this concern seriously for her work with incarcerated people, to the point of deciding that “I always stay. My study ended [YEARS AGO], and I’m still there.” Julia, a social work scholar, recalled doing a great deal of work before even being able to begin a project on violence among student athletes. She had to first meet with the university athletic director, and modify a project to incorporate their concerns; then reach out individually to different teams in order to establish individual relationships, utilizing each successful contact for further networking; and finally help out at team events, sometimes including such mundane tasks as passing out beverages.

Unfortunately, many participants noted that community involvement is not often rewarded in academia. Stephanie, quoted above, had faced considerable pressure to publish quickly and avoid intensive community work in her career as a psychology professor. Denise, whose background was also in psychology but with more of a community focus, echoed these concerns:

Just as there are realities to practitioner life, there are realities to academic life. I’m, again, fortunate to be in a discipline that understands that a large part of that discipline is applied, and so therefore I get cut slack for doing projects that are more focused on practice. I don’t think everyone always does. If we’re getting kudos or getting tenure for doing the best, biggest statistical models of x, y, and z, doing that takes a lot of energy, and that energy takes away from what may need to start as – like a lot of my projects with practitioners started with very small qualitative pilot things that were useful to their work but were not necessarily going to immediately turn into a publication. And those relationships take time to build. And you don’t always have a lot of time on the way to your tenure clock being expired, right? So I think that stuff can get in the way.

These challenges were so substantial that multiple participants waited until tenure before even considering such “applied” projects. Some decided, notwithstanding the prestige and resources often reserved for tenure-track academic positions, that non-tenure and non-academic positions were preferable if they wished to be able to devote sufficient time and resources to community-based work.

Resource constraints among community partners can pose additional challenges. This was an ongoing concern for scholars in program development and evaluation. Gretchen noted that “almost all the programming that I’m evaluating, there’s some cost associated.” While she was generally able to provide interventions free of charge to participant high schools, this was by no means guaranteed in the larger world of prevention/intervention research. Rebecca, quoted above, described related obstacles working with alcohol serving establishments. Although she and her colleagues were able to provide free bystander intervention trainings, they were unable to compensate trainees for their time. She noted that some bar and restaurant owners offered compensation for staff who attended, but others were unwilling or unable to do so. This resulted in overall reduced participation and sometimes even resentment from trainees who felt that they had been compelled to work without pay.

Promising Strategies

Although many participants had faced obstacles in building and sustaining community partnerships, many had also found promising strategies for doing such work. Three that stood out as particularly effective and widely embraced were *cultivating mutual partnerships*, in which researchers demonstrably valued partners’ involvement and further ensured that all parties involved benefited from projects where possible; *combining awareness and prevention*, in which researchers collaborated to develop action plans for responding to data that might otherwise seem overwhelming or even threatening to an institution; and *reframing the problem*, which involved connecting sexual violence prevention and response to other established priorities. These three strategies are not intended to “line up” with the three challenges described above. All of these may apply to all of those challenges, and none are sufficient to overcome all obstacles in collaboration.

Cultivating Mutual Partnerships

If you just say “we want to survey your kids,” they’re like, “not another survey.” But we’re offering them evidence-based prevention and a partnership, where they see some benefit to them. And I think it was helping schools to see that the surveys were going to be useful to them, not just to us...in addition to getting prevention programming. Even if they’re a control school, they always get the programming at the end if it’s deemed effective. And they get it free of charge, too.

Gretchen, psychologist

When you do good work, and when you’re thoughtful, and when you allow them to see the work and have input – at least reflective input – I think they’re much more willing to open themselves up to additional research. This is a very sensitive topic... you have such low clearance numbers, and you have such low prosecution and conviction numbers. So I think just having a good relationship with them is so important.

Pam, Criminologist

By far, the most common strategy involved cultivating mutual partnerships with community members and institutions. This approach was multifaceted. At their most basic, mutual partnerships ensured that all parties involved benefitted in some way from the relationship – sometimes within the same project, and other times in a more long term sense. Gretchen, quoted above, offered a range of incentives for schools that participated in evaluation research including free access to prevention programming, stipends, and non-technical reports with overviews of current strengths and areas for improvement. She also worked to balance individual schools’ needs with best practices in evaluation research. For example, she might use random sampling as a standard approach, but be willing to compromise on this if a particular school “really needs to be in the treatment condition.”

Advocacy and criminal justice organizations are often in need of data to evaluate their work and identify priorities for further endeavors. Several participants were able to cultivate mutual partnerships by lending their skills in study design and data analysis. Pam, quoted above, commented that police and prosecutors “sometimes look for researchers to assist them on

projects. So sometimes, in order to access one kind of dataset, maybe you're providing them some kind of research support in some other avenue." In describing her collaborations with local institutions, Audrey shared that:

I would meet with [STAFF] to say "here is our plan, and is there data – as long as we're doing this, is there data that would be helpful for you to have?"... And I think that is where we worked with them pretty collaboratively, at least our university, in the beginning to set up that first study design. It's one of those –it doesn't yield anything for me in terms of publications, we've just assisted them with their pre/post training surveys. And providing some resources for data entry, data analysis. Because we have that skill set here. And it's sort of in the interest of being a good citizen.

Max described a similar situation in which she had offered to provide data analysis and interpretation for an antiviolence coalition. In turn, they distributed a survey for her independent research alongside their (already scheduled) assessment of member agencies' needs and services.

Different forms of knowledge vary in credibility and impact (Epstein 1996; Murphy 2006). Whereas individual narratives of trauma and recovery can be tremendously powerful, they may lack the institutional and policy impact of statistical data and larger scale qualitative inquiry (Jasanoff 2005). Wendy, a social work scholar, recalled that it was easier to secure university resources for campus prevention when she provided detailed quantitative evaluations: "administrators said to me, 'we can't do with stories what we can do with data.' You know? The higher ups, they need to allocate more money [BASED ON DATA]." Max recalled collaborating with service providers who had encountered high rates of interpersonal violence in rural communities, but were only able to secure funding to address this concern after she provided a statistical report confirming their observations.

Another aspect of mutuality concerned valuing the expertise and experiences of community partners. Several participants had involved partners directly in the research process. This might entail collaborating on initial study design (as described by Audrey) and/or seeking

reflective input on data interpretation and presentation (as described by Pam). Denise commented that her clinical background was immensely valuable for research, and that “having genuine respect for where that practice comes from, and the value of practice-based knowledge, has been helpful...it’s really important to recognize that we all have expertise to bring to the table.” She elaborated that, just as researchers can offer valuable insights for improving services in different domains, so too can practitioners offer valuable insights for researchers:

I’ve also been really fortunate to have great practitioner collaborators who are willing to engage in honest conversations...you have to have that moment where they say “that’s a great bunch of statistics, but we already knew that. Why do you keep researching questions that we already have the answers to? We need the answers to *these* questions.” You know? But at the same time, support one another in the work. So I think I’ve been really fortunate to have people who are very willing to have those kinds of honest, challenging conversations.

Numerous participants shared Denise’s belief that engaging multiple perspectives enriched scientific projects. The challenges of competing priorities, building trust, and resource constraints persisted, but many researchers had managed to build and sustain mutual relationships. In Gretchen’s words, “if you have a strong enough team, you work through it.”

Combining Awareness and Prevention

A lot of the research on sexual assault...depending on the agency, they might see it as not putting them in the greatest light. And it’s so important then to be able to sit with them and talk to them about, ok, while it may say this, it’s also an opportunity. Let’s talk about what opportunities exist to make it better for victims, to make it better for the agency. So even though the outcomes might be kind of negative, let’s take that negative and let’s turn it into something that’s an action step that shows you in a positive light.

Pam, criminologist

Our recommendation has been that colleges and universities consider releasing their findings along with an action plan, so that they can say, “yes, this is a problem we have. We have it on our campus, just like any other campus. And

here's what we're going to do about it." Because if you have that response, it shows you're not just ignoring the problem.

Julia, social work scholar

Translating empirical research into social action can be challenging. In the case of sexual violence work, community partners might lack the skills or resources to do so. As described in the section on competing priorities, institutions might also be wary of research that seems unfavorable. Researchers in criminology often described hesitance among police and prosecutors to collaborate for these reasons. Pam, quoted above, had developed strategies for portraying ostensibly negative outcomes as opportunities to improve organizational practices and, ultimately, to publicly demonstrate a commitment to supporting victims/survivors. Tanya described a project in which collaborators made this connection themselves: "they said, 'you uncovered some things that we need to work on, that we need to do better.' The [POLICE DEPARTMENT] established a specialized training program for their sexual assault detectives. The sheriff's department instituted some of the changes that we recommended."

Campus prevention specialists often struggled with administrators who feared publishing high prevalence estimates. Moreover, university administrators rarely had the necessary skills to design effective interventions. In calling for broader investment in conducting and publishing the results of Campus Climate Surveys, Julia (quoted above) suggested that such data be released alongside concrete action plans. Several participants echoed this suggestion. This further highlighted the promise of researcher-practitioner collaborations, as practitioners often have valuable skills for developing and implementing comprehensive prevention and response measures.

Reframing the Problem

It's really, I think, the educational disruption. For the university, then that means their graduation rate is going down. That's an outcome they can really rally

behind. And there's all this work happening, and so we can say [SEXUAL VIOLENCE] is leading to this consequence in education retention that you really care about.

Audrey, public health scholar

Is the incidence of sexual violence lower in bars that have trained bar staff? But then also, from an economic point of view, do you have more people coming to your bar? Do they feel safer? Are they more inclined to go to your alcohol serving establishment? Because that would help us build buy-in on behalf of the bar owners and managers.

Marion, public health scholar

When prospective partners were not invested in addressing sexual violence, or found the issue important but irrelevant to their work, researchers were sometimes able to link antiviolence projects with other established priorities. Audrey (quoted above) often tailored her approach to the concerns of specific community partners. When working to address sexual violence on campus, she introduced research linking sexual violence with educational outcomes, such as retention and graduation rates. This, in combination with the more typical approaches of highlighting personal narratives, prevalence data, and mental and medical health outcomes made for a powerful argument. When working with hospital and clinic staff, Audrey pointed out that many patients came to appointments with their partners. She advocated that providers spend several minutes alone with each patient in order to screen for interpersonal violence, and to offer support to victims/survivors as appropriate. Collaborators were somewhat hesitant until she connected this practice with another dimension of clinical work:

The other thing that comes up a lot, and this is probably where there was more buy-in, was the realm of substance abuse. We have a lot of women who are using substances that their partners may or may not know [ABOUT]. And so they actually can use that 5 minutes to talk about what's likely to show up on their drug screen... it's not just violence, actually. There's other things that you really shouldn't have people in the room. And I think that has helped to make it a little more acceptable.

This reframing strategy ensured better services for patients in abusive situations and improved clinicians' capacity to support patients struggling with substance use and other potentially sensitive or private matters.

Profit motives seemed particularly promising for researchers who collaborated with corporate partners, such as alcohol serving establishments. Marion, quoted above, spoke to the potential for bystander intervention training to improve patron safety and comfort. With adequate publicity, participating in such trainings might have financial benefits for owners and staff in addition to reducing sexual harassment and other forms of violence. Rebecca shared similar views. She also suggested that sexual violence prevention might constitute a legal compliance issue:

In our state, we have a statute that basically says that bars can be held liable for patron acts of violence that take place on or around the alcohol serving establishment property...and if you look at the definition of violence in our state statutes, it's pretty open ended. Sexual assault could apply to it. So we've tied it in that way, and the bar owners' ears perk up immediately when you tie it into their legal liability. They may not care about preventing sexual assault because they think it's important in their bar environment, or actually happens there. They care about it when it comes to their liquor license.

Notably, neither reframing strategy had any substantive impact on the content or structure of antiviolence interventions. It was simply the justification for programming that shifted/expanded.

Discussion

Community partnerships are central to the work of addressing sexual violence. Scientists and other scholars who seek to affect social change have much to gain from building relationships with advocates, criminal justice professionals, educators and school administrators, medical providers, and members of local and/or marginalized communities. Participants in this study revealed numerous challenges to such work. Many prospective

partners are distrustful of academics, and sometimes with good reason. Socially marginalized communities such as racial/ethnic minorities, reservation-based communities, sexual and gender minorities, low-income and poor individuals and families, undocumented immigrants, and people with disabilities may be particularly wary due to historical and ongoing exploitation by researchers (Lareau 2011; Ordover 2003). Some institutions, such as police and prosecutors, may fear that researchers' agendas run counter to their own. Competing priorities between researchers and community partners, and between partners in different domains, can impede research as well as prevention and response efforts (Corrigan 2013; Mulla 2014; Whittier 2009). Time and other resource constraints can make the work of building and sustaining partnerships impractical or even counterproductive for scholars in tenure-track positions and practitioners with substantial caseloads.

Fortunately, participants in this study offered several promising strategies for overcoming obstacles to collaboration. Many highlighted the importance of cultivating mutual partnerships with community members and institutions. Ensuring that all parties benefit in some way, offering reflective or other input on study design and data interpretation, and recognizing expertise from both academic and non-academic perspectives can go a long way. Institutions that fear liability or loss of reputation for confronting the problem of sexual violence might benefit from concrete action plans. This can further ensure that researchers do not attempt merely to point out social problems or deficits, but also to engage in developing solutions. When prospective partners are not invested in antiviolence efforts, or view sexual violence as 'someone else's problem,' researchers might reframe the issue such that prevention and response align with more established priorities. This strategy has the potential to considerably expand the scope of individuals and agencies involved in addressing sexual

violence, even if some are motivated primarily by such concerns as profit, legal compliance, or educational retention.

It is important to approach this study as an exploratory first step, rather than a definitive and comprehensive account of all challenges and opportunities within researcher-community partnerships. Although these 30 scholars shared a remarkable range of experience in collaboration, they cannot represent the entire interdisciplinary field of sexual violence research. Far more limiting was my exclusive focus on researchers. Subsequent studies should explore researcher-community collaboration from the perspective of diverse community partners. Incorporating a broader range of methods, such as focus groups with researchers and community representatives in different domains, could also be very productive for advancing knowledge on building and sustaining effective relationships. Finally, future research should explore the extent to which the issues and practices observed here are unique to sexual violence work. Perhaps the obstacles and strategies observed in this study will prove relevant to scientists, community members, and institutions engaged with a broader range of social problems.