"Often I Feel We Victimize the Victim More Than the Suspect Does": Examining Officer

Attitudes Toward Sexual Assault Complainants

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to better understand police perceptions of sexual assault complainants by assessing their likelihood of questioning a complainant's credibility and by examining police attitudes toward victims of sexual assault. To advance understanding of these issues, this dissertation (1) expands upon prior research by drawing on a sample of officers from one of the largest metropolitan police departments in the United States and, (2) through the use of framing theory, contributes to the literature by focusing on the attitudes of police toward sexual assault complainants and how these beliefs are shaped by day-to-day experiences.

This dissertation investigates two research questions using a mixed-methods approach. The data come from 400 sexual assault complaints that were reported to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and 52 LAPD detective interviews. I quantitatively examine the factors that influence officer perceptions of complainant credibility, focusing on indicators of "real rape," "genuine" victims, "inappropriate" victim behavior, and "character flaws." I contextualize this work by examining police attitudes toward sexual assault victims using qualitative data taken from interviews of sex crimes detectives. This research contributes to the broader case processing literature by focusing on victim credibility, a factor consistently found to influence case processing decisions. Moreover, this study contributes to research on the frames officers assign to women who report sexual assault.

Analyses from the quantitative portion of the study confirm that indicators of "real rape," and complainant "character issues" were key explanatory factors influencing credibility assessments. Regarding qualitative results, three sexual assault victim frames

were identified. These frames include depictions of victims as they relate to: (a) the suspect/victim relationship, (b) problematic victim behavior, and (c) age. These three frames indicate that certain types of victims are viewed as problematic.

This dissertation contributes to three broad bodies of literature: law enforcement decision making, law enforcement perceptions of sexual assault victims, and framing theory. This dissertation was able to tap into officer attitudes to shed light on the ways officers treat women who come forward to report sexual assault, providing valuable insight into officer attitudes, credibility assessments, and victim framing.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The police organizational structure is shaped by both internal institutional forces and external societal influences (Manning, 1977). Therefore, to better understand the decision making that takes place by law enforcement officers it is first necessary to understand the societal, organizational, and group dynamics that contribute to the development, growth, and maintenance of the culture under examination. This type of research goal is informed by theories of framing, a process where people develop and maintain a specific belief system or adjust their conceptualization about a phenomenon based on their experiences in everyday life (Chong, & Druckman, 2007; Goffman, 1974). Goffman's (1974) theoretical framework argues that situations are defined by how individuals and groups make sense of, organize, and communicate about reality. Overall, framing is an organized pattern of thought (or schema) that individuals rely on to understand and respond to everyday events (Goffman, 1974).[1] This chapter introduces the larger theoretical issues that have influenced the policing of sex crimes beginning with societal views of sexual assault incidents, victims, and offenders and ending with a discussion of the police organization. First, this chapter situates police work within the larger "rape culture," focusing on rape myth acceptance and victim blaming and their role in shaping the police treatment of sexual assault cases. Second, it discusses the role of organizational culture in shaping the police response to sexual assault. Third, using framing theory, I describe how the larger societal environment and organizational culture may shape the police response to complainants of sexual assault. Finally, I summarize

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[1] Hamill and Lodge (1986) and Lodge and Hammill (1986) argue that there are only terminological differences between concepts like scheme, frame, or social script.

and complete this chapter by discussing the ways in which the current research contributes to and extends theoretical and empirical inquiry regarding the police organizational culture, police decision making, and the police treatment of sexual assault.

The internal organization of the police department is significantly shaped by larger societal influences (Manning, 1977). Manning (1977) argues that police work is largely symbolic as a result of mandates—instituted due to societal and cultural myths surrounding the organization—which are difficult for officers to fulfill but which they are obligated to maintain. For example, police work is considered symbolic when officers engage in activities that communicate ideological stances regarding societal issues, but at the same time such activities have no material, real, or enforcement-related impacts (Grattet & Jenness, 2008). This approach can have consequences; Manning's (2003) work on symbolic communication illustrates how members of an organization (i.e., police organization) interpret their environment and how variations in interpretation results in uncertainties regarding the police agency's responsiveness. In this chapter, I demonstrate that this perspective can be applied to law enforcement officers' treatment of sexual assault victims. Historically, women rape complainants have been—and continue to be—treated with intense suspiciousness by the criminal justice system (Jordan, 2004). Although the rape reform movement resulted in many legal successes such as the redefining of rape, the abolition of corroboration and resistance requirements, and the development of rape shield laws, the criminal justice response to sexual assault remains problematic (for a review see Spohn, Tellis, & O'Neal, 2015). Acknowledging Manning's (1977) analysis and assertions regarding the relationship between the police organization and the environment is salient in understanding the criminal justice response

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to sexual assault victims. Additionally, discussing the larger societal beliefs that contribute to the "rape culture" along with a historical discussion of the organization under examination will result in a more nuanced understanding of the institution and the decisions made by actors within it.

Manning's (1977) seminal research investigating the multifaceted factors shaping the occupation of policing as well as the role of law enforcement within society, coupled with more recent work specifically examining the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) (Bultema, 2013; Cannon, 1999; Gates, 1992; Gordon, 2011; Herbert, 1997; Lasley, 2013; Spohn & Tellis, 2014; Worth, 2011) inform the current dissertation. Following these significant works, I locate the LAPD within a specific framework that considers the historical, political, and cultural development of the agency. The setting of this study allows for a glimpse into officer perception and attitudes toward sexual assault complainants in one of the largest cities in the United States. Specifically, this dissertation will use framing theory to identify the ways in which police officers interpret and reconstruct sexual assault victim behavior based on day-to-day experiences and societal encounters (Volkmer, 2009). In later chapters, this theoretical framework will be applied qualitatively to police officer attitudes toward victims of sexual assault as well as quantitatively to decision making regarding victim credibility in these types of cases.

The "Rape Culture" Perspective of Larger Societal Beliefs

Inquiries into workplace behaviors have traditionally focused on individual attitudes linked to group, situational, and interactional aspects (Van Maanen & Schein, 1978). Van Maanen & Schein (1978) rightly assert that workplace behavior and socialization do not exist in a vacuum or without any external transmission of

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information and values from the larger society and culture. Therefore, it is important to situate police attitudes and treatment of sexual assault victims within larger societal beliefs surrounding this crime. After all, Williams (1984) has proposed that responses to sexual assault victims are "capricious products of public attitudes" (p. 68). These public attitudes are shaped by, reinforced by, and represented in various societal interactions. For example, popular culture has long justified men's violence against men, men's violence against women, and—salient to the discussion herein—sexual violence (Campbell, 1993).

North America's ubiquitous linking of sexuality to violence has resulted in a "rape culture" (Herman, 1988). Rape culture is a theoretical construct in which a set of societal beliefs and ideals normalize sexual violence and thereby foster an environment conducive to rape (Herman, 1988). Rape cultures exist in locations where both men *and* women believe that sexual violence is rampant and an unavoidable facet of daily life (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993). Rape cultures are marked by dominant attitudes and practices that not only normalize and tolerate sexual violence towards women but also excuse and even condone such behavior (Nicoletti, Spencer-Thomas, & Bollinger, 2009). Germane to the current discussion, rape cultures are also guided by specific views regarding sexual assault victims (Frohman, 1991). These deeply ingrained negative social attitudes regarding victims and misguided beliefs about sexual assault are called "rape myths." Rape myths or rape typifications are the widely held views about the causes, consequences, perpetrators, and victims of sexual assault that are used to justify sexual violence against women and girls (Frohmann, 1991; Gerger, Kley, Bohner & Siebler 2007).

Unfortunately, perceptions about the causes of sexual violence are guided by myths (Belknap, 2007). Examples of rape myths—to be discussed at greater length in the next chapter—include the beliefs that husbands cannot rape their wives, that women fantasize about being raped, that rape is merely undesirable sex and not a violent crime, and that sexual assault usually occurs between strangers (Burt, 1998). Rape myths continue to pervade society despite social advancements in rape awareness that have been made in the past several decades. These myths persist due to factors ranging from deep-rooted historical attitudes surrounding sexism to modern selective news media publication of certain types of rapes and sexual assault prevention programs that solely focus on enhancing the precautionary efforts of women (Caringella-MacDonald, 1998; Edwards, Turnchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; O'Donohue, Yeater, & Fanetti, 2003). First, regarding the historical origin of rape myths, the belief that husbands cannot rape their wives stems from the fact that before 1975 marital rape was not only legal but often thought to be an oxymoron (Bergen, 2004; Russell, 1990; Yllo, 1999). Second, media depictions often include stereotypical forcible rape—also known as "real rape"—involving incident factors such as stranger assailants, weapon use, and dark alleys (Caringella-MacDonald, 1998; Estrich, 1987). These media representations send viewers messages regarding what a victim, suspect, and incident *should* look like. A third example of factors driving the persistence of rape cultures includes modern prevention efforts on college campuses—a space where sexual victimization risk is high (see Fisher, Daigle, &Cullen, 2010). These university-based programs often emphasize victim protective behavior (e.g., not walking alone at night) instead of targeting the modification of male behavior (Parrot, 1991). Overall, this type of

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strategy sends subtle messages to victims that they are responsible for rape prevention and intervention.

The rape myth, victims-of-rape-are-not-real-victims, is rooted in beliefs surrounding victim culpability—or the idea that rape victims are somehow responsible for their own sexual victimization (Belknap, 2007). Societal attitudes surrounding sexual assault victim responsibility include: (1) the beliefs that alcohol consumption and intoxication *cause* rape (Belknap, 2007), (2) that women's appearances (i.e. clothing and demeanor) somehow provoke rape (Carmody & Washington, 2001; Walklate, 2008; Workman & Orr, 1996), and (3) that victims who engage in "risk-taking" behavior were "asking to be raped." A second rape myth involves the suspect-victim relationship. Rape is a crime that commonly occurs between acquainted individuals (Herman, 1988). Despite this reality, a majority of individuals believe that most sexual assaults occur between strangers. Research indicates that individuals are uninformed about the pervasiveness of acquaintance rape and are more likely to hold victims responsible for rape when assaulted by a dating partner (Bridges & McGrail, 1989; Johnson, Kuck, & Schander, 1997; L'Armand & Pepitone, 1982). The tendency to hold victims of date and intimate partner rape responsible for their victimization may stem from beliefs that prior sexual or dating interactions indicate women's wiliness to engage in sex in *any* situation (Pollard, 1992).

Relating to myths surrounding the suspect-victim relationship, a third ubiquitous rape myth, that rape is simply a miscommunication, is rooted in the idea that perpetrators do not realize that women do not want to have sex at the time of the incident (Belknap, 2007). In the context of intimate partner sexual assault, Finkelhor and Yllo (1985) term

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this phenomenon the "sanitary stereotype"—wife rape as a trivial conflict involving couple miscommunication. Overall, these prevalent myths are problematic when considering that legal decision making is vulnerable to the same biases that characterize general information processing, such as the propensity to concentrate on information that is consistent with pre-existing beliefs (McEwan, 2003). The following section discusses rape myths in the context of criminal justice response.

Rape Myths and Police Work

The high incidence of sexual assault is unfortunately coupled with low levels of formal help-seeking, specifically with regard to the criminal justice system. Research suggests that most victims do not report sexual assault to law enforcement officials (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006; DuMont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003; Johnson, Ollus & Nevala, 2008). Rape myths contribute to underreporting by influencing the ways victims of sexual assault come into contact with the criminal justice system; research indicates that the underreporting of sexual victimization partly reflects society's endorsement of sexual assault (Edward & MacLeod, 1999). Blame-the-victim attitudes that are present in rape cultures not only affect victims' reporting practices; they affect how law enforcement officers' treat victims (Resick, 1984). Victims often reference fears and concerns that law enforcement officers will question their credibility and truthfulness, which contributes to their underreporting (Bachman, 1998). These concerns are not unwarranted, as research indicates that law enforcement officers are often suspicious of claims made by rape victims and accept some of the more common rape myths including those mentioned in the previous section (e.g., the belief that "real" rape only involves strangers; Jordan, 2004; Page 2008). These responses from criminal justice "experts" are

harmful to victims because such treatment makes victims question the utility and

effectiveness of service providers (Ahrens, 2006). This is particularly salient regarding

law enforcement officers who are often the first point of contact victims have with the

criminal justice system. Initial contact is important, as the acceptance of rape myths by

law enforcement officers is often associated with system variables such as case attrition

(Smith, 1989). Attrition can result from the fact that criminal justice officials support the

traditional stereotype of sexual assault where the victim is attacked in a public area, by a

stranger assailant, involving the use of a weapon or brute force (Edward & MacLeod,

1999).

The inherent suspicious attitudes of law enforcement officers towards rape

victims may be a result of the officer role, which requires close examination of "facts"

and the identification of the "truth" (Alderden & Ullman, 2012, p. 6). This idea is in line

with contemporary frame analysis, which defines organizational frames as interpretive

schemas that actors use to deal with various situations (Goffman, 1974). Organization-

based frames dictate "rules and regulations" for members of the organization to follow

(March & Olsen 1989). These frames are often so deeply embedded in the organizational

context that even those who disagree with the organizational frame will often comply

because conformity in the workplace is expected (Scott & Lyman, 1968), potentially

resulting in the widespread acceptance of various beliefs within the police department.

This is problematic because it promotes the acceptance of rape myths and other flawed

organizational thinking. It is evident that societal rape myths have permeated law

enforcement agencies, as research reveals that police decision making reflects irrelevant

and rape-myth-based characteristics such as victim risk-taking behavior, the relationship

between the victim and suspect, and the character or reputation of the victim. These incident characteristics are known as extralegal factors (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Lafree, 1981).

Some extra-legal factors that mirror rape myths include whether the victim engaged in behavior that could be interpreted as damaging to her credibility (e.g. alcohol consumption), the victim/suspect relationship, and the victim/suspect living arrangement (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Bouffard, 2000; LaFree, 1981). Officer acceptance of rape myths coupled with skepticism towards victims is particularly problematic because it contributes to a low likelihood of arrest in sexual assault cases (Alderden & Ullman, 2012). Therefore, low reporting rates are met with a low likelihood of arrest which contributes to case attrition. LaFree (1981)—in a seminal sexual assault case processing study—found that suspects were less likely to be arrested if the victim engaged in "credibility-damaging" behavior, such as delayed reporting, or "risk-taking" behavior, such as being at a bar alone. More recent research suggests that victim characteristics continue to influence police decision making. For example, one study asked police officers to evaluate vignettes in which the beverage consumption (beer or cola) of the victim and suspect was systematically varied (Schuller & Stewart 2000). The authors of this study found that whereas officers' perceptions of the suspect's level of intoxication had no effect on their evaluation of the suspect's credibility, blame, or guilt, perceptions of the victim's intoxication *did* affect their assessment of the case.

Theoretical Considerations: Framing Theory

Concepts of framing are difficult to define both theoretically and practically due to their inconsistent application to research (Borah, 2011). Inconsistencies partly stem

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from the fact that framing theory has been applied by scholars from a wide range of

academic disciplines, including sociology, psychology, economics, communication,

media studies, political science, and cognitive linguistics (Hertog & McLeod, 2001;

Scheufele & Tewkbury, 2997). There is academic consensus, however, that framing

involves a process where people develop a specific conceptualization of a phenomenon or

adjust their thinking about a phenomenon (Chong, & Druckman, 2007). Framing assists

individuals to understand and organize what they see and experience in everyday life

(Goffman, 1974). Goffman's (1974) theoretical work on frame analysis argues that

situations are defined by how individuals and groups make sense of, organize, and

communicate about reality. His work has paved the way for the theoretical application of

framing theory to various organizations, populations, experiences, and academic

domains. Research has since focused on applying the construct of framing to the study of

conflict resolution, goal pursuit, American politics, opinion formation in competitive

environments, and citizen competence (Callaghan & Schenn, 2005; Chong & Druckman,

2007; Drake & Donohue, 1996; Druckman, 2002; Steglich, 2003). The application of

framing theory to the context of law enforcement organizations generally—and officer

attitudes specifically—remains underdeveloped (cf. Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell,

1995).

The process of framing refers to the social construction of a phenomenon or issue

that is produced and reproduced by political leaders, mass media outlets, social

movements, and/or actors within an organization (e.g., rape culture; Volkmer, 2009).

This results in the development of primary frames that reproduce the individual's,

group's, or organization's cultural belief system (Goffman, 1974). Regarding the police

organization, research indicates that law enforcement responses to sexual assault victims are shaped by widespread societal victim-blaming views and stereotypical judgments and perceptions (Campbell, & Johnson, 1997; Jordan, 2004). This type of response aggravates the trauma of sexual assault through what is widely known as "the second rape" (Campbell, 2006). The second rape includes victim-blaming and the insensitive and skeptical treatment of victims from social service agencies and the criminal justice system (Campbell & Raja, 1999, 2005; Martin & Powell, 1994; Williams, 1984). Overall, applying framing theory to law enforcement officer attitudes may help explain how the larger organizational and societal culture shapes individual police response to rape victims.

According to Goffman (1974), the process of framing serves the primary function of making sense of the world. Overall, frames assist individuals in reducing the complexity of information through interpretation and the restructuring of reality (Volkmer, 2009). In the context of police attitudes towards rape victims, framing theory allows for the investigation of perceptions through both the larger organizational and societal cultures. Martin's work (Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1994) has paved the way for this type of research; however, there remains substantial opportunity for the application of framing theory to the attitudes of law enforcement officers. This theoretical approach is appropriate due to the pervasive attitudes, values, and beliefs that officers share, which result in a unique and cohesive sub-culture.

Research Purpose and Significance: Framing Theory and Officer Attitudes

Guided by prior research, this dissertation investigates two research questions. First, I examine the factors that influence officer perceptions of victim credibility,

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focusing on indicators of "real rape," "genuine" victims, "inappropriate" victim behavior, and "character flaws," while controlling for measures of evidentiary strength as well as victim, suspect, and agency officer characteristics. Specifically, I quantitatively assess:

1. What are the factors that influence the police decision to question a victim's credibility?

Second, this dissertation contextualizes the quantitative work by examining police attitudes toward victims of sexual assault by qualitatively examining the following question:

2. Are officer attitudes influenced by widely held public views of sexual assault complainants?

Law enforcement officers operate in a victim-blaming society that holds some victims responsible for the assaults committed against them (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Koss, 1993; Orcutt & Faison, 1988). This social milieu may contribute to problematic criminal justice responses through a negative "framing" of rape victims. Overall, framing is the mechanism by which people draw from their set of attitudes and beliefs—also known as an "individual's frame [of] thought"—to evaluate their surroundings (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 105). Despite the importance of investigating police officer attitudes towards rape victims, few studies have examined the topic using framing theory (c.f., Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995).

Prior studies have formed the foundation for research on police officer attitudes towards rape victims (Campbell, 2006; Campbell, & Johsnon, 1997; Campbell, Wasco, Ahrens, Sefl, & Barnes, 2001; Jordan, 2004; Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995; Williams, 1984). Questions remain, however, regarding how officer attitudes vary within

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the same organizational context. Almost 10 years ago, Martin and Powell (1994)—in their study of legal organizations' framing of rape victims—called for more research investigating criminal justice organizations and the response to victims. And, although framing theory is a theoretically appropriate perspective for research on police officer attitudes, few studies have situated this topic in this framework. Existing studies have primarily focused on applying the theory of framing to the study of other social phenomena (Drake & Donohue, 1996; Callaghan & Schenn, 2005; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Druckman, 2002; Steglich, 2003). The current dissertation seeks to address this important empirical topic. Specifically, this study will use framing theory to identify the ways in which police officers interpret and reconstruct victim behavior based on day-to-day experiences and societal encounters (Volkmer, 2009). This approach will facilitate the development of knowledge on police officer attitudes through the lens of framing theory while informing victim management-related policies and practices.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I present important bodies of work that inform the current dissertation. First, I discuss a salient theoretical contribution to understanding officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims. I achieve this aim by situating the current dissertation within a social ecological model, a visual representation of the multifaceted relationships among individuals, groups, and their environments. To understand how officer perceptions are shaped by larger institutions, it is first necessary to discuss how beliefs result from complex and intersecting societal, organizational, and individual domains. Therefore, I identify the social, institutional, relationship, and individual factors that encourage violence against women and reduce inhibitions against such behavior.

Second, I describe specific components of the social ecological model in the context of policing sexual assault. I focus these discussions on the larger social and organizational influences, emphasizing the salience of the rape culture and the police workplace organization. I focus the rape culture discussion on rape myths, the widely held beliefs about rape that are used to justify or minimize sexual violence against women. Because the current dissertation examines officer attitudes, a deeper discussion of rape myths is appropriate as these myths facilitate the formation of beliefs regarding the characteristics of victims, the characteristics of suspects, and the characteristics of sexual attacks.

In the police organization section I describe the police subculture, officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims, and police decision making. These topics are important to the current dissertation because (1) the police subculture has long been considered a

critical concept in explaining police attitudes and behavior; (2) research suggests that some police officers adhere to problematic rape-related attitudes, resulting in policing that denies full protection to certain types of victims; and (3) the larger rape culture and the police subculture influence officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims and these ecological factors in turn shape legal decision making. Therefore, to understand the negative consequences associated with adhering to the rape culture and being socialized into an organization characterized by harmful views of sexual assault victims, it is necessary to discuss police decision making in sexual assault cases.

After the discussion of the rape culture and prior to presenting relevant information regarding the police organization specifically, I discuss organizational literature. This section covers theoretical developments, organizational functioning in the context of institutional cultures, organizational leadership, and organizational motivation, socialization, and decision making. Organizational theories facilitate the sociological study of formal organizations (like the police; Maines, 1991). Third, I describe how— consistent with the social ecological model—the process of framing results in the social construction of a phenomenon or issue that is produced and reproduced by various societal and institutional factors. In this section I focus on presenting aspects of framing such as metaphors, artifacts, jargon, spin, contrast, and stories in the context of policing sexual assault. Finally, I summarize and conclude this chapter by discussing how the current dissertation contributes to theoretical and empirical inquiry regarding the social ecological model, the rape culture, the police organization, organizational theory, and framing theory.

Understanding Violence against Women using a Social Ecological Model

To understand how officer perceptions of sexual assault victims are shaped by larger institutions, it is first necessary to discuss how beliefs result from complex and intersecting societal, organizational, and individual domains. This research approach is guided by a "social ecological model" (see United Nations [UN], 2006, 2012c; World Health Organization [WHO], 2002, 2010), a visual representation of the multifaceted relationships among individuals, groups, and their environments. This type of framework places social and cultural institutions at the center of investigation, examining the ways organized groups and social networks create community contexts that contribute to individual beliefs and actions (Heise, 1998). This process is cyclical; individuals are not only influenced by the social organizations with which they interact, they also contribute to the maintenance of societal beliefs, norms, and rules (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). In the paragraphs that follow, I rely on the traditional social ecological model—which examines the development of individuals within social subsystems—to discuss how social and organizational structures contribute to the widespread acceptance of violence against women (see Figure 1). This discussion is important to the current dissertation because widespread beliefs about violence against women influence the criminal justice response to sexual assault victims (Flood & Pease, 2009; Gerger, Kley, Bohner, & Siebler, 2007; Stewart, Dobbin, & Gatowski, 1996).

The violence against women social ecological model addresses four influential levels that facilitate the development and maintenance of beliefs, norms, and attitudes (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011). These four levels include: (1) the individual, which explores the biological and personal history factors that contribute to victimization and

criminogenic risk; 2) interpersonal relationships, which considers relationship factors that contribute to the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator; 3) the community, which examines social institutions such as workplaces, universities, and communities to identify how characteristics of these settings contribute to violence against women; and 4) society, which explores the far-reaching social factors that contribute to the maintenance of violence-supportive norms and beliefs (Center for Disease Control [CDC], 2015; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011). In the following paragraphs, I discuss each level in the context of violence against women, starting with the individual and ending with society.

  Level 1: individual. The first level of the social ecological model considers an individual's personal development as well as the biological and personal history factors that shape interactions with the three other levels (Brownridge, 2009; Dutton, 2006). Stated differently, this level of the ecological model focuses on the intersecting and contextual life history factors that influence responses to personal relationships, behavior within organizational institutions, and overall reactions to larger society. Factors associated with this level include demographics such as age, sex, gender, race, and ethnicity; biology; educational attainment; substance misuse; income; occupation; personality characteristics; and personal history such as quality of parenting and prior history of abuse (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; Webster, et al., 2014). These factors contribute to the shaping of individual beliefs regarding violence against women. For example, strict adherence to rigid gender roles, weak support for gender equality, masculine orientations, and a sense of entitlement based on male dominance have been linked to violence against women-supportive beliefs (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; Webster, 2014).

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Extant research has identified some individual factors that contribute to the acceptance of violence against women. First, gender is one of the most consistent individual factors found to influence the acceptance of violence against women, with men being more likely to: (1) support myths condoning violence against women, (2) define violence more narrowly, (3) blame women for their victimization, and (4) minimize the consequences associated with sexual and physical violence (Anderson & Swainson, 2001; Chng & Burke, 1999; Cowan, 2000; Ewoldt, Monson, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2000; Hinck & Thomas, 1999; Lee, Pomeroy, Yoo, & Rheinboldt, 2005; White & Kurpius, 1999, 2002). Second, research suggests that socioeconomic variables shape attitudes toward violence against women, with attitudes varying according to labor force participation and socioeconomic status (ANOP Research Services, 1995; Markowitz, 2003; Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre, & Morrison, 2005). Specifically, individuals who experience social and economic disadvantage are at higher risk for intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration (Markowitz, 2003; People, 2005). Third, attitudes regarding violence against women have been found to vary across various cultural groups, races, and ethnicities (Cowan, 2000; Kennedy & Gorzalka, 2002; Locke & Richman, 1999; Mori, Bernat, Glenn, Selle, & Zarate, 1995). For example, one study found that white students attending a Texas university were less likely to place rape prevention responsibility solely on women compared to Asian students attending the same university (Lee et al., 2005). This finding may reflect cultural attitudes regarding female chastity. Finally, research suggests that age plays a role in shaping violence against women-supportive norms, with young men the most likely to support these

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beliefs (Aromaki, Haebich, & Lindman, 2002; Davis & Lee, 1996; National Crime Prevention [NCP], 2001; Xenos & Smith, 2001).

Level 2: relationships. The second level of the social ecological model includes the relationship contexts between intimates, peers, and family members that increase the risk for violent perpetration and victimization (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011). Like the larger social and institutional levels (discussed next), this level includes norms regarding gender and sexuality as well as interpersonal interactions that facilitate the acceptance of violence against women (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). Numerous factors contribute to the production and maintenance of violence-supportive attitudes and beliefs in these relationship contexts. For example, sharing a common domicile and participating in peer activities that are linked to violence against women influences attitudes. In addition, being in a committed relationship where interactions with peers or romantic partners are characterized by the perpetration or acceptance of violence also influences attitudes, beliefs, and the perpetration of violence against women (Dalhlberg & Krug, 2002).

There is evidence that proximal social relationships can increase the acceptance, risk, and perpetration of violence against women. Like the levels discussed below, violence acceptance in the relationship context is linked to exposure to violence-supportive norms. However, this level focuses on the direct experiences of violence solely within interpersonal relationships. For example, experiencing or witnessing violence in the home (i.e. intergenerational transmission) is associated with violence-supportive attitudes and behavior (Carr & Van Deusen, 2002; Lichter & McCloskey, 2004: Markowitz, 2001; Schumacher, Feldbau-Kohn, Slep, & Heyman, 2001; Webster et

al., 2014), especially among males (for a review see Markowitz, 2001). Interpersonal relationships are an important component of the social ecological model because research suggests that attitudes and beliefs are socially constructed primarily through interactions with family and peers (Clausen, 1968; Habermas, 1992; Mead, 1913). Particularly salient to the current discussion is this level's ability to fuel and perpetuate learned attitudes through direct interpersonal reactions from those closest to the individual (e.g. police officer interactions in the workplace; Albarracin, Johnson, & Zanna, 2005; Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Newcomb, 1943; Watson 1913).

Level 3: organizations/community. The third level of the social ecological model includes the community and organizational contexts that facilitate the development and maintenance of beliefs, norms, and attitudes regarding violence against women (Buvinic, Morrison, & Shifter, 1999; Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011; Heise, 1999; Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Jewkes, et al., 2002). Like the societal level discussed below, this level includes culturally-specific norms regarding gender and sexuality as well as masculine peer and organizational cultures (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011; Heise, 1998). Numerous factors contribute to the production of violence-supportive attitudes and beliefs in these types of contexts. For example, group socialization, participation in group activities that are linked to violence against women (e.g., consuming alcohol), strong group identification, and the overall groups' commitment to the patriarchal social order all influence attitudes, beliefs, and the perpetration of violence against women (Godenzi, Schwartz, & DeKeseredy, 2001; Humphrey & Kahn, 2000).

Some workplace, institutional, and professional cultures involve more violence-supportive norms compared to other organizational contexts (Flood & Pease, 2002). This

is partly attributed to the socialization and training processes that occur within the organization or community. For example, the police workplace has been found to encourage violence-supportive norms (Waddington, 1999). This subculture characteristic is the result of socialization, strong group identification, participation in group activities that are linked to violence, and overall commitment to patriarchal beliefs (see Prokos & Padavic, 2002). First, regarding socialization, even women police officers hold violence-supportive views, a finding which arguably reflects their education and socialization within the androcentric occupation (Stalans & Finn, 2000). Second, police officers strongly identify with their occupational role. Feelings of isolation are commonly experienced in police work (e.g., "us vs. them mentality"); therefore, officers often rely on fellow police for their primary support (Alpert & Dunham, 1997). Third, participation in violent activities contributes to the acceptance of violence-supportive norms. Police work is characterized by masculinity where violence, danger, risk taking, and aggression is valued (Waddington, 1999). Thus, officers are often socially reinforced to engage in these types of behavior (Maskaly & Donner, 2015). Finally, the police subculture is intrinsically tied to values associated with the patriarchal social order. In fact, policing is considered a "male profession" (Goodmark, 2015, pp.1). And, some scholars argue that changing abusive officer behavior may prove to be impossible given the relationship between masculinity and policing (Goodmark, 2015). Overall, the above-mentioned factors, coupled with the relationship between masculinity and policing, result in a high likelihood that officers will adopt cultural norms accepting of violence (Conser, 1980; Skolnick, 1966). Violence acceptance is fueled by the desire to gain peer approval and develop a positive self-identity (Conser, 1980; Skolnick, 1966). Unfortunately, the police

subculture is so powerful that officers are likely to adopt and internalize associated beliefs (Skolnick, 1966).

Level 4: society. The fourth level of the social ecological model includes the broad societal factors that both encourage violence against women and reduce inhibitions against such violence (Buvinic, Morrison, & Shifter, 1999; Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011; Heise, 1999; Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Jewkes, Sen, & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). This level consists of the large social structures that support violence against women such as patriarchal attitudes and beliefs surrounding gender inequality and rigid gender roles (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011; Heise, 1999; Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Jewkes, et al., 2002). Overall, examining societal-level concepts is useful when discussing violence against women because it helps focus attention toward social contexts rather than solely toward individual men (Hunnicutt, 2009). Focusing attention in this direction is important because individual beliefs and actions are often the product of socialization and far-reaching societal norms (Heise, 1998).

Figure shows five concentric circles representing nested levels of the social ecological model.

Society (e.g., the large social structures that support violence against women such as patriarchal attitudes and beliefs surrounding gender inequality and rigid gender roles)

Organizations/community (e.g., culturally-specific norms regarding gender and sexuality as well as masculine peer and organizational cultures)

Relationships (e.g., relationship contexts between intimates, peers, and family members that increase the risk for violent perpetration and victimization)

Individual (e.g., age, sex, gender, race, and ethnicity; biology; educational attainment; substance misuse; income; occupation; personality characteristics; personal history such as quality of parenting and prior history of abuse)

Figure 1. Social Ecological Model

The violence against women social ecological model addresses four influential levels that facilitate the development and maintenance of beliefs, norms, and attitudes (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011).These four levels include: (1) the individual, which explores the biological and personal history factors that contribute to victimization and criminogenic risk; 2) interpersonal relationships, which considers relationship factors that contribute to the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator; 3) the community, which examines social institutions such as Gworkplaces, universities, and communities to identify how characteristics of these settings contribute to violence against women; and 4) society, which explores the far-reaching social factors that contribute to the maintenance of violence-supportive norms and beliefs (Center for Disease Control [CDC], 2015; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011).

The relationship between violence against women and patriarchy is the result of historically embedded beliefs, past and current laws regarding gender, and current widespread messages delivered via media outlets. First, patriarchy has been an established part of social life dating back to the Neolithic era (Lerner, 1986). Mutually interacting and reinforcing demographic, cultural, ecological, and historical factors eventually resulted in the androcentric existence present today (Lerner, 1986). Because patriarchy is a structural force that shapes power relations and privileges men, oppressive behavior is often directed toward women as a means of preserving the status quo (Hooks, 2004). Second, men have traditionally experienced a culture where their control over women has been protected by legal mandates (Smith, 2000). Although the most severe control-related inequities (e.g., men can no longer legally rape their wives) have mostly disappeared from western life, women still live in subordination to men and are often the victims of men's violence (Kennedy & Dutton, 1989; Webster, Pennay, Bricknall, Dierner, Flood, et al., 2014). Third, men are often exposed to extensive media messages about their inherent dominance and power over women. This exposure should not be overlooked, as the media have the capacity to create dominant "realities" that facilitate the reinforcement of power imbalances (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signoriell, 1980).

Unfortunately, empirical evidence suggests that level 4 factors of the social ecological model shape the widespread acceptance and perpetration of violence against women. Regarding patriarchal attitudes, there is a consistent relationship between men's adherence to sexist and patriarchal beliefs and their use and acceptance of violence against women (Flood & Pease, 2009). This relationship is particularly strong among men, and traditional gender-role beliefs have been linked to a greater acceptance of

violence against women (Davis & Liddell, 2002; De Judicibus & McCabe, 2001; Pavlou & Knowles, 2001; Truman, Tokar, & Fischer, 1996; Wade & Brittan-Powell, 2001; White & Kurpius, 2002). The ubiquity of societal beliefs that favor men's dominance results in community and organizational contexts that perpetuate the same ideologies about gender-specific power.

Application to the current research. The social ecological model of violence against women is designed to demonstrate how different levels of social existence are persistently interacting to influence a climate where violence is encouraged and inhibitions against violence are reduced. Although some risk factors may originate on one isolated level, most factors eventually operate on various levels simultaneously. For example, the previous sections demonstrate how *individual* officers interacting with *peers* in an *organizational* context built on the dominant ideologies of a patriarchal *society* may adopt similar beliefs and attitudes regarding violence against women. Due to these intersecting and complex causal dynamics, research guided by the social ecological approach is appealing for numerous reasons. First, social ecological models highlight the broad range of factors that contribute to violence against women (Dasgupta, 2002; Dutton, 2006). Second, this type of approach is flexible and is easily modified to fit various research needs (Brownridge, 2009; Heise, 1998). And third, this approach is likely to sustain prevention and intervention efforts because the model addresses the overlapping and interplaying factors—between society, community, relationships, and the individual—that influence violence (CDC, 2015).

In the sections that follow I discuss specific components of the social ecological model in the context of policing sexual assault. I focus this discussion on larger social

and organizational influences, specifically addressing the rape culture and the police workplace organization. Within these sections I discuss the relevant relationship and individual factors that contribute to officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims and the legal treatment of sexual assault cases. The discussion below is rooted is the argument that social contexts influence the formation of attitudes. Thus, the larger rape culture and police organization is understood to influence officer perceptions of victims generally as well as perceptions of victim credibility.

The Rape Culture

In the United States, the pervasive linking of sexuality to violence has resulted in a "rape culture" (Herman, 1988). Rape culture is a theoretical construct in which a set of societal beliefs and ideals normalize sexual violence and thereby foster an environment conducive to rape (Herman, 1988). Rape cultures exist in locations where both men and women believe—despite evidence to the contrary—that sexual violence is rampant and an unavoidable facet of daily life (Buchwald, et al., 1993). Rape cultures are marked by dominant attitudes and practices that normalize and tolerate sexual violence toward women and also excuse and even condone such behavior (Nicoletti, Spencer-Thomas, & Bollinger, 2009). Rape culture includes: television, music, jokes, legal jargon, words, and imagery that makes violence against women appear intrinsically entwined in daily life. The following paragraphs will discuss the mechanisms that facilitate the maintenance of the rape culture and the consequences associated with the rape culture.

Sexism. There are various factors that contribute to the existence of the rape culture. Ambivalent sexism, however, is viewed as one of the primary mechanisms that motivate the maintenance of the rape culture (Fraser, 2015; see Glick & Fiske, 1996;

2001). Ambivalent sexism is a theoretical framework which posits that sexism is characterized by two associated components, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism is an accusatorial view of gender relations; women are perceived to be control-seeking through the use of their sexuality or through feminist ideals (Glick & Fisk, 2001). Benevolent sexism, conversely, refers to the characterization of women as wholesome, pure, and clean individuals who are in need of constant protection and admiration (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The relationship between hostile sexism and the rape culture does not need much clarification, as this form of sexism encompasses the common aversions associated with prejudices (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003). The connection between benevolent sexism and the rape culture, however, is more complicated. Benevolent sexism facilitates discriminatory views of women because it suggests that women are primarily suited to fulfill traditional gender roles because they are weak and constantly rely on the support of men (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Therefore, benevolent sexism justifies male power, dominance, and authority because it rewards women who do not challenge the status quo (Glick & Fiske, 1996). In the context of sexual assault, benevolent sexism facilitates feelings of anxiety and fear; women are socialized to believe that they are in constant need of male protection to ward off sexual violence. The insidious nature of benevolent sexism is what makes this form of prejudice particularly dangerous (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Ambivalent sexism facilitates the maintenance of the rape culture through attitudes associated with paternalism, gender differentiation, and heterosexuality. This results in attitudes that justify violence against women (Fraser, 2015). Numerous studies have found associations between hostile and benevolent sexism and the justification of

male-perpetrated sexual assault (e.g. Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Gilmore, 1990; Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991; Sanday, 1981). Important to the current discussion, ambivalent sexism has been found to perpetuate rape myth acceptance (Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2007). Rape myths are widely held beliefs about rape that are used to justify or minimize sexual violence against women (Gerger, Kley, Bohner, & Siebler, 2007). Because the current dissertation focuses on officer attitudes, a deeper discussion of rape myths is appropriate—these myths facilitate the formation of beliefs regarding the characteristics of victims, the characteristics of suspects, and the characteristics of sexual attacks.

Rape myths. Rape myths exist for various historical and cultural reasons associated with gender role expectations, patriarchal ideals, and acceptance of violence. Rape myths include the following beliefs: women fantasize about being raped, husbands cannot rape their wives, rape is simply unwanted sex and not a violent crime, rape and sexual assault are solely about sexual gratification, healthy women can resist all sexual attacks, men can be sexually provoked to a "point of no return," victims are usually attacked by strangers, all rape is violent, women who dress provocatively are "asking for it," only attractive women are raped, women who engage in alcohol or drug-related flirting deserve to be raped, and false reports of rape are common (Cuklanz, 2000; Johnson, Kuck, & Schander, 1997; Scully, 1990). The following paragraphs will discuss and debunk some of the more common rape myths.

Rape is a crime that commonly occurs between acquainted individuals (Herman, 1988; Lovett & Kelly, 2009). Research findings have overwhelmingly found that women are much more likely to be victimized by a friend, coworker, intimate partner, or

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acquaintance when compared to strangers (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymore, 1992; U.S. Department of Justice [USDOJ], 2005). In fact, two national studies found that approximately three-fourths of women and girls who were raped were assaulted by someone they knew (Kilpatrick, et al., 1992; USDOJ, 2005). Despite these findings, the majority of individuals believe that most sexual assaults occur between strangers. Generally, individuals are uninformed about the pervasiveness of acquaintance rape and are more likely to hold victims responsible for rape when assaulted by a dating partner (Bridges & McGrail, 1989; Johnson et al., 1997; L'Armand & Pepitone, 1982). The tendency to hold victims of date and intimate partner rape responsible for their victimization may stem from beliefs that prior sexual or dating interactions indicate women's willingness to engage in sex in any situation (Pollard, 1992). The role played by rape myths may be particularly salient for intimate partner sexual assault, which is surrounded by numerous cultural and legal myths (Berman, 2004). Intimate partner sexual assault is often considered less severe when compared to sexual assault that occurs within other relationships (Bergen, 2004; Yllo, 1999). Finkelhor and Yllo (1985) term this phenomenon the "sanitary stereotype"—intimate partner sexual assault as a trivial conflict. In fact, some criminal justice professionals continue to adopt a "sanitary stereotype" by viewing intimate partner violence as a victimless crime involving an inconsequential conflict (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996; Cahn, 1992).

Along these same lines, women are often told to avoid being alone at night. This "advice" is based on the rape myth that women are most likely to be victimized by a stranger hiding outside in a dark alleyway at midnight. In reality, women can be (and are) victimized at various times of the day in many different spaces including college

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campuses, social engagements, and within their own homes. First, rape on college campuses is a reality (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, and Martin, 2007; Lawyer, Resnick, Bakanic, Burkett, & Kilpatrick, 2010). Fisher and colleagues (2010) put numbers into perspective; a college that has 10,000 women students could experience 350 rapes a year. In fact, studies continually find that women in college are at an increased risk of criminal victimization (including sexual assault) compared to similarly situated non-college women (Baum & Klaus, 2005; Fisher & Cullen, 2000; Fisher et al., 2000; Fisher, Sloan, Cullen, & Lu, 1998). Second, "party rapes," sexual assaults that occur in the context of a social gathering are also a reality (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006). The precipitating incidents in these assaults are generally non-threatening, making women potentially easier targets (Koelsch, Brown, & Boisen, 2012).

Regarding victim resistance, rape myths communicate that there is a "right way" to respond to rape. There is often an ill-conceived perception that if a victim does not actively fight back during a sexual attack, that she is somehow less of a victim. Victims may be negatively viewed as a result of their decisions to remain passive. O'Neal & Kaiser (2015), however, found that the decision to not fight back may lessen a victim's chance of injury. More dated research has reached the same conclusion; protective action during sexual assault increases the likelihood a victim will suffer an injury (Kleck & Sales, 1990; Marchbanks, Lui, & Mercy, 1990; Prentky, Burgessm & Carter, 1986; Ullman & Knight, 1993) and some scholars have argued that forceful resistance is useless and sometimes dangerous (Brecklin & Ullman, 2001; Griffin & Griffin, 1981; Marchbanks et al., 1990). Marchbanks and colleagues (1990) found that the likelihood of

injury increased when victims engaged in *any* form of self-protective action. In addition, Ullman & Knight (1993) found that the probability of injury increased when victims verbally resisted (i.e. screaming, crying, or pleading) indoors and Kleck and Sayles (1990) found that forceful resistance and arguing with or threatening the attacker was significantly associated with higher rates of victim injury. It must be noted that findings indicating positive relationships between rape resistance and injury may tell an incomplete story, as such research does not establish the sequencing of events; it is unclear whether rape resistance actions preceded or followed the suspect's infliction of injury (e.g., Atkeson, Calhoun, & Morris, 1989; Block & Skogan, 1986; Brecklin & Ullman, 2001; Griffin & Griffin, 1981; Marchbanks et al., 1990; Ruback & Ivie, 1988). Overall, a victim's choice of actively resisting or being passive during a sexual assault is one that should not be criticized or determinative of police response to these offenses (O'Neal & Kaiser, 2015).

Unfortunately, research suggests that these rape-related misconceptions are common. A recent study by Sussenbach and Bohner (2011) found that rape myth acceptance ranged from 19% to 57% (see also Carmody & Washington, 2001; Hammond, Berry, & Rodriquez, 2011; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Of course, rape myth acceptance varies according to various individual factors. Similar to beliefs regarding violence against women generally, research frequently finds that men demonstrate higher levels of rape myth acceptance (Anderson, Cooper, & Okamura, 1997; Frese, Moya, & Megias, 2004; Johnson et al.; 1997; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Additionally, adherence to rape myths is stronger among younger individuals and the less educated (Aosved & Long, 2006; Aronowitz, Lambert, & Davidoff, 2012; Buddie &

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Miller, 2001; Hammond et al., 2011; Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013; Lonsway &

Fitzgerald, 1994; McMahon & Farmer, 2011; Sinclair & Bourne, 1998; Suarez &

Gadalla, 2010; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2014). The fact that these myths are widely held

by the general public influences how criminal justice personnel, including the police,

handle rape allegations (Gerger, et al., 2007; Stewart, Dobbin, & Gatowski, 1996). This is

due to the fact that legal decision making is vulnerable to the same biases that

characterize general information processing, such as the propensity to concentrate on

information that is consistent with pre-existing beliefs (McEwan, 2003). These concepts

will be directly addressed later when discussing the police organization, officer attitudes,

and decision making in sexual assault cases. But first, the following section will discuss

organizational literature, focusing on theoretical developments, organization functioning

in the context of institutional cultures, organizational leadership, and organizational

motivation, socialization, and decision making.

Organizational Theories and Organizations

Organizational theories facilitate the sociological study of formal organizations

and help to improve understanding regarding the ways people function within the

workplace (Maines, 1991). Numerous organizational factors contribute to the production

of violence-supportive attitudes and beliefs. As previously discussed, organizational

socialization, participation in organizational activities that are linked to violence against

women (e.g. consuming alcohol), strong group identification, and the overall groups'

commitment to the patriarchal social order all influence attitudes, beliefs, and the

perpetration of violence against women (Godenzi, Schwartz, & DeKeseredy, 2001;

Humphrey & Kahn, 2000). Given the salience of the organizational context in shaping attitudes and beliefs, further discussion is warranted.

Early organizational theories. The development of organizational theory began in the early 1900s with the classical school of thought (Fayol, 1916; Taylor, 1916; Weber, 1922), which was closely followed by the neoclassical approach (Barnard, 1930; Merton, 1940; Simon, 1946). Classical organization theory includes the union of three models: administrative theory (Fayol, 1916), scientific management (Taylor, 1916), and bureaucratic theory (Weber, 1922). Organizations that are based on classical theory share six primary characteristics: (1) a centralized hierarchy of authority defines the formal structure, (2) labor is segmented into functional tasks, (3) worker activities and actions are carried out according to standardized procedures, (4) workers can move toward promotion through an established career route, (5) managers exact their power through a system of superior-subordinate relationships, and (6) employee status and worth are inextricably linked to their position within the organization (Fayol, 1916; Taylor, 1916; Weber, 1922, 1971). Other characteristics of the classical school of organization includes the assumptions that the interests of employees and managers are identical, the body functions like a machine, people can be programmed to behave in certain ways, and that workers are goal oriented (Taylor, 1947). When these organizational features converge it results in a rigid system where employees are unable to initiate change, restrict the organization's functions, or work outside of the organization's policies and informal guidelines (Angell, 1971). The shortcomings of the classical school of thought were quickly realized, which resulted in the development of neoclassical organizational theory.

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In response to the over-rigidity and authoritarian structure of classical theory, scholars worked to overcome the notion of absolute worker conformity by developing the neoclassical organizational structure (see Barnard, 1930; Merton, 1940; Simon, 1946). The emergence of this school is often referred to as the human relations movement (Scott, 1961). The neoclassical approach supports the general arguments and assumptions of classical theory but also considers the ways individuals within the organization and the environment influence the organization. For example, the Hawthorne experiments—a series of studies designed to test the relationship between factory lighting and productivity—demonstrated that workers' productivity changed in response to changes in the environment (Akerlof & Yellen, 1986; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). Despite the more human-relations approach in neoclassical theory, the school of thought remains incomplete and shortsighted (Scott, 1961). The major critiques of the neoclassical school surround ideas regarding originality and durability. Some scholars argue that neoclassicalists did not develop a theory that could fully replace the classical school of thought; instead, neoclassical theorists simply modified the classical approach, resulting in an "anti-school" of thought (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2011).

Components of classical organizational theory as well as neoclassical ideas can be seen at various stages of the criminal justice system. Broadly, the criminal justice system as a whole reflects the neoclassical tenet of multilevel governance where many interacting authority figures work together within a structure for common goals (for a discussion of multilevel governance and neoclassical theory see Marks & Hooghe, 2000). Criminal justice agencies such as the police, prosecutorial, and correctional organizations reflect Weber's (1964) concept of rational-legal authority, where strict adherence to

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formal regulations and informal guidelines is validated and positively reinforced through career advancement (Jermier & Berkesm, 1979). In the police organization, for example, bureaucratic norms are reflected in the pyramid-shaped hierarchy and the management principles derived from Fayol's (1949) administration management theory. Bureaucratic norms are also reflected in punishment protocol, where punishment is often directed toward officers who ignore commands from higher echelons (Rubinstein, 1973).

Issues with the classical organizational approach become clear with examining the criminal justice context in terms of discretion. Discretionary power and the ability to engage in individual decision making are crucial to the function of criminal justice organizations. Classical organizational theory argues that the unyielding hierarchical structure of an organization leaves little room for individual action or decision making (Weber, 1971). However, this assumption cannot be applied to numerous criminal justice actors (e.g. police officers, prosecutors, judges, and correctional officers; Gilbert, 1997). Discretionary power has a significant influence in shaping law enforcement (Baker, 1933); however, the classical school of organizational theory fails to recognize the importance of the discretionary power held by various criminal justice actors (for a discussion of correctional officers see Gilbert, 1997). Even more problematic, classical organizational theory fails to guide criminal justice actors in their use of discretion (Gilbert, 1997).

Police officers have largely unchecked discretionary power (Schulhofer, 1988). The police have the option of deciding what incidents will result in a formal report, the resources and time allocated to investigating a case, when a suspect will be arrested, what charges will be formally documented, and which cases will be sent to the prosecutor for

filing consideration. Overall, widespread discretionary power is present at various stages of case processing. In addition, discretion is necessary for effective and efficient criminal justice organizational functioning (Goldstein, 1963). For example, the use of discretion within the police agency rests on the belief that actions besides arrest can result in desired organizational goals. This type of encounter-level discretion allows officers to decide what degree of effort will be exerted to enforce specific laws (Goldstein, 1960; Goldstein, 1963). The very notion of discretion within the criminal justice system goes against the primary tenets of classical and neoclassical organizational theories, where strict adherence to rigid documented rules is expected at all times and those who deviate from said rules are disciplined. Instead, organizational structures within the criminal justice system should help guide actors in their use of discretionary power (Gilbert, 1997). Unfortunately, a classical hierarchical bureaucratic structure does not make room for this type of guidance (see Walker, 1993).

Human behavior and contingency factors: Moving beyond the classical school. A scientific theory is a system of ideas that includes a logical group of testable propositions created to explain and predict a class of phenomenon (Hurley, 2012). Whereas theories of the physical sciences involve answering questions about occurrences that do not have the ability to think and act (e.g. gravity, motion, thermodynamics, evolution), theories of human behavior involve explaining phenomena directly linked to subjects who do have that ability (Angell, 1971). This complicates theory development and testing because human decisions and actions can be influenced by past decisions, cultural surroundings, political environments, expectations about the future, and personal values (Angell, 1971). In terms of organizational theory, the goals of social science and

the complications that arise from studying human behavior are similar. The social

scientist aims to understand the form, aspects, and function of human organizations (Katz

& Kahn, 1966), which is complicated by the countless non-structural factors (e.g. human

behavior) that influence organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Bloomberg, 1977;

Burns & Stalker, 1961; Follet, 1926; McGregor, 1957; Rothlisberger, 1941).

Despite the more human relations approach in neoclassical theory, the school of

thought was critiqued as incomplete (Scott, 1961), being viewed primarily as a modified

classical approach unable to stand on its own (Shafritz, et al., 2011). This resulted in a

switch in focus to human behavior and structural contingency theories. Although human

behavior approaches and structural contingency theories differ in terms of their primary

propositions, they are similar in the way they take issue with classical organizational

approaches. For example, both the human behavior and structural contingency theoretical

approaches suggest that non-structural factors impact an organization's efficiency and

effectiveness. Whereas the classical school posits that all organizations benefit from the

hierarchical and rational structure explained above (Barnard, 1930; Fayol, 1916; Merton,

1940; Simon, 1946; Taylor, 1916; Weber, 1922), the human behavior and structural

contingency approaches recognize that human behavior and organizational characteristics

can impact the way an organization functions. Thus, a single ideal type of organization

does not exist. For example, human behavior theorists argue that human energy, feelings

of meaningful participation and increased responsibility, attitudes towards experiences,

values and expectations, and the way humans assign meaning to their experiences can

impact organizational functioning (Angell, 1971; Bloomberg, 1977; Follet, 1926;

McGregor, 1957; Rothlisberger, 1941). Moreover, structural contingency theorists

maintain that the structure of an organization should be based on contingency factors such as the size of the organization, task uncertainty and technology, purpose of the organization, and the environment in which the organization is situated (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Katz & Kahn, 1966). The following paragraphs will detail the ways human behavior and organizational characteristics influence efficiency and effectiveness.

Human behavior influences the ways organizations function. Human behavior theorists have identified human needs that shape the way an individual functions within an organization and how that behavior can facilitate or weaken organizational efficiency. These factors include psychological, safety, social, ego, and self-fulfillment needs (McGregor, 1957). Psychological needs include rest, shelter, and protection from the elements (McGregor, 1957). Safety needs include protection from danger and threats (McGregor, 1957). These lower needs require fulfillment due to the primeval desire to survive; however, they do not necessarily motivate workplace behavior because they are easily satisfied through merely being employed (McGregor, 1957). The other needs, however, shape workplace behavior in complex ways. Social needs, for example, include the need for belonging and acceptance (McGregor, 1957). This need can shape workplace efficiency; research suggests that experiencing love and friendship can result in more effective employees (McGregor, 1957). Ego needs, which McGregor (1957) identifies as most significant to management (p. 26), relate to self-esteem and reputation. This need can influence organizational efficiency, as increasing one's reputation through endowing a workplace role with greater power, dignity, and significance will increase organizational effectiveness (Bloomberg, 1977). The last need, self-fulfillment, includes an individual's need for self-realization, self-development, and creativity. Follet (1926)

has argued that heightening self-respect and fulfillment increases workplace efficiency through increased pride in one's work (p. 143). It is clear that human behavior, functioning through the needs of an individual, shapes organizational efficiency and effectiveness. However, an organization's characteristics can also influence these outcomes.

Organizations are multifaceted (Thompson, 1967). Because of this complexity, structural contingency theorists posit that no ideal organizational structure exists (Clegg & Hardy, 2005); instead, optimal structure must be based on contingency factors including organization size, task uncertainty and technology, purpose of the organization, informal organizations within the larger organization, and the environment the organization is situated (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Thompson, 1967). First, for example, Burns and Stalker (1961) argue that informal structures—also known as the "unofficial relationships with the workgroup" (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 9-10)—that form within an organization can affect efficiency. These informal structures are often formed in resistance to being treated as cogs in a machine (Angell, 1971; Burns & Stalker, 1961). After all, the wish to govern one's life is a powerful need (Follet, 1926). Second, in terms of environment, efficiency is affected by the context in which the organization is embedded (also see Katz & Kahn, 1966). For example, Barnard (1938) has articulated that organizations are not independent entities, but units that interact with and adapt to their environments (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Third, technology can influence the way an organization functions. Thompson (1967) argues that differences in technical levels and technical functions cause differences among organizations. Therefore, the organizational structure must be developed according to these differences to maximize

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efficiency. These above-mentioned examples demonstrate how contingency factors and human behavior can impact organizational efficiency.

Overall, theories of human behavior involve explaining phenomena directly linked to subjects who think and act (Angell, 1971). Early organizational theories advocated organization based primarily on rationalized, hierarchical arrangements defined by formal structures, centralized power, divided labor, standardized procedures, monocratic supervisor-subordinate relationships, and status based on rank (Angell, 1971). Conversely, human behavior and structural contingency theories recognize that human behavior and organizational characteristics can impact organizational functioning. In closing, to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness, it is important to consider the ways individuals function within an organization, the context in which the organization is embedded, and the characteristics of the organization itself.

Institutional and cultural environments: Organizational functioning.
Explaining organizational functioning is complicated by the numerous structural, non-structural, cultural, and environmental factors that shape effectiveness, efficiency, and performance (Bloomberg, 1977; Burns & Stalker, 1961; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Follet, 1926; McGregor, 1957; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Perrow, 1961; Rothlisberger, 1941; Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2012). Whereas early explanations of organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and performance were dominated by theories focused on scientific management, administration, and bureaucratic models (Fayol 1916; Taylor, 1916; Weber, 1922), those that followed acknowledged the complex interactions of workers, employers, and behavior, and overall differences among actual organizations (Angell, 1971; Bloomberg, 1977; Clegg & Hardy, 2005; Follet, 1926; McGregor, 1957;

Rothlisberger, 1941). More recently, organizational theorists have moved beyond the four walls of the organization to explain how cultural and environmental factors shape the performance of organizations.

The institutional perspective argues that the institutional environment can impact how the formal structures in an organization develop and are maintained (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). For example, Meyer and Rowan, (1977) argue that "[in] modern societies, the elements of rationalized formal structure are deeply ingrained in, and reflect, widespread understandings of social reality" (p. 343). As a result, organizations—in efforts of acquiring and maintaining internal and external legitimacy—will ritualistically adopt preexisting formal organizational structures ("institutional myths"; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Examples of these institutional myths include specific job titles, uniforms, organizational structure, and training protocol. This often results in homogeneity among similar types of organizations (e.g. police agencies, medical professionals, school systems; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Theories of goals and performance, like the institutional perspective, acknowledge that organizations are extremely complex and shaped by numerous factors (Perrow, 1963). These theorists, however, focus on how goal-setting and performance constructs vary among organizations (Perrow, 1963; DiIulio, 1993). Goal theorists believe that it is impossible to fully understand organizational functioning and individual actor behavior without examining goals (Perrow, 1963). Examining organizational goals is also important because doing so can help evaluate organizational performance. After all, Stojkovic and colleagues (2012) point out that effectiveness measures include the degree to which goals are environmentally responsive, multiple goals are pursued, and

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goal attainment is facilitated through employee effort. Discussions of goals and

performance, however, are often complicated by institution-based environmental and

cultural factors, a topic discussed next.

The concept of "isomorphism" is central to understanding how the institutional

environment surrounding an organization can influence performance, goal setting, and

overall functioning. Isomorphism involves compelling processes that force one

organization in a given population to resemble other organizations in similar

environments (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), despite output and effectiveness. For

example, Crank and Langworthy (1992) argue that police agencies do not exist because

they produce a clearly defined output; they exist because society perceives them to be so

"endemic to city life that the elimination is unthinkable" (p. 36). Other examples that

highlight the influence of the institutional environment on police agencies include officer

appearance, the existence of specialized law enforcement units, overall police practices,

and training (Crank & Langworthy, 1992). First, in terms of appearance, police

organizations conform to socially constructed expectations about what officers should

look like (e.g. badge, name tag, button-up shirt, etc.). Second, specialized law

enforcement units, simply by virtue of their existence, represent what officers *should* do

and not what they *actually* do. Third, policies often persist, even when they are

empirically proven to be ineffective, simply because they have legitimacy with the public

(Crank, 1996; Crank & Langworthy, 1992). Finally, officer training is often influenced

by the institutional environment. Crank (1996) argues that institutional values, practices,

and beliefs are reflected in the content of training classes and the actual classes provided.

These examples demonstrate how organizations emerge and persist due to institutional,

social, and cultural expectations and not by competition, need, or the need for specific output (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Cultural and institutional environments often shape the ways goals are developed and executed, which in turn affect organizational performance (Perrow, 1963; DiIulio, 1993). This is particularly salient in criminal justice organizations, which are heavily influenced by the outside environment. Criminal justice systems "exist in a sociopolitical environment in which diverse groups exercise influence in accordance with their own interest" (Wright, 1981). In terms of goals, DiIulio (1993) suggests that public agencies are characterized by numerous contradictory goals simply by their organizational functions (e.g., officers have many duties such as law enforcer, social worker, maintaining community relations). Wright (1981) argues that, for this reason, goal conflict is necessary to smoothly carry out duties in service areas of diverse interests and needs. For example, Wilson (1968) found that the daily operational goals of police officers heavily reflected the political culture of the community. Whereas goal conflict is generally perceived as a negative aspect in organizational structure (Duffee, 1980), Wright (1981) argues that goal conflict can actually improve performance in the criminal justice setting. He argues that the unification of goals within criminal justice systems would actually be detrimental to stability and function. Wright (1981) suggests that unification would hinder criminal justice systems' ability to adapt to change in the cultural and institutional environments' attitudes and values.

Organizational performance is complicated by the numerous structural, non-structural, cultural, and environmental factors that shape effectiveness, efficiency, and performance (Bloomberg, 1977; Burns & Stalker, 1961; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983;

Follet, 1926; McGregor, 1957; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Perrow, 1961; Rothlisberger, 1941; Stojkovic, Kalinich, & Klofas, 2012). Institutional and goal perspectives were the first theoretical developments to substantially move beyond the organization itself to explain the cultural and environmental factors that influence the organization. Focusing on concepts like isomorphism, institutional myths, and structuration, these theorists have worked to identify ways organizations adopt preexisting formal structures in efforts of acquiring legitimacy within their institutional environment and the populations they serve. Consequently, organizations may adopt ineffective structures, programs, and/or training courses simply because it appears as if they should do it. This pressure to conform to existing structures is perpetuated by the institution itself and the cultural environment surrounding the organization.

   The importance of organizational leadership. Leadership greatly influences organizational functioning, success, and culture (Acker, 1993; French & Raven, 1959; Gallas, 1987; Herbert, 1998; Maxwell, 1993; Sheridan, Vredenburgh, & Ableson, 1984; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Unfortunately, discussing the numerous ways a leader can influence an organization is beyond the scope of this dissertation; therefore, discussion will focus on organizational culture. The cultural environment is important because it often shapes organizational goal development and execution (Perrow, 1963; DiIulio, 1993), which in turn affects functioning and performance.

   Organizational culture is broadly defined as the behavior of individuals and the shared mental assumptions, definitions, and beliefs that result in the development and maintenance of norms. These norms prescribe what is considered "appropriate" behavior within an organization (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Schein, 1993). The notion of

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organizational culture helps explain why individuals within certain occupations engage in specific actions (e.g., use of force by police) and why such behavior is normalized (Schein, 1993). For example, Acker (1993) argues that organizational processes can result in a culture that promotes the differential treatment and subordination of women. Moreover, and providing a specific criminal justice example, law enforcement officers are often considered unique groups that are guided by distinct sets of attitudes that influence their respective daily activities (Herbert, 1993; see Marquart, 1986). The previous sections demonstrate the different ways organizations can develop a culture. Certainly, leadership—the activities and behavior of a manager—is another key factor that shapes organizational culture (Kuykendall & Unsinger, 1982).

Generally speaking, discussions surrounding leadership, power, and organizational culture have focused on: (1) the ways leaders impact formal structure development and maintenance; (2) how effective leadership is a necessary component of organizational success; (3) how theories of leadership aid in developing models of managerial style; and (4) how power can influence change and people's behavior (French & Raven, 1959; Gallas, 1987; Kuykendall & Unsinger, 1982). For example, Gallas, (1987) argues that the successful functioning and performance of an organization is "inexorably linked to effective leadership" (p. 54). Moreover, Kuykendall & Unsinger (1982) examined the leadership styles of police managers and found that leaders were as proficient at adapting their leadership styles to the situational context as nonpolice managers (a measure of leadership effectiveness formulated by Hershey and Blanchard [1977]). The following paragraphs will discuss how leaders shape culture through

manipulating—albeit not always intentionally—the routines and beliefs of individuals who function within the organization.

Beliefs and mental assumptions are central to understanding how leaders and leadership style influence organizational culture. As mentioned above, Acker (1993) posits that the differential treatment and subordination of women can emerge in organizations. These processes are driven by the implicit mental assumption that "managers and workers are male, with male-stereotypic powers, attitudes, and obligations" (p. 255). These types of androcentric beliefs perpetuate organizational cultures that value men and devalue women. This is particularly true in highly masculinized organizations, such as policing, where there is an underlying sexist ideology among officers (Hunt, 1990). Research indicates that police culture includes sexual discrimination, harassment, sexist humor, and the under-representation of women in higher positions (Adler, 1990; Brown, 1994; Daum, 1994).

Like beliefs and mental assumptions, organizational routines are salient to the maintenance of the organizational culture. Gallas (1987) argues that organizational integrity is the result of well-established and maintained routines. For example, police work is characterized by a hierarchical order, exposure to corruption, safety concerns, and exposure to officer use-of-force and violence (Hunt, 1990). These routine experiences are inherently masculine and deeply entrenched in the general organization of the police. Moreover, organizational routines like use of physical coercion in arrest settings ensure that masculine qualities are valued (e.g., strength, aggression). Because the rationalized formal structure of policing is deeply ingrained in society and reflects widespread understandings of social reality, similar organizations (e.g., security firms)

ritualistically adopt preexisting structures (e.g., uniforms, command hierarchy) in efforts to acquire and maintain internal and external legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). These types of routine processes facilitate the maintenance of organizational culture (e.g., masculine culture, sexist culture). Regarding leadership, the stability of these routines is dependent on those in power who manage the organizational structure (Gallas, 1987).

The relationship between managerial leadership and organizational culture is complicated because both influence each other simultaneously and cyclically. Leaders can influence the culture of an organization and the organizational culture can shape the ways managers lead.

Organizational motivation, socialization, and decision making. Organizational motivation, socialization, and decision making are complicated processes, impacted by numerous internal and external factors that shape outcomes (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972; Holtfreter, 2008; Locke & Latham, 2004; Rosecrance, 1988; Ulmer, Kurlycheck, & Kramer, 2007). Some explanations of motivations, socialization, and organizational decision making are grounded in ideas more salient to bureaucratic models, such as rational decision making and rewards-systems (Chao, et al., 1994; Lock & Latham, 2004; see: Simon, 1979). Other explanations acknowledge the complex interactions of the environment and individuals within an organization (Chao et al., 1994; Cohen et al., 1972; Lock & Latham, 2004; Ulmer et al., 2007). Overall, examining and explaining organizational motivation, socialization, and decision making is difficult, as these phenomena often occur in dynamic settings where (1) conditions require a series of actions, (2) decisions are often not independent, (3) organizational change is inevitable, and (4) motivation efforts,

socialization, and decision making must be made in real time (see Brehmer, 1992 for discussion of complex systems).

Put more simply, "motivation is literally the desire to do things" (Psychology Today, n.d). In an organizational context, motivation can be defined and measured in terms of work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010), employee effort and performance (Vroom, 1964), and employee behavior that leads to desired organizational outcomes (Skinner, 1953). The concept of motivation is arguably the most convoluted area of inquiry in organizational research. Scholars argue that the concept is confusing, theories of motivation are under-used by managers, and that research findings fail to support existing theory (Campbell & Pritchard, 1976; Pinder, 1984; Locke & Henne, 1986). Overall, motivation is important because it can impact job turnover, job satisfaction, and overall performance within an organization (Udechukwu, 2009).

Workplace motivation is influenced by numerous internal and external factors (Locke & Latham, 2004). Internal influences include factors specific to individual needs and desires; external factors include those based on organizational processes and demands (Locke & Latham, 2004). For example, individual factors that shape motivation may include the subconscious need for achievement and growth, the conscious desire to perform well on work-related tasks, and self-efficacy (Locke & Latham, 2004). External factors include workplace team members, compensation (i.e. paycheck), and tangible rewards (Locke & Latham, 2004). Motivation is salient in the organizational context, as the simple desire to act influences performance, efficiency, and productivity (see Locke & Latham, 2004). Motivation is even more important in the policing setting, where burnout (Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986), job dissatisfaction (Blau, Light, &

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Chamlin,1986), and job stress are high, and presence of social support (Dignam, Barrera, & West, 1986) and participation in higher level decision making is low (Slate & Vogel, 1997). Motivation levels, coupled with the negative working conditions noted above, can have organizational consequences. For example, police officers may voluntarily leave the organization due to the hostile conditions mentioned above coupled with low levels of motivation. This is problematic, as turnover has monetary consequences and is detrimental to organizational stability, productivity, and general performance (Mowday, 1984).

Socialization refers to the complex process of receiving and spreading ideologies, traditions, and norms. This process occurs through teaching individuals the skills and behaviors necessary to properly function within a given environment (Clausen, 1968). In organizations, socialization involves learning the environment, processes, and mechanisms required for adjustment to a specific role within an organization (Chao et al., 1994). Organizational socialization is a complex process; Chao and colleagues (1994) identified six dimensions of socialization including performance, proficiency, politics, language, people, organizational goals/values, and history. Overall, socialization is important in an organizational context because it influences the development of organization-specific abilities and can influence the degree to which employees use skills salient to achieve organizational goals.

Workplace socialization is a necessary component in maintaining the organizational culture. Socialization perpetuates shared beliefs that result in the defining and redefining of "appropriate" behavior and actions within an organization (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Socialization is influenced by numerous internal and external

organizational factors (Chao et al., 1994). Internal organizational influences include factors specific to organizational structure and processes; external factors are those outside the organization's four walls. For example, internal vehicles for workplace socialization include leadership, training, and institutional culture (see Acker, 1993; French & Raven, 1959; Gallas, 1987; Herbert, 1998; Marquart, 1986). External factors include the larger cultural and environmental contexts (see DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Therefore, socialization may be shaped by environmental factors such as the culture of the community. The daily operational goals of police officers heavily reflect the political culture of the community (Wilson, 1968); therefore, training and socialization mechanisms will reflect the larger community. Overall, socialization is important because the more employees adapt to their surroundings, the better they will function in service of the organization.

Decision making is the cognitive thought process of reaching a logical choice from several available options (Reason, 2000). Most research regarding decision making focuses on the examination of final decisions (Svenson, 1979). This simplistic research approach has been criticized because decision making is complex; choices are influenced by perceptual, emotional, and cognitive processes (Svenson, 1979). In an organizational context, decision making research has focused on analyses of power, sense making, commitment, information processing, and escalation processes (Shapira, 2002). Organizational decision making differs from individual decision making in five key ways: (1) ambiguity, or uncertainty of organizational preferences; (2) time, decision making in organizations is embedded in a longitudinal context; (3) incentives and penalties play a larger role; (4) repeated decisions are often necessary due to similar

issues; and (5) conflict is often ubiquitous in organization decision making (Shapira, 2002).

Research suggests that numerous internal and external factors shape organizational decision making (Cohen et al., 1972; Holtfreter, 2008; Rosecrance, 1988; Ullmer et al., 2007). Internal factors include those specific to the organization (see Holtfreter, 2008 for a discussion of individual factors regarding offenders and fraud). External influences include those outside the institution including the larger cultural environment. Cohen and colleagues (1972) argue that decision makers (i.e. individuals) within an organization have very little control because the environment holds control. As a result, decisions emerge from decision makers' interactions with environmental factors. Closing this section, the concepts discussed above are important because they often shape organizational outcomes. The motivation levels of employees can impact performance and productivity, socialization levels can influence the degree to which employees adequately adapt to their environment and function appropriately within it, and decision making—by definition—influences the choices made by organizations.

I now turn the discussion to the organization under examination in this dissertation. I focus on the police subculture, officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims, and police decision making. These topics are important to the current dissertation because (1) the police subculture has long been considered a critical concept in explaining police attitudes and behavior; (2) research suggests that some police officers adhere to problematic rape-related attitudes, resulting in policing that denies full protection to certain types of victims; and (3) the larger rape culture and the police subculture influence officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims and these ecological

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factors shape legal decision making. Therefore, to fully understand the negative consequences associated with adhering to the rape culture and being socialized into an organization characterized by harmful views of sexual assault victims, it is necessary to discuss police decision making in sexual assault cases.

The Police Organization, Officer Attitudes, and Decision Making in Sexual Assault Cases

Rape myth acceptance and problematic views of sexual assault victims do not develop in a vacuum. As discussed above, beliefs and ideals are often the product of interactions with social subsystems (e.g., the rape culture, organizational culture). The police are not immune to this type of socialization. Police officers not only operate in a society that holds some sexual assault victims responsible for their victimization, they work in an occupation found to encourage violence-supportive norms (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Koss, 1993; Orcutt & Faison, 1988; Waddington, 1999). Therefore, to completely understand law enforcement officers' framing of and attitudes toward sexual assault victims, it is necessary to discuss not only the societal dynamics (e.g. rape myths, rape culture) that contribute to the development, growth, and maintenance of these views, but the smaller organizational structure with which the police interact. Thus, the following paragraphs will discuss the police subculture, officer attitudes toward rape victims, and police decision making in sexual assault cases.

The police subculture. The existence of the police subculture has been well-documented (Rokeach, Miller & Snyder, 1971; Chan, 1997; Crank, 2010; Paoline, 2003; Paoline, Myers, & Wordon, 2000; Westley, 1970; White, 2000). The police subculture is defined as the widely held set of attitudes, beliefs, and norms shared among officers

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(Paoline et al., 2000); although, police scholars are increasingly questioning the extent to which the police subculture is monolithic (Terrill, Paoline & Manning, 2003; Paoline, 2003; 2004; Crank, 2010). This type of organizational culture is not unique to policing. As the previous sections demonstrated, nearly all organizations operate within a culture that specifies beliefs, values, goals, and norms. In this way, the police organization is no different. The police subculture communicates to its members various expectations about their career, work ethic, interactions with fellow officers, as well as general attitudes toward other justice officials and citizens (Adcox, 2000; Rose & Unnithan, 2015). For example, new police recruits entering the academy are taught the formal rules and laws associated with police work. More interesting, however, are the informal beliefs, norms, rituals, and expectations officers learn from seasoned coworkers taught through the organizational culture. For example, senior officers may teach new recruits the salience of tone of voice and posture regarding communication with citizens. These lessons are often based on years of experience and the refining of rituals and practices.

There are three characteristics considered most central to the police subculture (Herbert, 1998).[2] These characteristics emerge due to the unique nature of police work and male group interactions (Chan, 1996; Waddington, 1999). First, officers often describe themselves as a distinct group that is separate from the general population (Kappeler, Sluder, & Alpert, 1994; Niederhoffer, 1967; Skolnick, 1966; Westley, 1970). Police experience unrivaled degrees of occupational identification and "an exceptionally strong tendency to find [their] social identify within [their] occupational milieu" (Skolnick, 1966, p. 52; Van Maanen, 1978a; Van Maanen, 1978b). Second, the police

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[2] It should be noted that Herbert's (1997, 1998) work focuses explicitly on the LAPD, making his work particularly relevant to the current dissertation.

subculture is characterized by extreme masculinity (Balkin, 1988; Feilding, 1994). Men

hold a disproportionate number of higher ranking positions (Feilding, 1994; Sklansky,

2006), making policing one of the most androcentric occupational institutions (Balkin,

1988). This subculture characteristic was initiated during the early stages of police

development; those traditionally entering police work were predominantly white,

uneducated, young males (Brtiz, 1997). And, as Sklansky (2006) points out, although

women's presence in policing has dramatically increased over the past four decades, the

proportion of women officers has yet to exceed twenty-five percent. Third, concerns

regarding the dangerousness of the job are salient to the police culture (Bittner, 1967;

Brown, 1981; Reiner, 1992; Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Rubinstein, 1973). Police routinely

discuss strategies to ensure well-being along with the inherent dangerousness that comes

with the job (Bittner, 1967; Brown, 1981; Reiner, 1992; Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Rubinstein,

1973).

     The police subculture is considered a critical concept in explaining police

attitudes and behavior (Westley, 1970). This is partly because the police subculture's

influence begins almost immediately. New recruits are often instructed to forget what

they learned in college or in the academy and to start learning "real" police work (Cox,

McCamey, & Scaramella, 2013). This type of interaction communicates important

messages about how to be a successful officer. It communicates that new officers should

not rely on their previous formal education to guide their police work. And, it suggests

that veteran officers know how to successfully police, therefore, their words and in-the-

field teachings are paramount. In fact, police work is often described as being more

significantly structured by informal guidelines and norms than formal rules (Bittner, 1967; Brown, 1981; Reiner, 1992; Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Rubinstein, 1973).

Despite the salience of the police subculture in shaping officer views, there is reason to believe that attitudes may vary within the same organization. Police scholars have questioned the extent to which the police subculture is monolithic, and some have proposed the existence of numerous attitudinal subgroups within the culture (Terrill, Paoline & Manning, 2003; Paoline, 2003; 2004; Crank, 2010). Paoline (2004) argues that attitudinal subgroups have emerged due to the increasing heterogeneous profile of law enforcement agencies. Women, racial minorities, sexual minorities, and college-educated individuals bring different viewpoints—based on past experiences—to the police subculture, resulting in different interpretations of their work and the world around them (Paoline, et al., 2000; also see Galvin-White & O'Neal, 2015).

Rape myths and officer attitudes. The social acceptance of rape myths is one critical issue in understanding the police treatment of sexual assault cases (Sleath & Bull, 2015). The acceptance of rape myths is a general cognitive schema that facilitates the formation of negative views about rape victims (Grubb & Turner, 2012). The problem is not that police officers hold more pervasive rape myth-related views of victims; the issue is that beliefs of police officers—despite their position of authority—mirror those of the general public (see Brown et al., 2007; Brown & King, 1998; Sheath & Bull, 2015). There is a limited body of research examining police officer rape myth acceptance (Sheath & Bull, 2015). However, Page (2010) has conducted what is considered the only thorough recent examination of rape myth acceptance among police officers (Sheath & Bull, 2015). In her study of 891 police officers, Page (2010) found that approximately 6%

provided sexist feedback that indicated rape myth acceptance. These officers also discounted victims with certain characteristics (e.g., a prostitute), labeling them not credible.

Research suggests that some—not all—police officers adhere to problematic rape-related attitudes (Krahé, 1991; Page, 2010; Sheath & Bull, 2015). This is problematic, as adhering to rape myths can result in policing that denies full protection to certain victims. First, regarding victim blaming, officers with higher rape myth acceptance have been found to place increased blame on victims while simultaneously minimizing any blame reserved for perpetrators (Davies, Smith, & Rogers, 2009; Sleath & Bull, 2012). This process results in the shifting of blame from the perpetrator to the victim (Anderson, Beattie, & Spencer, 2001). Second, research suggests that officers with high rape myth acceptance are less likely to believe victims who do not fit the "real" rape stereotype (Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2012; Page, 2008). Third, in a recent study that compared police officers to students, officers were found to have a higher acceptance of myths regarding denial that a rape occurred (Sleath & Bull, 2015; see also Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980). These types of attitudes can result in officers denying victims the legal attention they deserve. These examples support Edward & MacLeod's (1999) suggestion that the treatment of rape allegations and the level of belief assigned to victims by the police is established based on individual officer beliefs about rape (e.g., adherence to rape myths; see also Schuller & Stewart, 2000).

Rape myth acceptance among police officers, as well as in other sectors of society, has consequences that move beyond the police treatment of victims. There is overwhelming evidence that rape is the most underreported violent crime (Koss, 1992).

Approximately 104,459 cases of sexual assault were reported to American police in 2013, despite individuals disclosing 300, 170 experiences of sexual assault to the National Crime Victimization Survey in the same year (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014). The disparity in official reporting and actual occurrences of rape is often attributed to the discouragement victims experience when encountering victim-blaming attitudes from their peers, family, and law enforcement personnel (Bachman, 1998; Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen, 2003). Victims frequently do not report incidents of rape in fear that they will not be believed (Jordan, 2001). Moreover, when victims do decide to engage in help-seeking from the criminal justice system, they are often met with rape-myth facilitated skepticism. For example, Holmstrom and Burgess (1978) found that victims who were assaulted by individuals they knew (e.g., intimates and acquaintances) had a more difficult time establishing credibility with agents in the criminal justice system and were more likely to stop cooperation with the criminal justice system.

The larger rape culture and the police subculture not only influence officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims, these ecological factors shape legal decision making. Therefore, to understand the negative consequences associated with adhering to the rape culture and being socialized into an organization characterized by harmful views of sexual assault victims, it is necessary to discuss police decision making in sexual assault cases. In the paragraphs that follow, I discuss decision making in sexual assault cases, focusing on the police decision to arrest. I focus on this decision stage because most research focuses on arrest when quantifying discretion (Schulenberg, 2015).

Police decision making. Police officials consider numerous legal and extralegal factors when deciding whether to arrest a sexual assault suspect (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; LaFree, 1981; Tellis & Spohn, 2008). Whereas legal factors are those expected to influence decision making such as crime seriousness and evidentiary strength, extralegal factors include legally irrelevant characteristics such as victim risk-taking behavior and the character or reputation of the victim. The following paragraphs discuss the factors that shape the police decision to arrest and situate empirical findings in the context of the larger rape culture.

Legal factors include case characteristics expected to influence officer decision making; however, the impact of some of these case characteristics remains problematic when considering the larger rape culture. Various studies have investigated the legal factors that shape arrest decisions in sexual assault cases; these factors include witness presence, evidentiary strength, victim resistance, whether the suspect physically assaulted the victim during the sexual attack, the victim's willingness to cooperate, and the suspect's use of a weapon (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Bouffard, 2000; Kerstetter, 1990, LaFree, 1981, 1989; O'Neal & Spohn, forthcoming; Spohn & Tellis, 2013). It is obvious why these factors influence the police decision to arrest; however, when viewing some of these factors in the context of the larger rape culture, the problematic nature of the police response to sexual assault is made clear. For example, findings regarding victim resistance, physical use of force, and the suspect's use of a weapon demonstrate that cases that mirror "real rape" are more likely to result in the activation of a law enforcement response (see Estrich, 1992). In a recent study of arrest decisions in intimate partner sexual assault cases, O'Neal and Spohn (forthcoming) found that suspects were

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almost 15 times more likely to be arrested if the suspect used a weapon and four times

more likely if the suspect physically assaulted the victim at the time of the incident.

These findings suggest that law enforcement decisions preserve traditional stereotypes of

sexual assault; victims who experience an attack involving the use of a weapon or brute

force receive more legal response. Findings regarding witness presence are also a cause

for concern unique to sexual assault cases. Recently, Alderden and Ullman (2012)

examined arrest decisions in sexual assault cases. They found that the presence of a

witness was significantly related to arrest in sexual assault cases. This is problematic

when considering the context of sexual assault incidents. Witnesses can only be present if

an assault takes place in a largely public area or in a private area where numerous

individuals may congregate (e.g., fraternity party). This discounts the sexual assault

incidents that occur within the home between intimates and those that occur in the private

sphere between acquaintances. Like findings associated with weapon use and use of

physical force, witness-related findings suggests that officers adhere (possibly

subconsciously) to the traditional stereotype of sexual assault where the victim is attacked

in a public area, by a stranger assailant.

Extralegal factors include legally irrelevant characteristics that influence police

decision making such as victim risk-taking behavior and the character or reputation of the

victim. Unlike legal factors—which logically shape the police decision to invoke

authority based on legal standards such as the seriousness of the alleged offense and

evidentiary strength—extralegal factors are considered by officers in part due to various

cultural, legal, and rape-related myths. For example, LaFree (1981)—a seminal sexual

assault case processing study—found that suspects were less likely to be arrested if the

victim engaged in "credibility-damaging" behavior, such as delayed-reporting, or "risk-taking" behavior, such as being at a bar alone. Additional extralegal factors that have been found to influence the police arrest decisions in sexual assault cases include: the victim/suspect relationship, the victim/suspect living arrangement, detective gender, the suspect's demeanor toward police, alcohol and drug use, and victim preference (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Bouffard, 2000; LaFree, 1981). These extralegal factors mirror beliefs associated with victim culpability. Regarding alcohol use, O'Neal, Spohn, Tellis, and White (2014), in their study of false reports of sexual assault, found that cases involving alcohol undoubtedly blurred the line of consent. Therefore, when officers link alcohol consumption and intoxication to the cause of rape (see Belknap, 2007) or view such behavior as damaging the victim's credibility, two negative consequences result. First, complainants can feel responsible for the victimization they experience. And second, officers fail to acknowledge the complexity of sexual assault negotiation and the adverse role alcohol can play in making consent-related decisions. Regarding the suspect/victim relationship, rape is a crime that commonly occurs between acquainted individuals (Herman, 1988). Despite this reality, research suggests that law enforcement officers are often suspicious of claims made by rape victims and accept some of the more common rape myths including the belief that "real" rape only involves strangers (Jordan, 2004; Page 2008).

It is clear that the larger rape culture and the police subculture not only influence officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims, these ecological factors shape legal decision-making. The socializing that occurs within the police subculture shapes the response to victims of sexual assault. Scholars have criticized the police treatment of

women victims, arguing that apathetic and hostile behavior on part of the police has resulted from socialization into a masculine culture that condones the use of force and violence and blames sexual assault victims for their victimization (see Jordan, 2004; Page, 2008; Saunders & Size, 1986). More importantly, women who behave in sex-inappropriate ways are not given the full protection of the law (see Spohn & Tellis, 2012). Sexual assault victims occupy a distinct space in the criminal justice system. Although victims are targets of assault, individuals (including police officers) are often unsympathetic towards their experiences (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). This reaction is partly due to the fact that police officers operate in a victim-blaming society that holds victims responsible for the sexual attacks committed against them (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Koss, 1993; Orcutt & Faison, 1988). This social milieu may contribute to problematic criminal justice responses through a negative "framing" of rape victims. Therefore, the application of framing theory to the current research is warranted. The following section discusses framing theory generally as well as its application to the current dissertation.

Framing Theory

Goffman (1974) is credited for being the first scholar to develop and articulate the general concept of framing. Goffman's (1974) theoretical work on frame analysis argues that situations and interactions are defined by how individuals and groups make sense of, organize, and communicate about reality. In contrast to the rational choice perspective (see Cornish & Clarke, 2014), that individuals primarily strive to make rational choices, framing theory argues that how something is presented influences individual choices. As such, frames are abstract ideas that facilitate the organization of social meanings. This

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process is accomplished by individuals reducing the complexity of information through interpretation and the restructuring of reality (i.e. cognitive shortcuts; Volmer, 2009). Because situations and interactions are often complicated and require an individual to draw from a variety of perspectives, frames offer individuals a shortcut by focusing attention on factors that the individual reasons to be the most important to the situation. Put simply, frames provide meaning to complex situations by selective simplification.

Consistent with the social ecological model, the process of framing refers to the social construction of a phenomenon or issue that is produced and reproduced by political leaders, mass media outlets, social movements, and/or actors within an organization (Volkmer, 2009). Through these productions and reproductions, frames provide cognitive shortcuts by emphasizing specific factors and downplaying others. This process allows the most salient information to guide decision making, interactions, and attitudes. This is complicated, however, by the fact that not all individuals see situations through the same lens, and what is important for one individual may not be important for another. This type of interaction can produce conflict when individuals disagree over the interpretations of a social encounter and/or the importance of an interaction.

According to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), framing involves techniques related to language, thought, and forethought. These techniques include stories, traditions, jargon, artifacts, contrast, spin, and metaphors (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). First, stories include myths, legends, and anecdotes that frame a subject or issue in a memorable way. In the context of policing sexual assault, a story might include the rape myth that most sexual assaults complaints made to the police are false reports. If an officer internalizes this story their interactions with victims may be influenced, ultimately causing officers to

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treat victims with skepticism. Second, traditions include rituals and historical contexts

that confirm and reproduce organization values. Regarding policing, traditions that

reinforce values of male dominance and patriarchal attitudes (e.g., gender disparities in

higher-ranking positions) can influence victim response, as women are often the targets

of sexual assault. Because patriarchy is a structural force that shapes power relations and

privileges men, oppressive behavior may be targeted toward women victims as a means

of preserving the status quo (hooks, 2004). Third, using jargon is the process of defining

a subject in a familiar fashion using specific slogans or catchphrases. In the context of

policing, detectives may evaluate victim credibility based on assumptions about how

"righteous" the victim is or how "legitimate" the sexual assault allegation is (see Spohn

& Tellis, 2014). This type of terminology can become embedded in police work, resulting

in "righteous victims" of "legitimate" assaults becoming the only victims worthy of

sympathy, sensitivity, and respect. Fourth, artifacts include physical vessels that

communicate values. Artifacts are integral to police work and include objects such as

uniforms, police cars, and badges. Fifth, contrast refers to the process of discussing a

subject in terms of what it is not. In sexual assault case processing, this can include

comparing all assaults to the notion of "real rape" (Estrich, 1987). Therefore, cases that

do not include strangers, weapon use, multiple suspects, and injury may be viewed as less

valid because they do not mirror "real rape," they contrast against it. Sixth, spin includes

the process of discussing a concept in a way that communicates positivity or negativity.

Officers may describe sexual assault incidents in a particular way based on the

characteristics of the victim, suspect, and attack. Finally, metaphors involve the

comparing of one issue to another in efforts of giving the initial issue a new meaning.

Metaphors often reflect cultural stereotypes and are an indication of the speaker's attitudes and beliefs (Luchjenbroers & Aldridge, 2007). Luchjenborers and Aldridge (2007), in their study of how linguistic manipulation through metaphors influences victims' legal system encounters, found that social beliefs surrounding gender roles influenced what information was communicated to the court, and what metaphors were used when talking about victims.

Framing is a useful tool for the analysis of officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims. As demonstrated by the previous paragraph, all aspects of framing can be explicitly applied to understanding police attitudes toward sexual assault victims. Identifying the frames that officers employ when interacting with sexual assault victims will facilitate understanding regarding victim response. This approach will help describe how the larger societal environment and organizational culture facilitate the framing of sexual assault complainants.

Framing theory and officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims.
Goffman's (1974) work has paved the way for the theoretical application of framing theory to various organizations, populations, experiences, and academic domains. Research has since focused on applying the construct of framing to the study of conflict resolution (Drake & Donohue, 1996), goal pursuit (Steglich, 2003), American politics (Callaghan & Schenn, 2005), opinion formation in competitive environments (Chong & Druckman, 2007), and citizen competence (Druckman, 2002). Regarding policing, the application of framing theory to police officer attitudes of sexual assault victims is seriously limited. Two studies exist that apply this theoretical framework to

understanding official attitudes toward rape processing work (Martin, 1997; Martin &

Powell, 1995). These two studies are described in more detail next.

Using data from 130 Florida organizations, Martin and Powell (1995), explored

the organizational and community conditions that influence legal responses to rape

victims. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews and on-site observations

of 130 organizations responsible for various aspects of rape case processing. Interviewees

were asked about general case processing characteristics, statistics, and issues associated

with this type of work. The main conclusion from this research is that numerous factors

position legal organizational staff to treat rape victims unresponsively. Although Martin

and Powell (1995) investigate different types of organizations, frames specific to police

are described here. First, rape victims are seen as a source of evidence rather than as

victims of crime. Second, police anticipate the reactions of prosecutors, judges, defense

attorneys, and jurors. Third, affective neutrality is desired and empathy is prohibited.

Fourth, time and energy constraints cause expeditious processing practices—police are

trained to handle various types of cases; therefore general knowledge and practices are

valued, preventing a specialized response to rape. Fifth, police protocols require that the

police ensure the validity of evidence they collect. Overall, these factors cause the police

to treat victims in an unresponsive way.

Martin (1997), using data from qualitative interviews with 47 Florida officials,

examined official accounts of rape processing work. This research focused on gendered

organization theory's proposition that organizations are gendered. This claim is in

contrast with the bureaucratic model which states that organizations are gender-free

(Acker, 1990). During the original data collection stage in 1984, respondents were

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primarily asked about their organizations' policies and practices. However, respondents made numerous comments about the role of gender in the field. The five gender frames found in this study include: 1) women are better than men, (2) men are better than women, (3) some women and some men are worse, (4) "it depends ..." and (5) gender is irrelevant. Overall, findings suggested support for gendered organization theory and Martin (1997) concluded that gender and work are inextricably linked and mutually reproduce each other. Some organizations explicitly included gender in their policies and practices (Martin, 1997). Most organizations assigned processing work with a gendered division of labor (Martin, 1997). And, gender organization was produced informally when protocol and guidelines say it is irrelevant (Martin, 1997).

Martin and Powell's work has paved the way for research examining framing in the context of rape processing work. More than a decade ago, Martin and Powell (1994)—in their study of legal organizations' framing of rape victims—called for more research on criminal justice organizations that respond to victims. Overall, the application of framing theory to officer attitudes toward rape victims remains underdeveloped (cf. Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995). The following section will discuss how the current dissertation accomplishes goals related to this research void.

Synthesis and Current Research

Despite progress in understanding the criminal justice response to and case processing of sexual assaults, additional work needs to increase understanding regarding officer attitudes towards victims of sexual assault. We have limited and dated knowledge on police officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Field, 1978; Galton, 1975; Hazelwood & Burgess, 1995; LaFree, 1989; c.f. Page,

2007, 2008, 2010; Sleath & Bull, 2015). There is relatively little current research focusing explicitly on the attitudes of police toward sexual assault victims *and* how these beliefs are shaped by day-to-day experiences. The present dissertation addresses issues related to these goals and contributes to the literature in important ways.

The current dissertation applies framing theory (see Goffman, 1961; 1974) to the study of officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims. Officers' acceptance of rape myths and skepticism toward victims shape victim experiences with law enforcement officers and the criminal justice system (Alderden & Ullman, 2012). The inherent suspicious attitudes of law enforcement officers towards rape victims may result from the officer role which requires close examination of "facts" and the identification of the "truth" (Alderden & Ullman, 2012, p. 6). This idea is in line with contemporary frame analysis, which defines organizational frames as interpretive schemas that actors use to deal with various situations (Goffman, 1974). Organization-based frames dictate "rules and regulations" for members of the organization to follow (March & Olsen 1989). This can be problematic because even those who disagree with the organizational frame will often comply because conformity in the workplace is expected (Scott & Lyman, 1968). The application of framing theory to the context of law enforcement organizations generally—and officer attitudes specifically—remains underdeveloped (cf. Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995). Research suggests that police responses to sexual assault victims are shaped by widespread societal victim-blaming views and stereotypical judgments and perceptions (Campbell, & Johnson, 1997; Jordan, 2004). Therefore, applying framing theory to law enforcement officer attitudes may help explain how the larger organizational and societal cultures shape the response to rape victims.

Police officers operate in a society that holds some types of sexual assault victims responsible for their victimization (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Koss, 1993; Orcutt & Faison, 1988) and previous studies suggest that police officers are inherently distrustful of sexual assault victims' allegations (Jordan 2004). In addition, research suggests that police encounters with sexual assault victims are shaped by widespread societal victim-blaming views and stereotypical judgments and perceptions (Campbell, & Johnson, 1997; Jordan, 2004).Therefore, it is hypothesized that officers will interpret and reconstruct reality based on day-to-day experiences and personal interactions with society (see Littlejohn & Foss, 2010). And, that officer attitudes will be influenced by widely held public views when proceeding with rape allegations (Gerger, Caspers, Bronstone, Moe, & Abercrombie, 2007). Regarding the first research question, I expect to find that indicators of "real rape," "genuine" victims, "inappropriate" victim behavior, and "character flaws," will influence the police decision to question a sexual assault victim's credibility.

In terms of the second focus of the current dissertation, I contextualize the quantitative work examining victim credibility by exploring police attitudes toward victims of sexual assault using qualitative methods grounded in framing theory. As previously mentioned above, law enforcement officers operate in a victim-blaming society that holds victims responsible for the assaults committed against them (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Koss, 1993; Orcutt & Faison, 1988). This social milieu may contribute to problematic criminal justice responses through a negative "framing" of rape victims. Therefore, I expect that officer attitudes and their framing of sexual assault victims will be shaped by larger societal and organizational factors including the rape culture and the police subculture.

The current dissertation addresses research voids that warrant attention while contributing to the larger bodies of research examining the police treatment of sexual assault. I now discuss four major contributions of the current dissertation. First, questions remain regarding how officer attitudes vary within the same organizational context. More than two decades ago, Martin and Powell (1994)—in their study of legal organizations' framing of rape victims—called for more research on criminal justice organizations that respond to victims. Framing is a theoretically appropriate perspective for research on police officer attitudes; however, few studies have situated this topic in this framework (cf. Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995). The current dissertation helps fill this void.

Second, research has long highlighted the importance of victim credibility in influencing case outcomes. Despite these findings, few studies have investigated the police decision to question a victim's credibility. Successful prosecution of sexual assault cases results from a combination of legal and extralegal factors. Whereas legal factors are those expected to influence decision-making, such as crime seriousness and evidentiary strength, extralegal factors include legally irrelevant characteristics such as victim risk-taking behavior and the character or reputation of the victim. As previously mentioned, LaFree (1981) found that suspects were less likely to be arrested if the victim engaged in "credibility-damaging" behavior such as delayed reporting. More contemporary research also sheds light on the importance of victim credibility in case outcomes (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Biechner & Spohn, 2005; Jordan, 2004; Kerstetter, 1990; Leivore, 2004; O'Neal, Tellis, & Spohn, 2015; Spohn & Tellis, 2008). Despite the salience of victim credibility in determining case outcomes, few studies have investigated the factors that influence officers' perceptions of victim credibility.

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Third, this dissertation relies on rich data from one of the largest police departments in the United States, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). The LAPD has long been considered the pride and pacesetter of police forces in spite of adversities such as the Rampart corruption scandal and the subsequent Consent Decree. The LAPD is recognized throughout the United States for its sophistication of technology, quality of personnel, efficiency, and accomplishments in crime control and order maintenance (Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, 1991). The quantitative data used in this research is rich in detail. Case files were initially coded for more than 350 variables based on several readings of the case narratives. Although complainants were interviewed by police personnel using uniform report documents, each interview was distinct in the type of information provided. In addition to information about officers' questioning of complainant credibility, cases were coded for phenomena relating to victim and suspect characteristics, assault characteristics, the characteristics of the relationship between the complainant and suspect, the complainant's experiences with the criminal justice system, and the combined influences of characteristics that result in an activation of law enforcement response. Like the quantitative data, the qualitative data is also rich in detail. Detective interviews broadly focused on experiences "on the job" at LAPD. This included length of time investigating sex crimes; nature, type, and extent of specialized training received; issues relevant to working with sexual assault victims (e.g., rapport building and determining credibility); decision making processes regarding arresting a suspect and case clearing; and perceptions of how to improve prosecutions of sexual assault in the criminal justice system.

Lastly, this dissertation synthesizes five bodies of literature: the social ecological model, the rape culture, organizational theory, policing in sexual assault cases, and framing theory. This concept is not unique to this dissertation—most dissertations bring together interrelated bodies of work. What is unique, however, is the current dissertation's ability to contribute independently to all five research areas. First, the social ecological model is important to the current work because widespread beliefs about violence against women influence the criminal justice response to sexual assault victims (Flood & Pease, 2009; Gerger, Kley, Bohner, & Siebler, 2007; Stewart, Dobbin, & Gatowski, 1996). This dissertation will determine if, and at what social levels, this model informs the current questions. Second, the rape culture is salient to the current research questions because rape myths are widely held by the general public; this influences how criminal justice personnel, including police, handle rape allegations (Gerger, et al., 2007; Stewart, Dobbin, & Gatowski, 1996). This dissertation will help establish the importance of rape myths and the rape culture regarding officer responses to victims. This dissertation will determine the importance—if any—of the organization in shaping the police response to sexual assault victims. Third, organizational theories facilitate the sociological study of formal organizations and, in this case, help to improve understanding regarding officer attitudes of victims of sexual assault. Fourth, police officers not only operate in a society that holds sexual assault victims responsible for their victimization, they work in an occupation found to encourage violence-supportive norms. Therefore, this dissertation considers not only the societal dynamics that contribute to the development, growth, and maintenance of views, but the smaller organizational structure with which police interact (i.e. police subculture). Fifth, applying

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framing theory to law enforcement officer attitudes may help explain how the larger

organizational and societal cultures shape the response to rape victims. As previously

mentioned, this area of research is in need of attention and growth.

Chapter 3

Data and Methods

Introduction

This dissertation is guided by prior research and examines two related research objectives using a mixed methods approach. First, the current work examines the factors that influence officer perceptions of complainant credibility, focusing on indicators of "real rape," "genuine" victims, "inappropriate" victim behavior, and "character flaws," while controlling for measures of evidentiary strength as well as victim, suspect, and agency characteristics. To reiterate, I quantitatively assess:

1. What are the factors that influence the police decision to question a sexual assault complainant's credibility?

Second, this work examines police attitudes towards victims of sexual assault by qualitatively examining the following question:

2. Are officer attitudes influenced by widely held public views of sexual assault complainants?

Considering these research objectives, this chapter will focus on the following methodological considerations. First, I will describe the setting of the study by including population and demographic information on the city and law enforcement agency in which the sample was drawn. I will also provide background information on the Los Angeles Police Department. Because the current study consists of two distinct—but related—research objectives, I will discuss the methodology concerning each research question individually. Within each methodology section, I will detail the data source used to conduct the analysis and the unit of analysis, and will provide a discussion of the

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measures and codes included in each analytic strategy. Lastly, this chapter concludes with a section that restates the entire focus of the current dissertation and the contribution of the present research.

Research Setting

The data used for this study come from (1) 400 sexual assault complaints that were reported to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in 2008, and (2) 52 Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) detective interviews that took place in 2010. The setting of this study allows for a glimpse into officer perceptions and attitudes toward sexual assault complainants in one of the largest cities in the United States.

Any discussion of individual actor framing is not complete without an overview of the development, growth, and maintenance of the organization where the actor functions. Therefore, before discussing the research setting as it stands today, the history of the LAPD will be provided (see Table 1). After all, it has been suggested that ideology formation is subtle, camouflaged by the very nature in which it develops. This process is often accomplished through disguising the historical origins of a given ideology while simultaneously presenting such beliefs as natural and rational (Hall, 1982). Discussing the historical development of the Los Angeles Police Department, coupled with discussion in previous chapters regarding the larger societal and cultural myths surrounding the organization, will allow for richer examination of officer framing. This historical and contextual approach will allow for the investigation of officer frames within historical and organizational contexts (Reese, Gandy, & Grant, 2008).

The early history of the Los Angeles Police Department (1850 -1940). The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) began its early development just months after the

initial formation of the town that has come to be known today as The City of the Angels (Bultema, 2013). In 1853 Los Angeles City Marshal and peace keeper Jack Whaling was murdered (Worth, 2011), an incident that resulted in the town council creating a police force of 100 volunteers called the "Los Angeles Rangers" (Worth, 2011). The Rangers were required to independently equip themselves with weapons, rely on equipment donations from local ranchers, and pursue, capture, and kill outlaws (Bultema, 2013). The Los Angeles Rangers operated from 1853 to 1857 but were replaced by the "City Guard" which continued to serve a policing function until 1861 (Worth, 2011). Despite the efforts of both the Los Angeles Rangers and the City Guard, neither organization was able to maintain order in an area without jails, and with rampant vigilante justice and daily murders (Worth, 2011). Much like the event that sparked the development of the earliest form of the Los Angeles police force, the 1857 murder of City Marshall James Barton and three deputies would encourage the development of a new type of force, one that deviated from the early volunteer model and instead paid those who served the community (Bultema, 2013; Worth, 2011).

The next period of policing in early Los Angeles was focused on combatting the "undesirables" attracted to the city's entertainment industry and who engaged in prostitution, gambling, and drunkenness (Bultema, 2013). As the population grew to more than 5,000 residents and the high rate of violence continued, city officials mobilized to form a paid police force in 1869 (Bultema, 2013; Worth, 2011). The council's unwillingness to tax citizens resulted in a commission system where officers were paid by saloon and gambling hall owners based on their performance (Bultema, 2013; Worth, 2011). Not surprisingly, this commission-based organization failed due to overdue reward

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fees and eventually resulted in the death of the first paid police chief, William Warren, who was killed by an officer (Bultema, 2013). This violent incident, coupled with what would eventually be known as the Chinese Massacre (an incident in 1871 involving the lynching of 18 Chinese settlers), solidified the need for a fulltime salaried police department (Bultema, 2013; Hays & Sjoquist, 2005).

The end of the 19th century and the early 20th century saw major changes to the city as well as the Los Angeles police force. This time period was characterized by tremendous population growth and a flicker of police professionalism. The Board of Police Commissioners was established in the 1870s (Worth, 2013), officers began wearing regulation uniforms in 1876 (Hays & Sjoquist, 2005; Worth, 2013), the first African American officer joined the force in 1886 (Worth, 2011) followed by the first female officer in 1910, technological advances in the form of photo labs and chemical labs were developed in the 1920s, and in 1925 Sergeant Frank Harper became the first Los Angeles officer to receive a medal after a gun fight with a notorious mobster (Hays & Sjoquist, 2005; Worth, 2011). Alongside these progressive moves on the part of the organization, the city underwent numerous changes that would influence the Los Angeles Police Department. The prohibition of alcohol in 1919 (Woodiwiss, 1988), the Red Scare (Escobar, 1999), the emergence of the Klu Klux Klan during the 1922 Inglewood raid (Rasmussen, 1999), organizational corruption (Bultema, 2013), and the drop in the New York stock exchange that resulted in the economic downturn known as the Great Depression (Appier, 2005) all posed unique problems for the Los Angeles Police Department that required action. These events further demonstrated the force's increasing ability to mobilize, albeit sometimes illegally (e.g., Chief James Davis' expansion of

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jurisdiction; Worth, 2013), and problem solve. Recognizing the importance of police efficiency and the consequences that emerge from neglecting to promote organizational professionalism, Chief James Davis formed the first official police academy in 1934 and graduated the first class in 1936 (Bultema, 2013). This move officially propelled the department into an age of reform and professionalism.

An era of reform, professionalism, and Parker (1940-1966). As Los Angeles emerged from the Great Depression, the police department underwent tremendous change and distanced itself from the corrupt previous era. Unlike the previous recruit class and the officials before them who purchased their officer appointments, the new LAPD recruits had to *earn* their place on the force (Bultema, 2013). Nearly 6,000 individuals applied for the 78 positions available at the academy (Bultema, 2013). These 78 recruits came to be known as "The Shields," named after the shape of their new badges (Bultema, 2013). This class turned out more chiefs (e.g., Tom Bradley and Edward Davis) and command officers than any other recruit class in the history of the LAPD (Bultema, 2013). The Shields were thought to embody a more professional, socially conscious, better educated, business-like, and publically likable police force (Bultema, 2013). This era in the development of the police force marked an important step for Los Angeles, forming the initial foundation for what would eventually become the Los Angeles Police Department. Despite the department's promising trajectory, however, Los Angeles law enforcement would encounter new obstacles as they struggled to maintain legitimacy with the community in the wake of the mayor's recall and the imprisonment of two LAPD officers (Bultema, 2013). The corruption-related recall of Mayor Frank Shaw marked the first mayoral recall in a major city in the United States (Bultema, 2013).

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Poised to stand against and eliminate the corruption that weaved throughout the city and police department, new Chief of Police Arthur Hohmann (1939 – 1941) pursued goals related to reform—specifically working to eliminate the undesirable practices that characterized the department to that point. Hoffman abolished the procedure of promoting officers based on favoritism and, to create opportunities for qualified officers previously denied promotion, fired officers advanced through this practice (Bultema, 2013). He ordered that sirens be removed from politicians' vehicles and that councilmen hand over their honorary badges (Bultema, 2013). Hoffman was replaced by C. B. "Jack" Horrall in 1941; although Horrall remained chief for eight years, his tenure simply maintained the status quo (Bultema, 2013; Pagan, 2000; Pagan, 2003; note that the Zoot Suit Riots took place during Horrall's leadership). It was not until Chief of Police William Worton took the position in 1949 that the professionalization of the LAPD continued. Under Worton's Leadership, the Internal Affairs Bureau, an internal department responsible for handling complaints against officers and detecting corruption, was established, (Bultema, 2013). Worton recognized the need for leadership within the Internal Affairs Bureau and hired William Parker, who would later become the one of the most renowned chiefs in Los Angeles' history (Bultema, 2013; Lasley, 2013;Worth, 2011).

Soon after William Parker was sworn in as LAPD chief of police, he implemented organizational policies which would mark the beginning of the Professional-Reform Model in Los Angeles (Lasley, 2013). The economy had begun to boom and tax money that was previously unavailable could be directed toward reform (Worth, 2011). The goals of Parker's organizational changes were two-pronged; preventing corruption and

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increasing professionalism. Parker believed that too-close ties with the community facilitated corruption within the department; to combat this, he replaced foot patrol with vehicle patrol, trained officers to have more stoic and professional interactions with community members, and separated himself from governmental bodies (Bultema, 2013; Lasley, 2013). Regarding professionalism, Parker hired more qualified academy instructors, tightened academy entrance requirements, and updated policy manuals that streamlined and professionalized practices (Worth, 2011). Despite the positive organizational changes made by Parker during his leadership, the Los Angeles Police Department faced race-based criticisms that would eventually contribute to the Watts Riots of 1965. Although Parker worked to desegregate the department by directing African American and white officers to work together, segregation was still widespread in the department; out of 5,000 officers, only 300 were African American (Worth, 2011). Of African American officers, *none* of them held positions of influence (i.e., command positions; Cannon, 1997). In addition, community members criticized Parker's policing philosophy, which maintained that criminals could be identified simply by the way they looked (Lasley, 2013). Despite these criticisms, Parker remained chief until 1966 when he suffered a heart attack during a banquet after being honored for 17 years of service as police chief, marking an "end of an era" (Worth, 2011, pg. 78).

Post-Parker: "Crazy Ed," Gates, and the beating of Rodney King (1967 – 1992). In the two years following Parker's death, the Los Angeles Police Department was led by three new chiefs (Thad Brown, Thomas Reddin, and Roger Murdock) before Edward Davis (a.k.a "Crazy Ed" due to his unfiltered exchanges with the media) was appointed in 1969 (Bultema, 2013; Lasley, 2013). Davis was a loyal follower of Parker

and subscribed to the same ideals regarding the Professional-Reform Model (Davis, 1990), making him a suitable "fit" for LAPD (Lasely, 2013). As a result of unsettling times, Davis adapted Parker's policing model in an effort to mend community-officer relations (Lasley, 2013). This community-focused Professional-Reform Model approach would result in him being considered one of the pioneers of community-based policing (see Corwin, 2006). Primarily of note was his development of the Basic Car Plan, a strategy that divided Los Angeles into small geographic locations that were assigned to groups of officers. Those officers were responsible for meeting with community members, identifying specific geographic-based problems and concerns, and devising solutions (Corwin, 2006). In addition, Davis introduced the Neighborhood Watch, a program that encouraged police officers to meet with residents in their homes and listen to their concerns (Corwin, 2006). Davis' innovative thinking was controversial within the department, which eventually led to the dismantling of his policies when his successor, Daryl Gates, was appointed in 1978 (Corwin, 2006).

Los Angeles in the 1980s as well as the police department underwent major changes due to the "War on Drugs," increasing gang activity, and the widespread support for harsher punitive controls and sanctions (Gordon, 2011). These factors contributed to Los Angeles adopting a new approach to policing under newly appointed Chief of Police, Daryl Gates (Cannon, 1997; Gordon, 2011). Although Gates followed his predecessors' lead in terms of extremely strong support for the Professional-Reform Model (Lasley, 2013), he all but abandoned community-focused efforts in exchange for a more militaristic approach (Gordon, 2011). His militaristic style is best demonstrated by the development of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams (Bultema, 2013; Worth,

2011). Overall, given the obstacles faced by Los Angeles law enforcement—crack hit the streets, the city saw a 31% increase in homicide (Sweeney, 1979), and the persistent pressure to "fight" the war on drugs—it makes sense that Gates would adopt a more reactive and militaristic approach to maintaining order and controlling crime (Gordon, 2011). The Los Angeles Police Department was not alone in adopting a more aggressive style of policing; agencies in large cities all over the United States were becoming increasingly militaristic (Dominick, 2003). In the end, Gates faced a career of criticism for a number of reasons that eventually resulted in him stepping down. Officers under Gates were viewed as bullies by the public, rather than community agents (Worth, 2011). Tactics like the battering ram (Gates, 1992), gang sweeps (i.e. Operation Hammer; Lasley, 2013), "Drag-net style arrests," (Gordon, 2011, p. 14), widespread use of the chokehold (Worth, 2011), and race-based "jamming" (randomly stopping someone for a stop and frisk; Freed, 1986) all contributed to the public questioning Gates' leadership. These types of aggressive tactics resulted in an "us versus them" attitude which some argue caused a permanent divide between citizens and the police (Lasley, 2013). It would not be, however, until the early morning of March 1, 1992 that Gates' tactics would be widely questioned and the Los Angeles Police Department would forever be changed.

In the spring of 1992 Los Angeles law enforcement officers engaged in a 115 mile-per-hour vehicle chase with an intoxicated African American suspect, Rodney King. After cornering, stopping, and eventually tasing the suspect for resistive behavior, the officers proceeded to kick King 7 times in the head and hit him 56 times with their batons. The beating involved four officers and lasted two minutes despite King's pleading (Cannon, 1997; Gordon, 2011). Later, officer Stacey Koon—one of the four

officers involved in King's beating—would testify that, although he believed he had

acted according to LAPD policy, he had "not seen anything that is as violent as this in my

fourteen and a half years [as a LAPD officer]" (Cannon, 1997, pg. 20). Ultimately, King

suffered a broken leg, a fractured eye socket, facial nerve damage, a broken cheekbone,

bruises, a severe concussion, and stun gun-related burns (Gordon, 2011). Unfortunately,

the conflict did not end there; nearly two months later, after the acquittal of the white

officers charged with the beating of Rodney King, Los Angeles exploded into 5 days of

deadly rioting (Bultema, 2013; Cannon, 1997). The riots conveyed perceived

miscarriages of justice that resulted in more than 50 deaths and the destruction of

property valued at more than $1 billion (Cannon, 1997; see Van Den Haag, 1992). After

the riot ended, fingers quickly were pointed at the chief of police; the people of Los

Angeles continued to express their outrage: Gates needed to go (Bultema, 2013).

The reemergence of community policing, Rampart C.R.A.S.H., and Bratton

(1992 – 2009). The turmoil that spread throughout Los Angeles during the end of Gates'

term prompted the police commission to revisit the community-oriented policing styles

advocated by Davis and abolished by Gates (Bultema, 2013; Corwin, 2006). Following

the beating of Rodney King and the near-death attack of white truck driver Reginald

Denny by African American LA rioters (Cannon, 1997), the police commission

recognized the need for a chief who could mend race relations and restore the city to its

former self (Bultema, 2013). These goals, coupled with the aim of increasing

community-based policing, resulted in the appointment of Willie Williams, the first

African American to become chief of police in LAPD's history. Williams, the former

chief of police in Philadelphia, had successfully implemented community policing in that

city, making him an ideal candidate for Los Angeles (Bultema, 2013; Gordon, 2011). Like his predecessor Davis, Williams advocated a policing model where officers were embedded in the community, resulting in a police force characterized by discretion and visibility (Williams, 1996). However, as Parker predicted, too-close ties with the community would eventually lead to one the most notorious scandals in the history of the Los Angeles Police Department: the corruption of the Rampart C.R.A.S.H. unit.

In efforts to combat the widespread gang activity on the streets of Los Angeles, police officials developed an anti-gang unit called C.R.A.S.H., Community Response Against Street Hooligans. Although this unit was originally created under Gates' term (Worth, 2011), Williams' community-based philosophy further embedded the unit within the community (Gordon, 2011). Partly due to Rampart C.R.A.S.H.'s location within the community and high levels of embeddedness, the unit itself began to look and act like a gang. The unit wore matching bomber jackets adorned with an identifying patch, celebrated their "kills" by awarding plaques to officers involved in a shooting, and even had a motto: "We intimidate those who intimidate others" (Gordon, 2011; PBS, 2001). Ultimately, Williams' decision to knit the anti-gang unit into the community would backfire under Chief of Police, Bernard Parks. In 1999 an LAPD officer, Rafael Perez, was caught stealing a million dollars' worth of cocaine from an evidence locker (Gordon, 2011). The officer signed a plea bargain and committed to help uncover the corruption within the police agency (Boyer, 2001). Perez implicated approximately 70 Rampart District officers in various wrongdoings, such as bogus arrests, perjured testimony, and weapon plants (Boyer, 2001). The Rampart scandal was deemed the largest case of police misconduct in the history of the United States (Bultema, 2013).

Table 1. Research Setting History

Los Angeles Police Department Eras	Prominent Events[a]
Era: The early history of the Los Angeles Police Department *Dates:* (1850 -1940) *Noteworthy Police Chiefs:* · William Warren (city marshal; 1865-1870) · James Davis (1885-1886)	· Creation of the Los Angeles Rangers (1953) · Creation of the City Guard (1861) · Mobilization of the first Los Angeles paid police force (1869) · Death of William Warren (1870) · Chinese Massacre (1871) · Officers began wearing regulation uniforms (1876) · First African American officer (1886) · First female officer (1910) · Alcohol prohibition (1919) · Red Scare (1919) · Photo and chemical labs developed (1920s) · Emergence of the Klu Klux Klan (1922) · Sergeant Frank Harper receives a medal (1925) · Stock market crash (1929) · Formation of the first police academy (1934) · Graduation of the first police academy class (1936) · Corruption-related recall of Mayor Frank Shaw (1938)
Era: An era of reform, professionalism, and Parker *Dates:* (1940-1966) *Noteworthy Police Chiefs:* · Arthur Hohmann (1939-1941) · William Worton (1949-1950) · William Parker (1950-1966)	· Creation of The Shields (1940) · Abolition of corrupt promotion tactics (1939 – 1941) · Removal of sirens from politician vehicles (1939 – 1941) · Councilmen required to hand over honorary badges (1939 – 1941) · Creation of the Internal Affairs Bureau (1949) · Beginning of the Professional-Reform Model (1950) · Foot patrol is replace by vehicle patrol · Academy requirements tightened (1950 - 1966) · Policy manuals updated with a focus on professionalism (1950 - 1966) · Watts Riots (1965)
Era: Post-Parker: "Crazy Ed," Gates, and the beating of Rodney King *Dates:* (1967 – 1992) *Noteworthy Police Chiefs:* · Edward Davis (1969-1978) · Daryl Gates (1978-1992)	· Basic Car Plan · Introduction of the neighborhood watch · Creation of the Rampart C.R.A.S.H unit (late 70s) · War on Drugs (1971) · Abandoning of community-focused efforts · Militaristic approach · Development of SWAT (1968) · Adoption of the battering ram, gang sweeps, "Drag-net style arrests," widespread use of the chokehold, and race-based "jamming" (randomly stopping someone for a stop/frisk) · The beating of Rodney King (1991) · Los Angeles Riots (1991)
Era: The reemergence of community policing, Rampart C.R.A.S.H., and Bratton *Dates:* (1992 – 2009) *Noteworthy Police Chiefs:* · Willie Williams (first African American Chief; 1992-1997) · Bernard Parks (1997-2002) · William Bratton (2002-2009)	· Efforts to mend race relations · Corruption of the Rampart C.R.A.S.H. unit (1997-1998) · Model of forthright disclosure · Creation of COMPSTAT (1994) · Restructuring of the department to better represent the community
Era: Present-day LAPD, Charlie Beck, and sexual assault complaints *Dates:* (2005 – present) *Noteworthy Police Chiefs:* · Charlie Beck (2009-present)	· Restoration of the Rampart Division · Stronger community-agency relations · Implementation of more constitutional policing strategies · Safer Cities Initiative (2005) · Reclamation of MacArthur Park · Melding of Gang Operations Support Division & Narcotics Division into Gang and Narcotics Division

[a] If no date is provided, event occurred over the course of the era.

In the aftermath of the Rampart scandal, Los Angeles citizens were suspicious and distrusting of the police department, its officers, and the leadership (Bultema, 2013). It was at this time that William Bratton was appointed as chief of police. Bratton was internationally known for his work at the Boston Police Department and the New York Police Department, where he reengineered police procedures and "revitalized morale" (Bultema, 2013, pg. 290). Bratton, recognizing the tension between community members and the police, decided to open communication channels with the media, implementing a model based on forthright disclosure (Bultema, 2013). Bratton is also known for adopting CompStat, a program that identifies crime trends with the goal of directing department resources and coordinating police response in an efficient manner (Bratton & Malinowski, 2008). Under his term, Bratton also restructured the department to better represent the community it served. By the time Bratton retired in 2009, the demographics of the department better reflected the demographics of Los Angeles (the force was 37% white—compared to 60% in 1992; Bultema, 2013). Bratton retired from the LAPD after serving seven years as the chief of police, saying that he had accomplished all he had set out to do (Bultema, 2013).

This historical discussion of the Los Angeles Police Department demonstrates how organizational growth is subtle, often reactive, based on past decisions and circumstances, sociopolitical and historical context, as well as current organization and institutional trends. Understanding the development of the Los Angeles Police Department, as well as the larger societal circumstances in which it is embedded (i.e. rape culture) will allow for richer examination of officer framing that considers officer frames within a historical and organizational context (Reese, Gandy, & Grant, 2008).

Present-day LAPD, Charlie Beck, and sexual assault complaints (2005 –

present). Before turning to the following sections that include an in-depth description of

the current study's data and methodology, it is necessary to discuss the research setting as

it exists today, contrasted against the research setting during the times in which the study

was conducted in 2008 and 2010. It is important to discuss both timeframes, as the

quantitative data were taken from sexual assault complaints reported to the LAPD in

2008 and the qualitative interviews were conducted in 2010. During 2008, the year in

which the quantitative data were collected, 36.6 million people resided in California, with

approximately 3.8 million individuals living in Los Angeles. In 2010, the year in which

the qualitative data were collected, approximately 37.4 million people resided in

California, with approximately 10% residing in Los Angeles. According to recent

estimates, nearly 38.8 million people currently reside in California and approximately 10

percent of those individuals reside in Los Angeles (United States Census Bureau, 2013;

United States Census Bureau, 2014). As illustrated, whereas the California population has

steadily increased, the Los Angeles population remains relatively unchanged. One of the

central contributions of this study is that it focuses on the second largest city in the

United States, served by one of the largest police departments.

Charlie Beck was appointed Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department in 2009.

Like Bratton, Beck is considered one of the major agency actors that contributed to the

restoration of the Rampart Division (Rubin & Willion, 2009). Beck is also known for

building stronger community-agency relationships between racial minorities and officers

through transparency and the employment of constitutional policing strategies (see

National Public Radio, 2014). The LAPD is currently the third largest law enforcement

agency in the nation, serving approximately 3.8 million individuals with a budget

surpassing one billion dollars (Los Angeles Police Department [LAPD], 2015). The

LAPD employs more than 13,000 employees, with approximately 10,000 sworn officers

charged with policing 473 square miles (LAPD, 2015; Los Angeles Police Museum,

n.d.). The LAPD currently has 21 divisions that are grouped geographically into four

command bureaus (at the time of data collection, the LAPD had 19 divisions). Central

Bureau encompasses the Central Area, Hollenbeck Area, Newton Area, Northeast Area,

and Rampart Area. The South Bureau includes the 77th Street Area, Harbor Area,

Southeast Area, and Southwest Area. The Valley Bureau covers the Devonshire Area,

Foothill Area, Mission Area, North Hollywood Area, Van Nuys Area, West Valley Area,

and Topanga Area. Lastly, the West Bureau in comprised of the Hollywood Area,

Olympic Area, Pacific Area, West Los Angeles Area, and Wilshire Area.

During the 5-year time period (2005-2009) surrounding the year in which the

quantitative data were collected, the LAPD received 10,832 sexual assault complaints. Of

these cases, 5,031 (46.4%) were rape and attempted rape, and 5,801 (53.6%) were sexual

batteries (n = 4,721) or other sex crimes including sexual penetration with a foreign

object (n = 202), oral copulation (n = 496), sodomy (n = 363), unlawful sex (n =9), and

sex with a child (n = 10) (Spohn & Tellis, 2014). Most cases reported to the LAPD from

January 2005 through December 2009 were cleared (n = 2,300; 45.7%) followed by

continuing investigations (n = 2,185; 43.4%). Of the cleared cases, 616 cases were

cleared by arrest and 1, 684 cases were exceptionally cleared. It should be noted that

Spohn and Tellis (2014) found that the official data on cases that were "cleared by arrest"

were misleading due to the fact that the LAPD changed the case clearance from cleared

by arrest to cleared by exceptional means when the district attorney refused to file charges. Finally, only 10 percent of cases (n = 546) were unfounded by the LAPD during this time period (Spohn & Tellis, 2014). These figures provide an overview of the case outcomes for incidents reported to the LAPD from 2005-2009.

Two data sources are used individually to investigate each research objectives. I will now discuss the data and methods used to examine each question separately. The following section also include a discussion of case outcomes for the year under quantitative examination, 2008.

Officer Perceptions of Complainant Credibility

Data. To satisfy the first objective of the study, this dissertation investigates the relationship between complainant, suspect, agency, and case characteristics and the likelihood that an officer will question a complainant's credibility. The current study uses data from 400 sexual assault complaints that were reported to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in 2008. These data were collected for a study of policing and prosecuting of sexual assault (see Spohn & Tellis, 2012). For that study, case files were collected for sexual assaults with female complainants over the age of 12 that were reported into the LAPD. Due to the numerous cases reported to the LAPD in 2008, a stratified random sample of cases was selected (N = 401). The LAPD sample was stratified by division and, within each division, by the type of case clearance. Case files were initially coded for more than 350 variables based on several readings of the case narratives.[3] Complainants were interviewed by police personnel using uniform report

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[3] All cases used in this dissertation were coded by the author; she served as the primary research assistant during the early stages of this project. Initial efforts to recruit and train additional graduate assistant coders were unsuccessful, resulting in the author assuming coding duties. It should be noted that a single coder's

documents; however, each interview was distinct in the type of information provided. The coding system was developed by examining the narratives and identifying contextual themes. In addition to information about officers' questioning of complainant credibility, cases were coded for phenomena relating to victim and suspect characteristics, assault characteristics, the characteristics of the relationship between the complainant and suspect, the complainant's experiences with the criminal justice system, and the combined influences of characteristics that result in an activation of law enforcement response. Similar response pattern imputation (SRPI) in LISREL version 9.1 (Scientific Software International, Chicago, IL) was used to handle missing data. Research suggests that SRPI handles missing data well when compared to other imputation strategies (Gmel, 2001). Imputation techniques failed for one case due to numerous empty cells. Therefore, listwise deletion was used to handle this single case (see Allison, 2014).

It is important to note that the present study relies on sexual assault cases that were reported to a single agency (i.e. LAPD); therefore it is limited in generalizability. In addition, studies of sexual assault that rely on police reports are limited because they reflect only those that have come to the attention of law enforcement. Although studies of sexual assault that rely on police reports are limited, focusing on these cases is justified given that the current study examines police decision making in sexual assault cases that are reported to law enforcement (Bergen, 2004). Police reports are an appropriate source of data because they provide detailed information regarding offender, complainant, assault, and case processing characteristics—information which is necessary for the

bias cannot be measured (Artstein & Poesio, 2005). Cases were coded based on explicit information provided in the case file. No interpretations were made by the author. For example, cases were coded 1 if the officer explicitly recorded questioning the complainant's credibility (e.g. "Victim is not credible"); no interpretations about credibility or officer perceptions were made by the coder.

present study. In addition, such data are appropriate for identifying the factors that

influence officer perceptions of complainant credibility. A final limitation of the present

study includes the inability to verify the accuracy of the information in each case file.

Although this study uses redacted copies of individual case files, it is impossible to

determine if the information provided by the investigating officer accurately represents

the complainant's, suspect's, and witnesses' experiences.

The majority of incidents in this sample were rape (n = 249, 62.3%), followed by

sexual battery (n = 110, 27.5%), and attempted rape (n = 41, 10.3%). The vast majority of

cases involved one complainant (n = 382, 95.5%) followed by two complainants (n = 15,

3.8%).One incident involved six complainants, the maximum number of complainants in

a single case. The total number of suspects ranged from one to seven, with one (n = 352,

88.2%) and two (n = 33, 8.3%) suspects being the most common. More than one third of

the cases in this sample resulted in the arrest of the suspect (n = 139, 34.8%). Lastly, in

terms of case clearance, the majority of cases were cleared by exceptional means (n =

127, 31.378%),[4] followed by arrest (n = 99, 24.8%), unfounding (n = 88, 22.0%),

investigation continued (n = 86, 21.5%), and juvenile clearances (arrest: n = 6, 1.5%;

exceptional n = 2, 0.5%). It should be noted that Spohn and Tellis (2014) found that the

official data on cases that were "cleared by arrest" were misleading due to the fact that

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[4] According to the Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2004), offenses are cleared either by arrest or by exceptional means. The handbook states that "an offense is cleared by arrest, or solved for crime reporting purposes, when at least one person is 1) arrested, 2) charged with the commission of the offense, and 3) turned over to the court for prosecution (whether following arrest, court summons, or police notice)" (p. 79). The handbook notes that there may be occasions where the police have conducted an investigation, exhausted all leads, and identified a suspect but are unable to clear an offense by arrest. In these cases, the police can clear the offense by exceptional means if the following criteria are met: 1) the investigation has definitely established the identity of the offender, 2) the exact location of the offender is known, 3) there is enough information to support an arrest, charge, and turning over to the court for prosecution, 4) and there is some reason outside law enforcement control that precludes arresting, charging, and prosecuting the offender (See Spohn & Tellis, 2104).

the LAPD changed the case clearance from cleared by arrest to cleared by exceptional means when the district attorney refused to file charges.

Dependent variable. Complainant credibility was coded dichotomously based on the officer's perception as indicated in the police report (1 = investigating officer questioned the complainant's credibility, 0 = investigating officer did not question the complainant's credibility). Cases were coded 1 if the officer explicitly recorded questioning the complainant's credibility (e.g., "Victim is not credible"); no interpretations about credibility or officer perceptions were made by the coder. Officers questioned the credibility of the complainant in 14.5% (n = 58) of the cases. The coding schemes for each variable are presented in Table 2; Descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables are presented in Table 3.

Key independent variables.

"Genuine victims" and indicators of "real rape." Several variables were included to represent characteristics attributed to "genuine victims" and factors that mirror "real rape" (Estrich, 1992). These variables were included with the belief that officers would be more likely to question the credibility of "untraditional" complainants who experienced assaults that did not mirror real rape. These rape myths include factors such as the victim/suspect relationship and the nature of the offense. The first indicator of real rape used in this study is a measure of the suspect/complainant relationship (1 = stranger, 0 = nonstranger/acquaintance). This study also included a measure of physical violence, which captures whether the suspect physically assaulted the complainant at the time of the sexual attack (1 = yes, 0 = no). Also included is a dichotomous indicator for whether the suspect used or displayed a weapon (1 = yes, 0 = no).

Table 2. Coding Scheme

Dependent Variable	
Complainant credibility: Officer questioned the complainant's credibility	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Independent Variables	
"Genuine victims" and indicators of "real rape"	
Suspect is a stranger	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Suspect physically assaulted complainant	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Suspect threatened/displayed/used weapon	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant suffered physical injuries	1 = Yes; 0 = No
"Inappropriate" complainant behavior	
Complainant engaged in risk-taking behavior	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant did not resist	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant recanted	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant did not want the suspect arrested	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant delayed in reporting	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Indicators of "character flaws"	
Reputation issues present	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant suffered mental health issues	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant's testimony was inconsistent	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant had a motive to lie	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Control Variables	
Strength of evidence	
Physical evidence collected	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant cooperated	1 = Yes; 0 = No
At least one witness	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant and agency characteristics	
Complainant black	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant Hispanic	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Complainant age	In years
Suspect black	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Suspect Hispanic	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Suspect age	In years
Central Bureau	1 = Yes; 0 = No
South Bureau	1 = Yes; 0 = No
Valley Bureau	1 = Yes; 0 = No

Another indicator of crime seriousness is a composite dichotomous indicator for complainant injury, which combines dichotomous measures for the presence of bruises, cuts, burns, broken bones, stab wounds, internal injuries, genital injuries, bite marks, and choke marks. Complainant injury is coded 1 if the complainant suffered any injury at the time of the attack. This variable was included with the belief that cases involving complainants with injuries more closely mirror "real rape."

"Inappropriate" victim behavior. Variables were included that capture various behaviors that could be interpreted as inappropriate. These variables measure several pre- and post-assault behaviors as well as complainant behavior during the assault. First, this study used a dichotomous indicator that measures whether the complainant was engaging in "risk-taking" behavior. Complainant risk-taking behavior was coded 1 if the complainant engaged in any risk-taking behavior before or during the incident (e.g., walking alone at night, accepting a ride from a stranger, going to the suspect's residence, inviting the suspect to their residence, in a bar alone, hanging out where drugs are sold, consuming alcohol, drunk, consuming drugs, and passing out due to intoxication). Second, regarding behavior during the assault, complainant resistance was reverse coded, where the absence of verbal or physical resistance was coded 1 and the presence of resistance was coded 0. Also included are two variables that measure post-assault credibility-damaging behaviors: whether the complainant recanted (1 = yes, 0 = no) and whether she told the investigating officer that she did not want the suspect arrested (1 = yes, 0 =no). Lastly, whether the complainant delayed in reporting is included (1 = yes, 0 = no). A delayed report reflects all reports not made within one hour of the incident.

Indicators of "character flaws." I include various indicators that measure complainant "character flaws" that could result in the officer questioning the complainant's credibility. The first is a dichotomous indicator for complainant reputation issues, which combines dichotomous measures for various complainant characteristics including whether the complainant had a history of alcohol and/or drug misuse, worked as a stripper and/or a prostitute, had a criminal record, and/or was affiliated with a gang. A second indicator measures whether the complainant suffered from mental health issues

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(1 = yes, 0 = no). Lastly, dichotomous indicators were used to measure whether the

complainant's testimony was inconsistent (1 = yes, 0 = no) and whether the complainant

had a motive to lie about the assault to the officer (1 = yes, 0 = no).

Control variables. To isolate the effects of complainant characteristics,

complainant behavior, and measures of "real rape" on the officer's likelihood of

questioning a complainant's credibility, this study controlled for measures of evidentiary

strength as well as complainant, suspect, and agency officer characteristics.

Strength of evidence. The study controlled for indicators of evidentiary strength

assuming that investigating officers would be less likely to question a complainant's

credibility if evidence that a crime occurred was present. Tapping into strength of

evidence in a case, the first variable measured whether there was any type of physical

evidence collected from the scene of the incident or from the complainant or suspect. A

composite measure of evidence was included that was coded 1 if any of the following

types of evidence were collected: clothing, semen, skin, fingerprints, blood, hair, or

bedding. Also included is a variable that measures whether the complainant was willing

to participate in the investigation, including whether the complainant was willing to

cooperate in the prosecution of the suspect (1 = yes, 0 = no). A dichotomous measure was

also included that indicated whether there were witnesses to the incident (1 = witnesses, 0

= no witnesses).

Table 3. Summary Statistics, LAPD 2008 (N=400)

Variables	% or Mean
<u>Dependent Variable</u>	
IO questioned the victim's credibility	14.5%
<u>Independent Variables</u>	
"Genuine victims" and indicators of "real rape"	
Suspect is a stranger	42.3%
Suspect physically assaulted victim	42.3%
Suspect threatened/displayed/used weapon	10.8%
Victim suffered physical injuries	
"Inappropriate" victim behavior	
Victim engaged in any risk-taking behavior	40.5%
Victim did not resist	31.0%
Victim recanted	13.8%
Victim did not want the suspect arrested	10.8%
Victim delayed in reporting	32.3%
Indicators or "character flaws"	
Reputation issues present	20.8%
Victim suffered mental health issues	12.5%
Victim's testimony was inconsistent	18.5%
Victim had a motive to lie	19.5%
<u>Control Variables</u>	
Strength of evidence	
Physical evidence collected	39.3%
Victim cooperated	63.3%
At least one witness	41.3%
Victim, suspect, and agency characteristics	
Victim black	19.0%
Victim white (reference)	33.0%
Victim Hispanic	48.0%
Victim age	28.04
Suspect black	27.3%
Suspect white (reference)	19.0%
Suspect Hispanic	53.8%
Suspect age	32.88
Central Bureau	26.3%
South Bureau	21.3%
Valley Bureau	32.5%
West Bureau (reference)	20.0%

Complainant, suspect, and agency characteristics. Complainant and suspect characteristics were included as controls. Because some cases involved more than one suspect, the first identified suspect is used here. Dichotomous variables were included for complainant race, including complainant black and complainant Hispanic, with complainant white as the reference group. The same measures were included for suspect

race, including suspect black and suspect Hispanic, with suspect white as the reference group. Complainant and suspect age are measured in years. Los Angeles Police Department bureau was also entered into the model as an organizational-level control variable, including Central, South, and Valley, with West as the reference group. West was chosen as a reference group for two reasons: (1) this bureau serves a more affluent area with a concentration of high annual income households, and (2) West is the only district to have a dedicated sex crimes unit. This organization-level variable will help determine if having a dedicated sex crimes unit influences the officer's likelihood of questioning a victim's credibility.

Unit of analysis. In my quantitative assessment of complainant characteristics and the likelihood that an officer will question her credibility, the focus is on the *officer's* likelihood of questioning a sexual assault complainant's credibility (as indicated in the report by the officer). Accordingly, LAPD officers are the unit of analysis.

Analytic strategy. The quantitative portion of this study is conducted in two stages. First, model diagnostics are conducted to rule out harmful levels of collinearity by estimating the variance inflation factors (VIFs), tolerance levels, and condition index scores for the variables included in the model. Second, this study estimates the effects of theoretically relevant independent variables (e.g., indicators of "genuine victims," "real rape," "inappropriate" victim behavior, and victim "character flaws") on whether the investigating officers questioned the complainant's credibility. Because the dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator, the current dissertation estimates a logistic regression model to access the factors that influence officer perceptions. Odds ratios will be presented.

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Detective Framing of Sexual Assault Complainants

      Data. To complete the second phase of this dissertation, I relied on data collected from in-depth semi-structured interviews with 52 LAPD detectives. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) of two universities: Arizona State University and California State University, Los Angeles. Informed consent was established immediately prior to the interview. Participants were interviewed using a semi-structured format,[5] which includes an enhanced layout that standardizes or assists the interviewer in determining what questions will be asked (Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1998). Semi-structured interviews deviate from the structured format in that they allow new concepts or topics to be brought up during the interview based on participant dialog (Wengraf, 2001). Overall, this methodology combines the flexibly of an open-ended format with the directionality of a survey format (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). Research suggests that semi-structured interviews are superior to the structured format because they allow the interviewer to engage in model-building, model-testing, theory-construction, and theory-verification within the same interview session (Wengraf, 2001). Importantly, research suggests that this method increases reliability and validity and enhances interpretation (Campion et al., 1998). Detailed notes were taken during each interview, which resulted in 194 single-spaced pages of information. Note taking during interviews is ideal because it allows the interviewer to rely less on memory recall and helps avoid problems associated with memory ratings (e.g., memories are often clearer during interview stages that occur early or late in the sequence; Campio et al., 1998).

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[5] Interviews were conducted by the project investigators (i.e., Spohn & Tellis, 2012) and the primary graduate research assistant (i.e., the current dissertation author).

Detective interviews broadly focused on experiences "on the job" at LAPD. This included length of time investigating sex crimes; nature, type, and extent of specialized training received; issues relevant to working with sexual assault victims (e.g., rapport building and determining credibility); decision-making processes regarding arresting a suspect and case clearing; and perceptions of how to improve prosecutions of sexual assault in the criminal justice system. Due to confidentiality and subject anonymity requirements, sociodemographic characteristics about participants including gender, race, age, and Bureau or Division assignment were not recorded. This research strategy was used to increase the likelihood of forthright self-disclosure.

The interviewees varied in rank from Detective I to Detective III and represented a wide range of experience. Detectives' time on the job at LAPD ranged from 10 to 33 years, with length of time investigating sex crimes ranging from 2 months to 25 years. Twenty two of the participants indicated that they did not request to work in sex crimes while 20 participants indicate that they worked towards and enthusiastically pursued the assignment. Detectives in the latter group expressed two reasons for actively pursuing the assignment: (1) working sex crimes was often considered a prerequisite for promotion and (2) that working the sex crimes desk was the most rewarding assignment because of the ability to seek justice for live victims. Other participants acknowledged that, although they initially were assigned or fell into sex crimes work, they enjoyed the job and decided to continue.

Unit of analysis. In this qualitative examination of detective attitudes, the focus in on how *sex crime detectives* frame sexual assault complainants. Therefore, individuals (i.e., sex crimes detectives) are the unit of analysis.

Analytic strategy. The interview notes were first examined to extract all

mentions of victim-related information, specifically focusing on the victim management

portion of the interviews. Questions and prompts regarding victim management included

topics relating to credibility, establishing rapport, false reporting, victim testimony, and

the victim and suspect relationship. Although the data collection instrument included a

section focusing on victim management, it became apparent that participants often

discussed victim-related information at other points during the semi-structured interview.

Therefore, I extracted all victim information, regardless of section, question, or prompt.

I analyzed the interviews using the systematic methods of Glaser and Strauss'

(1967) grounded theory approach to qualitative analysis. I thoroughly and systematically

examined the data to assign codes to phenomena and to identify themes that repeatedly

emerged. I carefully read each transcript in full and performed a line-by-line text analysis

of the interviews. Interviews were coded for phenomena relating to victim credibility,

establishing rapport, false reporting, victim testimony, and the victim and suspect

relationship. Overall, qualitative analysis is suited for this inquiry because engaging in

context laden in-depth analysis allows for a fuller understanding and "thick description"

of the phenomena under investigation (Geertz, 1973; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Conclusion

This study furthers our understanding of police perceptions of sexual assault

complainants by assessing their likelihood of questioning a complainant's credibility. It

expands upon prior research by drawing on a sample of officers from one of the largest

metropolitan police departments in the United States. Moreover, this study contributes to

research on the frames officers assign to women who report sexual assault, and these data

are well-suited to examine salient dimensions of officer attitudes. Both data sets include

information regarding offender, victim, assault, and case processing characteristics, as

well as information about victim credibility, establishing rapport, false reporting, and

victim testimony. The current study, through the use of framing theory, contributes to the

current body of literature by focusing explicitly on the attitudes of police toward sexual

assault complainants and how these beliefs are shaped by day-to-day experiences.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the results from the quantitative and qualitative analyses. First, I describe the results from the multivariate quantitative analysis that investigates the effects of complainant characteristics, case characteristics, and agency characteristics on officers' decisions to question a sexual assault complainant's credibility. Accordingly, model diagnostics and logistic regression analyses were conducted and are presented in the following sections. Second, I contextualize the quantitative results by discussing the results from the qualitative analysis examining the frames detectives assign to victims.

Quantitative Results: Officer Perceptions of Complainant Credibility

Prior to presenting the results from the logistic regression analyses, model diagnostics are presented to ensure that collinearity will not bias the parameter estimates. Variance inflation factors (VIF) and tolerance levels are presented in Table 4. As this table indicates, none of the VIFs for the variables included in the model exceed 2.5; these scores fall well below the standard "conservative" cutoff of 4.0 (Fox, 1991). Additionally, the condition index scores for each predictor are below the threshold of 30 (Belsley, Kuh, & Welsch, 1980), with none exceeding 22. These model diagnostic results indicate that collinearity is not a concern, which allows the analysis to proceed to multivariate methods.

The results of the analysis testing the factors that influence police perceptions of complainants' credibility are presented in Table 5. As these data indicate, indicators of "real rape," complainant "character issues," and theoretically relevant controls influence

the likelihood that an officer will question a complainant's credibility. Conversely,

variables measuring complainant behavior that could be viewed by officers as

inappropriate do not influence police perceptions. Overall, both the model χ2 statistic and

the Hosmer & Lemseshow goodness-of-fit test indicate that the model fits the data well.

The Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 is .49.

Table 4. Testing for Multicollinearity

	VIF	Tolerance
Dependent Variable		
Complainant credibility	1.44	.69
Independent Variables		
"Genuine victims" and indicators of "real rape"		
Suspect is a stranger	1.31	.76
Suspect physically assaulted complainant	1.31	.76
Suspect threatened/displayed/used weapon	1.20	.83
Complainant suffered physical injuries	1.53	.65
"Inappropriate" complainant behavior		
Complainant engaged in risk-taking behavior	1.38	.73
Complainant did not resist	1.12	.89
Complainant recanted	1.41	.71
Complainant did not want the suspect arrested	1.28	.78
Complainant delayed in reporting	1.23	.82
Indicators of "character flaws"		
Reputation issues present	1.38	.73
Complainant suffered mental health issues	1.30	.77
Complainant's testimony was inconsistent	1.37	.73
Complainant had a motive to lie	1.51	.66
Control Variables		
Strength of evidence		
Physical evidence collected	1.44	.70
Complainant cooperated	1.28	.78
At least one witness	1.14	.88
Complainant and agency characteristics		
Complainant black	1.77	.57
Complainant Hispanic	2.01	.50
Complainant age	1.34	.74
Suspect black	2.52	.40
Suspect Hispanic	2.25	.45
Suspect age	1.34	.75
Central Bureau	2.07	.48
South Bureau	2.12	.47
Valley Bureau	2.15	.47
Mean VIF = 1.55		
Condition Number = 22.13		

Turning to the variables of interest, two indicators of "real rape" and four

indicators of complainant "character flaws" influenced the likelihood that an officer

would question a complainant's credibility. First, regarding measures of real rape, officers were less likely to question a complainant's credibility if the suspect physically assaulted the complainant at the time of the sexual attack (Exp(B) = .397, b = -.925, $p <$ .05). In addition, results indicate that officers were more likely to question the credibility of complainants in cases where the suspect used, displayed, or threatened a weapon. The direction of this relationship is unanticipated; therefore, it is further investigated and discussed it in more detail below. Second, *all* variables measuring character or reputation issues had a significant effect on credibility assessments. The fact that the complainant had reputation issues (Exp(B) = 3.767, b = 1.326, $p <$ .01), suffered mental health issues (Exp(B) = 6.760, b = 1.911, $p <$ .01), provided inconsistent testimony when interviewed (Exp(B) = 2.996, b = 1.097, $p <$ .01), or had a motive to lie (Exp(B) = 5.898, b = 1.775, p < .01) all increased the likelihood that an officer would question the complainant's credibility. The degree of these effects should be noted. Officers were almost seven times more likely to question the credibility of complainants with mental health issues and nearly four times more likely to question the credibility of complainants with reputation issues.

Four control variables were found to be significant in predicting the officer credibility assessments. Regarding evidentiary strength, the police were less likely to question credibility in cases involving cooperative complainants (Exp(B) = .345, b = -1.063, $p <$ .05). In addition, suspect and complainant age are significant, with the police more likely to question the credibility of older complainants (Exp(B) = 1.055, b = .054, p < .01) and less likely to question the credibility of complainants in cases involving older suspects (Exp(B) = .944, b = -.058, $p <$ .01). Lastly, officers working in the Central

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(Exp(B) = .144, b = -1.937, p < .01), South (Exp(B) = .221, b = -1.510, p < .01), and

Valley (Exp(B) = .075, b = -2.587, p < .01) bureaus were all less likely to question the

credibility of complainants when compared to the West bureau.

Table 5. Results of the Logistic Regression Analysis (N = 400)

	b	S.E.	Exp(B)
Independent Variables			
"Genuine victims" and indicators of "real rape"			
Suspect is a stranger	.122	.441	1.130
Suspect physically assaulted complainant	-.925*	.446	.397
Suspect threatened/displayed/used weapon	1.338**	.546	3.811
Complainant suffered physical injuries	-.392	.460	.676
"Inappropriate" complainant behavior			
Complainant engaged in risk-taking behavior	.726	.427	2.068
Complainant did not resist	-.341	.427	.711
Complainant recanted	.252	.547	1.287
Complainant did not want the suspect arrested	-.357	.643	.700
Complainant delayed in reporting	.552	.476	1.736
Indicators of "character flaws"			
Reputation issues present	1.326**	.432	3.767
Complainant suffered mental health issues	1.911**	.520	6.760
Complainant's testimony was inconsistent	1.097**	.431	2.996
Complainant had a motive to lie	1.775**	.480	5.898
Control Variables			
Strength of evidence			
Physical evidence collected	.135	.440	1.145
Complainant cooperated at the investigation stage	-1.063*	.414	.345
Number of witnesses	.138	.201	1.148
Complainant, suspect, and, agency characteristics			
Complainant Hispanic	-070	.491	.993
Complainant black	-.610	.635	.543
Complainant age	.054**	.017	1.055
Suspect Hispanic	-.078	.527	.925
Suspect black	-.528	.625	.590
Suspect age	-.058**	.020	.944
Central bureau	-1.937**	.588	.144
South bureau	-1.510*	.618	.221
Valley bureau	-2.587**	.595	.075
Constant	-1.555	1.077	.211
Nagelkerke R^2 = .49			
McFadden's R^2 = .37			
Hosmer & Lemeshow Test	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
	13.003	8	.112
Model $\chi 2$	130.365**	25	.000

Entries are unstandardized coefficients (b) and standard errors (S.E).
**p < .01; *p < .05 (two-tailed test)

Additional Analyses: Teasing Apart More Complex Results

Parsimonious statistical modeling, the approach of starting from the simplest explanation and only adding complexity when unquestionably necessary, is one principle scientists have developed to facilitate asking questions about the world (Braithwaite, 2007). In the analysis presented above, various variables were transformed into dichotomous indicators to facilitate the construction of a parsimonious model—it would be unrealistic to enter all six "reputation issue" variables into the model simultaneously. This type of variable transformation, however, inherently results in the loss of information about the factors under examination. According to Neal (1996), "deliberately limiting the complexity of the model is not fruitful when the problem is evidently complex. […Therefore,] the appropriate response is to define a different complex model […]" (pp. 103-104). For example, when collapsing the reputation issue variables into one dichotomous indicator it is unclear whether one variable (e.g., working as a sex worker) is driving the significant effects or if simply having one reputation issue (regardless of its nature) influences officer perceptions. In addition, given the unanticipated findings regarding suspect weapon use it is important to reexamine that result to shed light on its relationship with perceptions of credibility. Therefore, additional analyses were conducted to tease apart findings related to complainant behavior and suspect weapon use.[6]

Complainant character flaws and risk-taking. In efforts of teasing apart the findings associated with complainant-related variables, similar logistic regressions were

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[6] Additional analyses were also conducted to examine physical evidence and complainant injury. Summative scale scores were constructed to test whether the amount of physical evidence or if the number of different types of injuries predicted officer perceptions. In addition, each individual predictor was entered into the model asynchronously to determine if any single predictor of physical evidence or type of injury influenced police perceptions. Results did not reach statistical significance.

estimated using variety scores for number of character issues and number of risk-taking behaviors. First, tapping into the degree of complainant character flaws, a summative scale score was constructed with the belief that officers would be more likely to question the credibility of complainants who had more character issues. This predictor approached significance when measured as a variety score ($b = .389$, $p = < .10$). From there, in efforts of assessing what variable, if any, was driving the significant results for the dichotomous character variable, each individual predictor was entered into the model asynchronously. Variables entered into the model include whether the complainant had a history of drug abuse, had a history of alcohol abuse, worked in a "disrespectful" (but legal) field (e.g., exotic dancing, massaging), worked as a sex worker, had a criminal record, or was gang affiliated. Having a criminal record was the only variable that independently approached significance ($b = .912$, $p < .10$), indicating that officers were more likely to question the credibility of complainants with criminal records.

Second, although complainant risk-taking did not reach statistical significance in the original model, it is often helpful to reexamine collapsed measures as a precaution to ensure relevant effects are not lost in the process of transforming variables. Therefore, in efforts of tapping into the degree of complainant "risk-taking," a summative scale score was constructed with the belief that officers would be more likely to question the credibility of complainants who engaged in more risk-taking behavior. Like the dichotomous risk-taking indicator, the summative predictor did not reach statistical significance. Similarly to the strategy above, I moved on to accessing if any one risk variable was significant in predicting officer perceptions. Therefore, each individual risk predictor was entered into the model asynchronously. Variables entered into the model

include whether the complainant was walking alone at night, accepted a ride from a stranger, went to the suspect's residence, invited the suspect to her residence, was in a bar alone, was in an area where drugs are commonly sold, was consuming alcohol, was intoxicated at the time of the incident, was using drugs, or was passed out from intoxication. Variables found to be significant when entered into the model asynchronously include whether the complainant went to the suspect's residence ($b = 1.39$, $p < .01$) or was using drugs immediately before or during the incident ($b = 1.519$, $p < .01$). Both of these factors increased the likelihood that the officer would question the complainant's credibility.

Suspect weapon use. The stereotypical definition of "real rape" has historically involved the use of a weapon (Ali, 2012). Common societal beliefs about the nature of rape often includes the misconception that most (if not all) assailants use weapons when sexually attacking complainants. The fact that these myths are widely held by the general public influences how criminal justice personnel proceed with rape allegations (Gerger, Kley, Bohner, & Siebler, 2007; Stewart, Dobbin, & Gatowski, 1996). Therefore, given the contradictory results presented above—that officers are *more* likely to question the complainant's credibility in cases involving a weapon—an additional logistic regression was estimated in an effort to clarify and better understand this finding. First, the original weapon variable was recoded into 3 dummy variables measuring traditional weapons (guns and knives; 1 = yes, 0 = no) and nontraditional weapons (broom handles, box cutters, unknown "sharp" object, etc.; 1 = yes, 0 = no), with no weapons (1 = yes, 0 = no) as the reference category. When entered into the model this way, the use of traditional weapons is not significant. However, the use of nontraditional weapons remains

statistically significant (b = 2.425, p = .014), indicating that officers are more likely to

question credibility when complainants report suspect use of a nontraditional weapon.

These findings are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Qualitative Results: Detective Framing of Sexual Assault Victims

The second aim of this dissertation was to contextualize the findings from the

quantitative analysis by qualitatively examining the frames detectives assign to victims.

To reiterate, I examined detective attitudes toward victims using qualitative data from 52

detective interviews. Law enforcement officers operate in a victim-blaming society that

holds some victims responsible for the assaults committed against them (Gordon &

Riger, 1989; Koss, 1993; Orcutt & Faison, 1988). This social milieu may contribute to

problematic criminal justice responses through a negative "framing" of rape victims.

Overall, framing is the mechanism by which people draw from their set of attitudes and

beliefs—also known as an "individual's frame [of] thought"—to evaluate their

surroundings (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 105).

Three broad sexual assault victim frames were identified. These frames include

depictions of victims as they relate to: (a) the suspect/victim relationship, (b) problematic

victim behavior (e.g., victim "risk-taking" and sex work), and (c) age (i.e., being a

teenage complainant). The following sections discuss each frame along with subthemes

identified within each frame. Table 6 presents the frequencies for the number of

detectives who discussed any given frame; later tables display subthemes and present

more nuanced categories. Overall, these three frames have one major theme in common:

certain types of victims are viewed as problematic. The first section discusses frames

surrounding the suspect-victim relationship, primarily focusing on detective attitudes

toward stranger rape and non-stranger rape. The vast majority of detectives (n = 47) acknowledged the importance of the suspect/victim relationship, with 25 of these detectives highlighting the connection between the suspect/victim relationship and victim credibility issues. The second section identifies the frames assigned to victims who engage in problematic behavior such as "risk-taking" behavior and those with a history of prostitution. In this sample of 52 interviewees, only five detectives refrained from discussing "risk-taking" victims and victims who engage in prostitution. Additionally, only three detectives asserted that these victim factors do not influence decision-making or case processing. The final section discusses detective frames of teenage complainants, focusing on false reporting. In this sample, 38 detectives framed teenagers as lying complainants, with 35 detectives portraying teens as means-serving false reporters and three detectives asserting that teens lie for good reasons. Findings are partially consistent with the hypothesis that officers will interpret and reconstruct reality based on day-to-day experiences and personal interactions with society (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009) and that officer attitudes will be influenced by widely held public views when proceeding with rape allegations (Gerger, et al., 2007).

Table 6. Detective Framing of Sexual Assault Victims (N=52)[a]

	N
Detective highlights the importance of the suspect/victim relationship	47
Detective mentions "risk-taking victims" and/or sex workers	47
Detective discusses teenage complainants	38

[a]Values are not mutually exclusive.

Before presenting results regarding detective frames, it is interesting to note that some sex crimes detectives acknowledged that "society" is a predominant barrier faced by victims when reporting, highlighting an important nexus between social influences and individual behavior. Some detectives discussed widespread societal stereotypes about

victims and the embarrassment that comes with reporting sexual assault. According to one detective, "[Victims don't report because] they have a fear of not being believed, feel embarrassment, [and] worry that they will be blamed…" The media were also mentioned as societal barriers to victim reporting. One detective said, "[They] don't want to report because possibly they have seen media coverage of sexual assault…and how victims are still treated in this day and age." Echoing the previous assertion, another detective said, "Everything they see on TV of persecution of victims [is an obstacle]." Others pointed to the sexualization of young people and women and its influence on victim reporting. According to one detective, "Maybe…society…there seems to be this sexualization of young people, even very young girls, so I think growing up in a society where everything is sexualized might affect how they respond or react to a sexual assault."

Along with the influence of social factors on victim behavior, detectives also discussed how the actual law enforcement agency can present a major challenge facing sexual assault victims. One detective said:

> There is a casual indifference of patrol officers who don't have the experience to know what they are dealing with. The bureaucratic face of the department is not cognizant between property crime and rape. Officers know that they have to take them to RTC [rape treatment center], [but] they take the numbers approach rather than the "what can I do for the victim" approach. It is a major training issue which is something that cannot totally change. Victims have the most problem at that first contact with law enforcement where they feel not understood or judged.

Along similar lines, detectives discussed how the process of contacting law enforcement can be victimizing (i.e. the second rape) and can cause low levels of reporting. Speaking

to the process, one detective said, "You go through hell; make report, undergo exam, feel disgusting…often I feel we victimize the victim more than the suspect does." Another detective discussed how sexual assault victims question the system's ability to help them. One detective said, "Many are hesitant to report. They fear that people will not believe them and the police won't believe them or won't help them. I say that because I had a recent [victim] tell me, 'you can't do anything because this will go nowhere.'"

From here, I present detailed descriptions of each frame along with the subthemes identified in each frame. As mentioned above, these frames have one major theme in common: certain types of victims are viewed by detectives as problematic. The first section discusses frames surrounding the suspect-victim relationship, primarily focusing on detective attitudes toward stranger rape and non-stranger rape. The second section identifies the frames assigned to victims who engage in "risk-taking" behavior and those with a history of prostitution. The final section discusses detective frames of teenage complainants, focusing on false reporting.

Suspect-Victim Relationship Frames

The first group of frames catalog one commonly held rape myth: that stranger rape is "real rape" (Check & Malamuth, 1983). These beliefs are apparent when detectives talk about the importance of the victim-suspect relationship in the context of arrest requirements and overall case processing. A number of law enforcement detectives suggested that the victim-suspect relationship *had* to be considered when assessing the credibility of a victim or making case processing decisions (e.g., to make an arrest). Overall, 47 detectives discussed the importance of the suspect-victim relationship regarding case processing (see Table 7). Out of these 47, 25 detectives highlighted the

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connection between the suspect-victim relationship and victim credibility issues. These

accounts communicated messages that stranger rape is real rape and that victims of non-

stranger rape (i.e., rapes involving acquaintances and intimate partners) lie. The

remaining 22 detectives who commented on the suspect-victim relationship discussed the

complexity of the suspect-victim relationship regarding case outcomes. Lastly, 5

interviewees either did not discuss the suspect-victim relationship in terms of case

processing or expressed that the suspect-victim relationship did not influence

investigative processes.

Table 7. Suspect/Victim Frames (N=52)[a]

	N
The suspect/victim relationship influences case processing	**47**
The suspect/victim relationship is connected to victim credibility issues	25
Relying on the suspect/victim relationship to access victim credibility	*(7)*
Non-stranger sexual assault cases are detrimental to successful case processing	*(10)*
The suspect-victim relationship prompts false reporting	*(18)*
Investigating non-stranger sexual assaults is complex	22
The suspect/victim relationship does not influence case processing	**5**

[a] Values in parentheses are not mutually exclusive.

The suspect/victim relationship is connected to victim credibility issues. The

25 detectives in this category discussed how they considered the victim-suspect

relationship when ascertaining the credibility of the victim and making case evaluations

and processing decisions. These officers discussed the skepticism surrounding non-

stranger assault, focusing on the victim/suspect relationship in terms of (1) accessing

credibility generally (n =7), (2) non-stranger sexual assault cases being more difficult to

prosecute successfully (n = 10), and (3) motivating false reports (n=18).[7] The following

paragraphs provide examples of comments regarding the skepticism surrounding non-

stranger assault. To the first point, as mentioned above, seven detectives explicitly

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[7] Categories are not mutually exclusive.

discussed the connection between the victim/suspect relationship and evaluating victim credibility. For example, one detective said, "[the] relationship between the victim and suspect impacts the victim's credibility." Further elaborating on this point, another detective said, "The victim's credibility is shot if she states she was dating him […] sometimes victims have a good explanation as to why they would talk to someone or see them after he has supposedly raped her. The credibility is out the door." Another detective, when asked about the types of cases most likely to end in arrest and successful prosecution, immediately said, "A credible victim [… who] doesn't necessarily have a long term relationship with the accused." Along these same lines, one detective said— when asked about if/why the suspect-victim relationship affects investigations—said, "issues of credibility; which one is telling the truth, what is the underlying reason the report was made?"

Regarding the second discussion point, ten detectives discussed the difficulty of processing non-stranger cases as justification for questioning the case itself. For example, some detectives suggested the importance of suspect interviews when making case-processing decisions in non-stranger cases. According to one detective, "…[In] acquaintance rapes, I tend to obtain a statement from the suspect…A more believable statement as opposed to what the victim said, especially if [there are] holes in [the victim's] story. I look for corroboration and believability on his part." Others discussed the difficulty in assessing he said/she said cases, "People [detectives] feel it is too difficult and it becomes a he said/she said."

Finally, regarding motivations for false reporting, 18 detectives discussed how the suspect-victim relationship often prompted complainants to contact police out of revenge,

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in efforts of gaining child custody, or to cover up "lipstick on the collar" (i.e., infidelity). Stated alternatively, detectives hinted at issues of victim credibility through their accounts of false reports involving non-strangers. For example, one detective said that marital discord and couples "not getting along" often prompted false reporting. Two detectives mentioned that they "called it 'buyer's remorse.'" One elaborated, saying, "where girls who have been partying and drinking have sex with a man willingly. Is it [date rape]? In my opinion, no. [...] You are responsible for how much you drink and where you spend your time." Along similar lines, another detective said,

> You have the ones that report rape and they're with this person and they get together, hang out, go out to dinner, spend the night, but at some point they're not sure, change their minds, or the person does not call them back or something [...] there's not enough to book this guy and put this on his rap sheet when she just didn't know how to say no or changed her mind."

In terms of child custody, detectives discussed how victims "might say rape when wanting custody if [going through a divorce]." One detective discussed how s/he would "look at if there [was] a child custody issues going on," saying that these types of situations often prompt women to make false reports regarding their significant others. Another detective said, "the wife will report that the husband touched the child in her private parts or the wife will claim that her husband rapes her so that she will get custody of the kids." Three detectives gave this type of false reporter a label, the "scorned woman," making similar statements as interviewees that discussed "revenge [reports] against ex boyfriends or current boyfriends."

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Other comments regarding the suspect-victim relationship explicitly questioned

the credibility of victims reporting intimate partner rapes. According to one detective,

> "We see about 3-4 [intimate partner rapes] a year but I haven't seen a credible one
>
> in a long time. Again, it's the victim's point of view if she felt compelled to have
>
> sex with this guy every night for the last 6 years. Why haven't you done
>
> something about it or reported it. I haven't seen anything worth filing on in a long
>
> time."

Comments like the one above were not uncommon when talking about intimate partner

sexual assault, indicating that "sometimes the victim's credibility is shot if she states she

was dating him." Detectives often referred to the "inherent" lack of credibility and

suspiciousness of intimate partner sexual assault reports. Examples include: "I would

assume that jurors are suspicious because actually I am kind of suspicious about these

cases as well. If a girl wakes up with a guy having sex with her does it really make him a

rapist?;" "[There are] issues of credibility, which one is telling the truth, are there

underlying reasons why a report was made?" Overall, this frame centered on what

detectives consider to be legitimate rape and can be summed up with the following quote,

"To tell the truth, some of the guys [male sex crime detectives] are kind of cynical about

those kinds of cases [dating and intimate partner]."

Investigating non-stranger sexual assaults is complex. The remaining 22

detectives who commented on the suspect-victim relationship discussed the complexity

of the suspect-victim relationship regarding case outcomes (e.g. "spousal rapes are the

most challenging to prove;" "acquaintance rapes [are often cleared by exceptional means

because] the victim and suspect know each other and often have family ties to friends and

the neighborhood […] a lot of times they are afraid to come forward."). Unlike the 25 detectives discussed above, however, these detectives acknowledged the complexity of the suspect-victim relationship without situating their discussion into a larger context of false reporting, lying, revenge, victim blaming, or "buyer's remorse." These detectives also emphasized that "there are ways to overcome" obstacles present in these types of cases. For example, one detective acknowledged the obstacles present when working non-stranger cases but asserted, "[It] doesn't matter if he is a stranger or a relative or a husband. It is a violent crime that violates the victim."[8]

      The suspect/victim relationship does not influence case processing. Five interviewees either did not discuss the suspect-victim relationship in terms of case processing or felt that the suspect-victim relationship did not influence investigative processes, "It doesn't matter if you've known someone for 20 years and he decides to attack you. It won't change the investigation, even if it is a husband and wife." One detective in this category thought that spousal rapes (a form of non-stranger rape) were the most likely to end in arrest and successful prosecution. Echoing this opinion, another detective said, "I am usually pretty good at getting filings in domestic violence sexual assault cases."

Problematic Victim Behavior Frames

      This category alleges that cases involving some types of victims are problematic. As demonstrated above, detectives asserted explicitly that victims of non-stranger rape

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[8] It should be noted that this detective—when asked about accessing victim credibility—made broad generalization about the basic strategies used when assessing credibility including considering the suspect-victim relations. This detective, however, was not categorized in the first category because s/he also asserting that, in her experience, "It has *not* (emphasis added) been my experience that they (non-stranger assault victims) do (lie about sexual attacks).

often lie as well as assume some of the blame for the assaults committed against them.

These types of blame-the-victim attitudes are compounded by views regarding the

victim's role in relation to "risk-taking" behavior as well as attitudes toward victims

whose livelihood is connected to sex work. Of the 52 interviewees, only five detectives

refrained from discussing "risk-taking" victims and victims who engage in prostitution;

additionally, only three detectives asserted that these victim factors do not influence

decision-making or case processing. The remaining 44 interviewees fell into three

categories: (1) detectives who both blamed "risk-taking" victims and/or sex workers for

the assaults committed against them or categorized these types of victims as inherently

lacking credibility despite other case circumstances (n = 13); (2) detectives who

acknowledged that "risk-taking" victims and/or prostitutes create barriers and obstacles to

successful case processing, but did not engage in victim-blaming (n =13); and, finally, (3)

detectives who explicitly asserted that both "risk-takers" and/or prostitutes can be victims

too (n = 18). Table 8 presents the frequencies for problematic victim behavior

categorizations.

Table 8. Problematic Victim Behavior Frames (N=52)[a]

	N
"Risk-taking" victims and sex workers influence case processing	**44**
"Risk-taking" victims and sex workers are problem complainants	13
Victims who engage in alcohol or drug consumption are blameworthy	*(9)*
Sex workers lie about the assault committed against them	*(8)*
"Risk-takers" and sex workers create barriers to case processing but are not blameworthy	13
Alcohol-facilitated sexual assault is ubiquitous	*(2)*
These types of cases create investigative obstacles	*(6)*
These types of cases cause challenges at later stages of case processing	*(5)*
"Risk-takers" and sex workers are victims too	18
All victims deserve to be believed and these types of cases deserve to be fully investigated	*(5)*
It is important that detectives believe sex workers	*(8)*
It is important to believe "risk-taking" victims; incident characteristics are more important	*(5)*
"Risk-Taking" victims and sex workers do not create case processing challenges	**3**
Detective did not mention "risk-taking" victims or sex workers	**5**

[a] Values in parentheses are not always mutually exclusive.

Only three detectives asserted that "risk-taking" victims and those with a history of prostitution do not pose any challenges to cases processing of sexual assault.[9] For example, one detective said, "Whether the DA (district attorney) will take a case [involving a "risk-taking" victim] or not depends on the facts and what other evidence we have to support her statements." Another detective asserted that victim alcohol use has "no connection to charging decisions." The last detective in this group said, "Drugs and ethanol are present in the vast majority of cases and it doesn't necessarily mean it will be a help or a hindrance; it depends on the totality of the circumstances." The remaining 44 detectives acknowledged that victims with a history of prostitution and those who engage in "risk-taking" behavior pose obstacles to successful case processing. As mentioned above, within this group of 44 interviewees, three types of detective attitudes emerged. These themes are discussed next.

"Risk-taking" victims and sex workers are problem complainants. Thirteen detectives had negative attitudes toward victims who engaged in "risk-taking" behavior and/or victims with a history of prostitution. Nine of these detectives discussed "risk-taking" victims, focusing on alcohol consumption. Eight detectives discussed issues of credibility regarding sex workers. Four of the detectives found in these two groups made blaming and/or negative assertions about *both* "risk-taking" victims *and* sex workers. First, discussions surrounding alcohol use, intoxication, and "risk-taking" generally, focused on blaming victims for the assaults committed against them. Some detectives even called for limiting the use of alcohol and drugs by women to prevent sexual assaults. For example, one detective suggested,

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[9] Five detectives did not comment on "risk-taking" victims or victims who had a history of prostitution.

"Stop women from drinking. Ninety percent of our date rape cases involve

alcohol. Women who drink that find themselves in positions that make them

vulnerable, make bad decisions or are unable to battle back against a male's

advances even by just saying no. If I had a daughter I would say, 'don't drink;

don't put yourself in those situations. […]."

Another detective made parallel statements,

I strongly believe that the use of alcohol and drugs by victims put [them] in

jeopardy of being sexual assaulted. A lot of the time our victims will drink too

much to where they can't control their surroundings and make right decisions and

defend themselves. A lot of times I feel if they hadn't used the drugs or alcohol

that wouldn't have led them to become a victim because a lot of the cases I have

seen they (victims) become so drunk that they know they are being assaulted but

they really can't react.

Along the same lines, one detective said, "We see a lot of self-victimization. Girls who

go to Hollywood clubs and drink alone. Don't need to drug her, as she will drink until she

is drunk." Another detective said that, although s/he doesn't expect victims to lie to the

police that "[Victims] do (lie) because they've done something they're not supposed to

[…]." It was also common for detectives to discuss these victims in the context of false

reporting, saying that "[Victims] drink alcohol and make bad decisions and then wake up

in the morning and regret it and now it is rape." Similar to statements made by this

detective, another detective discussed a situation in the context of case processing, "If she

was just drunk and made a mistake she regretted the next day then that affects the filing."

Second, as previously stated, victims with a history of sex work were also met with negative officer attitudes. In these discussions detectives focused on how sex workers lie about the assault committed against them in efforts of remedying "business disputes." For example, one detective said, "With prostitutes there is always the potential issue of a business deal gone wrong." Echoing these beliefs, another detective said, "A prostitute who claim[s] that she was raped but we find out that he (client) did not pay her or provide her with the drugs he said he would." Overall, these comments focused on situating the complainant's report in the context of false reporting. Some detectives discussed how they run the victim's criminal record to determine if the victim had a history of prostitution, "There is a lot of prostitution (in this jurisdiction) so you want to see whether prostitution has something to do with it (the report)." The remaining four detectives made blaming and/or negative assertions about both "risk-taking" victims *and* sex workers during their interviews.

There were some detectives who did not support the attitudes above and who acknowledged the problematic nature of such beliefs and how they interfere with investigations. According to one officer, 'Patrol officers, instead of treating them like a victim, they center more on disproving her testimony. The patrol officer writes the [initial] report and often notes all her inconsistencies. We [detectives] do not try to disprove her. We just want her story." Another detective talked about a specific case that had eight pages of opinion-based remarks. The interviewee said, "The detective [working that case] thought she (the victim) was making it (the rape) up." The following sections describe the remaining interviewees including detectives who acknowledge that "risk-taking" victims and prostitutes create barriers and obstacles to successful case processing,

but did not engage in victim-blaming (n =13); and, finally, detectives who explicitly described "risk-takers" and prostitutes as victims too (n = 18).

"Risk-takers" and sex workers create obstacles for successful case processing but are not blameworthy. Thirteen detectives in this study acknowledged the challenges and complexity present in cases where the victims either engaged in "risk-taking" behavior or had a history of sex work. Unlike the 13 detectives above, however, these detectives acknowledged the complexity of these cases without situating their discussion into a larger context of victim blaming, reduced credibility, or lying and false reporting. Instead, these detectives discussed (1) the ubiquitous nature of alcohol-facilitated sexual assaults (n = 2), (2) general obstacles in investigating these types of cases (n = 6), and (3) challenges associated with district attorney and jury attitudes (n = 5), To the first point, two detectives solely commented on the widespread occurrence of alcohol- and drug-facilitated sexual assaults, making no other comments regarding case processing. For example, one detective discussed how at least half of her/his cases involved an intoxicated victim. Another said, "A lot of cases involve alcohol. Teens here love alcohol." Out of these 13 detectives, 11 discussed the case processing obstacles associated with cases involving "risk taking" victims and/or victims with a history of prostitution.

Six of these 11 detectives discussed general obstacles associated with these types of victims that "make it (the investigation) more difficult." One example includes the "he said/she said" phenomenon. One detective said, "It is a his-word against her-word situation. In so many cases [that involve intoxicated victims] it is what the male thinks about her intoxication level […] You can't prove her level of intoxication." Another

general obstacle detectives discussed was associated with victim recollection of the incident (i.e., drugs and alcohol can "cloud the memory of a victim"). For example, one detective discussed how it is difficult to successfully investigate "cases in which the victim is intoxicated […] because the victim can blackout". Similar to these assertions, another detective said "cases where a young woman goes to a night club, gets drunk, doesn't know who he is, maybe he's a friend she went to the nightclub with, wakes up the next morning and cannot remember what happened" are often cleared by exceptional means.[10]

Five detectives (out of 11) in this category primarily highlighted the obstacles present at later stages of case processing, as opposed to the six detectives above who discussed challenges associated with investigating cases involving "risk-taking" victims and victims with a history of sex work. Four detectives said that these types of cases do not get filed by the district attorney. For example, one detective said, "A lot of my rapes in this division don't get filed. […] Victim is often involved in prostitution or drugs; […] we have a DA (district attorney) who as soon as he hears 'alcohol' he is quick to reject it." Another detective made similar comments, "The more drugs and alcohol are inserted into a case, the less likelihood of a prosecution /[less likely] of DA (district) attorney to file because now we have to prove the suspect knew the victim was incapacitated because of alcohol or drugs and that is difficult to prove." One detective provided insight into why district attorneys sometimes reject cases involving "risk-taking" victims and prostitutes, "it can impact their credibility, and the DA (district attorney) will reject it." Finally, the last detective to discuss challenges present at later stages of case processing commented

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[10] It should be noted that this is an example of a misuse of the exceptional clearance if there was not probable cause to make an arrest.

on jury perceptions, "With illegal drugs it is always unfavorable and plays into victim credibility when it comes to the jury."

"Risk-takers" and prostitutes are victims too. Eighteen detectives explicitly asserted that "risk-takers" and prostitutes can be victims too. These detective attitudes can be viewed as opposite to the first group of detectives who outright blamed "risk-taking" victims and sex workers for the assault committed against them. These detectives differ from the second group because, instead of merely acknowledging the case processing challenges present in these types of cases, they explicitly assert that "risk-takers" and sex workers can be victims too. These accounts centered on believability, trust, and the rejection of rape myths. As one detective put it, "There was a day that you were told you were asking for it, but that is not the case today." The topics of these comments varied, with some detectives discussing the need to believe and fully investigate all cases regardless of victim characteristics (n = 5) and other detectives focusing specifically on the importance of believing sex workers (n = 8) or the importance of believing victims who engaged in "risk-taking" behavior (n = 5).

To the first point, five detectives made general statements about the importance of believing all victim allegations regardless of victim behavior, focusing their discussion on the importance of adequately investigating all cases regardless of victim characteristics. Although these detectives did not explicitly mention "risk-takers" or sex workers, they made general comments about believing *all types* of victims. Detectives in this group made the following assertions: "A rape is a rape, regardless of what the victim was doing at the time" and "It doesn't mean you're not a victim because you made a dumb decision." These detectives also implicitly acknowledged the rape myths surrounding

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these types of victims (e.g. "God forbid you are young and in college and drinking, you are fair game.") as well as their unfortunate experiences with the criminal justice system. One detective said, "[Some] victims are not investigated with the same level of professionalism and integrity as they would if you (the interviewer) were [a reporting victim]."

Eight detectives solely discussed the importance of believing victims with a history of prostitution. Unlike the five detectives above, whose conversations were grounded in assertions about the importance of doing good investigative work, these detectives discussed the need to believe prostitutes. These detectives emphasized that a victim's personal history does not affect whether she can or cannot be a victim of sexual assault. Additionally, credibility was a topic of discussion regarding these cases. However, unlike the detectives who blamed victims with a history of sex work, these detectives emphasized that credibility is based on more than a victim's occupation. One detective said, "Does not mean that they weren't raped. Just because she had engaged in prostitution in the past does not mean she isn't credible." Another detective said, "If I have a prostitute, does not mean that she was not a victim. Credibility is assessed based on whether she is lying to me, not based on what she does for a living." These detectives also asserted that they believed the allegations made by victims with a history of sex work, "We have a lot of victims who are prostitutes and do I believe them? Yes. I do." Surprisingly, one detective even described victims with a history of sex work as "righteous victims."

Five detectives specifically discussed the importance of believing victims who engaged in "risk-taking" behavior, specifically drug and alcohol use. Like the detectives

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who made general comments about believing all types of victims, these discussions focused on the importance of information gathering and good investigative work as opposed to the behavior of the victim. For example, one detective said, "Who cares if she was using drugs, committing a crime, etcetera? We just need to know the truth. That way we can work around that and [work to] get charges filed." Two other detectives highlighted the importance of other case factors including "physical evidence" and the fact that alcohol use can sometimes enhance a victim's credibility, acknowledging that consent cannot be granted by an intoxicated individual. Overall, these detectives expressed that victims who engaged in "risk-taking" behavior in the form of alcohol or drug consumption deserve the same type of criminal justice system response as all victims. One detective said, "I don't care how drunk you are, if you do drugs…I do not care if you take off your clothes! No one deserves to be [assaulted]."

Teen-Related Frames

Detectives in this frame discussed the motivations behind false allegations of sexual assault made by teenagers. Interviewees often described teenagers as the "typical" or "common" false reporter, even going as far as saying, "If we profiled those who make a false report they would be young females" because "most [false reports] involve teens." Out of 52 interviewees, 38 detectives mentioned that teenagers lie about sexual assault. Out of these 38 interviews, the majority (n = 35) of detectives framed teenagers as means-serving false reporters (see Table 9). Stated alternatively, detectives asserted that teenagers made false allegations of sexual assault in an effort to acquire some selfish outcome. The remaining detectives stated that although teenagers lie about occurrences of

sexual assault, they do so for good reasons (n = 3). Fourteen detectives did not discuss teenagers in their interviews. The following sections detail teen-based frames.

Teenagers lie about sexual assault for self-serving reasons. As mentioned above, most (n = 35) detectives in this sample framed teenagers as false reporters. Within this group of detectives, interviewees asserted that teenagers lie about sexual assault for five primary reasons. These motivations include (1) excusing age-inappropriate behavior such as consuming alcohol, missing curfew, or having consensual sex (n = 30); (2) efforts to gain attention from parents (n = 3); (3) seeking revenge (n = 2); (4) their general runaway status (n =4); and (5) help-seeking (n = 1). One detective in this group made general statements about teenagers lying about sexual assault without providing explanations of motivations.[11]

Table 9. Teen-Related Frames (N=52)[a]

	N
Teens lie about sexual assault	**38**
Teens lie about sexual assault for self-serving reasons	35
Teens lie to excuse age-inappropriate behavior	*(30)*
Teens lie to gain attention from their parents	*(3)*
Teens lie as a mechanism for revenge	*(2)*
Teens lie because they are runaways	*(4)*
Teens lie because they are seeking help	*(1)*
Teenagers lie about sexual assault for good reasons	3
Detective did not mention teenagers	**14**

[a] Values in parentheses are not always mutually exclusive.

The majority of detectives who described teenagers as the typical false reporters of sexual assault discussed the various situations that motivated lying. These accounts overwhelmingly highlighted the reasons teenagers sought law enforcement assistance in efforts of excusing age-inappropriate behavior (n = 30). Overall, these teenagers were said to "lie to get out of trouble." Thirty detectives discussed that the typical false

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[11] These categories are not mutually exclusive.

allegation of sexual assault included teenagers who were afraid of getting in trouble for ditching school, attending parties where they engaged in alcohol or drug consumption, engaging in consensual sex, or not making curfew. In this group, detectives viewed teenagers as those "who have fabricated stories as an alibi to cover up some indiscretion on their part." When asked about false allegations, detectives provided examples, "the one that we get most is young teenagers who don't make curfew or have done something that they know their parents would not approve of [like] ditching school and using drugs and had consensual sex;" "usually they do not want their parents to know they are having sex;" "she said she was kidnapped and raped—turned out that she ditched school, went to a party and was drinking or smoking weed, and made it up to explain her absence;" and "a lot of girls coming in ditch school, hang out with boyfriend, get in trouble for being late, but say they were raped because they do not want to get in trouble." These examples demonstrate that detectives made assertions about teenagers and false reporting based on prior experiences, often drawing on previous case assignments. Although basing interactions on prior experiences is not inherently problematic, it became clear that prior experiences sometimes resulted in accusatorial views of teenage complainants. For example, one detective said:

> If [I get a case involving a] teenager, I talk to their parents first. Is she attending [school]? How are her grades? If they (parents) give a good report then it is usually an issue of a new boyfriend. If they are cutting school and smoking weed then I'll put them in a different category."

The second type of lying teenager that detectives described were those that fabricated sexual assault in an attempt to gain attention from parents. In this sample, three

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detectives described scenarios where teenage complainants lied about sexual victimization as a means of gaining attention from parents. For example—when asked about motivations behind false reporting and how detectives know that a report is false—these detectives said, "To gain attention, especially with younger victims;" and "One example, she alleged she was kidnapped and raped and said the reason she fabricated was because her parents are divorcing and no longer speak and she wanted them to speak and she said it worked because now they are speaking." One detective in this category discussed the techniques s/he used to encourage a "lying" teenager to tell the truth,

> Sheer attention. I have had victims who just like the attention that they are getting. If I figure that [lying] is what is going on, I will put the fear of god into that room to have them tell me the truth. I have a high caseload and it makes me furious if someone takes my time away from legitimate victims. I will call them on that. We don't arrest them but I do threaten them with the bill. If I find out that you are lying, from this moment forward your parents will get a bill from the city for the time I have spent on the case, for the […] arrest, for all the other resources that were wasted on this case. That is when the truth will come out."

Two detectives discussed revenge-based false reporting motivations when discussing teenage complainants. One detective simply said, "revenge," when asked about false reporting. The other said, "Older daughters and stepdads where the girls don't like their stepfathers and want them out of the home. Revenge and anger are motivating factors."

Four detectives mentioned runaway teens when asked about false reporting. Two detectives did not elaborate further, refraining from providing an example or explanation. The remaining two detectives said,

> I had one with a chronic runaway who reported that she was picked up on the street, at knifepoint, taken to an alley, and raped. The suspect walked her to his place, kept her there overnight, raped her repeatedly, threatened her, and the next morning let her go […] I could arrest him for rape because I have the crime report, but am I? Nothing corroborated her story, said she was hit, choked, etcetera; nothing supported this in the SART (sexual assault response team exam).

> Younger girl from the valley who reported that she was somewhere downtown walking on the street with a friend. Woke up and they were both tied to the beds naked and a couple guys raped them. [Then, the suspects] covered their heads, put them in a white van, dropped them off on the freeway. When we talked to the victim she insisted that something happened. Presented the inconsistencies in testimony to the victim and eventually she admitted that she ran away from home and made it up.

Lastly, one detective discussed help-seeking as a motivation behind teenage false reporting. This detective said, "One of the common problems I have with juveniles, they are out beyond curfew and have to justify if they have sex with a boyfriend and want medical treatment because they fear they are pregnant."

Teenagers lie about sexual assault for good reasons. Whereas the detectives described above discussed teenagers in the context of self-serving false reporting—often

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including accusatory views of these types of complainants—three detectives acknowledged that teenagers lie, but for good reasons. These accounts focused on the complexity of motivations for false allegations, highlighting situations where teenagers lied about sexual assault incidents to evade physical abuse, due to unstable mental health statuses, or to cover-up an incident inflicted by a family member. Regarding the first example, one detective referenced a case where a complainant "came up with a story of a stranger to protect her boyfriend (who had been physically abusing her)." This detective also acknowledged that false reports are rare, stating, "Very rare to have a false report." This detective estimated that one in one hundred complaints are false.[12] Regarding a potential false report involving a complainant described as mentally "unstable," one detective described how it is "difficult to determine whether someone is telling the truth […] and] if it turns out she didn't tell the truth I know I investigated it on my part." Lastly, one detective discussed a case where a complainant lied about a stranger sexual assault at the request of her mother. The complainant in this case was actually raped at knifepoint by her brother.

Conclusion

To summarize, indicators of "real rape" and complainant "character flaws" were key explanatory factors in the likelihood that an officer would question a complainant's credibility. Additionally, secondary analyses revealed that two risk-taking variables influence the decision to question a complainant's credibility when entered into the model individually.

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[12] Spohn, White, & Tellis (2014) estimate that the rate of false reports among rapes reported to the LAPD in 2008 are somewhere between 4-5%.

Regarding the qualitative results, 47 detectives discussed the importance of the suspect-victim relationship regarding case processing. Out of these 47, more than half highlighted the connection between the suspect-victim relationship and victim credibility issues. These accounts communicated messages that stranger rape is real rape and that victims of non-stranger rape lie. Twenty five detectives discussed how they considered the victim-suspect relationship when ascertaining the credibility of the victim and making case evaluations and processing decisions. These officers discussed the skepticism surrounding non-stranger assault, focusing on the victim/suspect relationship in terms of (1) accessing credibility generally, (2) being detrimental to successful case processing, and (3) motivating false reports.

Regarding problematic victim behavior, only five detectives refrained from discussing "risk-taking" victims and victims who engage in prostitution. Additionally, only three detectives asserted that these victim factors do not influence decision-making or case processing. The remaining 44 interviewees fell into three categories: (1) detectives who blamed "risk-taking" victims and/or sex workers for the assaults committed against them or categorized these types of victims as inherently lacking credibility despite other case circumstances; (2) detectives who acknowledge that "risk-taking" victims and/or prostitutes create barriers and obstacles to successful case processing but are not blameworthy; and, finally, (3) detectives who explicitly asserted that both "risk-takers" and/or prostitutes can be victims too.

Finally, the majority (n = 35) of detectives framed teenagers as means-serving false reporters. Stated alternatively, detectives discussed that teenagers made false allegations of sexual assault in efforts of acquiring some selfish outcome. The remaining

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detectives either discussed how teenagers lie about occurrences of sexual assault for good

reasons or did not discuss teenagers in their interviews.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

Despite progress in understanding the criminal justice response to and case processing of sexual assaults, additional work is needed to better understand officer attitudes towards victims of sexual assault. We have limited and dated knowledge on police officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Field, 1978; Galton, 1975; Hazelwood & Burgess, 1995; LaFree, 1989; c.f. Page, 2007, 2008, 2010; Sleath & Bull, 2015). There is relatively little current research focusing explicitly on the attitudes of the police toward sexual assault victims *and* how these beliefs are shaped by day-to-day experiences. The present dissertation addresses issues related to these goals and contributes to the literature in important ways. This dissertation furthers our understanding of police perceptions of sexual assault complainants by quantitatively assessing their likelihood of questioning a complainant's credibility and by examining police attitudes toward victims of sexual assault using qualitative data taken from semi-structured in-depth interviews of sex crimes detectives. It expands upon prior research by drawing on a sample of officers from one of the largest metropolitan police departments in the United States. Additionally, the current study, through the use of framing theory, contributes to the current body of literature by focusing explicitly on the attitudes of police toward sexual assault complainants and how these beliefs are shaped by day-to-day experiences.

This dissertation set out to investigate two related research questions. First, I quantitatively examined the factors that influence officer perceptions of complainant credibility, focusing on indicators of "real rape," "genuine" victims, "inappropriate"

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victim behavior, and "character flaws," while controlling for measures of evidentiary strength as well as victim, suspect, and agency characteristics. Second, I set out to contextualize this work by examining police attitudes toward victims of sexual assault using qualitative data taken from semi-structured in-depth interviews of sex crimes detectives. This research contributes to the broader case processing literature by focusing on victim credibility, a factor that research has long highlighted as important in influencing case processing decisions such as arrest and filing charges. Additionally, this study furthers our understanding of police perceptions of sexual assault complainants by assessing their likelihood of questioning a complainant's credibility. It expands upon prior research by drawing on a sample of officers from one of the largest metropolitan police departments in the United States. Moreover, this study contributes to research on the frames officers assign to women who report sexual assault. These data are well-suited to examine salient dimensions of officer attitudes.

In the following chapter, I discuss key findings from the current dissertation as well as theoretical and empirical contributions. Then, I describe the limitations of this study, directions for future research, and implications of these findings for law enforcement practice. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the broader key conclusions from this research regarding the police treatment of sexual assault and what it means for the victims who report.

Complainant Credibility: Key Findings

Research indicates that police officers are highly suspicious of sexual assault allegations, citing concerns over proving consent as well as *victim credibility* (Lord & Rassel, 2000). As current results confirmed, indicators of "real rape" and complainant

"character flaws" were key explanatory factors in the likelihood that an officer would question a complainant's credibility. Additionally, secondary analyses revealed that two risk-taking variables influence the decision to question a complainant's credibility when entered into the model asynchronously. Below I provide a brief overview of findings and discuss possible explanations for these findings, drawing upon theoretical and empirical work.

Complainant credibility and real rape. Primary analyses suggested that two indicators of "real rape" influenced the likelihood that an officer would question a complainant's credibility. Officers were less likely to question a complainant's credibility if the suspect physically assaulted the complainant at the time of the sexual attack. In addition, results indicate that officers were more likely to question the credibility of complainants in cases where the suspect used, displayed, or threatened a weapon. Given the unanticipated direction of the weapon finding, additional analyses were conducted, revealing that officers were more likely to question credibility when complainants reported suspect use of a nontraditional weapon (e.g., broom handle, box cutter, etc.).

These findings suggest that credibility perceptions are predicted by the same factors that shape police case processing decisions. Case processing research consistently finds that factors associated with aggravated rape—for example, suspect weapon use and whether the suspect used physical force—influence the police decision to arrest a suspect and the police decision to unfound a case (Kerstetter, 1990; Lafree, 1989; O'Neal & Spohn, forthcoming; see Alderden & Ullman, 2012b for recent review). In a recent study of arrest decisions in intimate partner sexual assault cases, O'Neal and Spohn (forthcoming) found that suspects were four times more likely to be arrested if they

physically assaulted the victim at the time of the incident. These findings offer insight into the current dissertation findings regarding the police decision to question a complainant's credibility. Overall, the fact that credibility perceptions are predicted by the same aggravated circumstances that influence police case processing decisions suggests that law enforcement behavior preserves traditional stereotypes of sexual assault. Specific to the current dissertation's findings, victims who experience an assault involving a physical attack receive more legal response; with these types of cases, law enforcement officers refrain from questioning the complainant's credibility.

The stereotypical definition of "real rape" has historically involved the use of a weapon (Ali, 2012). Common societal beliefs about the nature of rape often includes the misconception that most (if not all) assailants use weapons when sexually attacking victims. The fact that these myths are widely held by the general public influences how criminal justice personnel proceed with rape allegations (Gerger, Kley, Bohner, & Siebler, 2007; Stewart, Dobbin, & Gatowski, 1996). Like the effect of suspect physical attack on police case processing decisions, research has long highlighted the salience of suspect weapon use regarding police decision making (Kerstetter, 1990; O'Neal & Spohn, forthcoming; Lafree, 1989). These findings may be attributed to widespread societal beliefs surrounding forcible rape—also known as "real rape"—involving incident factors such as stranger assailants, weapon use, and dark alleys (Caringella-MacDonald, 1998; Estrich, 1987). These widespread beliefs are produced and reproduced through popular culture including television, movies, and literature. These representations send consumers (including the police) messages regarding what a sexual assault victim, suspect, and incident "should" look like (what Frohman [1991] referred to as

"typifications of rape"). Overall, officer decision making is vulnerable to the same biases that characterize general information processing, such as the propensity to concentrate on information that is consistent with pre-existing beliefs (McEwan, 2003), such as those learned from media sources. Given the contradictory results presented in Chapter 4—that officers are more likely to question the complainant's credibility in cases involving a weapon—additional analyses were estimated in an effort to clarify and better understand this finding. This analysis indicated that officers questioned the credibility of victims who reported suspect use of a nontraditional weapon. These findings provide a more nuanced understanding of officer perceptions of victim credibility; officers question the credibility of victims who report weapon characteristics that do not mirror common conceptions of weapon use in sexual assault (e.g., gun, knife). Rose and Randall (1982), in their study of investigator perceptions of victim legitimacy and case outcomes, noted that complainant reporting of a "serious" weapon (e.g., gun or knife, as opposed to a stick) in the offense incident report often outweighed other serious complainant "deficiencies." Thus, finding from this dissertation suggest that non-traditional weapons may be viewed as less serious and, therefore, contribute to perceptions of complainant "deficiencies" such as decreased credibility—instead of being viewed as a case severity indicator.

Complainant credibility, "character flaws," and risk-taking Certain victim characteristics are considered "red flags" regarding whether or not an officer will perceive a complaint to be false (Jordan, 2004). Research suggests that these "red flags" often include victim-related characteristics such as delayed reporting and inconsistent statements (Jordan, 2004). Because these "red flags" are intrinsically tied to victim

credibility, it is no surprise that variables measuring "character flaws" had a significant effect on credibility assessments. *All* variables measuring "character" or reputation issues had a significant effect on credibility assessments. The primary analysis indicated that whether the complainant had reputation issues, suffered mental health issues, provided inconsistent testimony when interviewed, or had a motive to lie all increased the likelihood that an officer would question the complainant's credibility. Regarding risk-taking, secondary analyses indicated that whether the complainant went to the suspect's residence or was using drugs immediately before or during the incident increased the likelihood that the officer would question her credibility.

Like findings regarding real rape, findings surrounding "character flaws" suggest that credibility perceptions are predicted by the same factors that shape police case processing. Case processing research consistently finds that factors associated with the character or reputation of the victim influence police decision making (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Lafree). This extant research offers insight into the current dissertation findings regarding the police decision to question a complainant's credibility. Overall, the fact that credibility perceptions are predicted by the same character circumstances that influence police case processing decisions indicates that law enforcement behavior preserves traditional stereotypes of sexual assault. Specific to the current dissertation's findings, it is evident that societal rape myths have permeated law enforcement agencies. This research reveals that police will question the credibility of a victim based on character and reputation assessments, which are often legally irrelevant to the case processing of sexual assault (i.e. extralegal factors; Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Lafree,

1981). Thus, character issues may influence outcomes directly, as well as indirectly through their effect on assessments of credibility (which influence case outcomes).

Additional analyses also shed important light on the complainant credibility assessments of law enforcement officers. First, whether the complainant went to the suspect's residence before the incident increased the likelihood that the officer would question the complainant's credibility. This finding suggests support for the common rape myth that real rape only involves incidents committed by a stranger. Despite findings indicating that women are much more likely to be victimized by a friend, coworker, intimate partner, or acquaintance when compared to strangers (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymore, 1992; U.S. Department of Justice [USDOJ], 2005), a majority of individuals believe that most sexual assaults occur between strangers. Research indicates that individuals are uninformed about the pervasiveness of acquaintance rape and are more likely to hold victims responsible for rape when assaulted by non-strangers (Bridges & McGrail, 1989; Johnson, Kuck, & Schander, 1997; L'Armand & Pepitone, 1982). The fact that these myths are widely held by the general public influences how criminal justice personnel, including police, handle rape allegations (Gerger, et al., 2007; Stewart, Dobbin, & Gatowski, 1996).

Second, whether the complainant used drugs immediately before or during the incident increased the likelihood that an officer would question the complainant's credibility. Like some of the findings discussed above, findings regarding victim drug consumption suggest that credibility perceptions are predicted by factors similar to those that shape police case processing decisions. Case processing research consistently finds that factors associated with victim substance use, primarily alcohol, influence decision

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making by legal actors (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Chandler & Torney, 1981; Kerstetter, 1990; Spohn & Spears, 1996). For example, one study asked police officers to evaluate vignettes in which the beverage consumption (beer or cola) of the victim and suspect was systematically varied (Schuller & Stewart 2000). The authors of this study found that whereas officers' perceptions of the suspect's level of intoxication had no effect on their evaluation of the suspect's blame or guilt, perceptions of the victim's intoxication did affect their assessment of the case. Overall, the current dissertation contributes to the conversations regarding complainant substance use and police decision making. Whereas most previous studies have found that victim *alcohol* use influences police decision making, this dissertation sheds light on another substance-related victim characteristic that shapes the police decision to question a complainant's credibility.

Rape myths surrounding victim substance use communicate that women who engage in alcohol or drug-related flirting deserve to be raped. Overall rape myths or rape typifications are the widely held views about the causes, consequences, perpetrators, and victims of sexual assault that are used to justify sexual violence against women and girls (Frohmann, 1991; Gerger, Kley, Bohner & Siebler 2007). As mentioned above, the fact that these myths are widely held by the general public influences how criminal justice personnel proceed with rape allegations (Gerger, Kley, Bohner, & Siebler, 2007; Stewart, Dobbin, & Gatowski, 1996). In this dissertation, the police were more likely to question a complainant's credibility if she was engaging in drug use. This finding suggests support for the common rape myth that women who engage in alcohol or drug-related flirting deserve to be raped (for a discussion of common rape myths, see: Cuklanz, 2000; Johnson, Kuck, & Schander, 1997; Scully, 1990).

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Detective Framing of Sexual Assault Victims: Key Findings

Law enforcement officers operate in a victim-blaming society that holds some victims responsible for the assaults committed against them (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Koss, 1993; Orcutt & Faison, 1988). This social milieu may contribute to problematic criminal justice responses through a negative "framing" of rape victims. Overall, framing is the mechanism by which people draw from their set of attitudes and beliefs—also known as an "individual's frame [of] thought"—to evaluate their surroundings (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 105). Despite the importance of investigating police officer attitudes towards rape victims, few studies have examined the topic using framing theory (c.f., Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995). More than 20 years ago, Martin and Powell (1994)—in their study of legal organizations' framing of rape victims—called for more research investigating criminal justice organizations and the response to victims. And, although framing theory is a theoretically appropriate perspective for research on police officer attitudes, few studies have situated this topic in this framework. Existing studies have primarily focused on applying the theory of framing to the study of other social phenomena (Drake & Donohue, 1996; Callaghan & Schenn, 2005; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Druckman, 2002; Steglich, 2003). The application of framing theory to the context of law enforcement organizations remains underdeveloped (cf. Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995). The current dissertation sought to address this important empirical topic. Below I provide a brief overview of key findings and discuss possible explanations for these findings, drawing upon theoretical and empirical work.

This dissertation identified three broad sexual assault victim frames. These frames include depictions of victims as they relate to: (a) the suspect/victim relationship, (b)

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problematic victim behavior (e.g, victim "risk-taking" and sex work), and (c) age (i.e.

being a teenage complainant). Overall, these three frames have one major theme in

common: certain types of victims are viewed as problematic. It is evident that societal

rape myths have permeated law enforcement agencies, as research reveals that police

decision making reflects irrelevant and rape-myth-based characteristics such as victim

risk-taking behavior, the relationship between the victim and suspect, and the character or

reputation of the victim. Findings here parallel sexual assault case processing research

and are partially consistent with the assertion that officers will interpret and reconstruct

reality based on day-to-day experiences and personal interactions with society (Littlejohn

& Foss, 2009) and that officer attitudes will be influenced by widely held public views

when proceeding with rape allegations (Gerger, et al., 2007).

Regarding detective attitudes toward stranger rape and non-stranger rape, the vast

majority of detectives (n = 47) acknowledged the importance of the suspect/victim

relationship, with 25 of these detectives highlighting the connection between the

suspect/victim relationship and victim credibility issues. Conversations regarding the

connection between the suspect-victim relationship and credibility issues parallel beliefs

regarding rape myths surrounding the suspect-victim relationship. Rape is a crime that

commonly occurs between acquainted individuals (Herman, 1988). As previously stated,

research findings have overwhelmingly found that women are much more likely to be

victimized by a non-stranger (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymore, 1992; U.S. Department

of Justice [USDOJ], 2005). In fact, two national studies found that approximately three-

fourths of women and girls who were raped were assaulted by someone they knew

(Kilpatrick, et al., 1992; USDOJ, 2005). Despite these findings, a majority of individuals believe that most sexual assaults occur between strangers.

The second set of frames highlight attitudes toward victims who engage in problematic behavior such as "risk-taking" behavior and those with a history of prostitution. In this sample of 52 interviewees, only five detectives refrained from discussing "risk-taking" victims and victims who engage in prostitution. Additionally, only three detectives asserted that these victim factors do not influence decision-making or case processing. This finding supports case processing research that finds a link between "risk-taking" behavior and sexual assault case outcomes. For example, LaFree (1981)—a seminal sexual assault case processing study—found that suspects were less likely to be arrested if the victim engaged in "credibility-damaging" behavior, such as delayed-reporting, or "risk-taking" behavior, such as being at a bar alone. The findings of this dissertation help inform the connection between "risk-taking" and case outcomes, shedding important light on officer attitudes toward these types of victims. Overall, it is likely that detectives who made negative statements about "risk-taking" victims and sex workers subscribe to rape myths that assert that some victims of rape are not real victims. This rape myth is rooted in beliefs surrounding victim culpability—or the idea that some rape victims are somehow responsible for their own sexual victimization (Belknap, 2007). Societal attitudes surrounding sexual assault victim responsibility include: (1) the beliefs that alcohol consumption and intoxication cause rape (Belknap, 2007), (2) that women's appearances (i.e. clothing and demeanor) somehow provoke rape (Carmody & Washington, 2001; Walklate, 2008; Workman & Orr, 1996), and (3) that victims who engage in "risk-taking" behavior were "asking to be raped."

The third set of frames includes attitudes toward teenage complainants, focusing on false reporting. In this sample, 38 detectives framed teenagers as lying complainants, with 35 detectives portraying teens as means-serving false reporters and three detectives asserting that teens lie for good reasons. This finding supports the connection between hostile sexism, an accusatorial view of gender relations, and rape myth acceptance. In these cases involving teenagers, complainants are perceived to be control-seeking through the use of false reporting—whether the report is actually false or not (see Glick & Fisk, 2001).The inherent suspicious attitudes of law enforcement officers toward teenage rape victims may be a result of the officer role, which requires close examination of "facts" and the identification of the "truth" (Alderden & Ullman, 2012, p. 6). This idea is in line with contemporary frame analysis, which defines organizational frames as interpretive schemas that actors use to deal with various situations (Goffman, 1974). Because situations and interactions are often complicated and require an individual to draw from a variety of perspectives, frames offer individuals a shortcut by focusing attention on factors that the individual reasons to be the most important to the situation. In this case, the teenager status of the victim may be viewed as the most salient factor.

Recently, O'Neal, Spohn, Tellis, and White (2014) investigated the motivations for false allegations of sexual assault using detailed qualitative data on 55 sexual assault cases that were reported to the Los Angeles Police Department in 2008 and that were subsequently unfounded. Their results revealed that motivations for false allegations fell into five overlapping categories: avoiding trouble/providing an alibi, anger or revenge, attention seeking, mental illness, and guilt/remorse. Salient to the current discussion regarding teenagers, O'Neal and colleagues (2014) found that one false allegation

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motivation, labeled "avoiding trouble/alibi," involved either (1) young girls who

fabricated a sexual assault to avoid the consequences of missing curfew, drinking or

using drugs, or engaging in consensual sex, or (2) older teens and adult women who

made up a sexual assault to cover up consensual sexual activity with someone other than

a current partner. It must be noted, however, that these cases were often far more

complex. Complainants described dysfunctional relationships with their parents as well

as abusive intimate relationships. It is possible that LAPD police frame most teenagers as

false reporters because they have experience with such cases, despite estimates that the

rate of false reports among rapes reported to the LAPD in 2008 are somewhere between

4-5% (Spohn et al., 2014). It is possible that these teenager-related frames are so deeply

embedded in the organizational context that even those who initially disagree with the

organizational frame eventually internalize such beliefs because conformity in the

workplace is expected (Scott & Lyman, 1968).

Theoretical Contributions

A salient theoretical contribution of this research is its focus on officer attitudes

generally. Specifically, this dissertation research makes several key theoretical

contributions to three broad bodies of literature: law enforcement decision making, law

enforcement perceptions of sexual assault victims, and framing theory. Moreover, this

dissertation demonstrates an attempt to situate officer attitudes within larger

organizational and social contexts. In the paragraphs that follow, I situate key theoretical

contributions in the bodies of literature previously identified.

The first major theoretical contribution of this dissertation is its focus on a

decision stage prior to arrest—the decision to question a complainant's credibility. This

focus is particularly compelling because victim credibility has been found to shape arrest decisions, an important case processing stage. Law enforcement decision making research has consistently highlighted the importance of victim credibility in predicting case outcomes (Alderden & Ullman, 2012; Biechner & Spohn, 2005; Jordan, 2004; Kerstetter, 1990; Lafree, 1981; Leivore, 2004; O'Neal, Tellis, & Spohn, 2015; Spohn & Tellis, 2008). Despite the salience of victim credibility in determining case outcomes, few studies have investigated the factors that influence officer perceptions of victim credibility. My empirical test of the factors shaping the police decision to question a complainant's credibility advances the theoretical understanding of officer decision making in several key respects. First, by identifying the factors associated with questioning a complainant's credibility, this research was able to provide valuable information about a decision stage prior to arrest that also has been found to shape arrest decisions. Moreover, most researchers examine arrest when quantifying police discretion (Schulenberg, 2015), making information gleaned from this dissertation even more salient to the police decision making literature. Second, this dissertation provides information about how beliefs surrounding "real rape," and complainant "character flaws," enter the police decision-making process. Indeed, it appears that rape myths facilitate the formation of beliefs regarding complainant credibility and that the social acceptance of rape myths is one critical issue in understanding the police treatment of sexual assault cases.

A second major theoretical contribution of this research includes information regarding law enforcement perceptions of sexual assault victims. This dissertation situates police attitudes and treatment of sexual assault victims within larger societal

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beliefs surrounding this crime. After all, Williams (1984) has proposed that responses to sexual assault victims are "capricious products of public attitudes" (p. 68). Findings from this dissertation regarding attitudes toward complainants and victims suggest that rape myths have permeated law enforcement agencies, shaping officer-victim encounters. Overall, this dissertation highlights an important reality about the consequences regarding operating in a victim-blaming society that holds victims responsible for the assaults committed against them (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Koss, 1993; Orcutt & Faison, 1988). It appears that this social milieu contributes to problematic criminal justice responses through negative attitudes and negative "framings" of rape victims.

A third major theoretical contribution of this dissertation is its application of framing theory to officers' attitudes toward sexual assault victims. This dissertation situates police work within the larger "rape culture," focusing on rape myth acceptance and victim blaming and their role in shaping the police treatment of sexual assault cases. Prior studies have formed the foundation for research on police officer attitudes towards rape victims (Campbell, 2006; Campbell, & Johsnon, 1997; Campbell, Wasco, Ahrens, Sefl, & Barnes, 2001; Jordan, 2004; Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995; Williams, 1984). Questions remained, however, regarding how officer attitudes vary within the same organizational context. Despite the salience of the police subculture in shaping officer views, there is reason to believe that attitudes may vary within the same organization. Police scholars have questioned the extent to which the police subculture is monolithic, and some have proposed the existence of numerous attitudinal subgroups within the culture (Terrill, Paoline & Manning, 2003; Paoline, 2003; 2004; Crank, 2010). Women, racial minorities, sexual minorities, and college-educated individuals bring

different viewpoints—based on past experiences—to the police subculture, resulting in different interpretations of their work and the world around them (Paoline, et al., 2000; also see Galvin-White & O'Neal, 2015). Framing is a useful tool for the analysis of officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims. However, the application of framing theory to police officer attitudes toward sexual assault victims is seriously limited; only three studies exist—including this dissertation—that apply this theoretical framework to understanding official attitudes toward rape processing work (i.e., Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1995).

This dissertation partially supports prior research that suggests that police responses to sexual assault victims are shaped by widespread societal victim-blaming views and stereotypical judgments and perceptions (Campbell, & Johnson, 1997; Jordan, 2004). In terms of rape myth-related frames, officers discussed the skepticism surrounding non-stranger assault, focusing on the victim/suspect relationship in terms of accessing credibility generally, being detrimental to successful case processing, and motivating false reports. Additionally, only five detectives refrained from discussing "risk-taking" victims and victims who engage in prostitution. However, whereas some detectives blamed both "risk-taking" victims and/or sex workers for the assaults committed against them or categorized these types of victims as inherently lacking credibility despite other case circumstances, other detectives explicitly asserted that both "risk-takers" and/or prostitutes can be victims too. These findings support scholars who question the extent to which the police subculture is monolithic and the existence of numerous attitudinal subgroups within the culture (Terrill, Paoline & Manning, 2003; Paoline, 2003; 2004; Crank, 2010). Lastly, the majority of detectives framed teenagers as

means-serving false reporters. Stated alternatively, detectives discussed that teenagers made false allegations of sexual assault in efforts of acquiring some selfish outcome.

Fourth, this dissertation offers insight into how individual officers interacting with peers in an organizational context built on the dominant ideologies of a patriarchal society may adopt similar beliefs and attitudes regarding sexual assault complainants. The social ecological model highlights the broad range of factors that contribute to violence against women (Dasgupta, 2002; Dutton, 2006) and this type of approach is flexible and is easily modified to fit various research needs (Brownridge, 2009; Heise, 1998). Overall, this dissertation approach is likely to sustain policy change efforts because the model addresses the overlapping and interplaying factors—between society, community, relationships, and the individual—that influence beliefs.

Fifth, findings not only raise questions regarding the extent to which the police subculture is monolithic, this dissertation raises questions about the impact of working for a bureau that has a dedicated sex crimes unit. Results from this dissertation indicate that officers working in the Central, South, and Valley bureaus were all less likely to question the credibility of complainants when compared to the West bureau. This finding is unanticipated, as West bureau serves a more affluent area with a concentration of high annual income households and because West is the only district to have a dedicated sex crimes unit. This organization-level variable was included in the study to help determine if having a dedicated sex crimes unit would decrease the officer's likelihood of questioning a victim's credibility (due to increased training). There are three possible explanations for this finding. First, regarding having a dedicated sex crimes unit, everyday work-related factors may undermine the existence of the unit. Therefore,

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everyday activities may influence the police response to sexual assault complainants more than the simple existence of a sex crimes unit. Lipsky's (1976, 1980) work on "street-level bureaucracy" demonstrates how lower-level public service employees, such as police officers, are often responsible for large caseloads, function under ambiguous agency goals, and are burdened by inadequate resources. Regarding this dissertation, these work-related factors, combined with the extensive discretionary power bestowed to the police, may have resulted in substantial differences between official policy at West bureau and actual practices. In other words, it appears that despite the implementation of a dedicated sex crimes unit, officers working at West continue to question the credibility of complainants. Second, given West's location, it is necessary to discuss the connection between social class and attitudes toward rape victims. Findings of this dissertation conflict with findings regarding social class and attitudes toward rape. Overall, social economic status has been associated with lower levels of rape myth-related attitudes (Burt, 1980; Marciniak, 2007); however, research testing this relationship is limited (for review see Anderson, et al., 1997). Although some research suggests that social status can influence perceptions about sexual assault victims and incidents, other variables may be more important in shaping attitudes (Nagel et al., 2005; White & Kurpius, 1999). For example, White and Kurpius (1999), in their study attitudes toward rape victims, found that men hold more negative attitudes toward sexual assault victims when compared to their female counterparts, regardless of professional status (an indicator of social class). It is possible that the geographic location of the West bureau influences the response to sexual assault complainants. Townsend and Campbell (2007), in their study of community-based rape prevention programs, found that most community members

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thought that sexual violence was irrelevant to the community. Members of more affluent

communities (like those served by the West bureau) may not find it necessary to

prioritize the criminal justice response to sexual violence because they do not believe

such problems exist in their communities. This community behavior may impact police

practices. After all, workplace behavior and socialization does not exist in a vacuum or

without any external transmission of information and values from the larger society and

culture (Van Maanen & Schein, 1978). Lastly, it is possible that cases that are likely to

lead to police questioning credibility could be concentrated in West because of its

coverage of locations where higher levels of alcohol and drug consumption take place as

well as acquaintance assaults (e.g. Hollywood, UCLA).

Empirical Contributions

Several empirical strengths regarding this dissertation are worth noting. First, I

examined data collected from the Los Angeles Police Department. The setting of this

study allows for a glimpse into officer perceptions and attitudes toward sexual assault

complainants in one of the largest cities in the United States. The LAPD has long been

considered the pride and pacesetter of police forces in spite of adversities such as the

Rampart corruption scandal and the subsequent Consent Decree. The LAPD is

recognized throughout the United States for the sophistication of its technology, quality

of personnel, efficiency, accomplishments in crime control and order maintenance, and

its Consent Decree, which promotes police integrity and prevents misconduct that

deprives individuals of their constitutional rights (Independent Commission on the Los

Angeles Police Department, 1991; Stone, Foglesong, & Cole, 2009). For this dissertation

I relied on data from (1) 400 sexual assault complaints that were reported to the Los

Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in 2008, and (2) 52 Los Angeles Police Department

(LAPD) detective interviews completed in 2010

Second, the mixed methods approach used in this study offers a more nuanced

look at officer attitudes, framing, and credibility assessments toward sexual assault

complainants. Considering the complexities of officer attitudes regarding sexual assault

complainants and victims, examining both quantitative and qualitative data strengthens

the current research. The quantitative data used for this research are rich in detail and the

ability to examine a large dataset that contained a comprehensive set of variables

including measures of "genuine victims;" "real rape;" "inappropriate" victim behavior;

"character flaws;" evidentiary strength; and complainant, suspect, and agency

characteristics when predicting officer credibility assessments is an important theoretical

contribution. Like the quantitative data, the qualitative data are also rich in detail.

Detective interviews broadly focused on experiences "on the job" at LAPD. This

included length of time investigating sex crimes; nature, type, and extent of specialized

training received; issues relevant to working with sexual assault victims (e.g., rapport

building and determining credibility); decision making processes regarding arresting a

suspect and case clearing; and perceptions of how to improve prosecutions of sexual

assault in the criminal justice system. The use of qualitative data provide a nuanced look

into the frames that sex crimes detectives assign to sexual assault victims, particularly

considering that so little is known about detective attitudes generally and the ways larger

societal factors influence beliefs specifically.

Limitations

The above-mentioned contributions notwithstanding, this dissertation is not without limitation. It is important to note that the present study relied on a small number of sexual assault cases that were reported to one agency; therefore it is exploratory in nature. Also, for this reason, these cases are not necessarily representative of all sexual assaults reported in the same timeframe, limiting generalizability. Although this dissertation makes a contribution to knowledge regarding law enforcement perceptions of complainant credibility and the frames that sex crimes detectives assign to victims of sexual assault, findings are specific to one Los Angeles agency. Therefore, there remains a need to investigate the factors that shape whether or not an officer will question a complainant's credibility as well as the frames detectives assign to victims in other jurisdictions. The current dissertation has provided the groundwork for such research, but replication is necessary to move closer to making solid causal claims.

A second limitation includes the small interviewee sample, with only 52 detective respondents. This small sample from one agency limits generalizability. However, in-depth qualitative interview approaches often involve small samples to facilitate the extensive examining of the topic under discussion (Gerbert, et al,, 1999), arguably an aspect of research as important as generalizability. Tewksbury (2009) has suggested that qualitative methods help to uncover the unique ways people function in social settings that are dynamic. In addition, he has argued that qualitative methods are better equipped to "paint a picture of wholeness" by drawing on the numerous factors that shape individual experiences (Tewksbury, 2009, p. 55). Therefore, in this dissertation, the limitation regarding generalizability is outweighed by the ability to gain an in-depth

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understanding about a phenomenon (Tewksbury, 2009). Overall, these data provided detailed, rich accounts of detective attitudes toward victims of sexual assault; however, additional research is needed using a larger number of detectives.

Third, as with all interviewing techniques, limitations exist when research relies on self-reported data. For example, interviewees may lie or censor their answers to make themselves look better, they may provide an inaccurate response due to poor memory recall, and they may not be as knowledgeable about the topic under study as the researcher assumes they are (see Stone, Turkkan, Bachrach, Jobe, Kurtzman, & Cain, 2009 for a discussion of the limitations of self-report data). However, some of the issues surrounding self-reporting were avoided by not collecting identifying information on the respondents. Due to confidentiality and subject anonymity requirements, sociodemographic characteristics about participants including gender, race, age, and Bureau or Division assignment were not recorded. This research strategy was used to increase the likelihood of forthright self-disclosure.

A final limitation of the present study includes the inability to verify the accuracy of the information in each case file. Although the LAPD provided redacted copies of each case, it cannot be known if the information provided by the investigating officer accurately represents the victim's, suspect's, and witnesses' experiences.

Directions for Future Research

Additional research is necessary in several crucial areas to further extend our theoretical and empirical understanding of the factors associated with, and impact of, law enforcement perceptions and attitudes toward sexual assault complainants and victims. First, as previously mentioned, there remains substantial opportunity for the application

of framing theory to the attitudes of law enforcement officers. In the context of police attitudes towards rape victims, framing theory allows for the investigation of perceptions through both the larger organizational and societal cultures. Martin's work (Martin, 1997; Martin & Powell, 1994) and the current dissertation have paved the way for this type of research; however, replication is necessary to move closer to making solid causal claims. Overall, research applying framing theory to the context of law enforcement organizations generally—and officer attitudes specifically—remains in its infancy.

Second, additional studies should examine credibility assessments at other case processing stages. Specifically, future research should work to uncover the factors that shape whether or not a prosecutor will question a victim's credibility. Investigating prosecutorial credibility assessments is important because prosecutorial decisions sometimes influence how officers proceed with sexual assault allegations. For example, Lord and Rassel (2000) found that, although officers believed that intoxicated victims could be sexually victimized, most modified their treatment of cases based on their beliefs that prosecution would not occur. In other words, officers did not investigate these cases because the prosecution of the suspect was unlikely. Given the relationship between prosecutorial decision making and officer case investigation, further research that taps into the factors that shape prosecutor credibility assessments is needed.

Third, future research should focus explicitly on credibility assessments in intimate partner sexual assault cases. The role played by rape myths in the decision to question a complainant's credibility may be particularly salient for intimate partner sexual assault, which is surrounded by numerous cultural and legal myths (Berman, 2004). Intimate partner sexual assault is often considered less severe when compared to

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sexual assault committed by a stranger (Bergen, 2004; Yllo, 1999). Finkelhor and Yllo (1985) term this phenomenon the "sanitary stereotype"—intimate partner sexual assault as a trivial conflict. These prevalent myths are problematic when considering that legal decision-making is vulnerable to the same biases that characterize general information processing, such as the propensity to concentrate on information that is consistent with pre-existing beliefs (McEwan, 2003). In fact, some criminal justice professionals continue to adopt a "sanitary stereotype" by viewing intimate partner violence as a victimless crime involving a minor conflict (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996). Overall, a satisfying investigation of officer credibility assessments would focus specifically on intimate partners, using relevant relationship variables including: whether the victim reported a history of intimate partner violence (sexual and/or physical), whether the victim reported that the suspect used nonviolent tactics to limit her autonomy, whether the victim and suspect have children, whether the victim and suspect are married, the length of the victim/suspect relationship in months, and if the victim expressed concern about the suspect being arrested. These relationship-specific factors may influence officer credibility assessments regarding intimate partner sexual assault.

Finally, more research is needed regarding how credibility assessments impact victim decision making in sexual assault cases, specifically the decision to cooperate with law enforcement. For example, Kaiser, O'Neal, and Spohn (forthcoming) found that whether an officer questioned the credibility of the victim had a negative effect on victim cooperation at later stages of the case (i.e., investigation and arrest); questioning the victim's credibility increased the likelihood that she would withdraw cooperation. The choice to cooperate with law enforcement is one of the most important decisions made by

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victims in the processing of sexual assault cases. Extant research overwhelmingly

indicates that victim cooperation influences case outcomes in these types of crimes, with

desired outcomes being linked to attaining and maintaining cooperation (Dawson &

Dinovitzer, 2001; Goodman, Bennett & Dutton, 1999; Hirschel & Hutchison, 2003;

Kingsnorth, Macintosh, Berdahl, Blades, & Rossi, 2001; Kingsnorth, MacIntosh, &

Sutherland, 2002; O'Neal, Tellis, & Spohn, 2015; Schmidt & Steury, 1989; Spohn &

Tellis, 2014). Specifically, victim cooperation in sexual assault cases has been found to

influence outcomes such as the police decision to arrest and the prosecutor's decision to

file charges (O'Neal & Spohn, forthcoming; O'Neal, Tellis, & Spohn, 2015; Spohn &

Tellis, 2014). Due to the importance of victim cooperation—a practical constraint

considered in the decision making process in both the decision to arrest and the

prosecutor's decision to file charges—it is necessary to investigate the circumstances that

surround willingness to cooperate (Spohn et al., 2014), with specific attention given to

law enforcement credibility assessments.

Implications

This dissertation research has multiple implications for law enforcement practice.

First, victims often reference fears and concerns that law enforcement officers will

question their credibility and truthfulness, which contributes to their underreporting

(Bachman, 1998). These concerns are not unwarranted, as research indicates that law

enforcement officers are often suspicious of claims made by rape victims and accept

some of the more common rape myths including those mentioned in the previous sections

(e.g. the belief that "real" rape only involves strangers; Jordan, 2004; Page 2008). These

responses from criminal justice "experts" are harmful to victims because such treatment

makes victims question the utility and effectiveness of service providers (Ahrens, 2006). Findings from the current dissertation suggest that law enforcement officers need to actively work toward dismantling rape myths or they run the risk of engaging in policing that denies full protection to certain types of victims.

Second, and along the same lines, developing appropriate and supportive response techniques regarding sexual assault victims is particularly salient to law enforcement officers who are often the first point of contact victims have with the criminal justice system. Initial contact is important, as the acceptance of rape myths by law enforcement officers is often associated with system variables such as case attrition (Smith, 1989). Despite the legal reforms designed to enhance the likelihood of arrest and prosecution in sexual assault and intimate partner violence cases, research consistently finds that attrition in these types of cases remains a problem in the criminal justice system. Research indicates that only one fourth to one third of sexual assault cases reported to law enforcement will end in an arrest (Alderden & Ullman, 2012a; Alderden & Ullman, 2012b; Feder, 1998; Spohn & Tellis, 2014). Of those cases presented to the prosecutor for filing consideration, fewer than half will result in felony charges (Alderden & Ulman, 2012a). Attrition can result from the fact that criminal justice officials support the traditional stereotype of sexual assault where the victim is attacked in a public area, by a stranger assailant, involving the use of a weapon or brute force (Edward & MacLeod, 1999). Therefore, it is imperative that police agencies work at dismantling rape myths if they want to decrease attrition in these types of cases.

Third, it is evident from this dissertation that societal rape myths have permeated law enforcement agencies, as the current research reveals that police decision making

reflects irrelevant and rape-myth-based characteristics. Although law enforcement officers cannot prevent the initial trauma caused by sexual victimization, they can help prevent the "second rape" [13] by treating victims with compassion, by believing them, and by refraining from questioning their credibility. Treating victims in this manner may not only facilitate aspects of case processing (e.g., victim cooperation), it may also facilitate victim healing. Undoubtedly, sexual assault victims will have a more positive experience with law enforcement if they feel they are being treated with respect.

Fourth, findings from this dissertation suggest the need to implement training and education efforts that improve the response to sexual assault victims. This implication is particularly timely given the recent executive order establishing the Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Less than one year ago, President Barack Obama established the task force in efforts of providing recommendations regarding effective policing strategies that increase public trust and responsiveness. The task force identified six areas in need of improvement, including officer training and education (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015).

Specific to the current dissertation's findings, the task force suggested that law enforcement agencies work to 1) increase bias awareness, 2) develop appropriate crisis intervention strategies, and 3) advance victim services. Regarding bias awareness, the task force acknowledged that the police often treat certain communities unfavorably, specifically discussing individuals that suffer from mental health issues (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015). This dissertation highlights the inappropriate ways law enforcement officers treat women with mental health issues who come forward

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[13] The second rape includes victim-blaming and the insensitive and skeptical treatment of victims from social service agencies (Campbell & Raja, 1999; Martin & Powell, 1994; Williams, 1984).

and report sexual victimization. Certainly, this dissertation supports the task force's call

for increased basic and in-service training regarding the response to special populations.

Additionally, training regarding rape-myth related biases is needed. Officers should be

educated regarding the pervasiveness of rape myths and the ways such rape-related

misconceptions contribute to policing that denies full protection to certain types of

victims.

Implementing appropriate crisis intervention strategies is particularly salient

regarding the police response to sexual assault. The task force acknowledged that

empathy training is important when interacting with individuals with mental health issues

(President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015); and, the same is true regarding

interacting with sexual assault victims. Indeed, the invocation of empathy is a topic of

education found in some police sexual assault response trainings (see Lonsway, Welch, &

Fitzgerald, 2001). Such trainings can help prevent the "second rape" by teaching law

enforcement officers to treat victims with compassion, believe their allegations, and to

refrain from questioning their credibility.

Developing appropriate trauma and victim services is important for the policing

of sexual assault, as research suggests that this crime can cause victims to experience

persistent long-term effects. For example, victims of completed sexual assaults and rapes

are at an increased risk for health consequences such as post-traumatic stress disorder,

anxiety, substance use, depression, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and other sexually

transmitted infections (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1979; Duncan, Saunders, Kilpatrick, &

Resnick, 1996; Jenny et al., 1990; Kawsaw, Anfield, Walters, McCabe, & Forster, 2004;

Siegel, Golding, Stein, Burnam, & Sorenson, 1990). Additionally, sexual assault victims

may express feelings of shame, guilt, embarrassment, and fear in the aftermath of victimization. Therefore, connecting victims with appropriate services is essential to promote victim healing.

Fifth, criminal justice agencies such as the police, prosecutorial, and correctional organizations reflect Weber's (1964) concept of rational-legal authority, where strict adherence to formal regulations and informal guidelines is validated and positively reinforced through career advancement (Jermier & Berkesm, 1979). In some cases, these types of organizational characteristics results in a rigid system where employees are unable to initiate change, restrict the organization's functions, or work outside of the organization's policies and informal guidelines (Angell, 1971). This can be problematic, when such characteristics contribute to unresponsive sexual assault victim protocols. However, Lipsky's (1976, 1980) work on "street-level bureaucracy" demonstrates the significant contribution that front-line workers—like the police—can make in developing and implementing practical and policy changes. He argues that such workers initiate change through exercising discretion in their everyday work. Additionally, socializing new police recruits to think more progressively about sexual assault victimization through the process of spreading ideologies, traditions, and norms may improve future police response (see Clausen, 1968). The police subculture is a powerful entity; it communicates to its members various expectations about police work, ethics, interactions with fellow officers, as well as attitudes toward victims (Adox, 2000; Rose & Unnithan, 2015). Taken together, these points demonstrate that police officers are positioned to develop and put into action practices that not only increase protection to all types of

sexual assault victims, but have the potential to increase victim cooperation and decrease case attrition.

Conclusion

This dissertation contributes theoretically and empirically to three broad bodies of literature: law enforcement decision making, law enforcement perceptions of sexual assault victims, and framing theory. The reality is that approximately 104,459 cases of sexual assault were reported to American police in 2013, despite individuals disclosing 300, 170 experiences of sexual assault to the National Crime Victimization Survey in the same year (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014). The disparity in official reporting and actual occurrences of rape is often attributed to the discouragement victims experience when encountering victim-blaming attitudes from their peers, family, and law enforcement personnel (Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen, 2003). Victims frequently do not report incidents of rape in fear that they will not be believed (Jordan, 2001). This dissertation was able to tap into these officer attitudes to shed light on the ways officers treat women who come forward to report an incident of sexual assault, providing valuable insight into officer attitudes, credibility assessments, and victim framing.

This dissertation raises related questions surrounding what it means to be a reporter of sexual assault. For the majority of sexual assault victims, this experience is a foreign concept as most sexual assaults go unreported (see: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014). However, for those that do seek out law enforcement assistance, some are met with rape-myth facilitated skepticism. Findings from this dissertation suggest this type of skepticism is particularly

true for teenage complainants, those who engage in "risk-taking" behavior, victims of non-stranger sexual assault, and victims perceived to have "character flaws." On the other hand, there were some detectives that explicitly asserted that both "risk-takers" and teenagers can be victims too. Unfortunately, this was more often the exception than the rule.

A major conclusion of this study is that police attitudes toward and detective framing of sexual assault victims contribute to policing practices that deny full protection to certain types of victims. First, results suggest that indicators of "real rape," and complainant "character flaws," are key explanatory factors in the likelihood that an officer will question a complainant's credibility. These findings suggest that societal rape myths have permeated law enforcement agencies, evidenced by the fact that police will question the credibility of a victim based on character and reputation assessments as well as factors associated with "real rape." These police attitudes deny full protection to victims whose cases do not mirror real rape and those that have character traits deemed to be problematic by law enforcement. Second, qualitative analyses partly support prior research that suggests that police responses to sexual assault victims are shaped by widespread societal victim-blaming views and stereotypical judgments and perceptions (Campbell, & Johnson, 1997; Jordan, 2004). In terms of rape myth-related frames, officers discussed the skepticism surrounding non-stranger assault, focusing on the victim/suspect relationship in terms of accessing credibility generally, being detrimental to successful case processing, and motivating false reports. Additionally, only five detectives refrained from discussing "risk-taking" victims and victims who engage in prostitution. Regarding teenage complainants, the majority of detectives framed teenagers

as means-serving false reporters. Stated alternatively, detectives discussed that teenagers made false allegations of sexual assault in efforts of acquiring some selfish outcome. These qualitative findings suggest that victims who possess the traits discussed above may encounter officers who are skeptical about their claims—possibly resulting in a police response that denies protection, contributes to the "second rape," and discourages further police contact.

Concluding on a more optimistic note, the rape reform movement has resulted in many legal successes such as the redefining of rape, the abolition of corroboration and resistance requirements, and the development of rape shield laws (for a review see Spohn et al., 2015). Moreover, some promising advances in sexual assault case processing research has also been made in the last decade, including work that significantly contributes to knowledge surrounding sexual assault case attrition (Spohn & Tellis, 2014), intimate partner sexual assault (O'Neal & Spohn, forthcoming; O'Neal, et al., 2015), and victim decision making (Kaiser, et al., forthcoming; O'Neal et al., 2014). Both the reform movement and increasing research efforts are in their infancy and the reach of such changes remain unclear. In the meantime, it is important to recognize that problematic attitudes toward sexual assault victims still exist and that these attitudes deny full protection to victims whose cases do not mirror widely held views about the causes, consequences, perpetrators, and victims of sexual assault. Conversely, whereas some detectives blamed "problematic" victims for the assaults committed against them or categorized these types of victims as inherently lacking credibility despite other case circumstances, other detectives explicitly asserted that "problematic" victims can be victims too. These findings question the extent to which the police subculture is

monolithic and support the existence of attitudinal subgroups within the culture. These attitudinal subcultures may be the key to dismantling rape myths within the police organization as well as combating negative stereotypes regarding victims who have historically been viewed as problematic. As one sex crimes detective put it, "Often I feel we victimize the victim more than the suspect does." This type of acknowledgement is progress.

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APPENDIX A

LAPD SEXUAL ASSAULT STUDY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

"DECISION MAKING IN SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES: LAPD"

Decision Making in Sexual Assault Cases: LAPD

Part I   Training and Investigation of Sex Crimes
1. How long have you been in law enforcement?
    a. How long have you been with the LAPD?
    b. How long have you been investigating sex crimes?
        i. Did you request this assignment? (If so, why?)

2. Did you receive any specialized training in the investigation of sex crimes?
    a. If so, type of training? Who delivered it? Number of specialized trainings?
    b. If not, should there be some type of specialized training? Why or why not?

Part II   Sexual Assault Case Processing

1. In your experience, which types of sexual assaults are least likely to result in arrest and successful prosecution? Which types are most likely to result in arrest and successful prosecution?
    a. Probe: what are the obstacles that you encounter in these types of cases?
    b. Probe: What are the "decision rules" that you follow in deciding whether to make an arrest or not? What do you need to make an arrest in a rape case?

2. In your experience, what are the characteristics of cases that are most often "cleared other"?

3. Do you present cases involving identified suspects to the DA's Office for review before an arrest is made?

    a. If yes, what is the rationale for allowing the DA to evaluate the case before an arrest is made?
        i.   Is this standard operating procedure for all felonies or only for sex crimes?
        ii. Probe: What happens to the case if the DDA says that it does not meet the DA's standard for filing?
        iii. Can you appeal this decision? (If so, to whom do you appeal? How often does this happen?)
        iv. Does the DA ever send the case back to you for further investigation?
             How often does this happen? In which types of cases?
    b. If no, to clarify, the DA's office does not evaluate sex crimes prior to an arrest being made?

4. How do you decide whether a sexual assault case should be unfounded?
    a. What standards do you use in making this decision?

      i. Probe: Do victims have to recant their testimony?

      ii. Probe: Will a case be unfounded if a victim "disappears" after making the initial report?

  b. Are there any particular types of cases that have a higher likelihood of being unfounded than others?

      i. Can you provide an example of a case that was unfounded and explain why it was unfounded?

  c. What if a victim recants but the evidence and case factors in their totality suggest that s/he was indeed forced and recanting may be due to threats/intimidation (DV, gang affiliated suspects/witnesses)? How will this type of case be cleared?

Part III   Victim Management and Evidence

1. We know that the credibility of the victim plays a role in sexual assault case processing decisions. How do you evaluate victim credibility?
   a. Probe: What leads you to question whether the victim is telling the truth?
   b. What role does use of drugs or alcohol by the victim and/or the suspect play in case outcomes?

2. How do you establish rapport with victims?
   a. What if the victim is reluctant, hostile and/or uncooperative?

3. What would motivate someone to file a false report? How do you know that the report is false?

4. What if there is no evidence that can corroborate the testimony of the victim—it is a he said/she said case. How is this case likely to be resolved?

5. How does the relationship between the victim and the suspect affect the investigation of a sexual assault report?
         i. Probe: Assume that the victim and the suspect have (or had) an intimate relationship.

PART IV   Relationship with the DA's Office

1. How would you describe your office's relationship with the District Attorney's Office (with respect to sex crimes)?
   A. Probe: can you describe a recent experience in which you felt satisfied with your interaction with the DA's Office? Dissatisfied?

CONCLUSION

1. If the Department had unlimited resources, what would be the best way to increase the number of arrests and successful prosecutions of sexual assault?

2. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges faced by victims when reporting a sexual assault? What role should the police and DA's Office play in decreasing the difficulties associated with rape victimization for victims?