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COLLEGE STUDENTS' CONCERN REGARDING PRISON RAPE

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sexual assault has been a long-standing social problem toward which much public policy, such as community response and advocacy, has been geared (Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance:np). Much research has been geared towards exploring the impact of stranger, acquaintance, and marital rape on the victim and community (Whatley 2005). Rarely, though, has the focus been extended to the victimization of incarcerated individuals. Prison rape occurs when an "inmate in a correctional facility is forced, intimidated, or coerced into sexual acts (Human Rights Watch 2001:np)." Sexual coercion is when the prisoner is pressured or forced into sexual contact against one's will (Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson 2000). Sexual assault outside of prison and sexual assault inside prison share many commonalities. Empirical research finds that prison rape is the acting out of power roles within an all-male, authoritarian environment where the emphasis is placed on dominance and

This thesis follows the format requirements of the *American Sociological Review*.

strength. Furthermore, rape is not committed solely for sexual gratification. Rather, prison sexual violence is a demonstration of extreme dominance and power over other individuals (O'Donnell 2004).

Prison sexual violence can result in negative psychological, social, and medical effects for the victim. Tewksbury and West (2000) state that the health consequences for victims of sexual assault carry on long after their release from incarceration and that sexually transmitted diseases can be passed on to institutional staff and eventually the outside population through sexual contact. This is augmented by the fact that "inmates are infected with sexually transmitted diseases at higher rates than the general, nonincarcerated public (Tewksbury and West 2000:369)." Dumond (2000) adds that along with the contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, inmates who are raped may suffer from physical injuries, such as bruising and broken bones in addition to the psychological effects.

There are specific psychological effects when dealing with sexual assault behind prison walls. Post-traumatic stress disorder is one example. Post-traumatic stress disorder is also known as rape trauma syndrome (Washburn 2003). Rape Trauma Syndrome is "the acute phase and long-

term reorganization process that occurs as a result of a forcible rape or attempted rape. This syndrome of behavioral, somatic, and psychological reactions is an acute stress reaction to a life threatening situation (Washburn 2003:237)." Other psychological consequences include depression and suicidal ideations (Washburn 2003). In addition to the psychological effects there are many social ramifications.

Social ramifications of being a victim of sexual violence include loss of social status within the prison facility. Additionally, the labeling and stigma of fulfilling a victim role may lead to increased rates of future victimization (Dumond 2000). O'Donnell (2004) argues that when individuals are raped in prison and then released into the general public, they reenter society brutalized and vengeful. This can, and usually does, lead to a higher chance of incidences of social deviance which may cause more harm to the general public and less chance of a successful re-entry into society, being rehabilitated and functional (Braithwaite 1989).

Studies concerning attitudes about prison rape have been conducted on specific populations within the criminal justice system. Correctional officers, for example, have been studied due to their direct impact on the treatment of

prisoners and the authority to determine the legal outcome of a prison sexual assault (Edgar and O'Donnell 1998; Eigenberg 2000a; Eigenberg 2000b; O'Donnell 2004). Correctional officers' attitudes toward prison rape have varied tremendously ranging from believing that prison rape is wrong to approving and even encouraging it to occur (Eigenberg 2000a). For example, a study that was conducted in Texas found that 46% of correctional officers surveyed stated that some inmates 'deserved' to be raped (O'Donnell 2004).

Although several studies have been conducted inside the prison community (i.e. prisoners, officers, wardens) little is known about the attitudes and level of concern that the public has toward prison rape. Currently, there is no known research that addresses this issue. Understanding the public's attitudes toward prison rape is particularly important due to its short term and long term consequences to the individual and the community and this study creates a foundation in regards to concern of prison rape.

One aspect that may explain attitudes and the level of concern regarding prison rape is the acceptance of rape myths. Common myths that encourage public opinion include that the victim of prison rape may provoke, and therefore

deserve, the behavior. Attitudinal research is vital in understanding the shift of responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim. Some might believe that because the victim is a prisoner, especially if they committed a particularly heinous crime, they deserve the sexual violence that is committed against them.

Another reason why researching prison rape is so important is that some might believe the victim is to blame for the violence, such as, if the victim does not report the rape to the authorities and is subsequently attacked again (Worden and Carlson 2005). This again shifts the responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim and in a prison setting the victim is constantly at risk. The perpetrator may be another prisoner or a prison worker, which might inhibit the victim from reporting the rape, since reporting can lead to retaliation victimization (Eigenberg 2000b; Worden and Carlson 2005).

Understanding the public's level of concern toward prison rape is important due to its links to prisoners' rights. Is the public supportive of the basic human rights of prisoners? A recent example of this would be issue of prisoner torture at Abu Ghraib. When the torture events that occurred at Abu Ghraib surfaced, there were multiple responses from the public, ranging from praise to disgust.

Indeed, the BBC World Service found that 36% of Americans believed some degree of torture is permissible (Marcus 2006).

The public's concern toward prison rape is also important for society. This study explores public regard toward prison rape. The United Nations states that the sexual assault of prisoners, whether it is perpetrated by corrections officers or by other inmates is a crime and a form of torture (Human Rights Watch 2001). This study will explore to what extent the general public holds similar beliefs.

Finally, public opinion is a key factor in determining the allocation of state and federal funding. If this survey can determine the level of concern toward prison rape then organizations can decide what the best course of action to increase support and awareness in hopes to end prison sexual violence.

Research up to this point has focused on attitudes of actors within the criminal justice systems attitudes toward prison rape, specifically prison workers. It is vital to expand this research to include the attitudes and level of concern that the general public has toward prison rape. It is in the public sphere that support to change laws, policies, and criminalize acts is garnered. This research

will provide a foundation for understanding public's attitudes towards sexual violence in prisons.

This study explores the acceptance of interpersonal violence, rape myth acceptance, attitudes toward prisoner rights, attitudes toward the 'just desserts' philosophy (prisoners get what they deserve) regarding prisoners, and gender as well as other factors that might affect the level of concern toward prison rape. In order to better understand what shapes attitudes toward prison rape it is essential to examine these relationships. Therefore, the following research questions will be addressed in this thesis.

First, how concerned are college students about prison rape? Because there is no known research that addresses this question it is important to understand the level of concern and attitudes that people have toward this issue. Secondly, what are the factors that affect concerns toward prison rape? For example, does the general acceptance of interpersonal violence affect the level of concern about prison rape? Does the acceptance of rape myths affect attitudes and concern over prison rape? Are attitudes towards prisoners in general related to attitudes toward prison rape? Are there gender differences on the concern about prison rape? The findings of this study should

provide policy implications surrounding citizens' attitudes about prison rape and theoretical implications will be discussed.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prison rape has long been an accepted by-product of the United States penal system; yet, in the last few decades more awareness has been brought to this topic (O'Donnell 2004). Non-profit groups, such as Stop Prison Rape and the Human Rights Watch, have raised awareness about this topic. Most recently, President Bush created the Prison Rape Elimination Act, which has allocated millions of dollars for research on the prevention of prison sexual violence (National Prison Rape Elimination Commission 2003).

The public's concern toward prison sexual violence is an area that has yet to be researched. Researchers have stressed the importance of societal values, beliefs, and norms in discerning variation in interpersonal violence (Payne and Gainey 2005). By understanding the concern toward prison rape, we are better able to understand it's all to frequent occurrence. If the general public is accepting of sexual assault of the incarcerated, it is unlikely that this phenomenon will be criminalized. Without establishing a firm precedent that prison rape is unacceptable and intolerable, law and policy makers will

have little vested interest in developing and implementing policy that deters the occurrence of sexual assault within prisons.

In order to understand the concern students' have regarding prison rape, other sociological factors need to be examined. Hence, the following review of literature centers on correctional officers' attitudes toward prison rape, the acceptance of rape myths and factors that influence it (i.e. gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity), attitudes toward prisoners, and the general acceptance of interpersonal violence in the United States. Through examining these areas, a better understanding of impacts concern toward prison rape can emerge.

PREVALENCE OF PRISON RAPE

Several researchers assert that the extent of prison rape is unknown (Dumond 2000; Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson 1992; Struckman-Johnson et al. 1996). A recent study of the Nebraska Prison System (Struckman-Johnson et al. 1996) found that rates of prison rape were similar to percentages given for the non-imprisoned female population, roughly one in four or one in five.

Dumond's (2000) research suggests there is a difference in the rates of forced or coerced sexual

activity between medium and maximum-security prisons and minimum-security prisons for males (22% and 16% respectively). Higher security prisons have increased rates of sexual assaults due to the longer prison sentences and more violent offenders. Wooden and Parker (1982) found that 14% of male prisoners were sexually assaulted by other inmates.

The U.S. Department of Justice conducted the first-ever national survey on prison sexual violence in 2004. The random sample survey was conducted on more than 2,700 correctional facilities holding 79% of all adult and juveniles in custody, equaling 1,754,092 incarcerated individuals. By analyzing this data Beck and Hughes (2004) found that of the 8,210 allegations of sexual violence reported in 2004. 10% consisted of abusive sexual contact, 11% staff sexual harassment, 37% involved inmate-on-inmate nonconsensual sexual acts, and 42% involved staff sexual misconduct (Beck and Hughes 2004). Other research suggests that about one in five prisoners engage in some sort of consensual sexual activity, and one in twelve report experiencing an aggressive unwanted sexual encounter (Tewksbury 1989).

CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD PRISON RAPE

Limited research has been conducted on correctional officers attitudes toward prison rape (Eigenberg 2000a; Eigenberg 2000b). Yet, this is a vital area that needs to be explored due to the direct impact of the correctional officers attitudes on the prison population, specifically, perpetrators and victims of prison rape. If officers are sympathetic or well trained "to recognize the symptoms of inmates who have been raped and take appropriate actions (Eigenberg 2000a:416)" they will be able to exhaust the appropriate resources and actions needed for the victim.

Research about correctional officers attitudes toward prison rape conducted by the Texas Department of Corrections found that almost half of the correctional officers surveyed believed that some inmates deserved to be raped (Eigenberg 1994). This same study also concluded that additional factors about correctional officers created a framework for which attitudes toward prison rape were determined. An officer was more likely to label a rape as such when it followed the stereotypical scenario (i.e. younger weaker victims, use of a weapon, and bodily injury). Additionally, officers who were religious, endorsed counseling, and had positive attitudes toward

women are more likely to act adhere to prison rape protocols (Eigenberg 1994).

ACCEPTANCE OF RAPE MYTHS

Although awareness of sexual violence has increased over the past few decades, the rate of sexual assault remains extremely high. The U.S. Department of Justice, through the National Crime Victimization Survey (2002), reported that 246,180 women were victims of rape or sexual assault in the year 2000. Other researchers have found that one in eight women in the United States have experienced rape (Nagel et al. 2005). With so many individuals victimized by sexual violence, it is important to examine the role that culture plays in tolerating these behaviors.

The acceptance of rape myths has been "linked theoretically and empirically to other attitudes regarding gender roles and interpersonal interactions (Cotton, Farley, and Baron 2002)." The acceptance of rape myths can be predicted from attitudes toward sex role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, sexual conservatism, and acceptance of interpersonal violence (Burt 1980; Cotton et al. 2002; Frese, Moya, and Megias 2004; Schaefer and Thomas 1999; Simonson and Subich 1999; Struckman-Johnson and

Struckman-Johnson 1992). Research reveals that rape attitudes are linked to other attitudes (i.e. sex role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, sexual conservatism, and acceptance of interpersonal violence). The more an individual adheres to and accepts the attitudes listed, the more likely they are to support the rape myths (Simonson and Subich, 1999). One example of the perpetuation of rape myths is the idea of an unknown black male perpetrator and a white victim (Koch 1995). Although interracial sexual assault is rare and is steadily decreasing, this myth has continued its persistence into the mainstream, which may be due to larger societal factors (Koch 1995).

Research suggests that the acceptance of rape myths is influenced by many societal factors (e.g. race, income, education) (Nagel et al. 2005). It is also theorized that the same societal factors that influence rape myth acceptance also influence attitudes toward prison rape. Gender is one factor where this is true.

Gender

Gender is an important aspect in the acceptance level of rape myths (Burt 1980). Studies conducted on rape myth acceptance show that males are more accepting of the myths

than females (Field 1978; Schaefer and Thomas 1999; Jimenez and Abreu 2003; Nagel et al. 2005; Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson 1992). Jimenez and Abreu (2003) found that female participants have higher levels of empathy, are less accepting of rape myths, and attribute more credibility toward rape victims when compared to males. Males are found to be more likely to blame the victim, have greater degrees of rape myth acceptance, and are more likely to adhere to rape-tolerant attitudes (Caron and Carter 1997; Jimenez and Abreu 2003).

Gender is a vital variable in much of the sociological and criminological research. It impacts the beliefs and attitudes held about many societal structures. Females, for example, are associated with less accepting attitudes of rape myths than males (Burt 1980; Nagel et al. 2005). In understanding this, it is hypothesized that gender will also have an impact on attitudes toward prison rape. Given this relationship, it may be that males, are more accepting of rape myths, and may be more accepting of prison rape.

Socioeconomic status and ethnicity

Research has found that ethnicities differ in the acceptance of rape myths (Jimenez and Abreu 2003; Nagel et al. 2003). Whites, when compared to other ethnicities,

tend to have lower levels of rape myth acceptance. Latinos and Asian Americans have been noted as endorsing more negative attitudes toward rape victims, when compared to Whites. Nagel and colleagues (2005) state that African American males significantly differ from White and African American females in their attitudes toward rape victims. However, this finding loses its significance when education and income are added to the model.

It is suggested that socioeconomic status (e.g. education and income) is a more concise indicator to predict one's acceptance of rape myths than ethnicity. When individuals with less education are surveyed, they show a less favorable attitude toward rape victims than those with higher educational attainment (Nagel et al. 2005). Those with higher incomes are also found to hold more favorable attitudes toward rape victims than those with lower income levels (Nagel et al. 2005). Since individuals with a higher socioeconomic status are less accepting of rape myths they may be less accepting of prison rape. The level of acceptance of rape myths can be studied in many different groups. An individual's student status in addition to socioeconomic status may have an effect on the level of acceptance of rape myths.

Student status

Rape is a problem in the United States that is prevalent on college campuses (Fisher, Cullen, and Turner 2000). Research specifically targeting rates of acquaintance rape of females on college campus have found victimization rates ranging from 11% to 21% or even higher (Jimenez and Abreu 2003). Approximately 54% of college women report some form of sexual abuse, such as forced fellatio or digital penetration, and 27% have been the victim of rape or attempted rape (White and Kurpius 1999). With such high incidences of sexual violence perpetrated on college campuses, research has begun to take preventative measures in understanding and reducing the level of rape myth acceptance (Payne and Respass 2006).

Rape awareness classes and prevention programs can be found on many college campuses throughout the United States. Yet, even with the high frequency of such preventative measures, rape myth acceptance still persists (Schaefer and Thomas 1999). The gender difference found in the general public too can be seen with regards to college students. Females are less tolerant of rape myth acceptance than their male counterparts (Harrison, Downes, and Williams 1991; Schaefer and Thomas 1999; Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson 1992; White and Kurpius

1999). A ceiling effect was found among female college students with regards to their knowledge of sexual assault. The scores on the pretest were so high that there was little room for females to improve. Males did show increased knowledge from the pretest to the post-test when a program addressing victim blaming and factual knowledge about acquaintance rape was provided (Harrison et al. 1991).

With the presence of rape awareness programs on college campuses, the percentages of students who still adhere to rape myths is still high. Holcomb and colleagues (1991) found that a quarter of all male college students surveyed agreed with rape myths, examples of such myths include that rape was often provoked by the victim, any woman could prevent rape if she really wanted to, and women frequently cried rape falsely. Other research states that 79% of college males surveyed responded, "raping a woman is justifiable if the woman was perceived as being loose or a tease (Muehlenhard and Linton 1987)." With the increase in sexual assault awareness classes on college campuses the level of knowledge about sexual assault increases. Although this study does not compare students with non-students we might expect low levels of rape myth acceptance among the student population.

ATTITUDES TOWARD PRISONERS

With the number of incarcerated individuals increasing, it is essential to understand citizens' attitudes toward prisoners. Citizens' attitudes towards prisoners are essential in determining interactions with prisoners during their reentry into the general public. It should be added that these attitudes greatly affect the hiring and housing process (Travis 2005). Additionally, understanding attitudes toward prisoners will provide a basis for understanding the reactions of individuals towards prison rape.

Melvin, Gramling, and Gardner (1985) state that attitudes toward prisoners determine how one will interact with prisoners. For example, a positive attitude in correctional officers' toward prisoners was one of the key variables resulting in successful releases. When compared to the correctional officers' attitudes toward prisoners, the community and college student samples scored higher, meaning they held more positive attitudes toward prisoners (Melvin et al. 1985). Thus, the perception that an individual has of prisoners may influence their attitudes about prison rape.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence

Interpersonal violence is aggression that occurs between family members and intimate partners. It can also include violence that occurs between strangers and acquaintances, which is "not intended to further the aims of any formally defined group or cause (Waters et al. 2005:303)." Notably, interpersonal violence is apparent in all levels of society and in all geographical locations (Pierce 2002). There are six identified types of interpersonal violence: a) child abuse and neglect, b) intimate partner violence, c) abuse of the elderly, d) sexual violence, e) youth violence, and f) work place violence (Waters et al. 2005).

Through listing these six categories, it is clear that interpersonal violence has the capability to affect every aspect of an individual's life throughout the life cycle (Payne and Gainey 2005). According to Schinkel (2004:5), "interpersonal violence is a phenomenon that is of increasing concern, both to politicians and policy-makers as well as to social scientists." Understanding the acceptance that citizens have toward interpersonal violence is an important aspect in understanding the level of acceptance of prison rape.

The acceptance of interpersonal violence is the idea that force and coercion are legitimate ways to gain compliance (Burt 1980). Specifically, they are legitimate in intimate and sexual relationships (Burt, 1980). The use of interpersonal violence has historically been considered an appropriate response when the cause is deemed as 'right' or when circumstances 'justify' the use of force (Johnson and Sigler 1996). Even extreme forms of violence, such as rape and murder, have been justified in the name of a greater good (Johnson & Sigler 1996). Yet, even with the justification of violence, research has shown that citizens have relatively low levels of acceptance of interpersonal violence, and this trend appears to be stable over time (Johnson and Sigler 1996). Indeed, Johnson and Sigler (1996) found that the use of physical force was deemed as always wrong by a significant proportion of individuals. The exception to this is when a man uses physical force to "defend his woman" (Johnson and Sigler 1996:428).

The acceptance of interpersonal violence, as noted earlier, is the idea that the use of force between two individuals is justified. Following the logic, accepting interpersonal violence may increase the likelihood of having more acceptable views on prison rape.

Opinions toward prisoners, rape myth, and interpersonal violence are theorized to better understand attitudes toward prison rape. The purpose of this thesis is to understand the level of concern and acceptance of prison rape. The following hypotheses are presented to assist in understanding the aspects that shape people's attitudes toward prison rape:

Hypothesis 1: Negative attitudes toward prisoner's rights are positively related with concern toward prison rape.

Hypothesis 2: The 'just desserts' philosophy regarding prisoners is negatively related with the level of concern toward of prison rape. The 'just desserts' philosophy is the idea that a prisoner deserves additional punishment, besides prison, for their crime.

Hypothesis 3: Acceptance of rape myths is negatively related with concern toward prison rape.

Hypothesis 4: Males are less likely to be concerned with prison rape than females.

Hypothesis 5: Acceptance of interpersonal violence is negatively related with concern toward prison rape.

Hypothesis 6: Because males are more likely to approve of interpersonal violence, which is negatively

associated with concern toward prison rape, the correlation between gender and prison rape will be at least partially explained by the approval of violence in general.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

This study is an examination of college students' attitudes toward prison rape. In this chapter I will explain the methods used, the sampling strategy, and how quantitative data were obtained and analyzed.

The *2006 Attitudes toward Prison Rape* (Appendix A) was comprised of three sections. The first section included eighteen demographic characteristic questions such as age, gender, marital status, race, etc. The second section was labeled 'opinion.' The opinion section had one question asking what the respondent thinks is the most important goal of prison. The main part of the opinion section was twenty-seven questions that asked the respondent to indicate their level of agreement to the corresponding question. The choices were Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4). The final section of the survey consisted of three open-ended questions in which the respondents were asked to answer the questions dealing with where they receive their information about prison rape and why they think it occurs.

After the completion of the questionnaire it was then distributed to seven graduate students and five professors at a large urban university in Virginia for input. Revisions were made due to the input and the survey was distributed to the sample.

SAMPLE

The data for this analysis is the *2006 Attitudes toward Prison Rape* questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to college students for a total of 401 respondents ages 18 to 53 between September and November 2006. The sample was comprised of individuals attending college classes at Old Dominion University. The questionnaires were distributed to students who attend classes at the main campus and through distance learning. Distance learning is a program offered through the University, where students from multiple states can enroll and participate in classes, which are broadcasted from studio classrooms.

Students were selected based on accessibility. The on-campus questionnaires were distributed during class by the investigator and were collected directly after completion. For the distance learning students the surveys were posted online and then submitted after completion.

Distance learning sites, a total of twelve, in both rural and urban areas of Virginia were used to help garner variation in student demographic characteristics. The questionnaires were distributed to criminal justice, sociology, and psychology classes ranging in size from 25 to 100 students. These classes were sampled due to their knowledge of sexual assault and prisons. By surveying classes who have some base knowledge of the criminal justice system there is an expected increase in awareness and concern of prison rape.

For this thesis project quantitative data will be explored. The respondents were informed that completion of the questionnaire was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were also informed that the questionnaire would explore attitudes toward violence, specifically prison violence. The respondents, after completing the demographic characteristics section (e.g., age, race, religion), were asked to choose the option that best fit their level of agreement with each statement. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree) regarding acceptance of interpersonal violence, rape myth acceptance, attitudes toward prison rape, knowledge of prison rape, and attitudes toward prisoners and the criminal justice system. The

respondents were also asked to answer three open-ended qualitative questions: a) where the respondents receive their information about prison rape, b) what they believe causes prison rape, and c) any additional comments they would like to include.

MEASURES

The independent variables used in for this study are acceptance of interpersonal violence, rape myth acceptance, attitudes toward prisoner rights, attitudes toward the 'just desserts' philosophy regarding prisoners, and gender. Age, marital status, race, religiosity, student major, having children, political affiliation, income, and living in a rural or urban area were included as control variables. The dependent variable is attitude about prison rape.

Dependent Variable

As previously noted, the dependent variable used in this study is the *concern toward prison rape* (Table 1). This variable is defined as the attitude the respondent has about the issue of prison rape. *Concern regarding prison rape* is measured with three different survey items: 1) I am concerned about prison rape, 2) prison rape is an important

Table 1. Coding Scheme

Variable	Codes
Dependent Variable	
Concern Toward Prison Rape	Values range from 1-4 1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree
Independent Variables	
Attitudes Toward Prisoners Rights	Values same as above
'Just Desserts' Philosophy	Values same as above
Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence	Values same as above
Rape Myth Acceptance	Values same as above
Sex	0=Males 1=Females
Marital Status	0=Never Married 1=Have Been Married
Race	0=White 1=Black 2=Other
Student Major	0=Criminal Justice 1=Social Science 2=Other
Political Affiliation	0=Strong Democrat 1=Not Very Strong Democrat 2=Independent, Closer to Democrat 3=Independent 4=Independent, Closer to Republican 5=Not Very Strong Republican 6=Strong Republican 7=Other

Table 1. Continued

Variable	Codes
Children	0=No 1=Yes
Active/Retired Military	0=No 1=Yes
Rural/Urban Setting	0=Rural 1=Urban
Religiosity	0=No 1=Yes

issue to me, 3) prison rape is a big problem. Response categories for each variable are strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), and strongly agree (4). These three questions were chosen to measure the level of concern that an individual has about the issue of prison rape. The three questions were then scaled into a single variable measure of attitude (Cronbach's Alpha = .757).

Independent Variables

Acceptance of interpersonal violence is defined as "the notion that force and coercion are legitimate ways to gain compliance and specifically that they are legitimate in intimate and sexual relationships (Burt 1980:218)." The items were taken from the *Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence Scale* (Burt 1980). Acceptance of interpersonal violence was measured from the response given to five items: 1) people today should use "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" as a rule of living, 2) sometimes violence is the only reasonable solution, 3) being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women, 4) a wife should move out of the house if her husband hits her, and 5) sometimes the only way a man can get a cold woman turned on is to use force. The response categories given for each variable are the same as the dependent variable (Strongly

Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), Strongly Disagree (4)). These five questions were then scaled into a single measure of acceptance of interpersonal violence. (Cronbach's Alpha= .922)

Many scholars have used Martha Burt's (1980) the rape myth acceptance scale or devised their own usually based on her work. *Rape myth acceptance*, were found to most effectively conceptualize rape myth acceptance and is defined as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false ideas about rape, rape victims, and rapists (Burt 1980:217)." When these myths are accepted it may contribute to a hostile environment toward rape victims. The acceptance of rape myths was measured from four separate items on the questionnaire: 1) in the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation, 2) if a girl engages in necking or petting and she lets things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her, 3) a woman who is stuck-up and thinks she is too good to talk to guys on the street deserves to be taught a lesson, and 4) if a woman gets drunk at a party and has intercourse with a man she's just met there, she is considered fair game to other males at the party who want to have sex with her too, whether she wants to or not. The response categories for these items are the same as other variables listed, ranging

from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The four items that measured the acceptance of rape myths were scaled into a single measure. (Cronbach's Alpha = .825)

Attitudes toward prisoners was another variables used in this study. This item was used to measure the individual's attitudes of prisoners having the same basic rights as the public. The question used to measure this item was "prisoners should have the same rights as the public." There are four response categories for this variable (Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)).

Another variables used in this study was the 'just desserts' philosophy regarding prisoners. The 'just desserts' philosophy pertains to the idea of prisoners deserving more punishment for their crime then serving time in jail. One example of this would be if a child molester were sent to prison it would be justifiable to rape him. The two items used to measure this is "although an occasional prisoner is found innocent, most prisoners get what they deserve." There are four response categories for this variable (Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly Agree (4)).

Gender, student major, age, race, marital status, the presence of children, military service, rural versus urban

setting, political affiliation, and religiosity were control variables used in this study. The *gender* of the respondent was coded as either Male (0) or Female (1). *Student major* was coded as Criminal Justice (0), Social Science (1), or Other (2). Age was measured with the item "what is your age in years?" Race was measured with the item "how would you describe your race" and the response choices were White (0), Black (1), and Other (3). *Marital status* was measured with the item "what is your marital status" and the response choices were Never Married (0) and Have Been Married (1). The respondents were also asked if they had children (1) or not (0) and if they were actively serving or had ever served in the military (1) or not (0). Respondents were also asked "do you live in a rural (0) or urban setting (1)." Participants were asked to identify their *political affiliation* and the categories given were Strong Democrat (0), Not Very Strong Democrat (1), Democrat that is closer to Independent (2), Independent (3), Independent that is closer to Republican (4), Not very Strong Republican (5), Strong republican (6), and Other (7). Lastly, *Religiosity* was measured with the item "do you participate in religious activities two or more times a month?" The response categories for this item were No (0) or Yes (1).

STATISTICAL ANALYSES

Descriptive statistics were applied to the sample to explain how citizens feel about prison rape. Bivariate analyses were used to understand the basic zero order relationship between the independent and dependent variables and provide an initial test of the first four hypotheses. In addition, bivariate statistics between independent variables are useful to detect potential problems with multivariate analyses (e.g. multicollinearity). Multivariate analyses were used to assess the unique contribution of the independent variables on the dependent variables and test the fifth hypothesis.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

UNIVARIATE STATISTICS

Results of descriptive statistical analyses are recorded in Table 2. Because the classes surveyed were mainly criminal justice and sociology classes, 39.7% of students had majors of criminal justice, whereas 24.4% had social science majors and 35.9% had majors that were other than these two categories. 53.8% of the respondents categorized themselves as 'White,' 28.9% categorized themselves as 'Black,' and 18% as 'Other.' Nearly 70% of the respondents were females, and the majority of respondents had never been married (78.5%) and likewise the majority does not have children (82%). Only a minority of the students identified themselves as active duty or retired from the military (11.2%) and nearly three-fourths stated that they lived in urban areas (72.2%).

Respondents were almost evenly distributed in regards to political identification, 16.8% identified themselves as a strong democrat, 15% as not very strong democrat, 17.5% independent but closer to democrat, 11.8% independent, 8.8% independent but closer to republican, 9% as not very strong republican, 11.5% as strong republican, and 9.5% as other.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	n	%
Attitudes toward Prisoner Rights		
Strongly Agree	103	26.3
Agree	206	52.6
Disagree	59	15.1
Strongly Disagree	24	6.1
'Just Desserts' Philosophy		
Strongly Agree	37	9.4
Agree	156	39.6
Disagree	184	46.7
Strongly Disagree	17	4.3
Sex		
Male	127	31.7
Female	274	68.3
Student Major		
Criminal Justice	158	39.7
Social Science	98	24.4
Other	144	35.9
Race		
White	213	53.1
Black	116	28.9
Other	72	18.0
Marital Status		
Never Married	314	78.5
Have Been Married	86	21.5
Political Affiliation		
Strong Democrat	67	16.8
Not Very Strong Dem.	60	15.0
Independent, Closer to Dem.	70	17.5
Independent	47	11.8
Independent, Closer to Repub.	35	8.8
Not Very Strong Repub.	36	9.0
Strong Republican	46	11.5
Other	38	9.5
Children		
No	329	82.0
Yes	72	18.0

Table 2. Continued.

Variable	n	%
Active/Retired Military		
No	356	88.8
Yes	45	11.2
Rural/Urban Setting		
Rural	111	27.8
Urban	288	72.2
Religiosity		
No	243	62.0
Yes	149	38.0
Variable	mean	s.d.
Rape Myth Acceptance ($\alpha = 0.825$)	1.356	0.472
Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence ($\alpha = 0.922$)	2.085	0.388
Concern towards Prison Rape ($\alpha = 0.757$)	2.580	0.627

Finally, the majority of respondents (62%) surveyed do not participate in a religious organization two or more times a month.

As previously noted, the dependent variable for this study, concern regarding prison rape is divided into four categories. The majority of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (66.2%) that they were concerned about prison rape. In contrast, 33.7% of respondents surveyed disagreed (30.2%) or strongly disagreed (3.5%). Most students agreed that prisoners should have the same basic human rights as non-incarcerated individuals (78.9%) and 87% of respondents disagreed with the 'just desserts' philosophy regarding the treatment of prisoners. Practically all of students have low levels of rape myth acceptance (99.0%). Likewise, the majority of students surveyed agreed (65.9%) or strongly agreed (32.1%) that they have low levels of acceptance of interpersonal violence.

BIVARIATE STATISTICS

Before discussing the specific hypotheses the relationship between concern over prison rape and several control variables. Table 3 reports the bivariate

Table 3. Continued.

	ANOVA	
	Mean	SD
<i>Race</i>		
White	2.52	.62
Black	2.67	.63
Other	2.60	.63
<i>Political Affiliation</i>		
Strong Democrat	2.76	.69**
Not Very Strong Democrat	2.68	.64
Independent, closer to Democrat	2.59	.58
Independent	2.52	.54
Independent, Closer to Republican	2.51	.65
Not Very Strong Republican	2.65	.67
Strong Republican	2.45	.61
Other	2.29	.56
<i>Major</i>		
Criminal Justice	2.62	.69
Social Science	2.57	.53
Other	2.54	.05

*p<.05 **p<.01 (2-tailed test)

Table 3. Continued.

	ANOVA	
	Mean	SD
<i>Race</i>		
White	2.52	.62
Black	2.67	.63
Other	2.60	.63
<i>Political Affiliation</i>		
Strong Democrat	2.76	.69**
Not Very Strong Democrat	2.68	.64
Independent, closer to Democrat	2.59	.58
Independent	2.52	.54
Independent, Closer to Republican	2.51	.65
Not Very Strong Republican	2.65	.67
Strong Republican	2.45	.61
Other	2.29	.56
<i>Major</i>		
Criminal Justice	2.62	.69
Social Science	2.57	.53
Other	2.54	.05

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed test)

relationship between each independent variables and the dependent variable, regarding concern toward prison rape. To determine the significance of the relationship an independent sample t-test was utilized. An independent sample t-test establishes if there is a difference in means between two independent groups. Analysis of variance was used to test the relationship between race, political affiliation, major, and religiosity with the dependent variable, concern toward prison rape. ANOVA compares these means at three or more levels of an independent variable. Pearson's r , the final bivariate analyses used, evaluates the relationship between two metric variables, and indicates both the strength and direction of the relationship.

Using the independent sample t-tests it was found that there was not a statistically significant relationship between the respondent living in a rural ($mean=2.64$) or urban ($mean=2.56$) setting and their concern over prison rape ($t=1.16$; $p=.248$). The respondents who identified their living area as rural had a higher concern toward prison rape than those living in an urban setting.

There is a significant relationship between the respondent having children and concern over prison rape ($t=-2.20$; $p=.03$). Respondents who have children are more

concerned about prison rape ($mean=2.73$) then respondents who do not have children ($mean=2.55$).

The relationship between concern over prison rape military service ($mean=2.40$) is not statistically significant ($t=2.06$; $p=.041$) and their mean is lower than those who had never served in the military ($mean=2.60$).

Ones marital status was not statistically significant ($t=-1.35$; $p=.177$) when looking at the level of concern toward prison rape, yet, it is interesting to note that individuals who had never been married ($mean=2.56$) were less concern about prison rape than those who had ($mean=2.67$).

Finally, the t-test was used to test the relationship between religiosity and students' regard toward prison rape. Those who participated in religious activities at least twice a month ($mean=2.66$) had a higher level of concern toward prison rape than those who do not participate in religious activities at least twice a month ($mean=2.54$). The relationship between religiosity and the dependent variable was not found to be statistically significant ($t=1.41$; $p=.160$).

ANOVA was used to test the relationship between race, political affiliation, major, and religiosity with the dependent variable, concern toward prison rape. Using the

analysis of variance, it was found that the relationship between race and concern toward prison rape was not statistically significant ($F=.79$; $p=.639$). Blacks ($mean=2.61$) did have the highest level of concern followed by individuals who categorized themselves as 'Other' ($mean=2.52$), and finally Whites ($mean=2.52$).

There was a statistically significant difference between political affiliation and concern toward prison rape ($F=2.85$; $p=.002$). Respondents who categorized themselves as strong democrats had the highest level of concern toward prison rape ($mean=2.77$; $p<.01$) while those who categorized themselves as strong republicans had the second lowest level of concern toward prison rape ($mean=2.45$; $p<.01$) and 'other' had the lowest ($mean=2.29$; $p<.01$). When the variable 'political affiliation' was put into a table the means appeared to have a linear relationship. Hence, in multivariate analysis it will be included as a single continuous variable.

Furthermore, political affiliation was correlated with the main independent variables and it was found that women are more democratic while males are more republican ($r=-.239$; $p=.000$). Those who accepted rape myths were more likely to be republican ($r=.139$; $p=.000$). Lastly, those who believed prisoners should have the same basic human

rights as the general public were more likely to be democrats ($r = -.117$; $p = .021$) while those who believed that prisoners get what they deserve were more likely to be republicans ($r = .188$; $p = .000$).

The major of the student was another variable where the ANOVA test was used. Criminal justice students ($mean = 2.62$) had the highest level of concern toward prison rape, students who were social science majors, other than criminal justice ($mean = 2.58$), such as sociology and women's studies, had a slightly lower mean than criminal justice students and students who had other majors ($mean = 2.54$), such as engineering or chemistry, had the lowest level of concern toward prison rape. However, this relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($F = 1.178$; $p = .304$).

Another statistical test, Pearson's r , was used to determine the relationship between age and concern regarding prison rape. The relationship between these two variables is positive, as age increase so does concern toward prison rape. However, the relationship was not statistically significant at the .05 level ($r = .096$; $p = .055$).

HYPOTHESES TESTS

The first hypothesis is that negative attitudes toward prisoner's rights are directly related with concern toward prison rape. Pearson's r was also used in assessing the relationship between attitudes towards prisoner's basic rights and concern toward prison rape. Using this test we found that although there is a statistically significant relationship between these two variables ($r=.27$; $p=.000$), the relationship between the two variables was directly associated. These results state that the more a respondent believes that prisoners should have the same basic human rights as the non-incarcerated public the less likely they are to be concerned about prison rape. ANOVA was also used to test this relationship and similar results were found.

The second hypothesis is that the 'just desserts' philosophy regarding prisoners is negatively related with concerns toward prison rape. A negative relationship was found between the 'just desserts' philosophy and concern toward prison rape ($r=-.165$; $p=.001$). Therefore, the more an individual adheres to the philosophy that prisoners get what they deserve then the less likely they are to be concerned about prison rape. This relationship was found to be statistically significant.

The third hypothesis is that the acceptance of rape myths is negatively related with the concern toward prison rape. Using Pearson's r to assess the relationship between the acceptance of rape myths and concern toward prison rape we found a negative relationship, although the relationship was not found to be statistically significant ($r = -.09$; $p = .069$).

Hypothesis four stated that males are less likely to be concerned with prison rape than females. Pearson's r was used to determine the relationship between sex and the approval of prison rape. Males were found to have a lower level of concern toward prison rape than females ($r = .26$; $p = .000$) and this relationship is statistically significant supporting hypothesis four.

The fifth hypothesis is that the acceptance of interpersonal violence is negatively related with concern toward prison rape. A negative relationship was found between acceptance of interpersonal violence and the concern toward prison rape but the relationship between these two variables was not statistically significant ($r = -.04$; $p = .471$). ANOVA was also used to retest this relationship and similar results were found.

Finally, in addition to these bivariate analyses the relationship between sex, acceptance of interpersonal

violence, and acceptance of rape myths was analyzed. Women were found to have lower levels of rape myth acceptance ($r = -.257$; $p = .000$) and interpersonal violence ($r = -.125$; $p = .013$) than their male counterparts. The relationship between interpersonal violence and rape myth acceptance was also statistically significant at the .01 alpha level ($r = .342$; $p = .000$). Therefore, those who have low levels of rape myth acceptance also have low levels of acceptance with regards to interpersonal violence.

MULTIVARIATE STATISTICS

Multiple regression predicts values for a continuous dependent variable using two or more metric and/or dichotomous independent variables. For this study, multiple regression was used to explain variation in the dependent variable, concern towards prison rape, based on five independent variables: 1) sex, 2) acceptance of interpersonal violence rape, 3) rape myth acceptance, 4) attitudes toward prisoners basic human rights, and 5) attitudes toward the 'just desserts' philosophy regarding prisoners. The last variables entered into the regression model were the control variables, which consisted of marital status, race, religiosity, student's major, political affiliation, rural/urban setting, the presence of

children, and service in the military. To determine the effects that these variables had on the dependent variables they were entered into a linear regression model. Table 4 describes the statistical relationships between the independent variables on the concern toward prison rape.

Model one depicts the relationship between sex and concern toward prison rape. The relationship was found to be statistically significant ($p=.000$). The variable, sex, explains 6.9% of the variation in concern regarding prison rape. These findings are consistent with previous bivariate statistics, and supporting the hypothesis that females are less concerned.

Model two represents the sixth hypothesis which states that because males are more likely to approve of interpersonal violence, which is negatively associated with concern toward prison rape, the correlation between sex and prison rape will be at least partially explained by the approval of violence in general. The hypotheses was not statistically significant As demonstrated in Model 2, sex and acceptance of interpersonal violence explains 7.1% of variance in the dependent variable, concern toward prison rape ($R^2=.071$). Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that because males are more likely to approve of interpersonal violence, which is positively associated with the approval

Table 4. Regression of Predictor Variables on Concern towards Prison Rape

	Model 1 Beta	Model 2 Beta	Model 3 Beta	Model 4 Beta	Model 5 Beta	Model 6 Beta
Sex	.267** (.067)	.265** (.068)	.262** (.070)	.258** (.067)	.267** (.068)	.259** (.072)
Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence		-.010 (.082)	-.006 (.087)	.014 (.084)	.020 (.084)	.013 (0.83)
Rape Myth Acceptance			-.014 (.072)	-.017 (.070)	-.002 (.084)	.028 (.072)
Prisoners Rights				.253** (.038)	.225** (.039)	.221** (.038)
'Just Desserts' Philosophy toward Prisoners					-.116* (.043)	-.124* (.044)
Marital Status						.049 (.087)
Race White Dummy						-.038 (.067)
Religiosity						.089* (.064)
Student Major Criminal Justice						-.095 (.063)
Political Affiliation						-.073 (.015)
Rural/Urban Area						-.064 (.069)
Children						.078 (.093)
Active/Retired Military						-.034 (.105)
R2	.071	.071	.072	.135	.147	.188
Adjusted R2	.069	.066	.064	.126	.136	.159

*p<.05 **p<.01 (2-tailed test)

of prison rape, the correlation between sex and prison rape will be at least partially explained by the approval of violence in general. The impact of sex on concern toward prison rape was reduced by .004 when rape myth acceptance was included in the model. As noted in table 4, sex, ($Beta=.263$; $p=.000$) has a greater impact on the level of concern toward prison rape than one's acceptance of interpersonal violence ($Beta=-.010$; $p=.837$). This is consistent with the bivariate findings previously discussed.

The third model shows what effect the variables sex, acceptance of interpersonal, and rape myth acceptance have on the dependent variable, concern toward prison rape. These three variables explain 7.2 % of the variation in the dependent variable. The model as a whole was statistically significant ($p=.000$). Of the independent variables, sex had the only significant effect on the dependent variable ($Beta=.262$). Rape myth acceptance ($Beta=-.006$) and acceptance of interpersonal violence ($Beta=-.014$) were not correlated.

The fourth model depicts the effect that the variables sex, acceptance of interpersonal violence, rape myth acceptance, and prisoner's rights have on concern toward

prison rape. Model 4 as a whole was statistically significant ($p=.000$). Gender had the greatest impact on concern toward prison rape ($Beta=.258$) followed closely by prisoner rights ($Beta=.253$). Both of these are statistically significant and acceptance of interpersonal violence ($Beta=.014$) and rape myth acceptance ($Beta=-.017$) are correlated with concern toward prison rape. The combination of these four variables explains 13.5% of the variation in the dependent variable, concern regarding prison rape.

Model 5 adds the 'just desserts' philosophy to the previous four independent variables and concern toward prison rape. As a whole, this model was statistically significant ($p=.000$). Gender, again, had the greatest impact on the dependent variable ($Beta=.258$) followed closely by basic prisoners right ($Beta=.225$), the 'just desserts' philosophy had the third largest impact on concern towards prison rape ($Beta=-.116$). The remaining variables, acceptance of interpersonal violence ($Beta=.020$) and rape myth acceptance ($Beta=-.002$), had no impact on the dependent variable. These five variables explained 14.7% of variance in concern toward prison rape.

Model 6 adds the control variables into the multiple regression table (Table 4) and shows the effect it has on

concern toward prison rape. The control variables added were marital status, race, religiosity, student major, political affiliation, rural/urban setting, if the respondent has children, and the respondent's military status. The addition of these control variables explained 18.8% of the variance in the dependent variable. The percent of variance explained is congruent with other attitudinal research (Dye and Roth 1990). This model as a whole is statistically significant ($p=.000$). Of the control variables added, the students major ($Beta=-.095$) had the strongest effect on the dependent variable followed by religiosity ($Beta=.089$); both are statistically significant. Introducing the control variables did not change the substantive findings of the earlier models.

The results in this section provide a basis which much theory and policy can be derived. The significant effect of some variables, such as gender and attitudes toward prisoner, on the dependent variables needs requires future research to fully understand the connection. The implications of these findings are discussed next.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The public's attitudes regarding prison rape is an area in sociology and criminal justice that lacks substantial research. The intention of this study was to create a basis towards understanding this issue by studying college students' attitudes toward prison rape. This thesis found that attitudes toward prison rape are dependent on some larger societal factors, such as gender, as well as more general attitudes towards prisoner's rights. Consequently, these findings have significant implications for future research, theory, and policy.

The results of this study are limited in terms of generalizability. This study surveyed only current college students attending a single University in the south. Furthermore, of the students, those with social science majors were over sampled due to the classes chosen. Social science students may have an increased awareness and concern toward prison rape due to the type of materials covered in class. Although various limitations are listed with this study, it is important to note that there is nothing in the academic literature on this subject.

Therefore, the results stated here are an important starting point.

Overall, the majority of students (66.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were concerned about prison rape. However, a sizeable minority (33.7%) of college students disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were concerned about prison rape. College students have traditionally held low levels of rape acceptance (Harrison et al. 1991). The findings in this study were in sync with the current literature on college students' attitudes toward rape and rape myths. Although there were extremely low levels of acceptance found in regards to rape myths, the level of concern, if the victim is a prisoner, was lowered. It appears that college students do not attribute the same concern towards prison rape as they do when the victim is not a prisoner. This suggests that prisoners are not attributed the same basic human rights as the general public. Furthermore rape, which occurs behind prison walls, is rationalized as more acceptable than rape in the general population. This lower level of concern suggests that the prisoners are devalued and that sexual assault is acceptable. The findings of this research suggest the need to reduce the gap between the level of concern toward rape that occurs inside and outside prison walls.

One purpose of the criminal justice system is rehabilitation, yet the responses to this survey suggest that retribution is more of concern to college students. Sexual assault is used as a justifiable means to additional punishment. When the sexual assault of one group is tolerated it results in tolerating the sexual assault of other groups as well. The demoralization cost is the belief that when individuals who commit crimes receive no punishment then other people who are aware of the lack of retribution feel more justified in perpetrating the same and, perhaps more violent crimes (Rosoff, Pontell and Tilman 1998). In regards to this idea, if we are able to devalue one group of human beings, the threshold for valuing other groups, especially those that are on the periphery, is lowered.

This logic is in accordance with the findings based on attitudes toward prisoners. This study found that the more one agrees that prisoners should have the same basic rights as non-incarcerated individuals the higher their level of concern is toward prison rape. Additionally, the more a respondent believes that prisoners get what they deserve the lower their level of concern towards prison rape. These statements lead to the conclusion that if a college

student holds a higher opinion of prisoners they will be less likely to justify sexual assaults on prisoners. As hypothesized, gender did have a significant effect on concern toward prison rape. In accordance with the literature on rape attitudes, males have lower levels of concern than females (Burt 1980; Cotton et al. 2002; White and Kurpius 1999). Females tend to have lower levels of acceptance toward interpersonal violence and of rape myths. As such, females will have a lower level of acceptance of this type of violence too (Burt 1980).

The policy implications in regards to mens' lower levels of concern would be to initiate education for men on sexual assault. Although gender was found to be statistically significant, rape myth acceptance was not. There were such low levels of rape myth acceptance (99% agreed or strongly agreed that they had low levels of acceptance) that with such little variation the relationship may not be significant. One explanation may be the ceiling affect among college students in regards to rape myths. The ceiling affect is that students may already have extremely high knowledge with regards to sexual assault and its harm that there is no room for variation (Harrison et al. 1991).

Another reason for such little variation is that currently, men in particular, are aware of the socially desirable answers with regards to sexual assault. Even though the individual may not internalize the answers he gives, he is aware that those are the socially acceptable responses (Saunders 1991; Van Wei and Gross 2001). This could be an explanation as to why students showed less concern toward prison rape than heterosexual non-incarcerated rape. Students may be unaware of the socially desirable answers with regards to prison rape and are, therefore, able to give their true opinion.

Another implication of this finding would be to educate men on the short-term and long-term consequences of rape that occur to both the individual and to the community upon the release of the prisoner. Empathy training may also increase the level of concern. Empathy training is, among other things, is set up to decrease the likelihood of perpetrating violent sexual activities (Foubert and Marriot 1997). Foubert and Marriot (1997) found that fraternity men who participated in empathy training reported lower rape myth acceptance and a decreased likelihood of participating in sexually coercive behavior. It would be imperative to educate people on prisoners and the prison system. Many prisoners are convicted of non-violent crimes

and yet they are still victims of sexually assault while incarcerated (Macallair 1999).

Fleisher and Krienert (2006) say that sexual assault in prison should not be viewed as a pressing social problem because of its rare occurrence. Fleisher and Krienert's (2006) case is that because it affects so few individuals it doesn't affect the larger societal structure. Other researchers disagree of its prevalence. For example, Struckman-Johnson and colleagues (1996) found that 20% of prisoners experience sexual violence.

The indirect effects of sexual assault do negatively and profoundly affect our society. First and foremost, condoning, or rather the ignoring the use of violence sends a message that depending on your social status, violence is an acceptable means to an end. Devaluing one group allows us to easily rationalize the devaluing of another group. To end sexual violence, or violence in general, we need to stagnate the tolerance for aggression at any level or towards any individual or group.

Additionally, when a prisoner re-enters society many problems are encountered. One main problem is the reoccurrence of antisocial behaviors (Travis 2005). When antisocial behavior occurs the ex-offender is less likely to form a support network or to be a productive member of

society (Travis 2005). Being sexually assaulted in prison can magnify the ex-prisoner's anti-social behavior due to symptoms of rape trauma syndrome, feelings of low self-esteem, and increased levels of hostility and anger. Because the prisoner is unable to assimilate back into society due to such emotional and physical trauma, many will not be able adhere to norms and of the dominant culture (Washburn 2003).

Political affiliation was a significant predictor of attitudes toward prison rape. Political affiliation is a predicator of ones attitude towards societal issues (Kline and Stern 2004). Democrats tend to hold more liberal values, such as being more permissive on drugs, prostitution, and immigration, while republicans tend to be more conservative (Kline and Stern 2004). This study showed that the more one identified as democratic the more concerned toward prison rape they were. Conversely, a stronger republican identification resulted in lower levels of concern. It is interesting to note that respondents who categorized their political affiliation falling outside of the categories listed (ranged from strong Democrat to Independent to strong Republican) who identified themselves as 'other' had the lowest level of concern toward prison rape out of all categories. The relationship between

political affiliation and concern toward prison sexual violence was linear, indicating the more liberal one's thoughts were, the more concern he or she had towards prisoners and their safety, with the exception of individuals who were categorized as 'other'.

In order for awareness policy regarding prison rape to occur, politicians, both republicans and democrats, have to see the value in the laws and research. Therefore, if we want legislation passed, we first need to inform lobbyists who influence leading politicians and stakeholders that this is an important issue with major consequences for our society. With such a divergence in the level of concern toward prison rape between republicans and democrats, the issue needs to be presented as a nationwide crisis with lasting effects for everyone—regardless of political status and affiliation.

Interestingly, race was not a significant predictor of concern toward prison rape. Historically, when looking at race as a predictor to behavior and attitudes, researchers were inadvertently examining the effects of socioeconomic status (Nagel et al. 2005). Also, sociology and criminal justice classes were surveyed which may account for an increased awareness on the subject of prisoner rights and sexual assault. It would be interesting to replicate the

survey in the general population to increase the variation in educational attainment. Perhaps, with more representative data, race may be a significant predictor of attitudes toward prison rape.

Respondents with children reported higher levels of concern toward prison rape than those without children. This question may have actually shown a relationship between intervening characteristics and level of concern. Individuals who had children may fall into the category of 'nontraditional' students (e.g., working full time, older, with families). Traditional students, generally, have just recently left home. By embarking on the college experience, these students have just begun to create an identity outside of their parental, and perhaps seemingly limited, viewpoint. Traditional students, in fact, may be limited in their views as they are, expectedly, limited on life experience. Perhaps, non-traditional students may be classified as older and wiser. These two attributes may be untied with an increased acceptance and concern for humanity in general. Under this umbrella of tolerance falls the concern for society's most unwanted—the deviant and incarcerated. It may be that these factors, which comprise the non-traditional student, contributed to the

increased level of concern for prison rape and not just having children.

The thirteen variables, when all added into the model, explained 18.8% of variation in ones attitudes toward prison rape. Sex, attitudes toward basic prisoner rights, attitude toward the 'just desserts' philosophy regarding prisoners, and religiosity were all significant. These variables remained significant when controlling for all others. This implies that attitudes toward prisoners are a salient predictor of one's attitudes toward prison rape. The same remains true for one's sex. In order to change concern regarding prison rape attitudes towards prisoners needs to change. Individuals need to acknowledge that prisoners have rights as well—they should be entitled to their dignity and integrity. When a prisoner is sexually assaulted they are striped of their dignity and integrity.

Religiosity, when controlling for all other variables becomes significant, although it is not significant in the bivariate findings. If one attends religious gatherings two times or more per month than they have higher levels of concern toward prison rape then those who do not attend religious gatherings at least twice a month. One's involvement with religious organizations may indicate more tolerable ideals (e.g., do unto others as you would have

done unto others and let he who has not sinned throw the first stone), even in regards to prisoners. This may account for the increase in concern towards the physical and psychological well being of prisoners who has been sexual assaulted while incarcerated.

Research regarding the relationship between support for capital punishment and a relationship with God found that supporting capital punishment sends a contradictory message about God. Churchgoers who view God as loving believe that God responds to murders with unconditional love, support, and mercy. Individuals who believe in this type of God also view the death penalty in a negative light (Unnever, Cullen, and Bartkowski 2006). Therefore, this same idea of a forgiving God can be used in reference to concern toward prison rape. The acceptance of interpersonal violence is another variable that yielded interesting results with relation to concern toward prison rape.

The relationship between interpersonal violence and concern regarding prison rape was not statistically significant. As previously noted, the United States has relatively low levels of acceptance of interpersonal violence and this trend is stable over time (Johnson and Sigler 1996). Yet, a substantial minority of individuals

surveyed were not concerned about prison sexual violence. Perhaps people may not label prison rape as violent. Therefore, if someone does not define prison rape as violent they are still able to have a low level of acceptance of interpersonal violence while still not being concerned about prison rape. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how individuals view prison rape and then to make sure it is defined as a violent offense with lasting repercussions.

Traditionally, society bases its attitude of sexual assault on the characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator. This is evident when looking at the harsh penalties given to black perpetrators when the victim is a white woman as opposed to a black woman (Mann and Selva 1978). Another example is the evolution of rape laws to include marital rape. Wives, up until recently, were unable in the eyes of the law to be raped by their husbands (Bergen 2004; Ryan 1995). As the public became increasingly aware of the consequences of marital rape, they began to support policy, which outlawed it. We see this too with legislation concerning date rape. Prison rape reform can, hopefully, follow a similar political movement. Prisoners are on the peripheral of society and

that makes it easier for citizens to rationalize or ignore the inhumane treatment of the incarcerated.

This study provides the foundation for the level of concern toward prison rape. The significant and non-significant results of this study create supplementary questions in the area of public attitudes toward prison rape. College students may have more liberal views than the general public. Based on this, will the level of concern of the general public decrease with regards to prison sexual violence? If so, by how much, and what can we do to increase the awareness, concern, and importance of this matter? Does the individual characteristics of the perpetrator and victim determine ones attitude toward prison rape (i.e., male guard assaulting a female prisoner versus a male prisoner).

Future research should consider extensive exploration on the link between attitudes toward prisoners, focusing on the crime committed, and opinions toward prison rape. Other variables that should be explored when looking at what affects the level of concern regarding prison rape are where individuals receive their information about prisoners, personal experience or prior relationships with prisoners, and if the respondent has been a victim of a violent crime, especially sexual assault. Finally, future

research needs to focus on whether prison rape is even categorized as violent. If individuals do not regard prisoners with basic human rights they might be less likely to label prison rape as either a sexual assault or violent.

In conclusion, this study showed that sexual assault in the eyes of college students is acceptable, which is disturbing. Under no circumstances is sexual assault tolerable and rationalizing it in one group will only provide a gateway for rape to be justified on other groups.

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APPENDIX A

2006 Attitudes toward Prison Rape

GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. What is your age?_____
2. What is gender?
Male Female
3. What is your marital status?
Have been married Never been married
4. How would you describe your race?
White Black Other
5. How would you describe your religion?
Protestant Catholic Jewish Other
6. Do you participate in religious activities two times or more per month?
No Yes
7. What is your major?_____
8. Do you work?
Full Time Part Time I do not work
9. Do you live in a rural or urban setting?
Rural Urban
10. Do you have children?
No Yes
11. Are you currently, or have you ever, served in the military?
No Yes
12. Generally speaking, what is your political affiliation?
Strong Democrat
Not very strong Democrat
Independent, closer Democrat
Independent
Independent, closer to Republican
Not very strong Republican

Strong Republican
Other

13. What is your total household income?

Less than \$10,000	\$10,000-\$14,999
\$15,000-\$19,999	\$20,000-\$24,999
\$25,000-\$29,999	\$30,000-\$39,999
\$40,000-\$49,999	\$50,000-\$74,999
\$75,000-\$99,999	\$100,000 or over

14. Have you ever served time in prison or jail?

No Yes

15. Has a close friend or family member ever served time in prison or jail?

No Yes

16. Have you ever been sexually assaulted?

No Yes

17. Are you in favor of the death penalty?

No Yes

OPINION:

1. The most important goal of prison is:

- Punish the offender for their crime
- Reform the offender, make them a better citizen
- Warn or scare off potential criminals of the criminal justice system
- Punish the offender in order to prevent future crimes
- Protect society

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

2. People today should use "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" as a rule of living.

3. Sometimes violence is the only reasonable solution.

4. Being roughed up is sexually stimulating to many women.

5. A wife should move out of the house if her husband hits her.
6. Sometimes the only way a man can get a cold woman turned on is to use force.
7. In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation.
8. If a girl engages in necking in or heavy petting and she lets things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her.
9. A woman who is stuck up and thinks she is too good too talk to guys on the street deserves to be taught a lesson.
10. If a woman gets drunk at a party and has intercourse with a man she's just met there, she is considered fair game to other males at the party who want to have sex with her too, whether she wants to or not.
11. Certain crimes are so heinous that offenders should be subject to the death penalty.
12. I am concerned about prison rape.
13. Only the weak get raped in prison.
14. Inmates often participate in consensual sexual acts while in prison.
15. Inmates who have been raped generally support it to the staff.
16. Prison rape is an important issue to me.
17. Rapes in male prisons are rare.
18. Rapes in female prisons are rare.
19. I am fairly knowledgeable about the issue of prison rape.
20. I have all the information that I need about prison rape.
21. Some prisoners deserve to be raped.

22. Prison rape is a big problem.
23. Prison rape is preventable.
24. Prison rape should be prevented.
25. Prisoners should have the same rights as the generally public.
26. The government should invest more time into preventing prison rape.
27. Although an occasional prisoner is found innocent, most prisoners get what they deserve.
28. The criminal justice system is biased against minority.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. A great deal of this survey focused on prison rape. Where do you receive your information about prison rape?
2. Why do you think prison rape occurs?
3. Do you have any other comments about prison rape?

VITA

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