A Content Analysis of "#MaleRape" on Twitter

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For those who have fought for equality and those who continue to do so, thank you for laying the path for black women like myself. To the black youth in today's world who continue to face the structures we have been bound to and marginalized by, I hope you see this and realize that you have your own light within that no one else can dim. You can do anything.

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ABSTRACT

Rape has historically been constructed as a women's issue and, as such, research has focussed on female survivors of sexual assault. Current research on the topic indicates that the construction of female rape is structured by stereotypical gender roles and patriarchal/misogynistic structures. However, there is very little research on male rape. This exploratory thesis seeks to fill this gap by exploring how the meaning of male rape is constructed on Twitter posts that contain the hashtag "MaleRape". Two thousand ninety-two tweets were collected. The final sample was comprised of 840 tweets and qualitative content analysis was the method used to code and organize the data. Preliminary analysis suggested that the constructions varied significantly by region; accordingly, the data were sorted into the following four regions: North America; Europe; Africa; and Asia. The analysis, rooted in critical feminism, explores how male rape is constructed in each region. The findings indicate that there is some consistency across regions, especially with respect to the ways in which patriarchal assumptions led to the denial of male rape and the silencing of survivors. However, there were interesting differences in the various regions. This thesis addresses the influence of heteronormative constructions and calls for more consideration of cultural differences when studying sexual violence.

Keywords: male rape, female rape, sexual assault, victim, survivor, hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy, gender.

Introduction of Thesis

Male rape is important to study as there remain both social and theoretical gaps in the knowledge generated thus far. Although many scholars contend that the topic of sexual assault requires further research, male rape in particular, remains understudied (Lundrigan & Johnson, 2013). Men are often excluded from conversations and research on victims of sexual assault unless they are being depicted as the perpetrators (Ryan, 2011). Riccardi (2010) notes that not only is male rape understudied but that much of the current research on the topic is based on findings specific to female victims which could be problematic to the male survivor.

Lundrigan and Johnson (2013) also found that male rape is in need of further study as the "rape of adult male victims has been […] the most unrecognized crimes in society today" (p. 763). This is at least partly due to the fact that the definition of rape in some areas (e.g. England and Wales) is still limited to the penetration of a vagina by a penis or another object (Lundrigan & Johnson, 2013). Kaufman and colleagues (1980) argue that hegemonic masculinity, the most widely accepted form of coercive masculinity, and the lack of safe spaces for men to share their experiences are responsible for such limited definitions. Conversations about male rape also tend to privilege the narrative that rape is about power and violence and not sex, and this inevitably limits how survivors are able to talk about and understand their experiences (Anderson & Swainson, 2001).

In this thesis, I use a feminist criminological perspective in order to unpack the construction of gender in, and the impact of patriarchal assumptions on, conversations about male rape. Feminism has tended to study women's subordination while criminology has historically examined men's deviant behaviours (Naffine, 1996). Accordingly, feminism is usually not mobilized when studying male criminality because it is "reduced to, or conflated

with, the study of women and crime" which is a minor part of criminology (Naffine, 1996, p. 1). Putting feminism and criminology together accordingly allows us to pose important questions about how academic research is constructed by social actors whose lived experiences are structured by patriarchy. Certainly, as feminist criminology gained popularity in the 1970s, it called upon researchers to pay attention to gender biases in the criminal justice system regarding the treatment of victims and offenders (Renzetti, 2013) and, since then, it has made it clear that the study of criminality requires researchers to take the subjectivities of gender constructs into account. This requires that we explore how patriarchy as a system structures the experience(s) of crime.

An important note is that there is no single theory of feminist criminology. As the feminist perspective is far-reaching and varied, there is no way of evaluating every feminist criminological approach; however, the mobilization of feminism in criminological analysis has been framed as a more progressive and inclusive way to study deviance (Renzetti, 2013). This mobilization is important to my project because the topic of male rape includes a unique and counter-factual construction of gendered deviance. As cited by Naffine (1996), Cornell and Derrida highlight the importance of questioning the stability of any given meaning and how the deconstruction of the meaning may shed light on marginalizing assumptions and conclusions. Through the mobilization of feminist approaches, the deconstruction of the conversation can help to shed light on male rape more fully.

My research is exploratory as male rape is an understudied field. As such, a good starting point is to examine how the meaning of male rape is constructed. Since data is scarce, I decided to explore Twitter, because it is an accessible source of data for an exploratory study of this kind. My main topic is accordingly the construction of male rape on social media. My research is

primarily concerned with the voluntary publication and sharing of experiences on a social media platform, and the understandings and interpretations of the discursive realities I find there.

Hashtags on social media platforms such as Twitter are words or terms preceded by a pound sign (#) which create a link between posts so they can be collated into one conversation. The hashtag I analyze in my research is "#MaleRape[1]". This hashtag was first used on March 19, 2010, by *@SheiFunmi*. This hashtag did not attract the social and media attention of recent hashtags (e.g. "#MeToo[2]"), nor was it rooted in activism, which provides further evidence of the need for more research to explain the lack of conversation being generated around male sexual assault.

In chapter one, I begin with a review of the literature on the topic of male rape and then situate that literature within the social constructionist perspective of gender (and of rape as a form of gendered violence) to lay the groundwork for my content analysis. Given the global reach of the Twitter hashtag, I also provide some context by summarizing the scholarly debates in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia regarding rape in general and male rape in particular.

In chapter two, I present the theoretical framework that I mobilized in my research. I include a note on feminist criminology and highlight how I am mobilizing feminist approaches in my research. In particular, I discuss how theories around the social construction of gender and hegemonic masculinity inform my project.

Chapter three presents the methodological approach I adopted in my research. In particular, I discuss my use of Klaus Krippendorff's content analysis model. I list the steps I followed in my research from data collection to analysis. I justify my choice of using content

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[1] Note the capitalization of letters do not impact the grouping of the tweets. For example, "#malerape" and "#MALErape" would still be grouped together on Twitter.

[2] https://metoomvmt.org/about/#history

analysis for qualitative research. I also engage in a discussion as to why content analysis is the suitable method for the proposed study and discuss the advantages and limitations of using Twitter as a data source.

My analysis follows in chapter four which is organized both by region and by thematic content. After a brief note on how users defined male rape as an act, I discuss the posts from North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. With respect to each region, I discuss who the perpetrator of the sexual assault is. In the North American discussion, I highlight the heteronormative constructions that surfaced in the data. I present tweets in which feminism was constructed as an enabler of rape and actual women were discussed in various contexts as (sometimes the only *possible*) perpetrators of male rape. I also discuss tweets that constructed men in custody as distinct survivors of sexual violence. The European discussion was distinctive as it was almost entirely geared towards narratives that supported the raising of awareness on the topic of male rape. In the conversation in Africa, the majority of the users discussed rape as a weapon of war or the need for support and legal protection for victims. In Asia, constructions of male rape focus on claims that wives who leave their husbands or who spend too much money are raping their husbands. Throughout my analysis, I focus on how these various discussions are aligned with patriarchal and misogynistic constructs.

In chapter five, I discuss my findings with respect to the construction of male rape in my data. This chapter is informed by my analysis as I discuss the deeper constructions that emerged in my data via common trends found in the tweets that users posted. In this chapter I discuss my interpretation of the posts and support it with the previous research I reviewed on the topic. In the conclusion of my thesis, I revisit the main findings that I identified in my research and present suggestions about future research that can build on my findings.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I review the literature on gender relations and sexual assault in the four regions I later identify in my analysis. In the second section, I review the literature on the topic of male rape and sexual assault. By canvassing the literature on male rape, I map out the current state of knowledge on the topic and identify the gaps I aim to narrow. In the third section, I explore how the common conceptualizations of rape are gendered. In particular, I examine how the gender binary informs our understanding of sexual assault as a form of gendered violence.

1.1 Gender Relations and Sexual Violence

The majority of literature dealing with male rape is western-centric and based largely on American findings, especially in Canada where the academic discussion tends to be grounded in American statistics about the problem (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017). To help balance this US-centric view, this section will summarize the literature in each of the four regions identified in the Twitter data – North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia – to provide a cultural context against which to position the findings. This is important because male rape is a social construction that, in any context, is moulded by local cultural beliefs, social norms and legal traditions (Laslett & Brenner, 1989). Rosen and Bird (1996) also support this by identifying culture as a major influence in a person's worldview. In addition, gender continues to be reproduced based on "cultural meanings, and identities through which biological sex differences become socially significant" (p. 382). The Twitter discussion about male rape in various regions accordingly can best be understood in these local contexts.

North American Contexts

North American feminists have focused on how social differences are linked to the distribution and misuses of power, especially economic and financial power. Given the North American emphasis on individualism (most prominent in the United States but also a factor in Canada and Mexico), Tang, Bensman, and Hatfield, (2012) argue that American men focus on their personal wealth whereas women are encouraged to take a collectivistic approach and take others (specifically men and children) into consideration when making financial decisions.

Rosen and Bird (1996) argue that this mindset has implications for gendered power; because North American conceptions of gender have an ownership component that is linked to the amount much power you have; this provides fertile soil for gendered conflict and violence where women are seen to have (and receive) less social power than men. For example, the gendered division of labour is seen as an outcome of biological differences at birth. Because of this, recent changes to the traditional structure of the family, where child rearing has traditionally been seen as women's work, continue to be constrained by biologically-based understandings which contribute to the reproduction of the gender binary by upholding the domesticated wife and marketplace husband family dynamic (Laslett & Brenner, 1989).

North American feminism has also paid attention to the impact of race on this distribution of power. In the 1980s, second wave efforts were critiqued by black feminists who argued that traditional feminism focuses on the needs of white women (Hall & Ogleshy, 2016). Black feminists added the layer of race to the gender ideology conversation as black women experience the world differently than white women (Laslett & Brenner, 1989).

Current scholarship emphasizes the importance of paying attention to how gender intersects with race and other axes of oppression, such as class, sexuality and ability, and

explores how gender operates within intersectional forms of repression to reproduce inequality. For example, Hall and Oglesby (2016) have drawn parallels between how women are treated in sport and how individuals with a disability are framed and treated. They report that female athletes tend not to be discussed in terms of their athleticism, but in terms of their sexual appeal. Black athletes, like Serena Williams, face the added layer of racial microaggressions.

In addition, feminist scholars argue that heterosexual courtships are considered the norm (Masters, 2010). In this understanding of sexuality, men seek out sex and women act as "gatekeepers" (Masters, 2010, p. 33). Sexual coercion is, accordingly, often discussed in the context of heterosexual men pressuring women where women are disadvantaged in terms of their relative physical/biological and social power (Martson, 2005).

North American laws against sexual assault vary, especially with regards to gender specificity. In Canada, according to the Criminal Code, sexual assault is defined as the non-consensual touching or threat of touching in circumstances of sexual nature where the sexual integrity of the victim (regardless of gender) is violated (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-46), and in the United States of America sexual assault refers to any type of physical sexual contact without appropriate legal consent (DeVore & Sachs, 2011). However, in the USA, the definition of rape and sexual assault are dependent on each other. Sexual assault becomes rape when unlawful force, threats, or rendering the person unconscious happens in conjunction with the sexual act; however, specific definitions vary across states and counties (U.S. Code s920 – Art 120). In Mexico, The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women includes rape in the broader conversation on gender-based violence, alongside femicide, sexual harassment and assault, and domestic violence, suggesting it is a gendered form of violence where women are victims and men are perpetrators (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017). Historically, the judicial system has

often dismissed cases of rape, which are immensely underreported, because of narrow definitions of sexual violence, despite laws that position rape as a serious crime (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017).

In spite of gender-neutral legal definitions in Canada and the US, power continues to play a major role in North American sexual violence and since men are awarded more power than women in most, if not all, western contexts, they often mobilize their power over women through acts of sexual violence (Hall & Oglesby, 2016). Women, accordingly, make up the majority of sexual assault victims. However, men still show up at medical facilities for treatment because they have been sexually assaulted (DeVore & Sachs, 2011). Although having access to the statistics on completed rape kits would be beneficial to research on male sexual assault, North American laws require medical records to be kept private. Moreover, DeVore and Sachs (2011) report that only a quarter of rape victims complete rape kits so underreporting of sexual assault may be even lower than expected.

European Contexts

Western culture supports the individualistic approach and highlights each person's independence. This holds true in Europe but European contexts blend individual approaches with communitarianism. This shows up in two areas. Firstly, Europe embodies both individual and collective approaches, which can be seen in how women's economic contribution across their lifespan is seen as being made up of an integration between paid work and family labour (Crompton & Le Feuvre, 1996). Secondly, since European scholars also more interested in critiques of capitalism, this perspective shapes how gender is understood. For example, during industrialization, two separate spheres were created: the domestic sphere intended for women; and the market sphere intended for men (Crompton & Le Feuvre, 1996). Even though this has been challenged more recently, European capitalism continues to incorporate gendered labour

divisions that position feminized positions as worth less than positions allocated to men (Hagqvist, Gadin, & Nordenmark, 2016). Even countries with a high level of egalitarianism continue to divide services based on gender; as Mosesdottir (1995) reports, in the countries in which women are seen as "working mothers" they are given access to social services to combine the paid work and unpaid (motherly) work they do, but men are strictly considered to be breadwinners (p. 633). Although it may look like women are being supported by receiving adequate support services for being mothers, feminists critique this by pointing out that these services further limit women and their access to opportunities outside of the home. Supporting women with daycare, adequate maternity leave, and post-pregnancy medical services facilities the reproduction of capitalism which limits women (Wohl, 2014). In France, there has been added job protection for women who have children, another example of the need to continue to advance women's interests against the gendered economic distribution of "power" (Crompton & Le Feuvre, 1996).

The mix of egalitarianism, individualism, and communitarianism work together to make sexual violence less visible. According to Sarmiento (2011), sexual assault is the least reported crime in Europe. Patriarchal structures continue to keep men and women in gendered separate spheres of society where rape myths are easily accepted (Sarmiento, 2011). Wohl (2014) finds the same point to be true especially when women who are operating outside of the domestic sphere are the victims. However, reporting is on the rise; suggestions that sexual assaults are increasing may, therefore, be partially due to an increase in the reporting of offences to the police (Aebi, 2004). In addition, Wohl (2014) reports that gendered violence is oftentimes talked about in an economic context and framed as women lacking the ability to fully mobilize their agency

because of the social constraints placed on their role. This reflects the European position on capitalism.

As in North American, legal definitions of sexual assault tend to be gender-neutral. For example, in Italy sexual assault is defined as a person forcing another person with violence, a threat, abuse, or authority to engage in a sexual act (Sarmiento, 2011). Male rape is not really discussed *per se* and statistics are not always considered an accurate measure of sexually based assaults or cross-national comparison (Aebi, 2004). Crompton and Le Feuvre (1996) report that after the Second World War much of England's legislation was geared towards fighting discrimination on the basis of gender. Although similar things happened in other European countries, feminist scholars argue that it is impossible to be free of gender discrimination in a patriarchal and capitalist society and that this approach in some ways contributes to a silence surrounding gendered violence (Mosesdottir, 1995).

African Contexts

African scholars note that Africa has been critiqued and framed as outdated as a result of colonization and globalization, both of which assert that the western worldview is the appropriate way to do things; this is particularly problematic because western practices can be detrimental to social norms that are widely accepted (and important) to both African men and African women (Armstrong, 1999). Brown (2012) argues that African cultures tend to be more community-oriented and local cultures reject capitalism and place emphasis on the extended family unit. Many African communities accordingly steer away from western approaches, as practices that are believed to be "imported by the whites" are perceived as serious threats to numerous African traditions (p. 51).

African feminist scholars argue that the emphasis on the extended family unit is deeply rooted in patriarchal beliefs where "a system of inequality [...] enables men to subordinate women and control women's access to resources and decision making (Okeke-Ihejirika, Salami, & Amodu, 2019, p. 99). However, this plays out in different ways in different parts of the continent. For example, in North Africa, religion and the influence of Islam shape the understanding of gender and men are seen as more desirable and powerful (Rossi & Rouanet, 2015). In South African culture, patriarchal norms enforce the belief that men and women are not equal. This inequality is especially present in the workforce where women are supposed to either work for a man, or work with the approval of a man, and women are typically limited to being the caretakers where men are the financial providers (Brown, 2012).

A commonality throughout the African literature is that African norms around sexuality privilege heteronormativity (Rossi & Rouanet, 2015). At the time of marriage, which is understood to be between a man and a woman, men are expected to have a house and means of support for their family; however, as costs continue to rise, many men are left frustrated that they cannot provide a home (Hasu, 1996). Nisula (1996) reports that, in some small towns, men believe that they are unable to succeed because female spirits have entered into their bodies and sabotage their chances of living up to the duties (i.e. getting married, being fertile, making money) that are traditionally assigned to men. These norms and beliefs have been used to justify various forms of violence against women. Violence is also used to reassert the gender order by punishing non-compliant women; for example, corrective rape is a form of violence directed at lesbian women, the justification being that they must be raped in order to become straight again (Brown, 2012).

African scholars have documented high rates of violence against women, with reports stating that 40% of African women have been victims of violence (Brown, 2012; Lankster, 2019)[3]. African feminists have responded by fighting for more legal rights such as the criminalization of marital rape (Dworking, Colvin, Hatcher, & Peacock, 2012). Legal reform has depended on the political, cultural, and economic circumstances of each area (Brown, 2012). South Africa appears to be one of the countries that have been putting legislation in place in order to combat sexual violence. Van Allen (2015) reports that, despite South Africa's attempt on paper and legislatively to obtain gender equality, violence against women continues to rise and feminist scholars continue to critique South Africa for increasing gender-based and sexual violence (Okeke-Ihejirika, Salami, & Amodu, 2019).

In conflict areas, rape has been used as a tool of war. Brown (2012) highlights that the friction between the government and activist movements during the Post-Apartheid era in South Africa caused both sides to position the threat of rape against women as an acceptable form of punishment. This use of rape has continued to be implemented with the logic rooted in patriarchy and male privilege. Lankster (2019) reports that African men who commit rape state that they view sex as a form of possession and that men are entitled to women. The theme of possession is also present in conflict areas, where the majority of discussion on male rape remains in the context of the rape of child soldiers in order to coerce and control the young boys (Armstrong, 1999).

Asian Contexts

Asian culture is also collective in nature. However, in most regions, the family unit –

[3] Given the cultural constraints around reporting, statistics from the United Nations often times are included in these calculations (Brown, 2012).

in which women are given subservient roles – is considered the most important thing (Johnson, Jackson, & Herdt, 2000). Because of that, women are continuously bound to domestic roles (Rao, 2012). This structure is an example of patriarchy being mobilized to reproduce the powerful man and submissive woman narrative (Bhattacharyya, 2019). In some parts of India, women have been influenced by the globalized identity of being a working mom and wife; however, in order to remain true to their culture, they use opportunities to work as another way of supporting their husband (Bhattacharyya, 2019). Many women also accept that their position and duty is to take care of their partners and children as they take pride in aligning themselves with that role and cultural belief (Hori & Kamo, 2018). This is often times overshadowed by instances of child marriage where young girls are married off to older men. The intersection of social class plays a role as sometimes young girls are sold as brides in order for their family to get money to survive (Hunt & Kasynathan, 2010).

According to Sharma, Pardasani, and Nandram (2014), Indian culture is steeped in patriarchal values, which may be a contributing factor to the high rates of crimes committed against women. These crimes include, but are not limited to, the unlawful termination of female babies in utero, dowry deaths, sexual harassment, and rape. In fact, India is ranked third in rape cases worldwide after the United States and South Africa (Sharma, Pardasani, & Nandram, 2014). Brooks (2003) argues this violence is rooted in the structure of marriage, which is built around male entitlement and female victimization. Given the paramount importance of the family structure in Southeast Asia, factors that go against this may be perceived as a threat to the man's role; this is taken seriously as social connection is extremely important for all citizens and is believed to impact their overall happiness. Similarly, in Chinese culture, the man's rightful place is outside of the home and the woman is expected to be inside; should either gender

operate in the opposite space, it could be considered as going against traditional values and be interpreted as a form of disrespect (Martin & Dragojlovic, 2019). Even as Asia seeks to develop economically, this "complex and paradoxical mix of traditional sociocultural practices and modernity" makes it difficult to challenge female rape; conversations about sexual violence against men receive even less attention (Bhattacharyya, 2019, p. 21).

The invisibility is of male rape is reflected in the law. For example, rape in India is defined under section 375 of the Indian Penal Code as "intentional, unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent". Indian feminists argue that this definition is too narrow and it has been critiqued for failing to consider other forms of sexual assaults (Sharma, Pardasani, & Nandram, 2014, p. 364; Brooks, 2003).

1.2 What We Know About Male Rape

In this section of my literature review, I examine the literature from multiple disciplines, including criminology and sociology, in order to identify how male rape is understood in the literature. The belief that men cannot be sexually assaulted is consistent with Cohen's conceptualization of (1993) of "literal denial" where the possibility of male sexual assault is denied entirely (p. 109). This belief is rooted in the notion that men are expected to feel compelled to engage in sexually forward and aggressive acts. Additionally, the construction of men as sexually forward and aggressive is frequently seen as the societal norm and, therefore, is rarely challenged (Cohen, 1933; Smith, Parrott, Swartout, & Tharp, 2014). Smith and colleagues (2014) report that, because of hegemonic masculinity, it is believed that men are less likely than women to suffer from sexual violence.

Most literature on male rape focuses on specific locations and contexts in which male rape occurs. One of the most commonly discussed environments in which men are raped is in

prison (Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006). For example, Ricciardelli and Spencer (2014) report that, in Canada, rape occurs in prison as a way for an inmate to prove their "masculine dominance" over another inmate (p.429). In this way, hetereonormative understandings of rape and male power are not challenged, as homosexuality is removed from the narrative of prison rape and the main focus is on rape as an exercise of male power. This same emphasis on masculine dominance and power is also found in discussions of male rape that occur within the total institution of the military. For example, O'Brien and colleagues (2015) found that men who have been raped in the military are not the only ones to keep quiet; the military organization itself silences the reality of male rape as it may make the institution appear weak or unstable – characteristics that have not been traditionally assigned to hegemonic masculinity.

Another specific context in which men can be sexually assaulted is in school. Ratliff and Watson (2014) found that female teachers are inclined to use their socially constructed role as a nurturer to build rapport with potential male victims. However, female teachers who commit male rape do not receive as much attention as their male counterparts despite making up more than half of the profession (Zack, Lang, & Dirks, 2018). Hegemonic masculine assumptions make it more difficult to focus on female teacher criminality than on assaults carried out by male teachers because gendered understandings of power hold that men are aggressors and able to use force to defend themselves. Moreover, female teachers have been reported as more likely to believe that their behaviour is a form of nurturing or that they are truly in love with their victims, therefore, justifying the abuse (Zack et al., 2018; Ratliff & Watson, 2014).

Despite the narrow focus in the literature on men who are sexually assaulted in controlled environments such as prison, the military, and school, a large number of men have been

victimized outside of those environments and in the community as well (Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006).

The discussion of female teachers who commit male rape also suggests that this kind of violence occurs during the victim's childhood. Frequently, female sexual predators have been defined as women who are attracted specifically to pre-pubescent boys (Almond, McManus, Giles, & Houston, 2017). In this context, women use their age as a way to mobilize their power over young boys in order to achieve their goal. Almond and colleagues (2017) made the important distinction that many female offenders obsess over being in control for the duration of the abuse. Despite women using the same aggressive tactics that male perpetrators use, the idea of a female rapist is still astonishing to some (Fisher & Pina, 2013).

Fisher and Pina (2013) note that female perpetrated sexual assault is a complex form of violence that needs to be addressed beginning with the legal discourse on the topic. Certainly, statutory rape provisions have been used to criminalize the rape of boys. However, Sahl and Keene (2012) report that abuse between an adult woman and young boy is considered less serious than abuse between an adult man and a young girl. This is also said to be true of teenage victims. In teenagehood, statutory rape is complicated as different jurisdictions have different ages of consent. Christopher and Hope (2012) found that in cases of statutory rape, there are moments where male survivors have been framed as rapists due to the patriarchal construction that teenage boys are interested in sex with women. In fact, men who admit that sex is not one of their main interests are vulnerable to having their "male (hetero)sexuality" questioned (Weiss, 2010, p. 277). In such instances, when the lines between female perpetrators and female victims begin to blur, the abuse of the female perpertrator's authority may be overshadowed by the

consent of her young victim. However, depending on the law, the survivor may be in fact too young to consent (Sahl & Keene, 2012; Christopher & Hope, 2012).

Pearlstein (2010) highlights the fact that while the legal age of consent and statutory rape laws are in place to "protect" teenage victims from other teenagers and arrests of same-age teenagers who had sex prior to reaching the age of consent are controversial (see also Bierie & Budd 2018), they are most frequently used in sexual assault cases between adult perpetrators and under-aged victims (p.110). In these cases, the differences between the adult offender and the child victim, both in terms of cognitive development as well as sexual experiences, are of major concern in discussions of young boys who have been assaulted (Bierie & Budd, 2018). Young boys, or young men, who have been sexually assaulted may also feel doubly victimized since boys are socialized to be strong and therefore it can be more difficult for them to talk about their abuse in the same way that women do (Danzer, 2011).

In keeping with the emphasis in the literature on location, there is also a body of work that focuses on the normalization of sexual assault on college and university campuses as well as prisons (King & Hanrahan, 2015). Moster and Jeglic (2009) report that, although many believe that male rape in prison is a common occurrence, prison wardens do not consider the sexual assault of inmates as a major concern as they believe it does not happen that frequently. However, there are counterarguments in the literature. For example, King and Hanrahan (2015) highlight the importance in debunking the common assumptions that rape is part of both university and prison culture, and Hill (2014) argues that male rape in prison is a failure of the corrections system to protect and ensure the health and safety of those in custody. All three call for the unpacking of rape narratives that responsibilize male survivors for their safety and place the onus on them to avoid being raped.

There are indications that male rape occurs in times of war and conflict although there are no definite statistics currently available. According to Maedl (2011), the use of rape as a weapon of warfare is now being extended beyond raping women and young girls to include the rape of young boys. This is important to note as discussion about global sex crimes in general tends to focus narrowly on the experiences of female victims. Accordingly, new research that suggests that both female and male bodies are being violated as a way to acquire territorial or political gain or as a tool of war (Maedl, 2011; Marshall, 2011) indicates that scholars may be expanding the discussion of male rape in ways that challenge traditional patriarchal assumptions.

However, literature addressing the subject of male victimization in general and male emotional responses and health outcomes in particular is still limited. DeBoise and Hearn (2017) found that men struggle with developing and subsequently expressing healthy emotions because they are socialized from a position of privilege. Heterosexuality is an active influencer on how male emotions are studied; as men are socialized to assert superiority over women, they also learn that being strong coincides with being rigid and emotionless (DeBoise & Hearn, 2017; Holmes, 2015; Kaufman, Divasto, Jackson, Voorhees, & Christy, 1980). Meth (2009) also reports that men's emotions (when discussed) revolve around power and how they mobilize their privilege over others. Holmes (2015) asserts that, in addition to acting on their privilege, men have internalized the role as the powerful ones in society. Consequently, men have internalized the need to restrain and control their emotions in order to display their power. That being said, men are taught that the socially accepted way to deal with their emotions is to channel them through "arousal, expression, and action" (DeBoise & Hearn, 2017, p. 65). This is conceptualized as sexual arousal and activity, controlling how one expresses their emotions, and acting out violently when they may feel like their masculine privilege is being challenged

(DeBoise & Hearn, 2017; Meth, 2009; Holmes, 2015). Additionally, there are certain emotions that men have not been socialized to process as they are feminizing, such as the emotion of fear (Meth, 2009; Javaid, 2018). Johansson and Ottemo (2015) attribute this to patriarchy and its ability to bind men to the concept of power and the goal of maintaining control.

Sexuality contributes to the strength of rape myths and plays a dynamic role in the entire discussion of rape. Labeling a heterosexual man who was assaulted by a man as gay leads male survivors to question their sexual orientation and at times their gender identity (Davies, 2000; Chapleau et al., 2008). This is due to the heteronormative social norms at play. In cases where the survivor is actually a gay man, the script frequently changes to paint a male rapist as a man using sexual assault to commit an anti-gay crime (Davies, 2000). As a result, gay men who have been assaulted by other men often internalize homophobia after the attack. Moreover, there are some gay men who are afraid that if their attacks are reported they will be involuntarily outed (Davies, 2000; Chapleau et al., 2008). Homophobia is accordingly a primary reason why male perpetrators often evade prosecution; the gay community is already marginalized in society and the additional shame a survivor would feel acts as a deterrent from reporting (Chapleau et al., 2008).

Kadyan and Unnithan (2017) raise the important note that sexuality as a category is reflected in a country's legal system and culture. For example, patriarchy is embedded in various ways throughout the global north and the global south and, as such, discussion of homosexuality or same-sex assaults is often repressed because the members of the LGBTQ+ community are marginalized and, in some jurisdictions, 'illegal' to a certain degree (Chapleau et al., 2008; Kadyan & Unnithan, 2017).

Another significant contributor to male rape myths is the gender of the perpetrator. Although stranger rapes are almost always committed by men, both men and women show more support for male rape myths when the attacker is a female (Chapleau, et al., 2008). Chapleau and colleagues (2008) argue that although men and women are constantly in a battle for dominance, men constantly win. Additionally, although victim blaming happens to victims of both genders, male rape myths are extremely strong when the perpetrator is female (Davies, 2000, p. 204). The assumed reasoning found in the literature is that men should never turn down sexual advances from a woman, which, again, presumes rape is a sexual act when it is, in fact, an act of violence and power (Davies, 2000; Conaghan & Russell, 2014).

A main rape myth about male victimization found in the literature was the false belief that men are able to fight off the attacker, and that a failure to do so is proof that the survivor wanted to be raped. Men are criticized for their inability to physically fight their attacker (Davies, 2000). As a result of this, the victim-blaming narrative of rape myths is reproduced: male survivors feel that their inability to fight off their attacker means that they are to blame for their assault (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). This stems from the overall misconception that all acts of rape include the use of additional physical violence (Hockett et al., 2015). Furthermore, this myth presumes that men are not vulnerable to being drugged or attacked by more than one person in the same ways that women are vulnerable. This myth is described by Chapleau and colleagues (2008) in this way: “a man is expected to be able to defend himself against sexual assault”; and “men cannot be forced to have sex against their will” (p. 605). This myth is amplified in cases where the attacker is a female.

The patriarchal mentality that men are constantly interested in sex is perpetuated in the male rape myth that being sexually assaulted does not truly upset men so they can recover much

more quickly from an assault than female victims (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). This myth is debunked in the literature where men have reported feelings of fear, anger and disgust post-attack (Davies, 2000). Moreover, men's sexual arousal during the attack is misconstrued as positive feelings towards the assault when, in fact, it is purely a biological response (Davies, 2000). Chapleau and colleagues (2008) explain that this is a result of the false belief that men are unable to function sexually unless they are aroused. This myth also perpetuates a false conception of how male rape occurs. The common assumption is that a female rapist forces her victim inside of her, when in actuality it is the male victim who is often on the receiving end of penetration.

1.3 The Gendering of Rape in the Literature

In this section, I discuss the gendered aspects of the literature on rape, which is primarily centered on the battle between female and male power. Given that rape myths are based on the patriarchical impositions of male and female gender roles, the topic of sexual assault is widely considered to be a women's issue. In the current neoliberal globalized climate, individuals are responsibilized when it comes to managing risks, including the risk of victimization (Bedera & Nordmeyer, 2015). Certainly, there is feminist literature that highlights how patriarchal assumptions which support ongoing and socially accepted forms of victimization of women make it more difficult for women to manage the risk of victimization (Rich et al., 2010; DuMont & Parnis, 1999). For example, the female body has been consistently objectified and sexualized in pop culture and images of women being portrayed as the property of men contribute to the false belief that men and masculine characters are entitled to the female body (Rich et al., 2010). Despite the misconception that women are the only ones at risk of being sexually assaulted, men still experience victimization (Tewksbury, 2007). Bedera and Nordmeyer (2015) highlight that,

in prevention programs, there is virtually no information or tips about how men can protect themselves from assault, thus reiterating the notion that sexual assault is not a man's issue.

The concept of a "rape myth" was introduced in the 1970s when western feminists were fighting for survivors of sexual assault (Davies, 2000). Myths can be rooted in religious practices, culture, or historical time periods; they can also be lies or "mistaken beliefs" (Ryan, 2011, p. 774). Both forms of myths influence human behavior as they can sometimes help an individual learn about their lifestyle and give that person meaning (Ryan, 2011). Rape myths are constituted as narratives that dictate what is considered a "real rape" and what is not considered an assault worthy of acknowledgement (Larcombe, 2011). Sociologists and feminists alike sought to expose "false cultural beliefs" that saturate rape myths and perpetuate violence against women (Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynold & Gidyez, 2011, p. 761).

Rape myths represent different forms of victim denial and dismissal. As stated by Franiuk, Seefelt and Vandello (2008), "rape myths are generalized and false beliefs about sexual assault [that] trivialize a sexual assault or suggest that a sexual assault did not occur" (p. 790). Although police are considered as the first contact within the criminal justice system, survivors are not likely to make this initial contact as they are afraid that their experiences will not be seriously considered because of rape myths (Russell, 2010; Vopni, 2006). For example, poor police attitudes towards victims is one of the main reasons why women avoid reporting (Russell, 2010; Quinlan, 2016; Vopni, 2006). The narrative that "nothing happened" is a common response among police officers who too often have denied the survivor's story from the beginning because she does not possess the characteristics of a "rapable" woman (Quinlan, 2016, p. 23). This attitude by the police is indicative of the broader narrative on sexual assault survivors that maintains that there are specific criteria that determine whether or not someone is

a ‘true’ victim. Alderden and Ullman (2012) found that “socially desirable responses” also have an impact on the level of blame that law enforcement officers may place on survivors, regardless of their gender (p. 8).

The socially desirable response myth contributes to the completion of a “real rape template” which outlines the specific traits of the assault that would qualify it as legitimate; the more traits, the more legitimate the sexual assault is considered to be (DuMont & Parnis, 1999; DuMont & Parnis, 1999; Larcombe, 2011, p. 31). Examples of these traits include women being visibly emotional when reporting the incident, the need for empirical evidence such as obvious physical injury, the clothing that was worn during the assault, being female, and being attacked by a stranger (DuMont & Parnis 1999; DuMont & Parnis, 1999; Larcombe, 2011; Nordmeyer, 2015; Tewksbury, 2007; Vause, 2004; Vopni, 2006). However, it is important to note that while these traits serve to “legitimize” the assault, they do not reflect the actual assault itself. In addition to women having to prove their assault, it is also their responsibility to act as a lady. For example, tears are expected during a survivor’s retelling of her assault (DuMont & Parnis, 1999).

Larcombe (2011) highlights the role that gender stereotypes play in the reproducing of rape myths. When women are assaulted, it is rare that there is shock or social outcry that the survivor lost their power as they have been socialized as the inferior gender. As Nordmeyer (2015) reports, women are expected to remain sexually passive and simultaneously attractive to please the male gaze. As such, “real rape” templates serve to fuel or substantiate the rape myth that male rape does not exist and occur (DuMont & Parnis, 1999; Hockett et al., 2015).

Similarly, rape scripts, a concept coined by Ryan (2011) to expand the “real rape template”, allude to a model image of a rape (p. 775). The most popular rape script is that of the “blitz rape” (Ryan, 2011, p. 775). This is the well-known story of the woman who walks home

alone, chooses to take a shortcut through an alleyway and is raped by a male, whom she has never met and who quite possibly suffers from a mental illness, who jumps out and attacks her (Ryan, 2011). Depending on where the attack is taking place, the man may drag the woman to a more secluded area. Next, the attacker likely uses a punch, kick, or some other form of physical violence to assert his power over the victim (Ryan, 2011). At this point, the attacker starts removing the victim's clothing and forcing himself in/on them. Once the attack is over, the man flees the scene (Ryan, 2011).

Rape scripts also help to construct the "ideal victim": a young white woman who fits societal beauty standards (Hockett, et al., 2015, p. 309) who is subjected to a "vicious attack by a stranger" (Franiuk et al., 2008); and highlight that the closer a sexual assault fits this mold, the more sympathy the victim will receive (p. 791). Typically, templates of such vicious attacks involve a female victim and a male perpetrator (Ryan, 2011; Hockett, et al., 2015; Franiuk, et al., 2008). Accordingly, in most conversations about sexual assault, the perpetrator is almost always depicted as a man and therefore the possibility of a victim being a man is difficult for some to understand and to accept. This is reinforced by the popular rape myth that frames rapists as "monsters" (Larcombe, 2011, p. 36). Presenting men as beasts works in tandem with the common misconception that strangers sexually assault victims, when in actuality in most cases that have been reported, the survivor knew the perpetrator (Larcombe, 2011; Vopni, 2006). It also makes it less likely that people will think of a woman as a perpetrator.

Selmini and MceIrath (2014) found that the studies of victims and offenders have continuously failed to consider gender scripts and their impacts. Female survivors are blamed for their assault as it is their responsibility to take the necessary precautions in order to avoid an assault. They can be subjected to a "second rape", referring to law enforcement's lack of

sensitivity when obtaining victim statements, which many argue is rooted in a lack of adequate training (DuMont & Parnis, 1999; Javaid, 2016; Rich et al., 2010; Smith, 2010, p. 24). Police appear to lack understanding of how difficult and emotionally stressful it is for a survivor to have to retell the story of such a traumatic incident in their life. Rather, the focus is on pushing the survivor to disclose so a case against the accused can be promptly built (Peterson & Franzese, 1987; Rich et al., 2010; Vopni, 2006). Secondary points of contact such as the courts are also accordingly ill equipped to respond to the needs of survivors because court workers also rely on inaccurate gendered scripts of how women should act and who can be raped (Russell, 2010; Rossella & Selmini, 2014; Larcombe, 2011).

Male rape myths are similar in nature and reasoning to female rape myths, although they are enacted differently (Chapleau et al., 2008). Believing in rape myths is a form of sexism as rape myths traditionally place women in a position of subordination (Franiuk et al., 2008; Conaghan & Russell, 2014). For men, believing in rape myths helps them to maintain their privileged position in the social hierarchy. For their part, women tend to accept rape myths and internalize their victimization as a result of being socialized to believe that men are superior (Hockett, Saucier & Badke, 2015). When the victim is a male, men are more likely to continue to accept rape myths and blame the survivor for his assault, whereas women, who are more familiar with victimization in other aspects of their lives, find it easier to sympathize with male survivors (Chapleau, Oswald & Russell, 2008).

Cultural differences also shape how male rape victims are perceived. For example, the cultural beliefs that a man is entitled to the female body regardless of consent and that his socio-economic status (e.g. his job, the amount of money he has, his marital status etc.) makes him

more entitled combine to make rape a common outcome because of a man's upbringing and self-image (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Durkle, 2011).

It appears as though myths about male rape are rooted in the inability to recognize that the assault itself is a possibility. In essence, it is the myth that "men cannot be raped" (Davies, 2000, p. 204). When discussing male rape, some find that when the survivor is a male the motive for the assault is, in fact, sexual desire and need (Anderson & Swainson, 2001). Although the number of stranger-perpetrated rapes and acquaintance rapes are similar to the same crimes against women, men who are raped are especially ridiculed when they do not fight back due to the socially accepted belief that true rapes involve some form of violence against and physical defense on the part of the victim (Anderson & Swaison, 2001; Davies, Gilston, & Roger, 2012). This is amplified by hegemonic masculine beliefs that men always use violence to fight aggression (Davies, 2000).

Feminist activists argue that rape is not sexual in nature; rather, it is violent and it is one of the most invasive ways to assert one's power over someone else (Conaghan & Russell, 2014; Davies, 2000). However, the conceptualization of rape as a physically violent act is used as a tool to further victimize male survivors, as they are assumed to be the gender with more power and physical strength. As such, men who are physically weak or unable to defend themselves in the context of rape are subsequently branded as weaker men (Davies, 2000).

Sexual assault is also constructed as a form of heterosexual and heteronormative patriarchal violence that men inflict on women. As rape myths are constantly being reproduced in order to resonate with contemporary society, Conaghan and Russell (2014) question if rape is a result of "sexual miscommunication" (p. 29). This refers to the assumption that men and women are unable to clearly communicate their sexual intentions, resulting in one person being

unable to adequately consent (Conaghan & Russell, 2014). However, this possibility is problematic because it can trivialize rape as "about sex", thereby erasing the dynamics of violence and power that comprise rape (Conaghan & Russell, 2014, p. 30).

Rape scripts such as the "man-is-ready-for-sex" script not only silence the male assault victim but they reconstruct someone's trauma into an acceptable experience (Ryan, 2011). Victim-blaming then adopts the narrative that if a man is attacked by a woman, he unknowingly initiated the sex and actually ended up liking the assault (Davies, 2000). As such, the failure to protect himself from his female attacker fuels the myth that men are not true victims of rape (Struckman-Johnsons, 1992).

The literature highlights that rape culture plays a role in the long term lives of survivors; however, the lives of male survivors are affected differently than the lives of female survivors (Davies, 2000). Gay men, for example, experience relationship problems and diminished sexual performance whereas heterosexual men struggle with their sexuality after being raped. These unique experiences of men are proof that rape crisis services need to be educated on male victimization (Davies, 2000). Davies (2000) furthers this argument by saying that there is "virtually no publicity" about transgender survivors in the literature (p. 208). The literature postulates that heterosexual men are significantly less likely to be survivors of sexual assault than bisexual and gay men (Davies, 2000).

Within the literature there is a general consensus that sexual assault cases are extremely underreported; this is even more so when the survivor is a male. Female rape and victimization receives more support as it is constructed as a phenomenon worthy of societal recognition, discussion, and concern (Javaid, 2016; Tewksbury & Mustain, 2001). As a result, many of the rape myths that are discussed stem from the belief that all rape survivors are female.

Consequently, male rape myths are merely considered as an afterthought in which female rape myths are subsequently tweaked to accommodate the male persona.

However, both female and male rape myths can be linked to patriachical assumptions. According to Edwards and colleagues (2011) sexual violence takes place in a society that practices patriarchy and, as a result, grants men more power than women. Operating under such a regime, men are far more likely than women to believe that rape myths are true (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). By accepting rape myths, men are also mobilizing patriarchy as a way to rationalize the likelihood of them engaging in acts of aggression, particularly sexual aggression (Ryan, 2011). The opposite is believed to be true; as women hold the subordinate position in society, they are less accepting of rape myths (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). However, there are some women who internalize patriarchal assumptions and accordingly believe rape myths to be true. These women will commonly blame victims and become critical, sometimes more critical than men, of female survivors (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992).

Davies (2000) suggests that men who belittle their trauma after being assaulted are men who have also internalized patriarchy. Specifically, in these cases, the gendered rape myth that men are more resilient to trauma is internalized. Moreover, given men's privileged place as heterosexual sexual aggressors in patriarchal terms, men who were able to function sexually when attacked by another male often have their sexual orientation questioned (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). In the occurrence of same sex rape, both the attacker and the survivor are perceived as homosexuals (Edwards, et al., 2011; Chapleau, et al., 2008). Feminist literature argues against this myth by reaffirming that rape is about violence and not sex. In the absence of female bodies, men in secluded areas will use rape to feminize other men

and not as an expression of their sexuality (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). When the attacker is a woman, rape myths suggest that the sexual assault is not as bad for a male victim. The expectancy for psychological trauma because of a female aggressor is also reduced due to the misconception that men would rather be assaulted by a female than a male. However, in reality, no victim wishes to be assaulted (Davies, 2000).

Hockett (2015) further articulates this narrative by noting that "common sexual scripts" depict men as the sex-driven gender who are always willing to initiate sexual experiences (p. 310). This myth frames sexual assault as an unexpected positive experience in male survivors' lives as it is believed that men are always ready for any sexual opportunity with a woman (Chapleau, et al. 2008). This myth is an example of how male rape myths, like female rape myths, are shaped by a patriarchal structure in which women are socialized to be sexually passive whereas men are socialized to be sexually forward (Davies, 2000).

Despite the mislabeling of rape as a form of sex, Sleath and Bull (2010) found that the term "physically forced sex" avoids any bias or confusion that may be attributed to the sexual assault (p. 976). Furthermore, this understanding can be applied to both female and male rape. It also casts a wider net as to what can be considered sexual assault. For example, the definition of rape did not include anal penetration in the United Kingdom until the late 90s, and other countries such as Canada use the term sexual assault to include various forms of violence (Lundrigan & Johnson, 2013). These notions contribute to the low levels of reporting by men as their assaults may not be recognized socially or legally, thereby minimizing the suffering they experience (Sleath & Bull, 2010; Lundrigan & Johnson, 2013). Even when the victims are assaulted as children, men and young boys are overlooked because of social assumptions that the

common victims of childhood sexual abuse are young girls and women (Kia-Keating, Sorsoli, & Grossman, 2010).

1.4 Conclusion

The literature on the topic of male rape is grounded in understandings of female rape and the sexual victimization of women. Consequently, current understandings of male rape reassert that men cannot be true "victims" of sexual violence for two main reasons: firstly, they are believed to hold power over women because of their status as men and are therefore seen as sexual actors in control of sexual interactions; and secondly, the role of being a victim has been assigned to the female person. This also underlines the heteronormative assumptions embedded in the literature on male rape. For example, same sex assaults were not included in the general conversation unless the rape took place in environments such as the military, prisons, and other total institutions.

My research is motivated by a desire to explore some of these problems. In particular, I am interested in seeing if/how heteronormative narratives (especially the status of able-bodied and socially desirable women as the "natural" victims of sexual assault) reassert themselves in discussions of male rape. Unpacking these heteronormative assumptions is important because there is so little discussion in the literature that addresses the specific experiences of men as victims. Additionally, the reviewed literature suggests that when the victim of a rape or sexual assault is a man, the conversation circles back to sex and not violence. Examining whether or not, and the extent to which, this focus on sex as opposed to violence is reproduced in my data will shed light on popular constructions of male rape as a phenomenon .

Ultimately, I am casting a wide net in hopes of generating a basis to continue the conversation on male rape and narrow the gap of knowledge about the topic. Walsh and Vaske

(2015) report that in domestic and sexual crime the focus remains completely on women; my research aims to expand the conversation to include male victims and survivors. My research is therefore exploratory in nature and aims to go beyond using female experiences to frame male rape and to see what is being said about male experiences and perspectives by men themselves. At the same time, this approach will allow me to explore the existence and reproduction of myths and heteronormative structures pertaining to male victimization in sexual assaults on social media, specifically on Twitter. I aim to explore whether or not patriarchal constructions of gender are applied to men who are raped as they are to women who are raped and, if not, what the differences between the two are. This will allow me to examine how the discussion changes when the incident does not conform to the common belief that the survivor of rape is always a woman who has been assaulted by a man. To explore this, I pose the following research question:

"How is the meaning of male rape constructed on Twitter?"

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

This chapter will discuss the theoretical framework I mobilized in the analysis of my data. The theoretical framework that I adopted for my research mobilizes concepts that are rooted in feminist approaches. Given that I am carrying out feminist criminological research, I sought to mobilize theories that focus on gender binaries and the power imbalances that result from binary polarizations. Specifically, I mobilize the concepts of the social construction of gender and hegemonic masculinity to conduct my analysis. These concepts are suitable for my project as they allowed me to understand how people discuss male rape, especially when hegemonic masculine assumptions (such as the idea that men are powerful while women are passive victims) are overturned by the simple fact of male victimization. As my research is situated in the critical paradigm, it was beneficial to approach my findings with this conceptual framework as it provided me with more insight to understand my data. Although they both have similar ways of shaping knowledge, the intersection of these two theoretical concepts is particularly relevant to my topic as hegemonic masculinity operates under the paradigm that sees gender as a social construct. Moreover, other researchers in gender studies have mobilized both when explaining the power imbalances between genders thereby demonstrating both are helpful tools to identify and understand patriarchal structures (Walsh & Vaske, 2015; Segal & Ngn-ling Chow, 2011).

I am drawn to feminist criminology because it creates spaces where patriarchal structures can be discussed and challenged, especially with regards to the topic of sexual assault. Centering gender enables a researcher to unpack the consequences that follow when men are classified as superior to women, and when the legal system upholds the heteronormative masculine understandings of sexuality that support patriarchy (Naffine, 1996; Renzetti, 2013). Thus,

considering the impact that patriarchy has on men's and women's experiences is imperative to feminist research.

Intersectionality is an important aspect of feminist research. Collins and Bilge (2016) find that intersectionality is often mobilized in research when one of the main aims is to encourage equality. The main factors considered are gender, race and class; Collins and Bilge (2016) suggest that there are other factors, such as sexuality, age, ability and ethnicity, that should also be considered. In addition, the inconsistent application of socio-economic political factors understood as intersections make it difficult to mobilize intersectionality the same way in each context (Collins & Bilge, 2016). This is particularly true of my data. Twitter posts are stripped of any proven individual characteristics, and it is impossible to ascertain if the poster is indeed male/female, rich/poor, racialized/non-racialized, etc. Accordingly, this thesis explores the constructions of male rape as they are presented by text in posts and online responses. Although my analysis suggests that further work is required to explore the intersectional aspects of male rape, my chosen data set strictly limits my ability to engage in that analysis in this early exploratory work.

2.1 The Social Construction of Gender

In this sub-section, I discuss the theory of the social construction of gender and how it applies to my research on sexual assault, as well as the biological differences that are used to fuel the social binary faced by men and women. Judith Butler (1993) conceptualizes gender to explore how a gendered world disadvantages women. As Butler (1993) notes, the unstable definition of gender reveals that gender can be manipulated to redistribute power in ways that may benefit individuals seen as superior in society. This conceptualization of gender is therefore

rooted in social constructivism, as it is the interaction with others that creates the understanding of society.

My research explores the dichotomous view of gender as this is present in both the literature and my data. Specifically, the literature and my sample reveal that gender is divided into two categories: man/male and woman/female. The normative assumptions of gender as a binary are based on constructs stemming from the biological differences that distinguish males and females (Alcoff, 2008; Kane & Parks, 1992; Norton, 1997; Smith, 2001). The normative assumptions underpinning the binary construct is that "sex is an observable set of anatomical characteristics" (Norton, 1997, p. 2). These observable anatomical characteristics include but are not limited to: aspects of the physical body; the female ability to carry a child; and the different distributions of testosterone and estrogen (Alcoff, 2008; Norton, 1997; Smith, 2001). Norton (1997) acknowledges that there are biological differences between males and females but that gender "is a socially constructed phenomenon" (p. 1).

Patriarchal constructions use these biological differences to establish different roles for men and women in society and this is referred to as a form of "gender differentiation" (Kane & Parks, 1992; Ljungholm, 2016; Smith, 2001). This gender differentiation is based on the claim that females and femininity are fundamentally different from males and masculinity (Kane & Parks, 1992; Vojdik, 2002). As such, the predetermination of gender performances based on biological differences are considered justifiable, thereby leading to the traditional separation of men and women (Ljungholm, 2016; Biever, Fuentes, Cashion, & Franklin, 1998). In order to abide by the biological arguments that serve to support gender differentiation, one's gender must align with one's corresponding biological sex (Choplin, 2011; Smith, 2001). Therefore, gender

cannot stop at the mere recognition that male and female bodies are anatomically different but requires that a woman has a female body and a man has a male body (Norton, 1997).

The normalized gender binary creates harsh lines of division. For example, people with intersex bodies are pressured to make the choice of which sex, and consequently which gender, they will perform and be expected to adhere to (Alcoff, 2008; Choplin, 2011; Norton, 1997; Smith, 2001; Vojdik, 2002). People who challenge these constructs are referred to as "gender outlaws" (Vojdik, 2002, p. 2). I am interested in exploring whether or not male survivors of rape fall into this category as men are not typically seen as survivors of sexual violence.

According to the social construction of gender framework, gender performance is integral to the reproduction of gender roles and binaries. Discourses emerge from the reproduction of gender norms as they inform the actions needed for gender differences to take effect (Butler, 1993). While gender performance entails acting according to social roles, discourse informs and re-informs what roles are attributed to men and women. Thus, the performance of gender picks up where discourse left off, and power dynamics remain embedded in both models as men must always be allocated more power than women. Butler (1993) discusses the relationship between bodies and gender, wherein bodies can be sexed and prioritized as a result of the gender that has been assigned to them. Traditionally, gender has been divided as man/woman and the female gender is inferior and at the service of the male gaze (Choplin, 2011; Easley, 1995; Kane & Parks, 1992; Ljungholm, 2016; Biever et al., 1998). This division leads to "gender discrimination" where one sex is favored over the other (Vojdik, 2002, p. 11). Some scholars question whether or not the male gender is considered to be innately superior because of its association with the male sexed body or because male superiority has been stamped as the norm. To this effect, the literature argues that men and male associated characteristics are rendered

superior not because they are “better”, but rather because they have been designated as the norm in society (Ljungholm, 2016, p.49). Consequently, female oppression and the power imbalances between genders become legitimized (Smith, 2001).

As a result of their biological makeup, men and women are each assigned predetermined roles to play in society. These predeterminations inform gender role socialization and the teaching and re-teaching of gender differences as natural rather than something that is “materially constructed” (Patrick & Beckenbah, 2009; Vojdik, 2002, p. 18). According to Alcoff (2008), biology should not be the sole defining agent of gender differentiation. Biology can be a grounding factor; however other factors such as environment, personal experiences, socialization, and religion all impact the ways in which one experiences, interprets, performs and absorbs gender (Alcoff, 2008, p. 8). The aforementioned factors that influence gender performances are maintained because men and women have predetermined roles within each factor and their performance of these gendered norms is continually policed.

Institutions are gendered, as “gender is a social practice that is produced [...] within institutions as well” (Vojik, 2002, p. 6). Therefore, the knowledge we gain about gender is based on the institutional structure and not our personal beliefs or feelings (Alcoff, 2008; Kane & Parks, 1992; Vojdik, 2002). Gender and sexual orientation are two different aspects of one’s identity that should remain separate when being evaluated. However, they currently operate in tandem within a heterosexual and heteronormative framework (Norton, 1997).

Gender performance requirements make it challenging for individuals to adopt or display traits that are prescribed to the opposing gender. For example, it is often challenging for male survivors of rape to claim credibility given that sexual assault is typically prescribed to female survivors. To this end, in these cases, the gender binary is flipped on its end. Moreover,

challenging these binary understandings is increasingly difficult because individuals are constantly policing one another, especially in discussions that involve power, such as rape. The consistent policing of behaviours and physical appearances results in the "disregard of [autonomous] personal gender identity" (Ljungholm, 2016, p. 2). The resulting rigidity of patriarchal constructions makes it difficult for individuals to challenge binary understandings of gender. This is especially true in environments in which men and women are clearly separated by gender (e.g. in sports, competitions, etc.).

The media in particular plays a leading role in reinforcing binary gender division (Kane & Parks, 1992). For example, in the world of sports journalism, someone who reads as male is evaluated based on their physical and athletic abilities, whereas someone who reads as female is assessed based on their femininity and personal life. If a male athlete was in an interview and the interviewer asked him how he was feeling, an expected answer would be that he feels strong and ready to compete. An unacceptable answer would be if he explained how distressed he was because he is working things out with an estranged family member. Even in cases where male athletes begin discussing anything personal in nature, interviewers gear the conversation back to physical prowess (Kane & Parks, 1992). These patriarchal norms may restrict how men share their experiences as survivors of rape in similar ways.

Moreover, since women are believed to be the gender that is better equipped to deal with emotions, situations in which emotions are high are often times reserved for the female sex (Biever et al., 1998; Choplin, 2011; Kane & Parks, 1992). For instance, if a female athlete was experiencing pain, reporters often quickly attribute the pain to a woman's menstrual cycle and then proceed to ask questions on coping mechanisms for menstrual pains (Kane & Parks, 1992). Male athletes are rarely asked for the cause of their cramps. Instead, they are congratulated for

"fighting the pain", "persevering", "man-ing up", and other gendered expressions of masculinity (Kane & Parks, 1992, p. 3). These assumptions are also seen in rape scripts where female victims' bodies are highly scrutinized to see if they conform to gendered norms and male victims find their masculinity is questioned. Men are told that, in emotionally distressing situations, they must suppress their feelings as failure to do so results in the destabilizing of gender norms (Biever et al., 1998; Patrick & Beckenbach, 2009). Despite the fact that some men choose to express their emotions freely, masculinities are produced and reproduced through the normalized reminder that the male sex is to remain unemotional (Biever et al., 1998; Smith, 2001). These masculinities may also limit how men can talk about the emotional and physical pain they experience as rape survivors.

Male power perpetuates patriarchal power roles. The power that men hold as a result of the gender imbalance is not natural, but rather an accepted and constructed superiority which serves to render them powerful (Ljungholm, 2016). For example, traits that are associated with masculinity, like rationality and logic, have historically been perceived to be more valuable than traits that are associated with feminity, like emotions and caring. Men are accordingly seen as more valuable than women because they are assumed to have these traits. As a result, the male holds more power. He is considered to be the "doer" who naturally makes use of rationality and logic and is in control, whereas women are the "nurturer[s]" who are extremely emotional and act out of feelings, not rationality (Kane & Parks, 1992; Biever et al., 1998, p. 165). This leads to social hierarchies in which "male-assigned people are given higher status than female-assigned people" (Choplin, 2011, p. 56). As such, a social environment and structure that oppresses women and impedes on their possibilities of having diverse social experiences outside of subordination is created (Ljungholm, 2016; Biever et al., 1998).

In relation to my research topic, just as it is considered "unwomanly" to deviate from the pre-designated position or attempt to use logic and rationality openly (Biever et al., 1998), it may be considered "unmanly" to reveal one's victimization because "cultural patterns" use bodily differences to treat people differently (Connell, 2002, p. 9).

2.2 Hegemonic masculinity

This sub-section discusses hegemonic masculinity, as coined by Connell (2002), and how it interacts with the social construction of gender. Both concepts are necessary as my topic interrogates power and gender roles simultaneously. As cited by Connell (2002), Simone de Beauvoir notes that one is not born masculine by nature; rather one acquires masculinity and mobilizes it, therefore becoming a man. Connell (2002) notes that, psychologically, men and women are not that different and, therefore, patriarchal structures are what keep them unequal. She argues that feminist research on power imbalances based on gender continues to search for differences between the two genders instead of studying how similar men and women are, and concludes that this continued emphasis on the dissimilarities between men and women reflects the ways in which systemic differences have been imbedded in culture, politics, and history to position men as powerful and superior while relegating women to subordinate positions (Connell, 2002).

Hegemonic masculinity operates under the widely accepted ideology that men are the dominant actors in society and, as a result, women are subordinate (Smith, Parrott, Swartout & Tharp, 2014). In rape narratives, men are accordingly constructed as the predators and women as the victims. The face of hegemonic masculinity is the "white, heterosexual, middle class man", who expects to have access to female sexuality. This has been considered to be the ultimate image of power in most patriarchal societies (Lanzieri & Hildebrandt, 2011, p. 278). Another

central component to hegemonic masculinity is the male's constant need for power and dominance, i.e., "men's need to control others in order to achieve status according to oneself [and] in society as a whole" (Smith et al., 2014, p. 162). Male use of power and dominance support the current patriarchal society and hegemonic masculinity demonstrates how patriarchy operates and reproduces itself in society (Messerschmidt, 2012).

An effective way of conceptualizing hegemonic masculinity is to turn the analysis inwards on the concept itself, revealing that there are several masculinities operating under the broader concept of hegemonic masculinity (Messerschimidt, 2012). Hegemonic masculinity then, refers to a *specific* form of manhood that is superior to other masculinities regardless of the context (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015, p.7). Other masculinities are either considered to be subordinate, marginalized, or complicit (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015, p.7). For example, traditional masculinity is comprised of three criteria: it is socially constructed; there are several traditional masculinities; and it is not equal to hegemonic masculinity (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015, p.5). It is problematic to use traditional and hegemonic interchangeably when referring to masculinities. Namely, the use of "traditional" refers to a form of masculinity that has somehow ended. However, elements of both forms of masculinities continue to be present in society today (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015). Hegemonic masculinity's power is exercised over other men just as it is over women. Men are constantly policed by of other men to see if the principles of hegemonic masculinity are being upheld (Messerschmidt, 2012). The masculinity that only exerts its violent power solely against women is that of "hypermasculinity", where men exercise power in a violent and aggressive way (Jewkes, et al. 2011, p. 114).

By itself, hegemony refers to one group dominating another. Within this ideology, the dominating group has "a system of overarching rules" that everyone must live with and abide by

(Lanzieri & Hilderbandt, 2011, p.278). Since it is so engrained in a society, hegemonic masculinity can only be redefined after its normative assumptions have been challenged (Lanzieri & Hilderbandt, 2011). However, when evaluating hegemony, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that one group is never in complete power and control. Rather, hegemony refers to the distribution of power and the subordinate group's constant struggle to gain power (Johansson & Ottemo, 2015). Within hegemonic masculinity both men and women possess distinct roles. Men possess roles associated with control, power and domination, while women possess roles linked to loss of control, powerlessness and subordination – there appears to be no in between (Johansson & Ottemo, 2015, p. 195). As various roles are associated with men and women, the form of masculinity cannot be rigid; it must remain adaptable to any context in order to ensure men remain in control.

The term hegemonic masculinity, however, has never been universally defined (Messerschimidt, 2012). Masculinity adapts to the circumstances it finds in any context. Due to its fluidity, masculinity can be "molded by sociocultural constellations" that shape constructions of sexuality and gender on a spectrum (Lanzerieri & Hilderbrandt, 2011). My project is, accordingly, interested in exploring how discussions of male rape challenge hegemonic masculinity and if/how hegemonic masculinity seeks to reassert itself to shut down these potential challenges.

As aforementioned, an individual first comes to understand masculinity during childhood mainly through family experiences (Lanzerieri & Hilderbrandt, 2011). This early development then brands the understanding or construction of masculinity with an imprint of a specific time during history within a specific context (Jewkes et al., 2011). Once this initial understanding and conceptualization of masculinity is mobilized, the individual then learns and re-learns

masculinities. In order for hegemonic masculinity to be upheld within and through various cultures, institutions themselves must also adhere to hegemonic masculinity (Lee, 2010).

Patriarchy must be considered when analyzing gender orders such as hegemonic masculinity (Johansson & Ottemo, 2015). Typically, women are granted significantly less power and social status than men. As a result, men not only dominate women, they also dominate and control political structures in the community (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015). Everitt-Penhale and Ratele (2015) report that recent trends for more gender equality reflect "modern ideologies [that] allow a more egalitarian distribution of [social status and power]" (p. 9). However, this is constrained by the shift from traditional to modern (or current hegemonic) masculinities. As masculinity is fluid, the distinction between these two forms of masculinities is not clear-cut. Indeed, modern masculinity influences the perception of traditional masculinity, where cisgender men are in possession of the majority of power, and "vice versa" (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015, p. 8). Everitt-Penhale and Ratele (2015) argue that tradition can be challenged as there is no difference between "real" or "invented" traditional masculinity (p.8).

Hegemonic masculinity can be explained through a comparison with American military culture. Military culture is based on rituals and ceremonies that are conducted in order to endorse a common standard, similar to the way that masculinity is reproduced to retain its dominance in society (Lee, 2010). Despite their rigidity and unwillingness to change, both hegemonic masculinity and military culture redefine what is required in certain circumstances. For example, peacekeeping masculinity in military culture, like community policing, would initially be considered feminine; however due to its transformative nature, hegemonic masculinity rewrites itself to consider peacemaking the noble and logical approach (Duncanson, 2015; Lee, 2010).

Thus, peacemaking was redefined as more valuable in order to reassert hegemonic masculinity (Messerschmidt, 2012).

Hegemonic masculinity, as previously discussed, enacts itself differently in different contexts. Masculinities are molded to reflect aspects of poverty or power, neighborhood dynamics and regional cultures and manipulate the impacts of these factors in ways that are favourable to the masculine agenda (Jewkes, et al., 2011, p. 114). Masculinities are diverse; however, there are still common narratives present regardless of the geographical or cultural location, the most prominent being the craze over muscles and physical strength in men (Messerschmidt, 2012).

Hegemonic masculinity mobilizes narratives that support heterosexuality. In the context of sexualities, homosexuality is subordinate to heterosexuality, especially since heterosexuality has been strongly linked to hegemonic masculinity. Despite an increase in the acceptance of homosexuality, members of the queer community are not celebrated, but merely tolerated within society (Duncanson, 2015, p. 239). This is true even when some homosexual men fulfill all other requirements of hegemonic masculinity apart from their sexuality. Lee (2010) describes hegemonic masculinity as the reinforcement of the "masculine paradigm" (p.15). An analysis of gay culture can help provide insight into the traits that are considered to be masculine. This analysis is necessary because homosexual or feminine gay men must work that much harder to prove that they are masculine (Lanzieri & Hildebrandt, 2011). Men who practice hegemonic masculinity define masculinity as avoiding femininity and express that they "feel threatened" when they are in a position of subordination to a woman (Smith, et al., 2014, p. 166).

Masculine traits vary from physical traits that can be seen and felt to verbal traits such as pitch of voice to problem-solving skills (Lanzieri & Hildebrandt, 2011). Although there are

common understandings of what traits are considered masculine, there is no unanimous agreement of a specific list of traits (Messerschmit, 2012). As hegemonic masculinity operates under heterosexual constructions, the image of the man is ultimately shaped to please the female gaze (Messerschmit, 2012). Physical traits of hegemonic masculinity are the easiest to identify. The most popular example, stemming from Western culture, is that of the ideal male body, whose muscles and "muscularity signif[y] maleness and dominance" (Messerschmidt, 2012, p. 62). Theoretically, gay men desire the same traits in men as heterosexual women desire. The desire for muscles is present in both communities, as homosexual men favor "lean, proportionate, muscular [physically fit] men" (Lanzieri & Hildebrant, 2011, p. 276). The male body itself embodies masculinity and, therefore, it must be maintained and remain pleasing to the eye. The image of the muscular male body is a significant source of pressure on men to conform to the standards of hegemonic masculinity (Lanzieri & Hildebrant, 2011).

Another distinctive element of masculinity is aggression and this suggests that male victims should respond to violence with violence. Stereotypical masculine traits are accordingly linked to violent actions, such as fighting and sexual aggression (Lee, 2010, p. 12). For example, since aggression is an example of a male trait that is central to one's manhood (Smith, et al., 2014), men in the military are more likely to commit violent crimes than their female counterparts even though the military seeks to treat both genders equally (Lee, 2010). This is because "real [violence and] fighting" is considered masculine (Messerschmidt, 2012, p. 66). The image of being macho is associated with masculinity and as a result man-on-man violence is encouraged and normalized (Jewkes, et al., 2011, p. 121).

Other traits of masculinity include "independence, toughness, assertiveness, emotional restrictiveness, competitiveness and hardiness [...]" (Messerschmidt, 2012, p. 62). These traits

define a man's life, meaning that the more traits one possesses, the more masculine and therefore the more powerful one is. For example, being able to function independently reflects notions of being strong and confident, all of which contribute to the masculine image (Messerschmidt, 2012).

While homophobia can be used as a tool to analyze hegemonic masculinity, dismantling this concept is necessary in order to challenge hegemonic masculinity to be more accepting of differences (Johansson & Ottemo, 2015). My project seeks to see if and how discussions of male rape provide a moment to challenge this, since men are the survivors of the violence and unable to assert physical dominance or aggression.

Hegemonic masculinity does not operate as a structure independent from women and femininity. I am, therefore, interested in exploring how women are constructed in discussions of male rape. Men's avoidance of femininity and the minimizing of actions, thoughts, and feelings that appear overtly feminine illustrate that women play an active role in upholding hegemonic masculinity (Smith, et al., 2014). The dominant operates by having the subordinate remain subordinate. The literature argues that women are reproducing their subordination and are therefore reproducing patriarchy (Smith et al., 2014). Femininity outlines that women must be compliant, accomodating to others and, most importantly, accommodating to hegemonic masculinity (Messerschmidt, 2012). "Emphasized femininity" strengthens hegemonic masculinity ideals by limiting female agency (Messerschmidt, 2012). Therefore, in order to dismantle hegemonic masculinity in its entirety, femininity must also be deconstructed. This is not to say that various masculinities would still have power over one another in the absence of femininity as the unequal gender, but that internal and external relations are vital to hegemonic masculinity's survival (Messerschmidt, 2012). Hegemonic masculinity is complex in that it

oversees masculine and feminine ways of life (Messerschmidt, 2012). It ensures that men continue to possess their domination over women (Lanzieri & Hildebrant, 2011). In this managing of everyday life "anything overtly feminine is placed in a submissive category" (Lanzieri & Hildebrant, 2011, p. 288). The avoidance of feminine traits has been constructed as appropriate under the patriarchal society where subordinating women has become normal for both genders (Everit-Penhale & Ratele, 2015). Hegemonic masculinity reasserts itself by assuring that patriarchal gender differences remain unequal between men and women (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015).

Jewkes and colleagues (2011) argue that hegemonic masculinity can be conceptualized as a theory advocating for positive change. In order to bring about the positive change, the social construction of gender and gender binaries must be deconstructed (Jewkes, et al., 2011). Attempts to deconstruct binary gender norms have been conceptualized as "gender transformative" as they suggest that there is a wider range of ways to enact gender, which in turn will reduce instances of gender-based violence (Jewkes, et al., 2011, p.119). Men can also use their power to advocate for equality among the genders, and in this way create a masculinity that is "open to equality with women" (Duncanson, 2015, p. 241)

In summary, both gender roles and patriarchy emerged as key concepts in my theoretical framework. Power and dominance also surfaced as key concepts used to understand how socially constructed roles impact real life consequences. The term binary was used in conjunction with other important concepts, such as heteronormativity and hegemony. There was a common theme of control and policing of social interactions to reinforce gendered norms and hegemonic masculinity.

The concepts of hegemonic masculinity and the social construction of gender inform my topic as they allow me to itemize the traits and roles associated with the two gender categories. As hegemonic masculinity shapes the experiences of both men and women, it will help me compare and constrast the experiences of female and male rape survivors. The concept of power and its exchange, distribution, assertion, and role in society was emergent in both frameworks as well. The benefit to referring to two related frameworks is that the list of key concepts to refer to when making sense of my data will be layered with different approaches to the topic of male rape and its online construction.

Chapter 3: Methodological Approach

This chapter outlines the methodological approach mobilized to collect, sort, and analyze my data. The main goal of my research was to explore the construction of male rape on social media. I applied content analysis as my research method. The data source was Twitter, an online international social media platform. I collected tweets that were publicly posted on the site. My secondary research goals were to explore the role that patriarchy plays in the conversation, and to seek out any indications of support for male survivors of sexual assault. The scope of my research is limited to male experiences of sexual assault; thus the review of past research on female victimization was an integral step in informing "the impact and meaning of" rape in the average man's life is often absent from the initial discussion (Javiad, 2014, p. 24; Neuendorf, 2011).

Qualitative content analysis allows me to see how parties involved in male rape are positioned and how male rape itself is constructed. Qualitative content analysis is a non-positivist method and is appropriate for my project because I am not making claims about male rape; rather, I am focusing on how social actors use language to make meaning. This method thus corresponds with my theoretical framework because I am interested in how the social construction of gender plays out in discussions of male rape.

A major benefit to conducting content analysis is that feminist concepts can be mobilized which allows for the bridging of different disciplines and experiences making for a more in-depth and layered discussion following the analysis (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). My research is rooted in the epistemologies of hegemonic masculinity and the social construction of gender. Having an understanding of the theories and concepts associated with them made for the underlying logic when analyzing the data (Neuendorf, 2011). Patriarchy contributes to the

chilling effect surrounding the topic of male rape. Using both hegemonic masculinity and the social construction of gender equipped me with tools to better navigate the data and develop my analysis to see if and how that effect shaped the conversations.

As noted, I conducted a content analysis because this research method allowed me to draw up findings on male rape to help fill the gap in the research. There is no general consensus or specific definition of the method. In fact, according to Reinharz and Davidman (1992), the term content analysis is not rigidly defined; content analysis and the study of human connections and interactions is to the social sciences what archives research and the study of tangible artifacts is to the field of history as each discipline will likely apply different lenses and approaches to their research. Regardless, topics which touch on gender roles have not been analyzed through content analyses enough according to Neuendorf (2002). My research narrows this gap by contributing to studies that compare "male and female roles" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 202). These rather complex roles can be organized and sorted with meaning being drawn out through the systematic sorting of repeated themes (Schreier, 2012).

My research mobilizes content analysis which allowed me to look at how people expressed personal understandings and thoughts on the topic of male rape as opposed to reviewing dated documents from a previous social period (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). As Copes, Brown, and Tewksbury (2011) report, content analysis is a method used to summarize any human communication and is not limited to the forms of communication nor the type of message delivered. Collins (2011) furthers this notion by stipulating that content analysis is a suitable method for media sources as it provides a window into how members of society make sense of what they actually experience offline.

Social media are an interesting source of data because, as Olorunnisola and Martin (2012) report, the number of people turning to online sources in order to communicate and acquire information is steadily increasing and social media are beginning to replace traditional media (Johnson, 2010; Stewart, 2015). Most of this activity focuses on two main activities: updates and promotion of a business' and/or individual's image (Kim, Sin, & Tsai, 2014; Stewart, 2015). Twitter is one of the most used social media platforms and has a global base of members (Stewart, 2015). People mainly use it to learn about various topics, stay updated on popular trends, take part in discussions and perform an online identity (Kim, et al., 2014; Olorunnisola & Martin, 2012).

Bouvier (2015) highlights that by sharing stories and news, social media users create a sense of interconnectedness and real relationships. Connectivity on Twitter is seen as beneficial, in that users of the platform can learn from one another and appreciate differences (Bouvier, 2015). Olorunnisola and Martin (2012) report that this creates a useful environment for discussion about policy issues. Given that the medium allows people to communicate, especially about issues, Twitter is a useful source of data because it is one of the few places a researcher can identify a discussion of male rape for analysis. Its global reach also makes it an interesting source of data because it provides a window into how male rape is discussed in (purportedly) non-western contexts (Murphy, 2012).

However, Twitter is still very limited as there is no way to establish who is speaking or where they are geographically located. Twitter posts bundle around purported geographic locations via hashtags and profile location listings, but there are still tweets posted without either one of those components and the accuracy of stated locations cannot be verified. Furthermore, Twitter is a performative space and as such can only be approached as a representation; this

means that, when tweets are analyzed, I can see how the individuals on the platform construct the meaning of male rape but I cannot make any claims about the facts of male rape. Since the data divided into unique discussions that bundled around geographic markers, I looked at tweets by the indicated area but I cannot tell if the data are actually from that area or about that area. All I can do is say how people on Twitter talked about male rape, and part of that is how they represented their geographic location and cultural identity.

Kim and colleagues (2014) report that the quality of information sourced from social media is also a concern as many posts can be considered mindless. Blackman (2015) and Stewart (2015) agree that the quality of language is a concern when social media is used in research as the true sentiment and impact of a slang term can be lost in academic translation and paraphrasing. However, given the lack of knowledge about understandings of male rape and the fact that this is an exploratory study, I argue that Twitter still provides a useful window into how Twitter users construct the meaning of male rape on social media. Since so little is known about the topic, an analysis of the Twitter conversation provides a window that can help inform future research.

3.1 Klaus Krippendorff's Model

Content analysis is typically believed to be a quantitative research method due to its counting and sorting components. However, this benefits my use of the method because qualitative researchers are often critiqued "for being unsystematic" in their research (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 87). The texts that can be evaluated are not limited to a specific form. Rather, by definition, content analysis needs an organized and justifiable sorting of the text (Krippendorff, 2004). Qualitative content analysis must take account of the reflexivity of the

research and the understanding that construction of a topic may sometimes "surface once in a text" (Schreier, 2012, p. 13).

Reinharz and Davidman (1992) report that in order to effectively conduct content analysis the researcher must collect "cultural artifacts" and study them once they have been counted, coded, and organized (p. 146). Cultural artifacts are not originally curated for research but have become essential to researchers focused on social constructions (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). In my case, Twitter posts that include the hashtag MaleRape are interesting artifacts that provide a window into the construction of male rape around the globe.

As articulated by Harriet Martineau, the use of texts like Twitter posts that have been created primarily for a public discussion and not research allows the researcher to have an unobstructed view of the reflection of social norms present in the content (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992). With a sensitive subject such as male rape, I found it appropriate to review data that was not created for the purpose of critical research but rather to discuss a pertinent social issue. For my project, I followed Krippendorff's (2004) necessary steps. They are: unitizing the texts; sampling the observations; recording and coding the texts; reducing the data; inferring contextual phenomena; and finally, narrating the answer to the research question.

3.11 Unitizing

The first task of any study as outlined by Krippendorff (2004) is the decision on what to evaluate, i.e. what data will be collected. I selected Twitter over other social platforms primarily because of its global member base. Zhang and Kramarae (2014) report that aside from Facebook, Twitter has been the main online tool used in awareness raising. Within the literature, there was a consensus that, for news and information, Twitter and Facebook were the most used social media platforms, and that they have become "global platforms" (Stewart, 2015; Johnson, 2010; Bosch,

2016). Both of these platforms are useful as they are accessible to the public. However, Twitter is capable of turning "a topic into a [protest] forum with 'hashtags'" (Zhang & Kramarae, 2014, p. 69). Discussions taking place on social media can foster meaningful ideas as well as pointless comments (Bosch, 2016). Regardless of which, the Internet undeniably influences social opinions. Thus, Twitter is a good source of awareness on certain issues as it can quickly mobilize the discussion on a topic that otherwise would not receive that much attention (Kende, et al., 2016; Zhang & Kramarae, 2014). In addition to sparking discussion, social networking sites such as Twitter assist in the development of public opinion about the topic (Bosch, 2016).

The dataset I used in my project was comprised of all the publicly available tweets with the hashtag "#MaleRape" that were posted between March 19, 2010 and November 19, 2017. This totaled 2092 posts. Thus, I do not have an intentional sample as my dataset included all of the public tweets that have ever been posted within that time frame. In order to collect the tweets, I used a computer where I remained logged out of any personal Twitter accounts. These preventative steps were taken in order to ensure that neither my search history nor cookie cache impacted the results of my search[4]. I went on Twitter's website and entered "#MaleRape" into the search bar. Once the search generated all the tweets with my desired hashtag, I changed the order from "most popular" to "chronological", as this common Twitter algorithm also impacts the results generated from a search[5]. I then scrolled to the absolute bottom of the thread in order to have all the posts loaded and available, before printing a hard copy with a recorded time stamp. Neuendorf (2011) suggests that a sufficient time frame is needed in order to have a

[4]Twitter and the Internet more broadly tailor search results based on patterns of activity and search history

[5] Twitter automatically sorts posts by popularity and it is up to the individual platform user to switch this function off (Twitter.com)

concise picture of what is said in the sample. My time frame includes the complete thread, which started on March 19, 2010, to the date of collection, November 19, 2017.

A major benefit to this data is that the discussion is now accessible to people who are not active in the movement (Bosch, 2016). Valenzuela (2013) stipulates that exposure to public issue discussions will increase the likelihood of one engaging in their own forms of demonstrations. Others have criticized this same point by stating that the use of social media for discussion is a lazy man's route and have branded those who protest online as "slacktivists" (Kende, et al., 2016, p. 453). It appears as though the amount of people turning to online sources in order to acquire information is on a steady incline due to its appealing characteristics such as accessibility (Johnson, 2010; Olorunnisola & Martin, 2012; Stewart, 2015).

3.12 Sampling

The group of data that I selected was then divided into "units" where I sorted and organized individual pieces of the conversation (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 97). I sampled the hashtag by recording each individual post. The 140 character limit to each tweet facilitated the manageability of each post and allowed for the user's message to be direct and to the point[6]. I chose not to speak to people directly partly due to accessibility but mainly due to the invisible safety blanket there is online (Bosch, 2016). Furthermore, online profiles are becoming the main way individuals engage with one another and how institutions engage with the public (Johnson, 2010; Johnston & McGovern, 2013; Olorunnisola & Martin, 2012; Stewart, 2015). Twitter was a good choice as the posts are to the point and in everyday interactions the meaning to what is being said often goes unaccounted for (Schreier, 2012).

[6] This has changed since the collection of the data. In the winter of 2017 Twitter began rolling out an update to double the character limit to 280 characters.

According to Krippendorff (2004), limiting the data to a sample of the entire source saves the researcher time and effort. Accordingly, I began with all tweets with the hashtag MaleRape. Neuendorf (2002) frames the act of the researcher selecting data that they deem to be appropriate for their project as purposive or judgment sampling. I made the conscious decision to analyze "#MaleRape", mainly because it was the hashtag discussing male rape with the highest number of tweets.

3.13 Recording/Coding

The third component of content analysis is organizing the units of unique texts into separated groupings. This step is extremely important as it shrinks the gap between data and what the researcher is noticing in the sample. I mobilized an inductive coding method as I went through my sample of tweets. Neuendorf (2011) stipulates content that has not been coded by a computer or software must have a complete coding scheme which is comprised of a codebook and a strategic form. Given the nature of my qualitative research, I mobilized a human coding method as it allowed me to remain reflective throughout the development of my codes. I was sure to include fundamental elements while coding, compiling an initial list of codes and themes, and sorting through my data according to those codes (Franzosi, 2008).

Coding this way was useful as conducting qualitative feminist research calls for allowing the data to speak for itself. Two people would never code the same as personal biases and opinions are steeped into the approaches we assume as researchers (Franzosi, 2008). Due to the restraints of this project, the use of a secondary coder in order to produce intercoder reliability was not feasible nor did I find it to be necessary (Franzosi, 2008). Content analysis permitted me to conduct this research as I was not limited to a predetermined set of observable variables

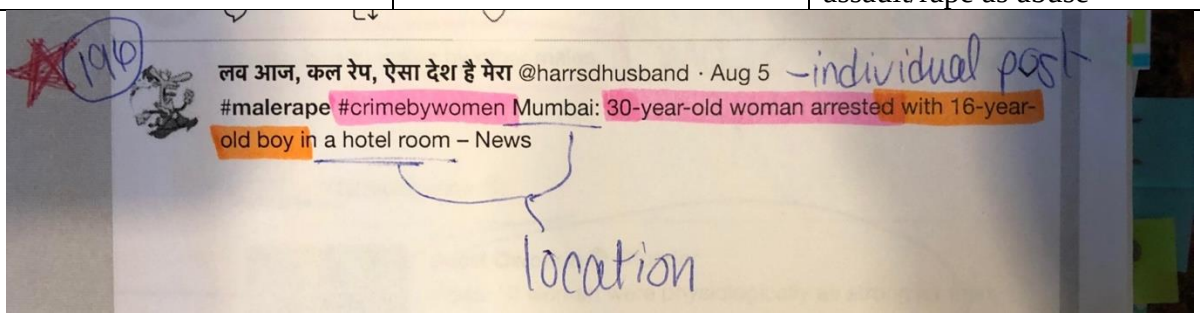
(Neuendorf, 2010). Below is the list of initial codes I devised while sorting through my data followed by an example of my coding notes in what Neundorf (2002) calls the human codebook:

Initial Codes[7]

Code	Colour	Explanation
1. Law/political reform	Yellow highlighter	This code included tweets that critique the current legal systems. There are also tweets that critique governments/countries on how the address rape.
2. Female rapist	Pink highlighter	Tweets that discuss male rape with a female attacker OR tweets that present the assumption that when a male is raped, it is by a woman.
3. Child victim	Orange highlighter	This code is applied to tweets that use the word "boy", as well as tweets that explicitly say it was a minor or child that was the victim.
4. Break the silence	Purple highlighter	These are tweets that call for awareness on the subject of male rape, this is also the popular code.
5. Story sharing	Green highlighter	This code includes tweets that are stories of a survivor's experiences, as well as promotion for story sharing events such as: book launches, news reports, plays etc.
6. Sexuality/LGBTQ+	Blue highlighter	This code was applied to tweets that address different sexualities and the occasional comment on masculinity.
7. No male victims – Rape myths	Red Pen	This code includes tweets that were posted ridiculing male victims, as "men do not get raped" as well as tweets critiquing the abovementioned stance.

[7] A more detailed codebook is outlined in Appendix 1.

8. Suicide	Pencil	This code was applied to any tweet that mentioned suicide.
9. Rape in war	Purple Pen	This code was applied to tweets that discussed rape as a war tool.
10. Abuse	Green Pen	This code was applied to tweets that framed the assault/rape as abuse



*Note: here the red star is in reference to one of my first analysis drafts and not Code No.

3.14 Reducing Data and Inferring Phenomena

The next components that a researcher must follow in the mobilization of a content analysis is reducing the data by extracting general representations found in the data (Krippendorff, 2004). Afterwards, a researcher must draw meaning from their data in their process. In my data this translated into the creation of working themes. Thus, I regrouped the tweets into four new categories of posts.

The first group was focused on the individuals involved in the rape itself. This included tweets that explicitly mentioned the perpetrators, survivors, and other individuals that may have had a hand in the sexual assault. The second grouping of tweets included posts that discussed where the raped happened, tweets in this category ranged from those which mentioned a large city to those who mentioned a specific school campus. Thirdly, there were a group of tweets that focused on the language that was used when discussing the rape. This group was heavily influenced by some of the preliminary readings I completed on my topic, specific to words used to identify those who have been sexually assaulted. In my research, the terms I focused on were

survivor vs. victim, and rape vs. sexual assault vs. sexual abuse. Lastly, I grouped tweets together that included any discussion of gender roles or constructions.

3.15 Narrative

The final component is the creation of the narrative which entails making the findings of my research "comprehensible to others" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 85). After sorting through my sample, I realized there were different distinct narratives, depending on the geographical location associated with the post. I accordingly separated the tweets into four regions: North America; Europe; Africa; and Asia (I include further details about the geographical categories in the following chapter); then I examined my findings in each region according to the categories. The first category is that of the female perpetrator, including posts that assumed the perpetrator was a woman. The following category was comprised of tweets that identified, implicitly or not, the perpetrator as a male. Some of the posts identified the perpetrator as a male given the space in which the rape happened (i.e. prison). The third category of tweets was comprised of posts that discussed social movements such as feminism and democracy and constructed them as enablers of male rape. Lastly, I included a category of tweets that did not specify a perpetrator of male rape but rather posts that discussed unique elements of the male rape experience.

In terms of face validity my research would be able to be reproduced because it looks at "conceptual definition" of a topic (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 115). However, this definition is also considered a limitation of content analysis as it can never look at a topic in its entirety if every project can frame a topic slightly different from the next (Neuendorf, 2002).

3.2 Reflexivity and Ethical Considerations

As the researcher, I am part of the research, as I am a product and active member of the same patriarchal structure I am critiquing. Thus, it was important for me to remain reflexive as

individuals are shaped by social structures and self-awareness is an integral part of being considerate of the voices of others (Ezzy, 2002). Situating myself in the research as a young black female student, I am not in the position to speak for male victims and if I did speak for them I would "change the truth" and come off "politically illegitimate" (Alcoff, 2008, p. 117-118). In point of fact, my research may "constructively influence future theory, policy and practice" (Ezzy, 2002, p. 57). Therefore, I have chosen to create space in the discussions about sexual assault for male victims. Creating space is a much "more equitable way for speakings to be heard" (Alcoff, 2008, p. 132). Schreier (2012) highlights that as researchers we contribute to the creation of the meaning of the topic we are analyzing, thus one must embody that role and account for their position in relation to their data.

One limitation to my research is that I am only evaluating tweets that were posted in English and according to Twitter it offers its platform in thirty-three languages. However, it is beyond the scope of a master's project to include tweets in other languages. English is emerging as a common global form of communication in online spaces, as it is in technological discussions as a whole. The use of language is pertinent when referring to the assault itself. For the purposes of my research, I will refer to the act itself as rape and sexual assault interchangeably.

Language also plays a role in regards to how the individual who is assaulted is referred. There is a debate on whether or not to refer to someone who has been sexually assaulted as a victim or survivor or as a patient, provided they are seeking medical services following their attack (Bohner & Papendick, 2017; Peternelj-Taylor, 2015). The word victim has traditionally been used carrying negative connotations such as weakness and helplessness (Bohner & Papendick, 2017). Although some individuals may choose to reclaim the word victim and use it to refer to something they have endured and overcome, there appears to be a greater support

towards using the word survivor as an alternative. Furthermore, in the medical environment, practitioners may be more inclined to use the word patient in order to remain objective and neutral (Peternelj-Taylor, 2015). The important note is that regardless of what word is used, language can never be neutral or static. As such, those who have suffered a sexual assault can identify with any or all of the labels (Bohner & Papendick, 2017; Peternelj-Taylor, 2015). For the purposes of my research, I decided to refer to those who were raped as survivors wherever possible as I align with the empowerment message behind the use of the term.

Chapter 4: Analysis

The sample used in this project was drawn from a total of 2,092 publicly available tweets on Twitter that included the hashtag #MaleRape. These tweets were posted between March 19, 2010, (when the hashtag was first created) and November 19, 2017 (when my data was collected). Of the 2,092 tweets, 471 were deleted from the sample because they were either: posted in a language other than English (18); comprised of hashtags or links directing the reader to other content in the discussion and therefore did not add to the construction of the key concepts under examination (187); posted by a single user (@pnotchtree) to promote a book he had written about his personal experiences (205); or random and/or unintelligible (61). An additional 317 tweets were deleted from the sample because they were replying to tweets that had been posted privately. For ethical reasons, I made the decision to focus solely on non-private tweets where the assumed context indicated that the users intended them to be part of a broader public discussion.

My preliminary reading of the data indicated that there were very different constructions of rape attributed to posters on Twitter from different countries. I decided to divide the data by geographical area to conduct a comparative analysis. Accordingly, an additional 326 tweets were deleted from the sample because they did not contain a geographic pin point and could not be attributed to a specific area. Lastly, 138 tweets were deleted as they pointed to specific stories or news reports about male rape but did not contribute to the broader discussion.The final sample accordingly consisted of 840 posts, which I then divided into the following four geographical areas for analysis.

Forty-eight tweets explicitly referenced North American content. For example, an American city would be clearly stated in a tweet:

@solwunderwood – March 1, 2016
"Portland sexual assault survivor joins Lady Gaga onstage #malerape"

An additional 35 tweets were included in this sub-sample because the posts included links and/or user profiles that led to North American locations. The locations of these posts were confirmed by clicking on links that cited news articles from the specific region or referring to the poster's location listed publicly on their profile. Most posts identified a city, town or state within the United States of America (e.g. Washington, Portland, Florida, etc.) however, location also varied from high schools to state prisons. The final North American portion of the sample consisted of 83 tweets, with American posters dominating the context.

One hundred and sixty-six tweets explicitly referenced a European location. An additional 93 tweets with links and/or user profiles that led to European locations were included in this sub-sample. Thus, the European portion of the sample consists of 259 tweets in total with the United Kingdom being the dominant European location (42% of the area's sample).

The third sub-sample of posts that contained the hashtag #MaleRape consisted of 101 posts geographically linked to Africa. This category included posts from The Democratic Republic of the Congo or DRC (30), South Africa (17), Uganda (8), Libya (6), South Sudan (4), Somalia (3), Kenya (3), and Zimbabwe (1).Two hundred and eighteen posts explicitly referenced an Asian location. An additional 179 tweets with links and/or user profiles that led to an Asian location were included in this sub-sample. Accordingly, the Asian portion of the sample consisted of 397 tweets in total. Tweets from Pakistan (17) and China (12) were also included in this part of the sub-sample.In sum, the final sample consisted of 840 tweets, including 83 from North America, 259 from Europe, 101 from Africa and 397 from Asia.

Next, I looked at the ways in which survivors and perpetrators were described in each sub-sample and coded for major themes that arose in the data. References to denial of male rape

as an issue and calls for awareness about male rape as a problem were included. The following tables provide an overview of each geographic area; they include the counts on the survivors of male rape, the perpetrators, and the contexts in which the assault took place. The total count of the posts sorted in this manner exceeds the number of tweets (by 26 posts) as some users addressed more than one point in a single tweet.

Table 1: Survivors of Male Rape

Twitter Posts	North America (NA)	Europe	Africa	Asia	Total
Men - general	16	21	-	156	**193**
Young boys	8	1	-	10	**19**
Male students	3	-	-	-	**3**
Boys & men in custody	2	-	-	-	**2**
Military	4	1	18	-	**23**
Husbands	-	-	-	64	**64**
Total	-	-	-	-	**304**

Table 2: Female Perpetrators of Male Rape

Twitter Posts FEMALES	North America (NA)	Europe	Africa	Asia	Total
Women - general	36	4	5	72	**117**
Teachers	3	-	-	-	**3**
Prison staff	2	-	-	-	**2**
Sperm seekers	-	2	-	1	**3**
Adulterous/ housewives	-	-	-	56	**56**
Intimate Partners - IPV	6	-	-	8	**14**
Total	-	-	-	-	**195**

Table 3: Male Perpetrators of Male Rape

Twitter Posts MALES	North America (NA)	Europe	Africa	Asia	Total
Men - general	2	6	-	1	**9**
Soldiers/ members of the military (including Ugandan & Kenyan armies)	4	-	18	-	**22**
Child abuser	4	-	-	-	**4**
Taliban/ Police	-	-	-	1	**1**
Total	-	-	-	-	**36**

Table 4: Other Perpetrators of Male Rape

Twitter posts OTHER	North America (NA)	Europe	Africa	Asia	Total
Feminism	2	-	-	14	**16**
Democracy/ Government	2	-	-	-	**2**
Total	-	-	-	-	**18**

Table 5: Contexts/Themes in Discussion

Twitter Posts	North America (NA)	Europe	Africa	Asia	Total
Denial	-	24	21	-	**45**
Call for awareness	16	164	57	31	**268**
Total	-	-	-	-	**313**

In this chapter, I discuss the conceptualization of male rape on the hashtag and seek to identify similarities and differences in conversations in the four geographical areas. Logically this section would have begun with a definition of male rape and how it was specifically defined in each area. However, the posters did not explicitly define male rape or sexual assault in the discussion. In fact, there were only four posts in which the act that constituted rape was described.

The first four tweets, the following from the African sub-sample, revealed a way in which male-over-male power is exercised:

> **@StandtoEndRape** –May 17, 2016
> "#MaleRape is not a new phenomenon? "Men were anally raped w/ knives in a Kenyany Concentration Camp"

In this tweet, the desire for acknowledgement is addictive and likely increases upon the acquisition of a basic characteristic of hegemonic masculinity (Jewkes, et al., 2011). The use of a weapon in the assault is an added level of aggression. In times of war and conflict, individuals are susceptible to commit crimes they otherwise would not, creating more environments in which men can mobilize their power over other individuals (Porter, 2015). Although men and women are survivors of rape in war, the focus remains on the female survivors making it so any construction of a male rape narrative may be considered shocking (Davies, Pollard & Archer, 2006).

In the second tweet, from the Asian sub-sample, the perpetrator was a young female intimate partner, assaulting a younger boy:

> **@MRA_Atit**- April 20, 2013[8]
> "Woman, 20, Rapes 14-year-old Boy By Knife Point | EliteDaily #malerape"

The perpetrator and survivor in this post are arguably both young; however, the survivor was still conceptualized as a "boy". This tweet is similar to the previous one as both posters discussed the use of a knife, the use of a weapon in order to coerce and control the victim. The distinction between the two tweets is in how the knives were used. The survivors at the Kenyan concentration camp were sodomized with the knives making them the instrument of the assault itself. Whereas the second tweet discussed a female perpetrated assault in which the knife was

[8] This post referenced the story of a young woman who attacked a boy who was no longer interested in her.

used to control the survivor. Interestingly, Indian rape laws are not applicable to individuals under the age of 18, and legal protection as a male survivor is far more difficult to obtain (Kadyan & Unnithan, 2017). As further discussed below, given the role of hegemonic masculinity, this may be an indicator that male rape scenarios may need to refer to additional factors of violence and tools of coercion to be taken seriously because they reverse stereotypical gender roles with respect to sex and (sexual) violence.

The Asian sub-sample had another description of how rape is constituted in the conversation. The following tweet demonstrates how hashtags were telling aspects in the data:

> **@Misandry_Kills**- October 31, 2017
> "When will #MaleRape be criminalised?? #SheUsedMe"

This tweet used the hashtag "#SheUsedMe" to indicate a potential perpetrator of sexual assault as being female. Male rape in this instance was constructed as using a man and his privileges which is completely against the heteronormative structure of catering to men and respecting their superiority.

The North American sub-sample also had a tweet in which the construction of the act of rape was described. Like the aforementioned tweet, the poster included a hashtag, this time feminism was labeled a systemic enabler of male rape:

> **@chumasu** - June 10, 2015
> "Man receives sex act while blacked out, gets accused of sexual assault washingtonexaminer.com/man-receives-s… #MaleRape #Feminism #Rape"

The gender of the perpetrator was omitted from the tweet; however, feminism was presented as a movement riddled with double standards. On one end it is a movement of equality, on the other, it is one of opposition; this resonates with arguments of feminists of color that several intersections must be included in discussions of power and gender (Alderden & Ullman, 2012).

Although there is a lack of explicit definition, these four descriptions highlight how male rape is constructed by latent meanings in the data that can be best read by accounting for dominant ways of thinking about sex, male power and male reactions to rising female equality. I explore these issues more fully throughout the chapter.

While posts discussed the topic in general and social attitudes towards the male survivors in particular, no specific checklist or criteria to define male rape was outlined. The conversation in each of the four geographical areas did, however, consistently call for more recognition of male rape and critiqued those who argue that there is no such thing as male rape. Accordingly, the following seeks to outline how the meaning of male rape was constructed in each area by analysing how posters talked about who was raped by whom (i.e. who are the survivors and who are the perpetrators), and the contexts that surrounded the rape.

4.1 North America (NA)

In the North American sub-sample, male rape was overwhelmingly conceptualized as a form of heterosexual violence, although there were also many references to male-on-male violence. In discussions of female rape, traditional power dynamics between the inferior woman and the superior man are present. For example, discussions of female rape often include sex scripts that suggest that men are always seeking sex due to their "higher sex drives" (Hockett, Saucier & Badke, 2015, p. 310). Therefore, women who have been victimized are often held responsible for their sexual assault because it is expected that women will actively deflect and avoid the male gaze (Nordmeyer, 2015). Interestingly, this dynamic is inverted in parts of the North American sub-sample. The male survivor of female sexual violence, who would otherwise be the individual with the power and desire for sex, becomes the survivor who is stripped of his power through sex forced upon him by a woman.

The concern of being stripped of male power is reflected in discussions of democracy which, like feminism, was seen to be in favour of women thus creating an unhealthy environment between men and their relationship with violence. Male anger and violence created a heteronormative construction of male power. The anger directed at men was fueled by the need to keep men in line with hegemonic gender ideals. This same anger was directed at women in their perceived bold out-of-place actions as perpetrators of sexual assault, or otherwise conceptualized seekers of sexual encounters with men.

In an article discussing the rape myth of denial, a myth faced by female survivors as well was found in the following tweet:

> **@ShoneeKapoor**- June 12, 2015
> "Male student raped and expelled on allegations of #falserape. Sad fact that #malerape is not recognized. Amherst student was expelled for rape. But he was raped...the accused the victim"

Both of these posts illustrate how the male survivor is stripped of his power and voice in the aftermath of the rape, which resonates strongly with the literature on female rape. However, unlike men, women are socially required to fit a specific mold of the ideal victim who is upset and powerless (DuMont & Parnis, 1999). Giraldi and Monk-Turner (2017) have reported that rape culture stipulates that, in specific contexts, such as school campuses, gendered norms that have become permissible by the public intensify harmful stereotypes.

This construction is consistent with reports by Sleath and Bull (2010) that the myth of denial and the myth of victim-blaming are applied both to female and male survivors. However, male rape is complicated by the assumption that boys consent to sex with female teachers as a result of the heterosexual construction that men desire sex. The perpetrator then avoids punishment as seen in this tweet:

> **@_tooktheredpill** - February 3, 2014
> "Meredith Powell, a math teacher arrested for child rape, was released without bail. #doublestandard #malerape #MHRM"

The hashtag "#doublestandard" alluded to, if the perpetrator was male, the punishment would have been more severe. Sahl & Keene (2012) argue that power is multi-faceted; since older male perpetrators possess more power than older females, young survivors are to be protected primarily from older men. As legal ages of consent are stipulated to protect the young from adult predators, they can backfire in that what the adult believes to be "sexual activity" is actually "sexual abuse" (Pearlstein, 2010, p. 125). Oftentimes "sexual activity" and "sexual abuse" are synonymous.

Democracy and Feminism as Perpetrators

The male anger remained present in North America as some posts labeled feminism and democracy as perpetrators of male rape. Democracy was identified as an enabler of male rape in this tweet:

> **@CitizenAProgram**- November 5, 2017
> "#MaleRape and #WarRape are among #WesternWorld's many gifts of #democracy and #HumanRights to the people of… fb.me/3uhcchzjT"

The use of sarcastic language casts male rape as a political issue. Tweets in this group critiqued social norms and agendas that ostensibly seek to promote equality but create conditions that put men at risk of being violated without recognizing their role in enabling male rape. Social norms were framed as enablers that let rape take place without consequence suggesting society shares the blame for male rape. For example, the following tweet identified the "socialization of men" as an enabler for a culture which fosters male rape:

> **@TorreSafeAtHome**- April 21, 2017
> ".@MaleSurvivorORG @DenimDayNYC There is no excuse! #malerape #sexualassault #safeathome [...] MALE RAPE [...] Male anger and violence is afflicted upon other men and not just women. Rape is a violent act of power and

> control that damages the victim – male or female. The socialization of men creates immense challenges for them to disclose and type of sexual victimization."

The role of socialization in keeping men from sharing and reporting their traumatic experiences is underscored by research that attributes men's reluctance to report to the fear of being branded as weak (Bull, 2010).

Feminism was identified as another systemic enabler of male rape:

> **@RationalistF**- August 21, 2015
> "#ISupportShanley oh wait I don't! #Feminism is #RapingMen everywhere! I can't believe this hateful group is allowed to exist! #MaleRape"

In the tweet, the feminist movement was framed as an anti-man movement that strictly views men as the perpetrators of violence against women in the context of sexual assault; accordingly, it fails to consider the actuality and severity of male rape. Therefore, one of the ways that posters sought to define male rape reflected the degree to which the current societal structures makes sexual violence a women's issue (Lungdrigan & Johnson, 2013). Furthermore, it is not uncommon for supporters of men-centered issues/topics to blame feminism for the lack of awareness on men's issues (Fisher & Pina, 2013). This suggests that male rape is a possible issue that can be exploited by men's rights groups working to delegitimize feminist advocacy and more rights for women. Fisher and Pina (2013) support this, although there has been more conversation around the topic, the law and legal systems still lag behind.

The only exception to the aforementioned was one post that argued that patriarchy enabled sexual assault in general and sexual assault suffered by men in particular:

> **@BrBabblingBooks**- October 24, 2015
> "Our society needs to pay a lot more attention to male rape survivors. – everdayfeminism.com/2014/12/male-r… via @everydayfeminism[9] #Malerape"
> [...] There's a Rape Epidemic in America That No One Is Talking About: D…

[9] This is a feminist organization that supports non-oppressive language and environments. Website: https://everydayfeminism.com

> due to patriarchy, our society does not want to acknowledge the frequency and impact of sexual violence directed at boys and men. Because of th...everydayfeminism.com"

This tweet underlines how male rape shares similar characteristics with female rape, especially around the silencing of survivors (Danzer, 2011). This post accordingly resists that heteronormative construction that dominates the conversations in the rest of the NA tweets.

Female Perpetrators

Tweets also discussed men being raped in a general aspect. In the following tweets the theme of denial became apparent as the conversation ranged from simply stating that male rape happens and real individuals are impacted by it to posters ridiculing the actuality that men are also survivors of sexual assault. The following tweet identified the rapist as a female followed by several hashtags which would, in turn, link the tweet to other Twitter posts and conversations:

> **@doingit4dave-** October 23, 2017
> "When Females Rape Males #rape #malerape #sexualassault #Malesurvivors #mentalhealth #PTSD"

As indicated above, the majority of rapists were female (in 37% of the total tweets and 53% of those referencing gender). These cases were most likely to be when the entire reality of male rape was questioned and/or denied. As Riccardi (2010) reports, society mobilizes hegemonic masculine ideals that reinforce the questioning of male rape. This leads male survivors to feel a "lost sense of manliness" as victimization has traditionally been attributed to women (p. 1). This reluctance to accept or confusion pertaining to male survivors was present in the online conversation. For example, *@NooraniTejani* tweeted:

> **@NooraniTejani-** January 15, 2016
> "Can a male really be raped by a female? #Malerape"

Questioning female-on-male rape is possible because, as previously explained, rape discourses often assume that men are socialized to be "motivated by the need for sex", and due to

patriarchal structures, they are entitled to sex as well (Anderson & Swainson, 2001, p. 116). In this context, the mere question appropriated the survivor's reality and trauma, and, in spite of the gendered assumption that men are powerful, it stripped the male survivor of power.

Other posters voiced their opinion on male rape within heterosexual constructions of the topic:

> **@Chief900Bill**- September 12, 2017
> "Bruh this ain't pornhub… #MaleRape is not a thing MEN LOVE HEALTHY PUSSY, if we didn't get a disease from it it wasn't rape…"

The assumption that heterosexual sex is the only kind of sex and since men are constantly seeking sex with women, male rape can only exist when there is an undesirable outcome for the male survivor beyond having sex itself. Davies (2000) presents the notion that women are considered to be sexually passive and remain ready to satisfy the male sexual drive. According to *@Chief900Bill*'s tweet, women who are carriers of a transmittable disease are the only legitimate perpetrators because they fail to satisfy their role as passive receptacles. Interestingly enough, this tweet revealed that women involved in a sexual assault will have their sexuality brought into the clean versus unclean debate regardless of their role as the perpetrator or the survivor. This tweet still reinforced the myth that women cannot rape men, a myth addressed in the following tweet:

> **@MoreThanNo**- March 23, 2014
> "The reality of female to male rape.#rape #rapejokes #rapesurvivors #malerape #rapeculture."

The additional hashtags suggested that cultural norms that minimize female rape make it even more difficult for male survivors to be acknowledged.

A total of 48 out of the 83 tweets identified the perpetrator as female or "a woman" which suggests that posters using the hashtag #MaleRape constructed male rape as something

that women do to men, reflecting the assumed belief that men are raped primarily, and according to some posters, like *@Cheif900Bill*, only by women. As such, it places male rape into an overwhelmingly heteronormative context; whether posters are seeking to understand the phenomenon or to deny its existence, it is constructed as a heterosexual action in a context where men only have sex with women. This construction suggests that sexual violence between men is either marginalized and made to disappear or accepted as mundane/non-criminal.

Another notable subject that came up in the NA sub-sample was mental health. A tweet by *@doingit4dave* links female perpetrators to forms of physical or mental trauma by including hashtags such as #mentalhealth and #PTSD. Davies, Gilston, and Rogers (2012) report male survivors must often cope with depression and loss of self-esteem. When male rape is acknowledged on the hashtag, the female perpetrator was accordingly constructed as a violator who causes substantial harm to her heterosexual male victim. This is an interesting reversal of mainstream understandings of female rape as the distribution of power is reversed and men are seen as vulnerable and susceptible to harm. This reality suggests that male survivors suffer long-term effects similar to those of female survivors. As Ullman and Peter-Hagene (2014) report, a sexual assault survivor's denial of one's trauma is "perceived control over [the victim's] recovery" and contributes to distress and isolation amongst other maladaptive coping mechanisms (p. 496).

Specific categories of female perpetrators included child abusers (including teachers), intimate partners who also committed domestic violence, and prison guards. The tweets accordingly emphasized the role that power plays in male rape – young male students are vulnerable to female teachers or prison guards, for example, because those women are in a position of power over them. Implicit in this relationship is the assumption that outside of these

exceptional cases, men are more powerful than women; from this perspective, the anomalous nature of male rape must be "explained" by the power imbalance that facilitates the possibility for assault and makes male rape possible.

The discussion of female perpetrators in NA identified the following women who commit rape: teachers; intimate partners; and female prison staff ranging from officers to therapists in the facility, as seen above. For example, a female intimate partner who raped her partner as a result of him expressing his wish for them to separate:

> **@InsaafNGO** - September 20, 2017[10]
> "Woman accused of rapin man at knifepoint might dodge prison.. Why?? #MensRights #InnocentMenTargeted #MaleRape [...] Woman accused of raping man at knifepoint might dodge prison. A Michigan woman accused of raping a man at knifepoint may dodge prison after pleading no contest to lesser charges. Lestina Marie Smith w…"

Although it is unclear whether or not the knife used in the above case was needed, this was one of the only tweets that included the mention of a weapon at the hands of a woman. Another poster listed male rape alongside other forms of violence experienced by men:

> **@NoLaws4Men** - September 22, 2017
> "#MaleRape isn't a #Fiction in 21st Century And #DomesticViolenceOnMen too"

Both tweets discussed intimate relationships. As DuMont and Parnis (1999) discuss, this is a call for attention to domestic violence as survivors are often blamed for their assault. Being victimized is linked with the loss of one's power. Victimization, particularly sexual victimization, is traditionally associated with women (Bohner & Papendick, 2017). Sexual assault perpetrated by a female onto a male partner may have similar lasting consequences on the male survivor that female survivors are left with such as the fear of sex, which would take form in sexual impotence for men (Fisher & Pina, 2013).

[10] https://nypost.com/2017/09/20/teen-pleads-no-contest-to-raping-man-at-knifepoint/

A number of tweets discussed women who sexually assaulted boys and men by an abuse of power given through the position they occupied; for example:

> **@KennyDCruz**- July 11, 2017
> "Very Surprising! #Rape #MaleRape #MaleSurvivors #GenderRoles #GenderSterotypes #Feminism #NoSexism #MensIssues [...] Sexual offending by women is surprisingly common, claims US study [...] Physical overpowering need not, and often does it not, accompany sexual victimisation, the researchers said. By Christian Jarrett."

From this perspective, women do not need to be physically stronger than their victims in order to overpower and assault them. As Rich, Utley, Janke and Moldoveanu (2010) report, female rape addresses structural power imbalances upheld by hegemonic masculinity and the assumption that men are physically stronger (and more sexual, as discussed above) than women. This assumption may require a stronger assertion of power to create the conditions in which male rape can be understood and discussed.

Another tweet hinted at the leftover impact of the power over a young boy that the woman mobilizes when committing sexual assault:

> **@CrOwnSphMinX**- November 11, 2017
> "As a #RapeSurvivor I WHOLEHEATEDLY sympathise w/ #MaleRape victims of #FemaleAbusers. What MUST be UNDERSTOOD is if #SexAbuse victims who ARE potential FUTURE #CHILDbearers, don't speak up, they'll possibly perpetuate the abuse on THEIR Children @UNAction [...]"

The tweet specifically addressed the potential cycle of violence that may continue if childhood sexual assault is not revealed. This parallels a push for survivors, referred to as "potential #CHILDbearers", to disclose the abuse and seek help. In order to combat the fear of the abuse happening again, survivors must speak up and be heard, and abusers must be punished (Peterson & Franzese, 1987). Punishment is important as it validates survivor's experience and halts the violence. As Zack, Lang, and Dirks (2018) report, female perpetrators of sexual assault reject traditional feminine traits such as passivity and vulnerability; and are considered more deviant

than a man who commits rape. Ratliff and Watson (2014) theorize that female perpetrators use their feminine traits to attract their victims. The use of these feminine traits is also at play in the trial process as women are often times punished to a lesser degree than men who committed the same offense (Zack, Lang, & Dirks, 2018).

Another poster highlighted the importance of punishment and argued that the female perpetrator deserved imprisonment:

> **@iSierraNichole**- January 24, 2017"Adult women, if he is underage and you do anything sexual with or to him, that is sexual assault and you deserve jail time. #malerape"

In the North American context, the age of consent draws a line between legal and illegal sex. As Zack, Lang, and Dirks (2018) report underage male survivors are vulnerable boys before they enter manhood. In this way, perceptions of men as powerful/invulnerable can be maintained as female perpetrators do not need to be able to physically overpower their victims if they take advantage of their victims' immaturity.

As Kia-Keating, Sorsoli & Grossman (2010) note, the use of the word "abuse" has historically been used to talk about violence and trauma that occurs in childhood (p. 667). Childhood sexual abuse is a unique form of abuse that would benefit from its own separate analysis. However, for the purposes of this project, survivors of sexual abuse are those who have accepted what happened to them in the past and are actively on the therapeutic road to recovery (Bohner & Papendick, 2017). The delayed sharing of their trauma can be a result of societal norms which silence male survivors across the board. Compared to female survivors, boys are socialized from an early age to be on the sexual prowl and to see themselves as virtually immune to [sexual] victimization; this contributes to the silence surrounding male sexual abuse and

underlines the importance of the hashtag as a place to break the silence (Kia-Keating, Sorsoli & Grossman, 2010).

The following female teachers were conceptualized as abusers, which is consistent both with the North American criminal laws surrounding rape and statutory rape and the general construction of sexual abuse of children (Kia-Keating, Sorsoli & Grossman, 2010). In North America, the age of the survivor plays an important role in distinguishing rape from consensual sex with survivors in their teenage years, a distinction that was highlighted in the online conversation. This tweet addressed both the reframing rape as a different "illegal act" and its presence in schools:

> **@ChandraSBhasker**- November 2, 2015
> "Female teacher rapes 8th grade male student. But in the civilized West it's NOT rape. It's illegal sex. #MaleRape"

Some male students have their rapes denied or downplayed. This is another form of the rape myth denial, denying the severity of the survivor's trauma (Perternelj-Taylor, 2015). As Peternelj-Taylor (2015) reports, the language used when documenting a survivor's experiences must be chosen mindfully because it can shed doubt on their trauma. As such, there may be commonalities between female and male survivors of rape, in spite of the gendered constructions that often keep them apart. A parallel dichotomous view on a subject within the topic of male rape found in the literature demonstrated that there are similarities between "victims" and "survivors". Although the immediate assumption is that "victims" have more of a depressing road to recovery and "survivors" are strong and may be quicker to recover as they have reclaimed their pain, both groups have been attributed to negative thoughts and feelings towards oneself (Bohner & Papendick, 2017).

Young Boy Survivor

In the NA sub-sample, the most common survivor was a young man. Although most perpetrators were described as female, some tweets do reference male-on-male violence but they are almost always constructed as a harm that befell a young boy. For example, one user posted a high number of tweets to promote the book he had written about being sexually assaulted by an older male friend as a child[11]. In his last tweet, he wrote:

> **@pcnotchtree**– November 17, 2018
> "The first book deals with Simon's childhood friendship and eventually love affair with an older boy, the second trauma of his teenage years and childhood"

this tweet stated that his book dealt with sexual abuse that took place in his childhood[12]. Similar to the abuse by female perpetrators, the rape of a young boy was recast as something less violent (e.g. a "love affair") (Pearlstein, 2010).

Boys who were raped by older men were typically revealed in the course of a survivor discussing his childhood rape. For example, the following includes a statistic to demonstrate that childhood sexual abuse suffered by young boys is an issue worthy of attention:

> **@DJBURR1022**- July 6, 2017
> "1 in 6 men have experienced *sexual abuse* by the age of 18. #malerape #male*survivor* #mentoo #boystoo #malerapist" (emphasis added)

Both of these tweets were not referencing child abuse happening at the time of the post; rather they were talking about the previous rape and abuse in order to raise awareness about the topic.

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[11] In the following post there was an age gap between victim and perpetrator:

> **@BeaconPressBks** – July 12, 2016
> "An amazon search shows lack of books on #malerape. 'On Being Raped' is especially welcome as a resource – Review – Memoir and Biographies – In this slim volume, Ray Douglas describes his rape when he was 18 by a priest and the effect it had on life. He is grown man now, married and living…"

Both users referenced books as a way of sharing previous traumas.

[12] http://www.limebury.com/clouds/index.html - link to user's book website.

This is a reflection of the reluctance that surfaces when men are expected to express their emotions (Meth, 2009).

In addition to being young, many survivors of male-on-male violence were in some form of an institution. For example, tweets talked about male rape as something that happens to male high school students at the hands of their classmates. In the following tweet, the poster talked about high school boys who raped one of their fellow students. In this case, the perpetrators were part of an athletic team and sexually assaulted one of their teammates:

> **@msladyD**- October 20, 2014
> "The Violent Side of Friday Night Lights - seven players were arrested at a high school for raping their teammates. You can draw a line from here through Steubenville, Penn State"

This post identified the specific context of a sports team. In an environment in which men are supposed to showcase their masculinity and assume their heteronormative position, this depicts how embedded rape culture is in society (Giraldi & Monk-Turner, 2017).

Survivors in Institutions

A smaller group of tweets talked about men raping men in prisons or in the military, both circumstances where they are largely isolated from women except for when the survivors are young boys. These tweets referenced male rape that took place both in juvenile detention centers and adult prisons. As King and Hanrahan (2015) report, rape that takes place while the victims are in prison stipulates that sexual assault in custody is not a new phenomenon. It seems with incarceration rates constantly increasing, the sexual assault of male inmates is also on the rise. For example, the following tweet discussed the sexual victimization of male teenagers by female guards:

> **@dutchjim1** - April 2, 2015
> "Female Prison Guards Commit 90% of Sex Assaults on Male Teens.ibt.uk/A006GoA

> #SexualAssault #Prison #MaleRape #Rape #PrisonRape [...] Female prison officers commit 90pc of sex assaults on male teens in...Lawsuit in Idaho highlights the prevalence of sexual victimization of juvenile offenders. Ibtimes.co.uk"

Similarly, the following tweet shared the story of a female prison therapist as the perpetrator:

> **@ABQJournal**– April 6, 2015[13]
> "Therapist Charged: Criminal Sexual Prison Penetration w/ Minor at Juvenile #SexualAssault #Prison #MaleRape #Rape"

Once again, the role of power in inverting the stereotypical relationship of the aggressive male and passive female is an important part of the construction. Both female prison staff and female teachers who rape use their position of power for sexual advantage and manipulate boys/men into having sex or performing sexual acts. As Ratliff and Watson (2014) report, women in powerful roles have lines blurred between them and the population they oversee. Young inmates tend to be more impressionable and as a result can fail to recognize inappropriate sexual advances; however, cultural beliefs are more permissive to relationships between "women and boys" than between "men and girls/boys" (Sahl & Keene, 2012, p. 3702). The survivors are often reluctant to report the prison staff as they are believed to be the gatekeepers and those with the power. It is discouraging as wardens do not tend to consider rape of any sex to be an issue, therefore "it goes unnoticed" and under-supported (Moster & Jegile, 2009, p. 74).

Rape in prison takes place because of assumed power dynamics at play within prison walls. Aside from female staff committing sexual assault, rape, in general, is prevalent in prison (Hill, 2014). The following tweet is an example this:

> **@gauravsatle** - September 22, 2017
> "In the USA, more men are raped than women, due to the prison rape culture. Australia is similar. #Rape #MaleRape"

[13] https://www.abqjournal.com/565466/cyfd-psychotherapist-indicted-for-sexual-assault.html

The abuse of power is present as corrections officers have obvious power over inmates, as do senior inmates over new inmates, and as senior guards over rookies (Hill, 2014). This aspect of prison rape is in need of additional research as prison culture is saturated with sexual violence due to hierarchies that inflict domination through sexual assault. Heterosexuality is present in prison rape even when the gender of the perpetrator is ambiguous due to hegemonic masculinity. As King and Hanrahan (2015) report, power is at play in prison (i.e. new inmates have less power than inmates who have been in custody for a longer period of time). Javiad (2018) highlights that men are often times hesitant to reveal that they have been sexually violated (by another man) as the survivor label adds femininity and consequently reduces the survivor's masculinity. This power imbalance is one that is traditionally found between female survivors and their male perpetrators.

Members of the military were also implicitly identified as survivors of rape. The conversation remained superficial as ranks, levels, and positions were not mentioned as seen in the following tweet:

> **@DJBURR1022**- April 29, 2017
> "In Debate Over Military Sexual Assault, Men Are Overlooked Victims via @nytimes #MaleRape #MaleSexualAbuse - Because it happens to men too!"

Similarly, the following tweets mentioned military rapes without providing much detail on its construction:

> **@kittysneezes**- July 12, 2016
> "5 Harmful Lies About Military Rape. Men are being raped in the military at alarming numbers. Learn 5 lies about male military rape that need to stop now. Military rape happens"

> **@Aframerica**- February 11, 2017
> "15 times more men are raped by men in military than Pentagon report dailym.ai/1CpOiH #MaleRape"

All three posts mentioned the military as the environment in which the rape took place. As O'Brien, Keith and Shoemaker (2015) report the military is known to be secretive and does not reveal details on its inner operations. In fact, this parallels the silence that men in heteronormative roles experience. Rhode (2016) reports that rapists are found at every rank. This private environment that the military upholds is so secretive that some members, especially those on lower rank, are not updated on problems within the military (Rhode, 2016). This is an example of a power tactic: to leave the subordinate clueless. Additionally, O'Brien, Keith, and Shoemaker (2015) argue that the number of male rapes reported are a poor reflection of reality because some survivors do not report their rape because they are too scared or feel like they are the only victim. The implicit assumption is that men rape other men in this context.

The common thread in the NA construction of male rape is, therefore, power: NA discussions "explain" how boys and men (who are usually powerful) can be raped by being over-powered by someone in a position of superior power. This plays on gendered assumptions about power and sex where – men are assumed to be more powerful cannot be overpowered about power and sex. This reversal happens by talking about specific situations where male power is limited by external/exceptional circumstances (like age, school authority or prison hierarchies of violence).

Male perpetrators of sexual assault were not discussed with sufficient detail; however, male anger and violence on men by men was found in the data. One of these tweets problematized the assumption that homosexuality is a possible "outcome" of being raped by a man:

> **@VictHim_**- *September 24, 2017*
> "#MaleRape #malesupport #VictHim [...] MaleSurvivor @MaleSurvivorORG [...]Male Sexual Abuse FACT #5 - Sexual abuse does NOT determine sexual identity/orientation Malesurvivor.org"

The poster acknowledged the problematic assumption that a survivor's sexuality can be swayed as a result of the assault. Holmes (2014) suggests that this is a heterosexual belief and that the gay community separates sex from emotion and sexuality. There was one tweet in the North American sample that referred to homosexuality when discussing male rape:

> **@DELICIOUSKEK** - June 13, 2017
> "Scientific American trying to get men to accept same sex #malerape and #matrarchaldomination and #homophobia"

Homosexuality was referred to through the hashtag "#homophobia" in a tweet that addressed trying to get the support of men on the topic of male-on-male sexual assault. This post called for recognition of same-sex assault. Traditionally, women are trained to deal with being victimized by men (Davies, Pollard & Archer, 2006). Therefore, men who are victimized, by another man are living outside of heteronormative roles. This untraditional survivor intersects with homophobia in male rape cases. As Weiss (2010) reports, men who have been victimized and express that they do not want to have sex [with a woman] are in violation of "male (hetero)sexuality". Contrastingly, the following tweet merely shared an event on the topic of same-sex rape:

> **@changejustice**- October 24, 2012
> "Andrew Sawyer on HuffPo live right discussing male on male sexual assault now. #malerape #HuffPostLive"

The first tweet directly challenged the rape myth that same-sex sexual violence causes homosexuality (Bull, 2010). The tweet also addressed the common misconception that sexual assault or rape is about sex, not violence and power. One poster challenged the potential homophobic sentiments that some survivors face as a result of underdeveloped, and socially silenced male, emotional reflexivity (Holmes, 2014). Homophobia is intensified when the

survivor is gay as it is assumed they were accustomed to experiencing same-sex sexual activity (Sleath & Bull, 2010).

Interestingly enough, the topic of sexual assault has been discussed in a conversation that has continuously labeled men as the perpetrators and women as the survivors of assault. In the data I found that the male perpetrator as a category was not discussed nearly as much as female perpetrators of sexual assault. This may be because the female perpetrator is more transgressive of heteronormative norms than the male survivor, and needs to be disciplined/explained away to reassert heterosexual normativity.

4.2 Europe

Generally, male rape in Europe was discussed as an understudied and unsupported topic. As such, much of the conversation focused on creating a space where male rape could be recognized and acknowledged. In this sub-sample, awareness was a major component of the discussion as 97% of the posts called for awareness. Posters took to Twitter to share stories about male rape, including news reports of sexual assaults. This presupposes that male rape is understood by a sub-section of society that need not define it. Instead, there is a need to generate a public dialogue that educates people about its existence. This assumes the meaning of male rape is self-evident. Tweets were therefore inviting the public to an event in support of male victims and/or encouraging the public to inform themselves on the topic of male rape:

> **@SurvivorsUK** - February 7, 2017
> "Find out about myths on male sexual abuse #sexualabuse #malerape #itsnotok #awareness"

Through the use of the word "myths" as well as the hashtags "#itsnotok" and "#awareness" this tweet works at deconstructing the belief that women are the only survivors of sexual assault by introducing rape myths into a conversation about the untraditional (male) survivor (Davies,

Pollard & Archer, 2006). Another poster clearly stipulated that male rape is in need of awareness and explained why:

> **@MycroftBrolly**- August 12, 2017
> "Tackling the important, often overlooked and hidden issue of #MaleRape #RapeCulture"

Both posters mentioned concepts traditionally associated with the sexual assault of women such as "#RapeCulture", this refers to attitudes that consider women to be the normalized survivors who are blamed for their assaults and excuse the perpetrators (Sleath & Bull, 2010). Turchik and Edwards (2011) reported that the traditional norm that men are believed to be constantly mobilizing their power and dominating others. The messages of awareness found in the tweets appear to be challenging this norm. This norm transcends physical differences between the sexes and stems from socialization dating back to childhood when men first learn to be dominant, strong, and hyper-masculine to fit society's expectations. Whilst young boys are learning to be sexually and physically forward in the physical and social space they occupy, women are being socialized to be passive and discrete. Both of these lessons are fundamental in contributing to the current rape culture (Turchik & Edwards, 2011).

Of the entire sample, a Swedish medical trauma centre for men was the only medical service for male survivors of rape referenced in the tweets. In the following tweet the poster congratulated Sweden on their recognition of the specific needs of male sexual assault survivors:

> **@lemonlifts**- September 12, 2017
> "Good job again, Sweden. #rape #trauma #ptsd #malerape #domesticviolence #victims #mentalhealth"

This post identified rape, mental health, specifically PTSD, and domestic violence suffered by men as topics that received recognition from Sweden. This implies that other countries are still failing to recognize male survivors, let alone provide services for them:

> **@BetterBlokezNZ** - October 18, 2015
> "Swedish hospital opens world's first trauma center for male rape victims #MaleRape"

The medical center provides an example of how to provide knowledgeable support to survivors of male rape, especially given findings that few know how to react socially, legally, or medically (Javaid, 2016). The tweets discussing Sweden's trauma center stood out as an example of the care that male survivors of sexual assault are demanding. This is reflective of the argument that resources are not and have not focused on male victimization (Alderden & Ullman, 2012).

Despite this concrete example of how male survivors are receiving support, there was still a call for more. There were posts in the conversation that offered kind and supportive words to survivors and others informed the public by sharing stories and inviting people to listen. This sense of solidarity is illustrated by the following post by *@melaphelia*, which contained the hashtag "#metoo" suggesting that the poster was a survivor of sexual assault as well:

> **@melaphelia**- October 16, 2017
> "If you're being ridiculed because of your experience or told to be happy about it, I'm so sorry you have to endure this! #metoo #malerape

Another form of solidarity and support was found:

> **@SurvivorsMcr**- September 26, 2017
> "@bassduckfresh is currently telling @bbc5live the story of how he was raped. Tune in and listen to Sam #breakthesilence around #malerape"

Sleath and Bull (2010) report that the creation of environments in which male rape is considered an issue worthy of attention can foster discussions to debunk myths about the topic and improve the social response male survivors receive. The latent effect of positive public reaction to male rape is more support.

Solidarity was also present in tweets that drew on hashtags that have been used to promote better outcomes for male survivors of sexual violence. For example, this post:

> **@StayBraveUK**- August 11, 2015
> "You don't owe sex to anyone. #BreaktheSilence #MaleRape"

continued the awareness message in the hashtag "#BreaktheSilence". Additionally, it addressed the myth that survivors at some point in their attack owe their attacker sexual acts. This notion is common in sexual assault cases with female survivors and has been conceptualized as victim blaming and responsibilization (Nordmeyer, 2015). However, much of the potential of solidarity was limited by the need to draw attention *away* from female survivors:

> **@NxJewell**- May 24, 2011
> "In all this talk about #rape let's not forget that the victim is sometimes male. #SurvivorsUK #MaleRape"

This tweet implies male survivors are invisible, which links to the notion that men are socialized to always want, seek out, and engage in sexual experiences with women (Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006). Furthermore, it supports the point that men are socialized to assert their power over women. Therefore, suggesting that there are underlying commonalities that could be used to unite responses to male and female rape without creating a competitive environment in which attention to female rape automatically calls into question the existence of men's experiences of male rape. However, it is underdeveloped in the discussion.

At the other end of the spectrum, there were three tweets that explicitly denied the possibility of male rape. These tweets specifically perpetuated the myth that men cannot be raped, so they do not get raped, and since they do not get raped there are no perpetrators of male rape:

> **@RealMissSteam**- November 10, 2017
> "Men cant be rape victims because society say's so #MensRights #MaleRape"

This post shows how social norms can shape understandings of rape; because "society say's *(sic)* so" men cannot be considered survivors of sexual assault. Such constructions are rooted in

hegemonic masculinity and seeks to trivialize male rape because that kind of masculinity cannot focus on specific persons as it searches to define a social issue or explore solutions (Messerschmidt, 2012).

Female Perpetrators

One poster expressed their feelings towards the denial surrounding the topic of male rape. This kind of denial explains the prevalence of tweets seeking to legitimize male rape, as in the tweet:

> **@TheGayChrist**- October 18, 2017
> "Woman says #malerape is not #legitimate I'm fuming! @SurvivorsUK #metoo"

Again, this tweet focuses on denial coming from women. Although, in addition to institutional awareness, public awareness through the media and social images needs to be implemented in order to broaden the reach of the conversation, there are remaining points of conflict between male and female rape survivors (Turchik & Edwards, 2011).

The denial of male experiences present in the tweet contributes to the need to have male rape included and discussed on an institutional level to allow for the development of policies and training to diminish ignorance on the topic (Turchik & Edwards, 2011). This tweet demonstrates how male victimization is silenced. The fear of men being omitted or not needed was also present in the part of the discussion in which men are absent from the process of creating a child.

That said, the majority of references to specific perpetrators described them as women. For example, female teachers were identified as the dominant perpetrators of male rape. A tweet by *@SurvivorsUK* went as far as to frame the rape of men by women as an issue in need of immediate attention and support:

> **@SurvivorsUK** - February 10, 2017
> "The Hidden Epidemic of Men Who Are Rape by Women #sexualabuse #malerape #femaleperpetrators"

Alongside posts that framed the topic of male rape as something as catastrophic as an epidemic, tweets like:

> **@ChildNeedFather**- May 6, 2016
> "What i have read from this article you are agreeing that women rape men too? #MaleRape #FemalePerpetrator"

Both tweets revealed the reality that male rape is a pertinent social issue. Male rape remains overlooked as the world studies fear and related issues strictly from a female perceptive, omitting the male experience (Meth, 2009). As Meth (2009) reports, victimization when studied is typically studied in a world from the female gaze.

The following two tweets presented female teaching staff as the perpetrators. The following poster broadened the scope to include feminism as a perpetrator as well:

> **@MailOnline**- July 20, 2015
> "#MaleRape #WomenAgainsntFeminism #CrimeByWomen. Head teacher accused molest two under-age boys."

The hashtag "#WomenAgaisntFeminism" was an indication that there appears to be remnants of a narrow, and arguably dated understanding of feminism as it has been constructed as an anti-man movement. Another example of inappropriate behaviour by school staff, demonstrated by *@StayBraveUK*'s tweet alludes to the possibility that women are punished on a more lenient scale:

> **@StayBraveUK**- September 24, 2015
> "Teaching assistant escapes jail despite admitting having sex with teenage pupil #MaleRape"

The women in either post have power over the male students as they are employed by the institutions that the survivors attended at the time of the assault. As Holmes (2015) reports power is found in self-restraint, these women misused their power as one even admitted to having sex with one of her students. Power also takes many forms; for men it may look violent and

aggressive and with women, it may take form through manipulation and covert forms of coercion.

As noted above, the European conversation was mostly made up of calls for more recognition of male rape and better services for survivors, but there was almost no detail about the survivors and perpetrators.

Although there were no specific references to feminism or intimate partners, there was an implicit concern about male power being protected from women perpetrators who buy sperm online. Pregnancy and conception was a trend found in tweets about the bodily fluids market:

> **@Abused_Men**- October 9, 2016
> "Swedish women buy sperm over the Internet from a sperm bank in Denmark. Swedish men are no longer needed. #MaleRape"

Johansson and Ottemo (2015) report the ability to purchase fertile semen online may pose a threat to patriarchal norms as women would be stepping outside their marginalized position of being sexual gatekeepers and become active seekers of procreation. Men are typically the gender in power and when women or other individuals resort to sperm banks in order to get pregnant and take alternative measures to conceive, some men perceive themselves to have lost some power via this perceived sexual override (Layne, 2013).

Women who sabotage protection or contraception were also grouped together with this type of perpetrator. In their critique of the commodification and/or objectification of male fertility, some posters conceptualized this as a trap:

> **@ChildNeedFather**- May 13, 2017
> "i hope who make the same statement who force dads to have children against their will by sabotaging protection #MaleRape"

This tweet labeled tricking men into a pregnancy or having a child, as a form of rape via the sabotaging of protection. The male perpetrated version of this takes form in stealthing where the

condom is removed during sex without the other person's consent. This is an interesting parallel to stories of female survivors of rape who become pregnant and then are faced with the social scorn when they consider abortion (Cohen, 1993). I found this to be an interesting finding in the sample. Despite an absence of physical or sexual assault, women seeking measures of procreation outside of the traditional sexual encounter with a man is considered rape. This may be due to the perception that it is a threat to the power patriarchy has granted men.

Male Perpetrators

Man-on-man sexual assault was also referenced but mostly in the context of the military. As in the NA sub-sample, male soldiers and military officers were implicitly labeled as perpetrators of sexual assault; however, one EU poster explicitly labeled male rape as a form of homosexual violence:

> **@JoeLangley9999**- December 23, 2014
> "We call it fag army. Male rape prevalent in UK army, Ministry of Defence figures reveal #MaleRape"

The use of the term "fag" supported the possibility that the perpetrators were male members of the military. In line with Turchik and Edwards (2011) reports that the majority of military rape is perpetrated by fellow "servicemen" (p. 218) the tweet speculated that it may have been a same-sex assault. The military keeps all rape silent because the interiorizing characteristics attributed to victimization does not align with the military's pristine image of strength and honor (Turchik & Edwards, 2011).

Male perpetrators were also discussed on a general level. The conversation included heteronormative ideals of masculinity. There is some homophobic fear present, however, it is reflective of NA's conversation upholding heteronormative constructions, contextualizing calls for equal services for male survivors. These tweets simply identified the rapist as a male:

> **@IBB_Solicitors**- March 14, 2016
> "UK man raped by Libyan cadets sues #sexualabuse #malerape #samesex legal advice"

Another tweet labeled a man as the perpetrator:

> **@TheGayChrist**- July 26, 2017
> "5[14]/ As he groped my genitals I just froze. I didn't tell anyone what happened to me. Haven't told anyone until now. Over to you"

Men are not socialized to be expressive or to tap into their feelings, often leading them to bottle up their traumatic experiences (Meth, 2009). Furthermore, the reluctance to report a sexual assault is a trend present across genders as the fear of being blamed or having their experiences denied appears to be embedded into the system (Alderden & Ullman, 2012).

4.3 Africa

In the African sub-sample, rape was discussed as a weapon of war mobilized by soldiers and prison guards. Accordingly, most of the discussion called upon governments to do something to prevent it and provide redress to survivors. A total of 78 (95%) posts in the African sub-sample accordingly focussed on the need to spread awareness and generate conversation about male rape.

Rape as a Weapon of War

The only survivors of male rape who were identified were prisoners and victims of war. The following tweet identified another general variable in male rape:

> **@DarrenBlance**- Jun 13, 2015
> "Male #PrisonRape survivors speak out #SouthAfrica #Rape #MaleRape #malerapesurvivors"

[14] This tweet was accompanied by three other tweets sharing the rest of the user's story.

The context in which rape takes place as per this tweet is a prison. Both tweets addressed power over others, more specifically the post discussing war rape as a tool of war is a reflection of the general desire for power and domination over the individual (Marshall, 2011).

Both the Ugandan and Kenyan Armies were identified as male perpetrators of rape. In the context of war and conflict, the understanding of perpetrators of sexual assault as men was implicitly assumed, even when the tweets did not include a mention of gender. Tweets in this grouping included total institutions like prisons and concentration camps as the context in which the assault takes place. There were tweets like that of *@AcholiGenocide* that shared a movie on rape in war:

> **@AcholiGenocide**- August 21, 2016
> "Our #film features untold stories of #malerape by the Ugandan army #socialtorture #spreadingHIV #ABrilliantGenocide"

This tweet was unique as it was the only one that mentioned HIV, a disease that has traditionally been attributed to same-sex sexual encounters resulting in male victims being fearful to come forward as they may have to face homophobic sentiments (Davies, Pollard & Archer, 2006). Furthermore, some infected soldiers are used to spread the disease through the act of rape. Additionally, the context of the assault was the Ugandan army, and according to Marshall (2011), tools of war have expanded beyond traditional combat weapons to include rape as well. This tweet labeled the entire "Ugandan army" as the perpetrator.

Female Perpetrators

A small portion of tweets referred to female perpetrators of rape. The first example is of a combined general awareness and identification of women as the perpetrator:

> **@mensrightsrdt**- July 2, 2013
> "By age 18, ⅖ of South African boys report being forced to have sex mostly by female perpetrators #malerape"

With the mentioning of the age of 18, this post indicated that there are cases of sexual assault carried out on young boys that are unnoticed. But male rape was overwhelmingly seen as a problem of power contests between men; male rape was accordingly constructed as a weapon of war and repression of men by men.

The one exception to this construction revolved around situations where men lost control over who had access to their sperm. This resonated with European concerns about women buying sperm, but the context (and male reaction to it) were described in an aggressive way. Male rape is such an understudied topic that any story can be considered shocking with any construction of the assault out of the ordinary. Another construction of male rape was discussed in this tweet:

> **@HovellMJ**- May 9, 2015
> "South Africa three women kidnap a man and steal his sperm #maleRape it's real"

Under this construction, the unique aspect of the assault is that three women committed the rape in addition to a kidnapping. Additionally, the tweet did not indicate any connection between traditional powers over sex norms in sexual assault cases; rather, the rape was conceptualized as stealing sperm.

There were calls for awareness on the topic and posters expressed that legal changes were needed to protect African men from rape in the same ways that women are protected. Furthermore, the poster stated that the perpetrators were "mostly" female, therefore, there is the possibility that adult men in Africa may also be committing child sexual abuse. The following tweet included a critique of the law:

> **@antidespondent**- January 5, 2013
> "Nigeria/Zimbabwe known instances of #MaleRape by women, when no law admits it happens. Wat'l happen once men start reporting?"

The above tweet revealed that male rape is not even conceptualized as a reality, thus there is "no law" protecting men from sexual assault. It also revealed how complex and intrinsic measures of hegemonic masculinity can be the rape myth of denial is written into the legal system for men.

Several tweets omitted the perpetrator's identity and lacked insight into their potential social or professional roles. However, as *@oliver_meth*'s tweet demonstrates, there was very little social support for this kind of discussion:

> **@oliver_meth**- November 2, 2016[15]
> "Let's end the scorn against #MaleRape, by providing equal services for men, just as there are for women - too few people recognise male rape as being a problem South Africa"

The above tweet stated that there is "scorn" towards male rape. A sentiment found in rape myths specific to male rape is when they are acknowledged, it typically is in a critical environment (Christopher & Hope, 2012). Affirmations accordingly took on a practical aspect, demanding "equal services for men" as in the above post, or calling on male survivors to become educated about what legal services may be available to them:

> **@SAmalesurvivors**- September 2, 2013
> "Male #sexualabuse #malerape #sexualassault victims and the law. What are your rights under South Africa Law?"

Both of these approaches affirmed survivors' experiences, suggesting that they, like survivors of any crime, should be protected under the law. However, as Sleath and Bull (2010) stipulate, in cases of female rape, even when women are aware of the services available to them they may decide to remain silent as the legal system can become a secondary source of trauma. Nonetheless, offering support is beneficial in and of itself, as rape violates an individual's integrity and their body and support can aid a survivor in their healing (Jewkes, Sikweyiya,

[15] This tweet exceeds the 140-character limit as it was sharing a news story.

Morrell, & Dunkle, 2011). Equal rights and services were also requested in this part of the sample.

4.4 Asia

Posters in the Asian sub-sample were much more likely to identify the gender of survivors and perpetrators of male rape than posters in the other three geographical areas. For example, a number of posts talked about young boys being sexually victimized by women with "voracious" sexual appetites. Some of the rapes included kidnappings or elopements:

> **@sifchandigarh**- November 18, 2017[16]
> "#MaleRape woman elopes with minor boy, held for rap. Men/boys r raped too. Let's punish d guilty not d gender @PMOIndia @Manekagandhibip Times of India, Bengaluru: A 24-year-old homemaker from Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) has been arrested for allegedly kidnapping & raping a 17-year-old boy"

In this tweet, the rape happened at the hand of a kidnapping, so the abuser in question had exercised a certain level of power to relocate the survivor to assert violence. The labeling of the perpetrator as a "homemaker" was an indication of the role that many women fulfill, a housewife. The need for a secluded area was a common trend with female perpetrators as seen in the following tweets:

> **@harrsdhuband**- August 5, 2017
> "#malerape #crimebywomen Mumbai: 30-year-old woman arrested with 16-year-old boy in a hotel room - News"

The specific location, in this case, was the hotel room. Moreover, as per *@Indianfathers* the location of the assault can also be familiar to the victim:

> **@Indianfathers**- August 29, 2016
> "UP 10-yr-old boy injured after girl forces him to have sex. The incident too lace in Kulhauli village of Bidhnu area when the 16-year-old girl sweet-talked the boy from her neighborhood into his house"

[16] This tweet exceeds Twitter's 140-character limit as the user posted the text as an addition to another public post

A commonality found between the three tweets above is that the young boy was moved to another location. Almond, McManus, Giles, and Houston (2017) report female perpetrators who commit rape engage in a range of manipulative behaviors to overpower their victims more easily. For example, some women take advantage of their victims by using illicit substances to coerce their victims or by moving them outside of the survivor's environment. Removing someone from their environment is a power-play and men staying in one location keeps them safe and familiar with their power. The dynamics of power that are found between men and women are also at play in relationships with a notable age gap. The assumption is that older women use their age as a tool of coercion with young boys. Rape has been traditionally constructed as a man and his power dominating a woman and her limited agency (Kadyan & Unnithan, 2017). When the script is flipped, gender role socialization comes into play. Men are socialized to specific roles, all of which are specific and in line with the hegemonic masculinity agenda (Davies, Pollard & Archer, 2006). This supports the use of "sweet-talk[ing]" and other manipulative approaches older women used in order to attract young boys.

Young Boy Survivor

There were tweets that did not provide context about the rape, just the fact that a minor was assaulted:

> **@MRA_Atit**- January 5, 2013
> "#malerape in Kerala, a woman (Shahida) 'sexually abuses' a minor boy."

There were a few tweets in which the survivor of rape was a young man in his teenage years. Bohner and Panpendick (2017) find that the choice of vocabulary used in sexual assault research reported that although the term "survivor" (p. 4) may be empowering, it has been associated with anger and bottling up traumatic personal experiences.

The survivor, in this case, was very young and the gender of their neighbor remains unknown:

> **@NidaYousufzai**also identified a young male victim:
> "Seven-year-old boy raped in the Mangal Villa of Abbottabad by his neighbor#MaleRape #Pakistan"

Kaydan and Unnithan (2017) report that young male survivors of rape are limited as the focus remains on the marital rape of young girls who are married off prior to their eighteenth birthday; however, there has been a social push to criminalize marital rape and rape of those under aged girls

Male Students

Young students victimized by their female teachers were also discussed in this part of the sample. The following post by *@ajayverma2014* demonstrated how a social role can contribute to the level of power the perpetrator has at the time of the assault:

> **@ajayverma2014**- May 14, 2015
> "Female teacher forces student to have SEX #MaleRape"

Assuming that the student and teacher are close in age as a level of school was not identified, the female teacher "forcing" a student to have sex contradicts the common belief that women are passive (Weiss, 2010). Weiss (2010) also reports that men who succumb to the power of women and admit to doing so are considered to be weak and effeminate.

In the tweets, there was no clear indication of what the legal adult age in Asia is; however, the words used in the tweets clearly highlighted young boys are sexually assaulted. For example, *@Kevin_Kantor* tweeted:

> "#MaleRape: No one comes running when young boys cry #RAPE, says #survivor"

The hashtag "#survivor" may have been an indication that the victim is older in age when they discussed their trauma. However, the post identified "young boys" as the survivors; a

type of survivor that tends to go unnoticed as the abuse is typically carried out by individuals close to them (Christopher & Hope, 2012).

Indian Husbands

The most common survivor was an Indian husband. The following tweet further supported this unique construction:

> **@time4MAN**- September 23, 2016
> "#MaritalRape on Men anyone? RT[17]@nishan_mrs: Indian women are more hungry for sex thn indian men #malerape"

According to Desai and Andrist (2010), masculinity is valuable to men in India; as such, if a wife were to have a platonic relationship with another man her husband and his family will feel threatened and betrayed. Other posters included additional constructions of intimate partner violence committed by a wife:

> **@Misandry_Kills**- October 9, 2017
> "STOP DEFAMING #IndianMen Need #GenderNeutralLaws Punish #AdulterousWives recognise #MaleRape"

In this tweet, the hashtag "#AdulterousWives" reveals that infidelity is considered a form of sexual violence and disrespect towards one's spouse. Specific to India, many young women are married off to older men before they hit the age of 18 (Desai & Andrist, 2010). Families often marry off their daughters in exchange for economic benefits, an aspect of the conversation that was missing in the topic of "#AdulterousWives". Desai and Andrist (2010) report that as the young wife matures, she becomes less impressionable and arguably more difficult to control. This tweet also used the hashtag "#GenderNeutralLaws", resurfacing the need for the recognition of male victimization in gendered topics.

[17] RT: stands for "retweet" where a user shares another user's public post on Twitter's timeline

Although some focused on intimate partner violence (IPV) as connected to male rape, the harms also included wives committing adultery. The following tweet highlighted the reality that in addition to rape, male partners have been subjected to domestic violence:

> **@narendramodi**- September 22, 2017
> "#MaleRape isn't a #Fiction in 21st Century And #DomesticViolenceOnMen too"

This is another post that discussed the violence men face "too", supporting the trend that Indian laws are aware of these issues for the opposing female sex but fail to support male survivors of the same crimes. The overarching theme remains power. Anderson and Swainson report that rape and sexual assault have "two popular explanations" (p.108): sex or power. This links male rape to a loss of male power/control over women.

The Indian wife as a perpetrator was specified as sex-crazed housewives who fail to fulfill their duty as grateful women who have married men socially entitled to their bodies. Interestingly enough some tweets did not limit male rape to the construction of physical violence:

> **@RajeshKelkar** - August 26, 2013
> "Gender-nuetrality is a must. Any wife can marry, get pregnant, dump her husband & grab his property. #MaleRape"

This tweet demonstrated how intimate partner violence is constructed within the Indian context; it is the unconventional wife who commits violence against her husband. This tweet touched upon the notion that Indian wives are desirable to their husbands and their in-laws when they remain submissive and solely focused on their spouse and his needs (Desai & Andrist, 2010). The blame placed on women spanned so wide as to include feminism as one of the perpetrators of male rape in Asia. Some posts were clear and direct in their identification of feminists as the enablers:

> **@mra_ramesh**- July 13, 2016
> "Rappe has been turned into a joke in our country. FEMINISTS should take responsibility for defaming India. #MaleRape"

The user identified feminists as the culprits behind an environment that makes the rape of men possible. This is supported in the following post by *@awadhiyavl*:

> **@awadhiyal**- June 22, 2017
> "#letstalkaboutmen #malerape feminism is cancer; She said NO, he said NO but only Her NO was "NO MEANS NO" …"

Both of these posts revealed that the role of a survivor has repeatedly been assigned to the female sex. By stating that only the female's "NO" is valid is a reflection of how the victimization of women is validated and that of men is not. Desai and Andrist (2010) report women stepping out of their predetermined social domain is problematic to society's constructs. This social restriction works against India's women and is counterintuitive to their population that is "rich in diversity" spanning from gender to social class to sexuality (Desai & Andrist, 2010, p. 672). The fight for power and agency is present in the feminist movement to acquire equal rights for women similarly to how men are fighting to have their victimization recognized.

Feminism has received pushback as there is still the focus on female rights and needs. Fisher and Pina (2013) find that the binary construction of gender makes it possible to interpret feminism as innately anti-male. In order for male survivors to be acknowledged, feminism must be better understood or more clearly defined. This recognition is requested on a legal level in this tweet:

> **@NanOratoR**- October 18, 2015
> "Indian feminists, judiciary and lawmakers prefer to stay blissfully ignorant #MaleRape"

The need for legal change was not specific to India as seen here:

> **@mra_sandeep**- November 2, 2015
> "China pip India in case of law or #MaleRape IND had made rape gender neutral before feminists got the bill changed."

As it was mentioned in previous tweets, India's construction of sexual violence is unique. Therefore, it is possible that the alleged rape gender-neutral law addressed some aspects of marriage that men did not accept. It is clear that men support the growth of the Indian woman; however this does not include "their" woman in the household as she "belongs" to their husband and this would be a disruption to the powerful hierarchies that exist within their home (Weiss, 2010, p. 291). Feminism was found to be a discrete trend in the posts and was identified as an area of the male rape topic in need of more research and attention in order to better understand the conceptualization of the issue and consequently come up with solutions and/or propositions. The male anger present in the tweets led me to classify feminism as a perpetrator.

In fact, the only male perpetrators who were discussed in the Asian sub-sample were the Taliban. According to the posts, young boys were offered as sexual bait to trap police. The following post by *@NewsInTweetsIn* presented a unique adult perpetrator in their tweet:

> "First post: #MaleRape and #paedophilia: How #Taliban uses 'honey trap' boys to kill Afghan police…"

The perpetrators who were identified in this tweet are members of the Taliban who use young impressionable boys as pawns in their plans against police officers who are assumed to be male. This is another demonstration of how power is present in this conversation. The boys are victimized by the Taliban and the police officers who fall for the "'honey trap'" as both social roles are accompanied by power. It is specifically a patriarchal power that exists in society and with hegemonic masculinity certain men have power over other men. For example, men such as police officers carry more patriarchal power and authority in a society. Furthermore, as the perpetrators are adults, their age gives them power over the younger individual's agency, which is a common trend in the topic of underage marriage in India (Desai & Andrist, 2010, p.669-

670). Similarly, young children, girls, and boys alike are often victimized by predators as they are easier to manipulate and control (Desai & Andrist, 2010). In fact, the Taliban, and subsequently the police, were the only male perpetrators that were discussed in the Asian jurisdiction.

However, with that one exception, posts on the topic in the Asian sub-sample constructed male rape as a heterosexual form of violence that attacked male property, including men's money and their sperm. Certainly, this construction of rape did not focus on the physical form of violence traditionally associated with the topic. As Davies, Gilston, and Rogers (2012) report, violent stranger rapes are believed to be the likely sexual assault scenario which ultimately contributes to the belief that male survivors should be strong enough to fight off their attacker. The attributions of blame towards survivors of sexual assault tend to increase when it is believed that the victim did not do everything in their power to evade the perpetrator (Davies, Gilston, & Rogers, 2012). Although the Asian sub-sample does not seek to reconstruct male power by "exceptionalizing" male victimization, it directly interacts with heteronormative understandings of gender. It extends to protect male rights to protect their property from women who, through feminist gains, expect to share it.

Interestingly, one Asian tweet, out of the whole sample, mentioned transgender individuals. Although other users critiqued the exclusion of men's issues from the law, the following post was the only tweet that explicitly included the transgender community in the conversation on sexual violence:

> **@MaahiArora4ever** - January 19, 2017
> "#malerape Despite so many cases of assualt, India's sexual violence laws are failing to help men, women and trans people."

This post was unique because its inclusive approach to gender went beyond India's heterosexual norms (Desai & Andrist, 2010). The limits of hegemonic masculinity extend beyond gender roles and preferred sexuality as assigning a gender has been framed as yet another form of restriction; thus, excluding transgender persons; this is the same lack of power that members of the queer community face as, they too, are not "allowed" to be survivors of sexual assault despite the realities of their traumas. An example of the complexity of male victimization as men are the superior gender (Desai & Andrist, 2010). Although society has been structured to cater to men and their needs, the structure fails to allow room for male victimization as roles associated with weakness have been omitted from the male experience. Victimization of men is also a way in which men have their very humanity and citizenship challenged; it is as if they no longer exist if they fail to be "man enough" to avoid sexual assault.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter begins with a discussion on the theme of denial as it was present in the majority of the general conversation, and will move into an overview of patriarchal assumptions and affordances in each region. I then discuss male anger and the shared silence that male survivors suffer from. The aim of this section is to focus on the unique constructions and differences within the similarities found in each region.

My analysis suggests that throughout the various regions, sexual assault is constructed as a form of heteronormative violence through a variety of tropes rooted in patriarchal assumptions. In all regions with the exception of Europe, rather than laying the foundation for finding similarities between male and female survivors of rape who are both subjected to patriarchal violence, male victims tend to use their position within the patriarchy to blame women for the fact that they, as men, have been victimized. In this sense, male survivors of male rape align themselves with male perpetrators of female rape, mobilizing patriarchal power against women as a way of reasserting male dominance even when they are the survivors of violence (Davies, et al., 2006). This mobilization raises interesting questions about a potential relationship between male concerns about male rape and social anxieties about men losing power/control in a patriarchal society[18]. The tweets blaming feminism, for example, reflect an underlying narrative of the need for men to regain control of their position as superior within the patriarchal society in their identified geographic location.

5.1 Solidarity within the Denial

In the first place, male survivors have to overcome the patriarchal belief that men cannot be raped because they are physically stronger than women and that they are the only ones

[18] Link to an article on "incel", or involuntarily celebant, in Toronto: https//www.cnn.com/2018/04/25/us/incel-rebellion-alek-minassian-toronto-attack-trnd/index.html

capable of being a sexual aggressor in heteronormative relationships. Denial was accordingly a major theme in the data, including the Europe sub-sample, the region with the least amount of posts containing overt patriarchy. Many posters were using their tweets to challenge the popular belief that men do not get raped. Both Europe and NA exemplified this through the minimal conversation discussing male perpetrators. Through the denial of male power, a call for awareness of problems of men who have lost patriarchal power and need it restored emerged in the conversation. Many posters used their tweets to challenge the hush surrounding male rape.

In North America, posters contributed to the reproduction of male rape denial because men are the almighty powerful gender; consequently, male rape must be explained as exceptional, something that can only occur in limited circumstances where the predator is also exceptional (Fisher & Pina, 2013). By having their experiences denied, men are connected throughout the conversation. In NA, there is a call for solidarity. This was echoed in Europe's lack of discussion outside of raising awareness on male rape. It appeared to be the only jurisdiction to present a medical service exclusively to male survivors. In an area where patriarchal norms are less strong, there is more space for men to talk about their experiences and get support. The theme of denial resonated in each jurisdiction. This theme became apparent through the calls for awareness on the topic of male rape in Africa and Europe. Posters on Twitter called for acknowledgement of male sexual assault survivors in order to dismantle the silence that has blanketed the male voice in terms of victimization.

In the North American sub-sample, this tendency to dismiss male victimization was also present and was so strong that much of the conversation was geared towards proving the reality of male victimization. A main assumption that makes it difficult to see male victimization is that "men are the instigators of sexual activity and so would not be targeted for rape" (Sleath & Bull,

2010, p. 972). Alderden and Ullman (2012) raise an important point that the current constructions of female rape impedes support for men as it is widely concerned with vaginal penetration by a man. Thus, rape is not only believed to be about sex but a specific form of sex or sexual act, one which omits male survivors from the equation. Consequently, much of the conversation about male rape at the surface is on breaking the major myth that rape is about sex and not (male) power, which parallels conversations challenging patriarchal assumptions about female rape as well.

Although the denial of male rape occurs broadly across the regions, there is solidarity and support for male survivors as survivors in each geographic grouping. All of the locations had posters who were trying to convince the general public that male rape happens and continues to happen, this was done in various ways. Some NA and European posters shared their stories and recounted their experiences via the tweets themselves. Interviews where survivors shared their stories were commonly found in the European sub-sample where posters shared air times of interviews and encouraged others to tune in in order to enlighten themselves on the topic. In the African sub-sample, the interviews were scarce; however, when posters shared these tweets the underlying tone was that the interviews were being used to expose the isolation that male survivors endure. In some instances, stories were also shared to expose the military with the rape of their soldiers. Unique to the African sub-sample, documentaries on male (war) rape were also shared. The lack of awareness is addressed by users critiquing the amount of attention the topic currently receives (i.e.: critiquing the legal system for only protecting women in the Asian context), challenging the patriarchal assumption that men do not get raped, and encouraging survivors to speak out.

The existence of male rape is completely contested as the patriarchal starting point is that men cannot be raped by women precisely because men are more powerful and women are not, and rape is an exercise of power (Javiad, 2018; Almond, et al., 2017). No one contests that female rape occurs. The struggle remains how to make sense of it. Generally speaking, patriarchy tries to diminish its significance by naturalizing it through the mobilization of the narrative that men want sex, justifying them taking it because they are physically more powerful than women, whereas women use to gain access to power by sleeping with (powerful) men (Bierie & Budd, 2018). So rather than seeing sexual assault as something that happens to people, male rape is constructed as something unique, which is the opposite of female rape where sexual violence is normalized due to the significance hegemonic masculinity attaches to sexual domination.

Rape myths such as denial and victim responsibilization assert that men have their rape denied in a specific way. The popular belief is that men do not get raped so before one can have their assault denied it needs to first be a possibility. This belief is an indication that social norms must be rewritten to recognize violence as a trauma experienced by everyone. In addition to inclusion and attention on the topic, male rape survivors need communities to mobilize actual systems of support. The heteronormative move in my data is that men are damaged by rape and consequently silenced but are still able to mobilize male privilege of voice and power in order to blame women. Survivors of attacks appear to blame women more for their victimization when they are sexually assaulted. As previously mentioned, provided that the perpetrator was male, the conversation is virtually nonexistent. The overall misogyny is exposed in the conversation through male anxiety that they will somehow lose their status in the world specifically with

regard to their money, biological integrity in the form of sperm and potential future offspring, as well as sexual wants and needs.

Kaufman and colleagues (1980) report that legal changes and social changes alike are necessary to have the topic of sexual assault adequately account for male victimization. By granting men access to an environment entirely dedicated to their health outside of their masculinity, European posters commend Sweden on its approach to the topic. DeBoise and Hearn (2017) find that what has been constructed as patriarchal privilege has also taken away the opportunity for men to be emotional despite it being an integral part of the healing process. Users in the European sub-sample were encouraging men to talk, without any constraints placed on how to express traumas. The European sub-sample was similar to the NA region as it too called for awareness and did so by continuing a discussion on male rape. The little amount of referring to perpetrators of male rape also contributed to the supportive nature of these sub-samples.

Africa's call for awareness included stories that were posted and generated conversation surrounding the topic of male rape. In the other regions, posters tended to use anecdotes and sometimes took a less formal approach by storytelling. Masculine beliefs and ideals are rigidly upheld in many African countries and rape is a direct attack on one's bodily integrity. As such, in order to cope some men are encouraged to find strength in sharing their story as opposed to harboring on the shame that they were in fact victimized (Buiten & Naidoo, 2016). Posters in the African sub-sample were often organizations that offered support to survivors (i.e. @StandtoEndRape and @mensrightsrdt); interestingly these groups focus on rape in South Africa despite the abundance of survivors emerging from conflict areas. This is another indication that, in Africa, establishing the fact that men are raped has not trickled down into everyday conversation and patriarchal norms continue to bind men to silence.

The Asian sub-sample posters called for awareness generally by requesting that services for male survivors become available. Several tweets called for gender-neutral laws as male rape is not considered a crime in some parts of Asia. There were not many tweets that were encouraging men and boys to speak out about their assault. In the Asian sub-sample, there were no stories of assault being shared and no personalization of the problem like there was in the European region. Legal recognition of the survivors was demanded instead of social recognition, therefore, conceptualizing male rape as a structural problem of law rather than a real human trauma,suggesting that the law's influence is a way of reproducing patriarchal norms in society (Sleath & Bull, 2010). NA and Europe have gone through decades of law reform which may open up spaces for public discussion and set them aside from the Asian sub-sample.

5.2 Patriarchy

Throughout my data, constructions of male rape are constrained and shaped by patriarchy. Most clearly, men who are survivors of sexual assault are cast out of their expected role as physically superior. Since being a victim, especially of sexual assault, is a role that has traditionally been assigned to women because of their assumed status as inferior, male survivors are obscure within the patriarchal matrix of understanding. As Selmini and MceIrath (2014) found, despite men making up the majority of the victims of all crimes, their victimization is often times neglected because the role of a victim is weak and, therefore, typically assigned to women.

Posters in the NA region talked about the complexities of patriarchy implicitly. How a powerful man got ousted from his rightful place as powerful is a structural move (i.e. women in authority (Sahl & Keene, 2012)). The stereotypes are slightly different in that they are specific to the male gender and its assigned roles. For example, women are typically blamed for their rape

based on what they wear or how much they drink, whereas men are blamed because they should have fought their attacker off or they should not have turned down a sexual "opportunity" (Turchik & Edwars, 2012). According to the patriarchal norms, even if a man were to get raped by a woman, they should reframe it as a lucky experience. This approach is still two sides of the same patriarchal coin in that women should protect themselves from sex and men should go out and seek it.

In the African sub-sample, the tweets discussing rape tended to reference an organization available to male survivors, a decent amount of which were centralized to South Africa. The tweets would also refer to (or include a link to) documentaries about male rape in Africa, with many of these documentaries discussing rape as a weapon of war which was arguably the most significant expression of patriarchal power. Authority figures, especially military personnel, hold significant power globally. In wartime, women and girls are commonly raped during combat in order for groups to assert power over communities, to impregnate in order to defile and dilute bloodlines and to spread diseases such as HIV/AIDS (Marshall, 2011). Interestingly, in my data, posters are discussing how young boys are often abducted and raped by older soldiers in the military. Power is still at play here but the power is not only between men and women; rather it is between military officials (likely older men with a higher rank in the military) and young boys who are inferior on two levels: they are young and they are entry level of the military. Similarly, male victimization in NA was constructed as being something that occurs in exceptional spaces. In NA these spaces where incidents of male rape were more likely to occur are prisons; military settings; and school campuses.

Interestingly, the cases of female perpetrated rape in Africa were discussed differently (i.e., a group of women stealing a boy's sperm). In this way, although the instances of male rape

are different than the ones described in the NA and Asian conversations, it links to patriarchal hierarchies placing male power at the top. However, the notion of men needing sex to propel their genes (and power) into the future suggests women should be compliant receptacles and if they are not, they are violating men's vitality, a key component of his masculinity. In their research, Layne (2013) stipulates that the use of sperm banks is not uncommon for couples, especially same-sex households, or single women who decide to raise a child in a single-parent home. This argument appears in Europe's conversation as some posters critiqued women who elected to purchase sperm online because this meant that "men are no longer needed". The commonality between the two regions is that women are stepping outside the usual passive role when it comes to procreation and are seeking alternative methods of becoming mothers independent from a man's assigned role as the procreator. In all four regions, men are frustrated because they feel like their patriarchal powers and rights have been infringed upon when they are victimized. Men are assuming the role of survivors, a role traditionally occupied by women.

5.3 Male Anger

The anger stemmed from men being angry about being dismissed as opposed to being angry about being survivors of female violence. In North America and Asia, the denial of male survivors previously discussed is challenged by an (angry) attack on feminism. Here, the attack is not on female perpetrators but on a movement that threatens male power, the constructed problem being that women will not keep their subservient place. This attack on feminism seemed to justify a blaming of women for the male loss of power be as a result of being raped. When male perpetrators were discussed, there were little to no details provided in the data. In fact, much of the conversation implied that the perpetrator was male based on the location of the assault (i.e. military and prison in NA and conflict areas in Africa). Such was not the case when

the perpetrator was female. When talking about female perpetrators the list of women was long and included roles in which women have power over men and boys. This list suggests that men continue to be unable to discuss male sexual violence against men and, instead, reassert male rape as a heteronormative experience.

In my data, how patriarchy works against human alliances between people who have suffered from sexual violence is apparent and makes room for animosity. It structures the ways that posters talk about sexual violence and divides the conversation into "us" (naturally powerful) men who need a solution because their power has been violated and "them" (unnaturally powerful) women who manipulate their position in society in ways that hurt men. In all regions, the conversation includes an ontological claim, working to establish the fact that (some) (powerful) men suffer from (some) (powerful) women. The heteronormative nature of the dialogue is key and the conversation about heterosexual men bifurcates in two ways. First, it is a conversation between "us", men who have been violated, and "them", men who do not believe male survivors and do not provide the services needed. It is also a conversation between men against women, where women are the problem because feminist agendas focus their attention on "their" needs and not those of men. Patil (2009) reports that patriarchy is deeply embedded into social frameworks and upholds a divide between men and women even in shared topics such as sexual assault and victimization. Both of these claims provide an interesting look into how patriarchy shuts down more productive conversations about the commonalities between men and women who suffer because of sexual predation by men and women.

In the NA sub-sample, posters discuss how men face the same myths that women do, such as victim blaming and denial. Through this shared silencing there is a call for solidarity where men wish to be included and recognized in discussions on sexual assault. Still, this call for

solidarity is constrained by patriarchal understandings of gender. Patriarchy is disadvantageous for both men and women as it silences both and when men suffer from sexual violence they are dismissed, like women. However, unlike women, men have status within a patriarchal society and seek to mobilize that status to reassert a position of power and control. In my data, this was done through the expression of anger towards women.

Male rape is an anomaly compared to female rape. It has to be an anomaly because the fact of assault means that a man's power and his ability to protect his own power through an external factor, such as one's profession or age, is compromised (Alderden & Ullman, 2012). Furthermore, even if a man were to be raped by a woman, patriarchal notions of sexuality suggest he should and would be happy, as all men are expected to seek out and enjoy heterosexual sex. This demonstrates how male rape is constrained by patriarchal assumptions about men and their masculinity (Davies, Pollard & Archer, 2006). Here the "us" versus "them" dichotomy is between men who have been raped and men who have not been raped. These men also adopted the belief that men should be happy with any sexual opportunity. This finding challenges the narrative that rape is about power and not sex by making the assault about sexual gratification and pleasure (Sleath & Bull, 2010).

Part of the African sub-sample expressed what appeared to be anger about the fact that there are services for women but none for men, which is another demonstration of how patriarchal structures which, on the one hand, silence male survivors and brand them as weak but on the other hand, positions men to demand that their needs be met. This finding links to the thread about feminism, as feminist advocacy often focuses on services for women. The fight is over the fact that women are getting attention and this is deflecting attention from men where it "rightfully" belongs. This is another example of the "us" versus "them" dichotomy constructed

between men and women. Women are blamed because they receive services, despite not being the powerful agents in society; patriarchy attaches more value in society to men, meaning services should primarily be considered for men given their heightened value as men. The fact that women are receiving more attention than men, who are in a superior position to them in the social hierarchy, is used to justify this male anger and outcry. Basile and colleagues (2009) link this assumption to what they call the "social ecological approach" which considers acts as a reaction to or consequences of socialization and external influences (p. 338).

This construction of men as powerful and the rightful narrators of social troubles is particularly strong in the Asian region. There is a general tone of outrage, not that people are subjected to violence, but that men feel like they are not heard and taken seriously, when they should be. Here the "us" versus "them" is still present between men and women, specifically (male) husbands and (female) wives. The unique distinction in the Asian sub-sample is that men are explicitly blaming feminists fighting for equality across genders for male rape, as if women fighting for equality somehow means men lose power. This resistance is a depiction of how patriarchy is upheld in Asia as women are not living up to their assigned roles in society (Desai & Andrist, 2010; Datta, 2011). This also shows us links between similar constraints in NA although the topics may differ; for example, in NA the conversation appeared to be more sex-driven and in Asia, posters discussed the assigned gender roles more. However, the social assumptions that frame men as more powerful than women built into these discourses have much in common.

5.4 Silence Surrounding Male Survivors

The conversation raised the loss of male power as a concern and outcome of male silence. The posts in the NA sub-sample were continuously generating a conversation on the topic.

However, posters did not discuss how men are raped and what happens during the attack; rather, they discussed various ways in which male rape is talked about or understood by society at large. It makes sense to then call on other survivors to come forward and break the silence, as it will strengthen the claim that the problem exists (Kia-Keating, Sorsoli & Grossman, 2010). Although some posters expressed that sharing their stories helped with healing for themselves, in general, advocating for others to come forward was interpreted as a discursive move towards social action and recognition of male rape. In all four regions, posters frame it as a knowledge battle. Statistics on male survivors were used to establish the fact that men are raped. Specific cases often presented in the form of media news coverage were also used to substantiate the fact that male rape exists. An important note here is that referring to media coverage may have substantiated the claim that "male rape happens" more than a Twitter anecdote would. The NA sample has stories shared in their posts, another way of providing evidence to support the notion that men, in fact, get sexually assaulted and this may have humanized the discussion more, as it personalized experiences.

European men may be more likely to push back against patriarchal constructions because their legal framework and social discussions are really grounded in striving for equality (Selmini & MceIrath, 2014). Scholars note that in other areas, such as Asia, men are positioned to be "catered" to as they are seen to be the powerful gender and can show rage and express their discontent when such is not the case; whereas in Africa, men are pressured to remain silent as they are the powerful gender and must not show emotion (Jewkes, et al., 2011). In North America, there were similarities linking the conversation to Asia and Africa as posters discuss how men may not speak up about their traumas because they do not want to be considered weak and have their masculinity challenged. In the NA region, posters discuss how in specific places it

is acceptable for a man to talk about his assault because he was in an environment where his power is lessened (i.e. an inmate in custody).

Additionally, according to Dosekun (2013), rape is a major issue in some African countries; however, cultures of shame often silence discussion surrounding the topic, sending male survivors even deeper into their own personal silence. Dosekun (2013) proposes that discussions of rape prevention initiatives should be allowed to flourish as opposed to being imposed upon survivors, the latter of which is reflective of a patriarchal approach.

In the Asian sub-sample, the impact that the rigid patriarchal structure had on the legal system was also discussed. The tweets addressed the absence of laws for men; however, they also addressed the structure of marriage, specifically in the Indian context. Patriarchy binds women to men from birth, first to their fathers then to their husbands, whom they often marry before reaching the age of eighteen. Once married, it becomes a woman's responsibility to take care of her husband's every need (Desai & Andrist, 2010). In the Asian sub-sample, posters talked about how women are expected to abide by their social roles and men are to have their power and position in society respected and never challenged; this is one of the ways that patriarchy controls women's sexuality and supports male power (and domination) over women (Davies, Gilston & Rogers, 2012). This control also links to the implicit ways that patriarchy does the same thing in NA; even though women have more legal rights and social recognition in NA, these social constructions remain active. For example, in NA, a woman's sexuality is policed and controlled based on what she wears or how many sexual partners she has and patriarchy makes it so women have to remain vigilant of any sexual energy they may exude regardless of whether or not it was intentional whereas that of a man is not mentioned. As

Riccardi (2010) reports, a man's sexuality is not discussed nearly as much as that of a woman, making it difficult to understand and unpack when discussing sexual assault.

Sexual violence was discussed as a trauma that can take place in the early years of one's life when one is vulnerable or not fully a "man" within the patriarchal sense. The age of the survivor touches on power dynamics and how an adult can coerce a child into sexual acts solely based on their age before anything else, so male vulnerability is "understandable" or comprehensible because it is determined by a lack of physical maturity. For example, in Africa the conversation about child soldiers included calls for non-governmental organization support for male victims because their young age made them vulnerable to violence. However, the patriarchal roots of this are not discussed or challenged. This sub-sample included a reference to rape as a tool of war where young soldiers are concerned; this also fits within the comprehensible victimization of boys who are not yet men. According to Sadat (2013), this form of sexual assault should be considered a crime against humanity, which touches on a different topic entirely.

Heterosexual norms and beliefs were present in the Asian sub-sample. The heteronormative nature of male rape's construction is extremely apparent, specifically in the institution of marriage. Social norms specific to India reveal that almost half of the country's girls are married (off) by the age of eighteen (Desai & Andrist, 2010). It is important to note that these girls are married off to husbands through patriarchal negotiations because women have been socialized as being a man's possession and as a tool for social mobility, voiding the argument that they are still girls and not yet women. This actuality is an interesting twist of patriarchy to justify the mistreatment of girls, yet express concern for boys. Women are owned by their families, headed by their fathers, and then are gifted to another man as their wife and

expected to spend their lives catering to their new husband's needs (Desai & Andrist, 2010). Any deviation from this apparent father-to-husband pipeline causes friction in the social fabric. Women are expected to fulfill the needs of adult men from a very young age (Datta, 2011). It is important to note that here is another demonstration of how women remain under constant supervision of what they are to do and men have their role assumed and consequently not discussed.

All four areas call for attention. The call for awareness of male rape in all areas is part of the discursive move to establish a hierarchy of knowledge that is highly gendered: "we" know because we have been violated, "they" need to listen to us and know too. The encouraging to raise awareness is an interesting ontological claim that has everything to do with power. That is why the discussion of men being powerful is so complicated in this data. When women make the same ontological claim (i.e. male sexual violence exists and it hurts us), the control dynamic is more straightforward (i.e. patriarchy focuses on social power in male hands and gives men as the holders of power impunity to commit sexual violence against women as the ones without or with less social power). When men make this claim, they have to justify why and how they found themselves in a victim role. To be a victim is to challenge the heterosexual definitions of masculinity, of being in and owning control and often through a propensity for violence, especially because it puts women as violators in a position of superior power (Anderson & Swainson, 2001).

Chapter 6: Conclusion

My research on the construction of male rape on Twitter revealed that the intrinsic complexities of patriarchy continue to influence how perceptions of sexual violence are shaped. Given the lack of knowledge about male rape in particular, I used Twitter as a public source of data in order to conduct my exploratory thesis. My findings suggest that constructions of male rape as a form of violence are bound to patriarchal structures in terms of if/how it takes place.

My analysis revealed that although the sample was divided into four regions globally, patriarchal constructions were present throughout the global conversation. In the North American sub-sample, the users constructed male rape as a form of heterosexual violence that usually takes place in the same spaces (e.g. schools, military, prison). The perpetrators varied from adult women and men to fellow students at a high school. Although the European sub-sample included a similar array of perpetrators, users in this part of the discussion constructed women making the choice to purchase sperm online as perpetrators of male rape. This part of the conversation demonstrated that hegemonic beliefs (e.g. the normalization of male control over female sexuality) remain at play when it comes to male and female gender roles in Europe.

My analysis of the African sub-sample contained numerous tweets where either the survivor was a male child soldier or the context in which male rape was being discussed referenced the rape of young boys in conflict areas. However, this sub-sample also included a significant number of tweets in which users were offering support or sharing information about support to survivors. This push in the African conversation aligns with Dosekun's (2013) discussion on how African men are socialized to remain silent when they experience trauma as it is a demonstration of strength. Interestingly, the men in the Indian sub-sample were not as silent. Posters in this region mobilized anger against women as a way of expressing that women who

step out of the misogynistic structures in place are to be considered perpetrators of male rape. In this sub-sample, the majority of the conversation focused on men voicing their rage with women which was interesting as I did not expect women to be the focus of much of the conversation. It also resonates with the North American conversation, blaming feminism for male rape.

My findings answer my research question "How is the meaning of male rape constructed on Twitter?" in three main ways. I mobilized the theories of the social construction of gender and hegemonic masculinity in order to adequately articulate the narratives found in my data. A significant finding is the similarities and differences found in the four regional discussions. This supports Lanzerieri and Hildebrandt's (2011) conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity as being influenced by cultural structures.

As noted above, the first narrative that materialized from my research was that of male anger found in two of the regions. Posters in North America and Asia alike projected their anger onto feminism in some tweets. Feminism, democracy, and social support for female survivors of sexual violence were reframed as direct attacks on male patriarchal power. This construction implies that somehow those who are seeking equality and progressive thinking are to blame for men being silenced in their victimization. In posts from India, male rape is constructed as a nonphysical attack on male privilege and power. This was my most unique finding with specific regard to the "angry husband" survivor that was constructed in the data. Tweets expressing the anger against women in India for not fulfilling their husband's needs, were in the same feed as tweets in Africa where young boys were used as pawns in conflict areas. This revealed both that the current understandings of male rape remain bound to patriarchal constructions of sexual violence and that patriarchy may express itself in unique ways in different regions (Lee, 2010).

The second notable finding that my thesis produced illustrated that patriarchal constructions have managed to keep gay men out of the conversation, even in areas where men publicly affirm the need for social acknowledgement and equality between the heterosexual and queer communities. Specifically, in my data, the conversations on Twitter echoed the silence that members of the LGBT community experience (Duncanson, 2015). There was an absence of discussion surrounding experiences outside of heterosexual interactions in my data. At first glance, this seemed to suggest that gay and straight male survivors stood in solidarity, since all male survivors are being silenced. However, the heteronormative construction of rape throughout my data and Lee's (2010) and Lanzieri and Hildebrant's (2011) conceptualization of homosexuality in relation to male rape suggest that the absence of discussion of same-sex sexual violence is another product of patriarchal structures that internalize homophobia through a fear of being dominated by not only a woman, but by anyone (Smith, et al., 2014).

My third finding was thought-provoking, even though the focus of my thesis was on the male experience of sexual violence, much of the entire conversation was directed at women (and how they are gender outlaws). In North America, perpetrators were constructed as women in positions of power which would traditionally not be awarded to them (e.g. teachers, prison therapists, women who are armed). In Europe, the most supportive sub-sample, posters constructed women who seek sperm from sperm banks as perpetrators. The African sub-sample had almost the exact same construction except the women in that sample acquired the sperm through the violent and criminal act of kidnapping. Lastly, wives who failed to abide by the gender roles set out for them in society were constructed as perpetrators in Asia. My findings confirm that patriarchy can be used to marginalize the voices of those who are stereotypically in power (in my project's case, it is men); however, it also suggests that men can still mobilize their

privilege in resistance to the structures that are silencing them (often by blaming women), whereas women learn to cope with being silenced.

A main contribution of my research to the interdisciplinary field of feminist criminology is my focus on men as gendered beings who, like women, are inserted into patriarchal relationships that both privilege and constrain them. As Chow, Segal and Tan (2011) report, analyses of the effects of gender, especially in global contexts, cannot be focused solely on women, and the assumption that the male gender is synonymous with power needs to be undone. My research helped to demonstrate that inclusive space must be allocated to men in conversations centered on victimization as it is clear that the current knowledge on male experiences of victimization does not embody the complete range of what men go through (Chow, Segal, & Tan, 2011). Although my data were drawn from an online source, my analysis adds to our understanding of victimization of men in general. It also suggests that further research is needed to better understand the interplay between male perpetration and male victimization in the context of sexual violence, as this interplay appeared both explicitly and implicitly in the tweets I analysed. Additionally, my research aligned with Aas's (2013) point that "the social […] of technologies are hotly debated issues within the social sciences" (p. 175). By exploring what is actually being said on one of these platforms/technologies, I have provided a model of both the benefits and constraints of using social media as a source for social science research.

A shortcoming of my research is that I was unable to interview survivors or Twitter posters. With a topic as intimate as male rape, my findings would have benefited from the opportunity to see how survivors respond to the Twitter conversations and to ask Twitter posters to clarify their views. Additionally, I only looked at one hashtag. My findings would have been

more complete if I were to look at more than one hashtag especially when several of the tweets had more than one hashtag in the posts themselves. Both of these shortcomings reflect the short timeframe of a master's project.

The various narratives that appeared in each region both underline the universal impact of patriarchy and regional differences in how patriarchal assumptions shape social discourse. Accordingly, my project suggests that cultural differences and social climate must also be included in the research on the topic of male rape in order to effectively conceptualize it. Furthermore, if this project were to be duplicated, I recommend taking into account the times at which the tweets were posted. My sample ranges from 2010-2017; it would be interesting to see if and how the conversation on male rape changes longitudinally, especially given the fact that, after I collected my data and was conducting my analysis, a few sexual assault cases gained significant (social) media attention (e.g. #MeToo, Harvey Weinstein, R. Kelly). Although these cases were heavily focused on the experiences of women, there were undoubtedly expressions of how "men are raped too" in the online conversations. Finally, a next step for research in this area would be to conduct qualitative research with survivors to see if their understandings of their assault resembles or resists the constructions on Twitter.

Appendix 1: Codebook

Code	Description	Example
Female Perpetrator	- Posts that explicitly identified the perpetrator as a female in the tweet and/or hashtag, attached link, reposted tweet, etc.	- @putsala_rao: #Femalerapist #malerape #crimehasnogender #crimesbywomen US woman charged with rape of a male taxi-driver – News * - @JohnHennry904: Video Shows Man Crying Talking About Being R@ped By A Woman #rape #society #sex #perception #malerape #disbelief
Male Perpetrator	- Posts that explicitly identified the perpetrator as a male in the tweet and/or hashtag, attached link, reposted tweet, etc.	- @_Man_Enough: @milkandh0ney agreed! men rape men and then have the balls to say they enjoyed it. We're doing a project against #malerape to remove stigma - @sultanaSafeerah: At a sleepover, a lady saw another boy rubbing her son's penis. He said someone else did it to him. #EndTheRapeCycle #MaleRape
Social Perpetrator	- Posts that explicitly identified the perpetrator as social or legal structure in the tweet and/or hashtag, attached link, reposted tweet, etc. - Examples include but are not limited to: feminism, gender equality/neutrality, reference to a law, reference to a government.	- @womenofchina: Joint Letter Calls for #MaleRape Change to Law - @antidespondent: Most imp aspect is gender-neutrality. #Malerape is a harsh reality, that we as a soxiety are scurrying away from. Most countries have is #feminism *
School	- Posts that identified teaching staff as perpetrators. - Posts that identified students as perpetrators.	- @StayBraveUK: Teaching assistant escapes jail despite admitting having sex with teenage pupil #MaleRape

	- Posts that identified male students as survivors of rape. - Posts that referenced a school or campus in the tweet.	- @Indianfathers: Headteacher accused molest two under-age boys *
Prison/Detention	- Posts that identified the perpetrator as a prison employee. - Male survivors of rape that took place in a prison or detention center. - Posts that shared articles on male rape in prison.	- @DarrenBlance: Male #PrisonRape survivors speak out: #SouthAfrica #Rape #MaleRape #malerapesurvivors * - @dutchjim: Suicide, drugs & sexual abuse more common in privately run prisons #SexualAssault #Prison #MaleRape
Military	- Posts that discussed rape in the military. - Posts that shared the stories of men who have been raped in the military and/or army.	- @RantingCatwoman: Male Rape prevelant in army. Ministry of Defence Figures reveal #MaleRape - @SASNational: A blog piece that looks at #malerape and #militarysexualtrauma
Age	- Posts that explicitly identified the survivor as a child in the tweet and/or hashtag, attached link, reposted tweet, etc. - Posts that shared stories of men speaking out about their childhood trauma.	- @trehan_barkha: Girl arrested for raping minor boy. #MaleRape * - @Toniatogbe: @StandToEndRape #MaleRape I have a couple of male friends who were raped as kids by the maids and aunties and sadly don't think it's rape. *
Awareness	- Posts that explicitly called for the awareness of male rape - Posts that affirmed that male rape is violence. - Posts that shared research, facts, or stories of male rape.	- @StripyWellies: Rape is rape. No consent; no sex. #rapeisrape #malerape #femalerape - @metanoia298: Male Rape is still RAPE #malerape

	- Posts that offered support to male survivors of sexual violence.	- @SurvivorsUK: 5 Facts About #MaleRape to tackle the #taboos around it *
Geographic location	- Posts that explicitly included the location of the poster and/or post in the tweet and/or hashtag, attached link, reposted tweet, etc.	- @NidaYousufzai: Three thousand, seven hundred and sixty eight victims #MaleRape #Pakistan - @etribune: 'Rape Victim' commits suicide in Kellar Syedan rt #MaleRape
Weapon/War	- Posts that shared the stories of men who were raped in conflict areas. - Posts that shared articles on the use of rape as a weapon of war.	- @catnathannathan: "It kills your spirit." Male #Rape: the Secret Weapon of #War #malerape #comflict #DRC * - @Curious_Animal: Good to see this story still getting responses around the world. #MaleRape as a weapon of #war
Dismissive	- Posts that denied the actuality of male rape. - Posts that encouraged male survivors of rape to view their assault as sex.	- @anon_victim: Men can't be raped #malerape - @FullofNonsense: #malerape is always funny @POTUS

*Note: some of these tweets were counted under more than one code at the time of data analysis.

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