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Editor's Note

It is a sincere honour to introduce the first edition of *Simon Fraser University's Undergraduate Journal of Psychology* (SFUUJP). This journal is a student-driven initiative that aims to allow fellow undergrads to fully engage with the scientific peer-review process and gain valuable experience in publishing their own work. Through this initiative, we hope to offer an important new element to our academic community – a platform that enables students to pursue scientific research, writing, and critical thinking *beyond* the limits of conventional coursework.

This first issue reflects the knowledge and commitment of a small group of enthusiastic undergraduate and graduate students whose combined efforts made this publication possible. Particularly, I am very grateful to my fellow editors for their tireless efforts that provided the backbone of this initiative, our graduate reviewers for producing exceptionally in-depth and thoughtful reviews in a timely manner, and our faculty advisor, Dr. Tim Racine, for his guidance and assistance in making this initiative known. The SFUUJP team would also like to extend our gratitude to the Psychology Student Union and the Department of Psychology for their generous support, and members of the UBCUJP for their helpful tips early on.

Lastly, we are indebted to our talented authors for filling these pages ahead. This opening issue showcases the promise of undergraduate research and writing with five excellent articles, comprising topics such as prosocial motivation towards outgroups, the illusoriness of free will, and misperceptions within the criminal justice system (among others). It is our hope that this first issue of the SFUUJP will stimulate new inquiries, inspire future undergraduate research, and mark the beginning of a lasting tradition within our academic community.

– Ryan W. Carlson, *Editor-in-Chief*

The Impact of Self-Categorization on Motivations and Willingness to Help an Outgroup

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Do motivations and willingness to help an outgroup differ depending how one is self-categorized at the time of helping? A helper who is currently self-categorized as an individual (engaged in cross-group helping) may have different motivations for providing help to an outgroup than a helper who is currently self-categorized as a group member (engaged in intergroup helping). Participants (N = 240) completed an online questionnaire preceded by a manipulation priming self-categorization as either an individual or a group member, with no manipulation provided in a control condition. Participants self-categorizing as individuals (versus group members) were more willing to provide help to an outgroup, and inclusion of the outgroup in the self and empathy proved to be important motivations for this helping. These findings provide initial evidence that willingness to provide help to an outgroup and motivations for doing so will present differently depending on the level of self-categorization of the helper.

***Keywords*:** Self-categorization, outgroup helping, motivation, inclusion of the outgroup in the self, empathy

The act of helping is a mechanism for sharing information and knowledge, a way to redistribute resources, and a primary tool by which people take care of others who may be in need. Recently, psychologists have begun to integrate thinking on intergroup relations and on prosocial behavior resulting in the emergence of a literature on outgroup helping. Although an outgroup is always the target of help in outgroup helping, it may matter whether the helper is thinking of him/herself as an individual or a member of another group. A person may be more or less willing to help an outgroup and may be motivated to help for different reasons depending on what level of self is currently salient. This study will directly investigate the question of how self-categorization processes affect outgroup helping.

Self-Categorization and Outgroup Helping

Every individual possesses a self-concept, or understanding of the person they are (Turner & Onorato, 2010). Our self-concept contains a collection of possible selves and we will draw from these possible selves (i.e., self-categorize), usually sub-consciously, depending on which of these self-representations is appropriate for the current situation. Humans are able to self-categorize at a personal level – drawing on self-aspects within our personal identity, or a collective level – drawing on self-aspects within our collective identity (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Wright & Richard, 2010). Personal identity is the level of the self-concept that includes aspects of the self that distinguish us from others. These are our unique, individuating characteristics. In contrast, collective identity is the level of the self-concept that includes aspects of the self that connect us to collections of others. These are our group memberships.

This distinction between personal and collective identity offers the possibility of two

different contexts for outgroup helping – cross-group and intergroup helping (Wright & Richard, 2010). On one hand, someone is involved in cross-group helping when they help the outgroup while self-categorized at the personal level. On the other hand, someone is involved in intergroup helping when they help the outgroup while self-categorized at the collective level. The difference does not lie in how the helper views the target of their help, but how the helper understands him/herself within that context. Given these differences, it is hypothesized that within a given intergroup relationship, the motivations for helping as well as the level of helping behaviours will be different depending on whether the helper is in a cross-group helping context or in an intergroup helping context.

Why Might Self-Categorization Affect Helping Behaviour?

The role of norms. Group norms are informal guidelines for behaviour that dictate what is acceptable for members of the specific group (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). It has been argued that it is normative for a group member to put their own group needs before the needs of an outgroup (Dovidio et al., 1997). However, it is possible for group norms to dictate that group members should provide help that solely benefits the outgroup, without concern for the ingroup. For example, members of a humanitarian group that exists to alleviate the suffering of others should be very concerned about the outgroup, and should not be focused on providing help to benefit themselves. In general, group norms that are ingroup-serving should result in less help provided to the outgroup while group norms that are other-serving should result in more help provided to the outgroup. In addition, group norms should have less effect on a person's motivations and actions when they are self-categorizing as an individual because the rules that guide the behaviour of group members should be less salient to individuals (Livingstone, Haslam, Postmes, & Jetten, 2011).

Self-serving motivations for outgroup helping. Help that benefits the helper as well as the recipient of help is considered self-serving. Three self-serving motivations have been identified: meaning, impression management, and power.

Meaning. A person has meaning in their life when they believe their life matters and they have a purpose for living (Steger, 2012). Van Leeuwen (2006) suggests that helping others is a way to provide meaning to life. Through helping and thus improving the lives of others, people may feel that they are contributing to the greater good of humanity. A person may help outgroup members for the sake of enhancing or strengthening their sense of personal or collective meaning.

Impression management. Helping is an effective way to improve the perceptions that others hold about an individual or a group. When a person is confronted with an outgroup depiction of themselves or their group, they will try to confirm positive stereotypes and disconfirm negative stereotypes. Humans are socialized to understand that helping is an encouraged and thus socially-valued behaviour. Therefore, helping outgroup members is a useful approach for disconfirming negative impressions about an individual or a group and creating a positive image for others to witness (Hopkins et al., 2007).

Power. In this context, power refers to the higher status of a group or an individual over a disadvantaged group. The helper can use a helping relationship to ensure that they maintain a position of dominance over the outgroup (Nadler, 2002). The disadvantaged group, who is in need of and continuously accepts the resources of the advantaged helper, can become dependent on the helper's benevolence over time. When help is accepted on an ongoing basis, the recipient acknowledges their dependency

and inferiority to the helper. Therefore, the helper makes their superior status salient and forces the outgroup to become dependent on the provided help.

Other-oriented motivations for outgroup helping. Helping for other-oriented reasons means that the goal of the helper is to benefit the outgroup, without being concerned about benefitting themselves (individually or collectively). Three other-oriented motivations have been identified: moral convictions, inclusion of the outgroup in the self, and empathy.

Moral convictions. Morality develops early in life; some individuals will come to truly value the welfare of others and develop a sense of personal responsibility for others' welfare (Staub, 1991). Helping is then felt to be a moral obligation. Personal responsibility and moral obligation can contribute to altruistic motivation for helping. Therefore, an individual may be more motivated to help an outgroup, especially if it is a disadvantaged group, if their moral convictions dictate that helping those in need is 'the right thing to do'.

Inclusion of the outgroup in the self. As personal relationship closeness intensifies, so do feelings of concern for the other person. Aron and Aron's (1986) concept of *inclusion of the other in the self* explains how another person's identity as well as their welfare and pain can come to be one's own. This notion can be extended to consider how an individual can develop a sense of closeness with an outgroup in a process of including *the outgroup* in the self (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). For this to occur, there must be strong feelings of closeness between the individual and the outgroup (Wright, Aron, & Tropp, 2001; Wright, 2001). In terms of helping, this means that the outgroup will automatically be treated like an ingroup, allowing the individual to truly feel concern about the outgroup's problems and thus willingly providing them with help when they need it.

Empathy. Empathy is the experiencing of the emotions of another (Batson, Chang, Orr, & Rowland, 2002). Empathic feelings include sympathy, compassion, and warmth and can be aroused by taking the perspective of a person in need. Batson et al. (1995) propose that empathy is the source of an altruistic desire to help others. Empathy can also be an effective tool to ameliorate relations between groups. Strong feelings of empathic concern increase caring about others' welfare and can improve attitudes towards the collective group to which others belong. In addition, this can be reflected in more positive actions (including helping) towards the group (Dovidio et al., 2010).

The Current Study

The current study examined whether willingness to help and the underlying motivations for helping differ depending on the level of self-categorization of the helper (cross-group versus intergroup helping). Specifically, I examined the impact of self-categorization on willingness to provide help to sub-Saharan Africans living in extreme poverty.

Hypothesis 1a was that after reading a passage describing the plight of people living in sub-Saharan Africa, participants in the cross-group helping conditions would report that they were more willing to provide help to sub-Saharan Africans than participants in the intergroup helping conditions. Hypothesis 1b involved the motivations for helping and proposed that cross-group helping would be associated with stronger other-oriented motivations (i.e., empathy, inclusion of the outgroup in the self, and moral convictions) than intergroup helping. In contrast, intergroup helping would be associated with stronger self-serving motivations (i.e., meaning, impression management, and power) than cross-group helping. In other words, other-oriented motivations and self-serving motivations would mediate the relationship between *self-categorization* and willingness to provide help. A

control condition was also included in which no prime was given to focus attention on either one's individual or group identity. No specific predictions were made about the control condition. However, it was important to include a control condition to determine whether participants' "default" focus leads to behaviours that are more consistent with self-categorizing as an individual or as a group member.

Hypothesis 2 pertains specifically to the intergroup helping conditions and contrasts two group memberships – Canadians and students. Hypothesis 2a was that participants who were asked to self-categorize as Canadians would be more willing to provide help than participants who were asked to self-categorize as students. This prediction was based on the assumption that the group helping norms of Canadians would be stronger than the group helping norms of students because Canadians are stereotypically thought of to be nice, polite, and generous people. If these stereotypes accurately reflect group norms, this would suggest that participants who are thinking of themselves as Canadians should be willing to provide more help to outgroups than participants thinking of themselves as students. Thus, Hypothesis 2b was that a Canadian identity would be associated with stronger group helping norms than a student identity, and that group helping norms would mediate the relationship between *group membership* and willingness to provide help.

Method

Participants

Participants were 240 undergraduate psychology students at Simon Fraser University (129 female and 111 male). The mean age of the participants was 19.34 (SD = 3.12). They were recruited through the Psychology Department's Research Participation System (RPS). The self-reported ethnicities of the participants were: Caucasian (76), Chinese (66), South Asian (33), Other (17), Korean (9), South East Asian (6), Filipino (3), Arab (1), Black (1), and Japanese (1). There were 27 participants who chose not to report their ethnicity. In some of the conditions, participants were asked to think of themselves as Canadians, therefore only Canadian citizens were eligible to complete this study.

Design

This study incorporated a 3x2 between-subjects design. The first manipulation produced one of three types of helping relationships by priming a particular level of *self-categorization*: as an individual (cross-group helping); as a group member (intergroup helping); or a no manipulation control. The second manipulation was of *group membership* and involved altering the particular group identity that was to be made salient in the intergroup helping conditions: Canadian or student. Participants in the cross-group conditions were asked to think about themselves as individuals and participants in the control conditions did not receive any identity priming manipulation. However, to fill out the full 3x2 design and to allow for the comparison of group helping norms across conditions, the Canadian or student identity was introduced for the final scale on the questionnaire in all conditions to measure perceived group helping norms. The dependent variable of interest was willingness to engage in three different hypothetical helping behaviours. In addition, six motivations for helping (i.e., meaning, impression management, power, moral convictions, inclusion of the outgroup in the self, and empathy) were measured.

Procedure

Participants signed up for an online study titled "Reactions to World Events". After being randomly assigned to one of the six conditions, they read a passage about poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. To manipulate *self-categorization*, participants were asked to think about themselves either as an individual (cross-group

helping conditions) or as a group member (intergroup helping conditions) or received no instructions to think about themselves (control conditions). Participants in the cross-group helping conditions read the following manipulation:

> *Take a moment to think about what it means to be you. For example, you could think about personality traits you possess that make you unique from others, and reflect who you are. You could also think about the experiences and values that are associated with your identity and how these relate to your life.*

In contrast, participants in the intergroup conditions read the following:

> *Take a moment to think about what it means to be a student/Canadian. For example, you could think about the ways being a student/Canadian gives you a sense of belonging or identity, and reflects who you are. You could also think about the experiences and values that are associated with being a student/Canadian and how these relate to your life.*

Participants were then asked to write an open-ended response about what it means to be them as an individual, or what it means to be a student/Canadian. The manipulation of *group membership* involved varying the specific group that was the focus of their thoughts and writing (Canadian or student). To strengthen the effects of the prime and to attempt to maintain that impact throughout the questionnaire, a small picture was placed at the top right corner of every page (i.e., a maple leaf in the intergroup-Canadian condition, an SFU logo in the intergroup-student condition, and an individual stick person in the cross-group conditions). Participants in the control conditions were not primed to think of the self at all and there was no picture displayed at the top right corner of each page.

All participants then completed a questionnaire containing the measures of motivations for helping, willingness to engage in several forms of help, perceived group helping norms, and demographic information. Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants viewed a debriefing page and received a 6-digit code which they could email to the researcher to receive their research credit and be entered into one of five draws for $20.

Measures

Motivations for helping.

Self-serving motivations. This 20-item scale ($\alpha = .82$) measured the degree to which self-serving motivations would influence participants' decision to provide help. The measure was developed for the purpose of this study, influenced by previous theorizing on strategic helping by van Leeuwen and Täuber (2010). The scale is made up of three subscales assessing each of the three self-serving motivations: meaning, impression management, and power. Each item was preceded by the statement: "I would help sub-Saharan Africans…" followed by items for each subscale, for example: "to establish a clear purpose in life" (meaning subscale), "to be perceived by others as warm" (impression management subscale), and "to gain a sense of control" (power subscale). Responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Other-oriented motivations.

Moral convictions. This 2-item scale ($\alpha = .85$) measured moral convictions regarding helping. The measure was adapted from van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears (2012) to focus specifically on helping. The two items were: '*My feelings about helping others are connected to my core moral beliefs or convictions*' and '*My feelings about helping sub-Saharan Africans are connected to my core moral beliefs or convictions*'. Responses were made on a 7-point

Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Inclusion of the outgroup in the self. This single item measured the degree to which sub-Saharan Africans are felt to be included in the self. The measure was adapted from Aron, Aron, and Smollan's (1992) *inclusion of the other in the self* (IOS) scale. Participants selected one pair of circles to best describe their relationship with sub-Saharan Africans from a set of seven Venn-like diagrams, each depicting two circles with increasing overlap. The two circles were described as representing the self and sub-Saharan Africans.

Empathy. This 6-item scale (α = *.90*) measured empathy felt towards sub-Saharan Africans. The measure was taken from Batson et al. (1999) and asks participants to report the degree to which they are currently feeling six emotions (i.e., sympathetic, warm, compassionate, soft-hearted, tender, and moved). Responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Willingness to help. This 3-item scale (α = *.85*) measured the degree to which participants were willing to engage in three hypothetical helping behaviours. These helping behaviours included donating to UNICEF, volunteering time to UNICEF, and collecting signatures for a petition on behalf of UNICEF. UNICEF was described as a means to help sub-Saharan Africans specifically. Responses were based on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Group helping norms. This 4-item scale (α = *.79*) measured the degree to which participants perceive values and behaviours associated with helping to be normative for their group. An example question is: '*What percentage of students/Canadians would make a donation to support sub-Saharan Africans?*' Responses were entered in percentage format, from 0% to 100%.

Demographic information. This section included all of the variables used to describe the sample (i.e., age, sex, ethnicity).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Motivations. The three self-serving motivations (i.e., meaning, impression management, and power) were highly related to each other and formed a single reliable scale (α = .82). In contrast, the other-oriented motivations (i.e., moral convictions, inclusion of the outgroup in the self, and empathy) were not highly correlated and did not form a reliable scale (α = .56). As such, in all subsequent analyses the three self-serving motivations were collapsed into a single scale, while moral convictions, inclusion of the outgroup in self, and empathy were treated as separate variables.

Primary Analyses

Hypothesis 1a and 1b. I hypothesized (1a) that participants in the cross-group conditions would report that they were more willing to provide help than participants in the intergroup helping conditions. No predictions were made about the control conditions. A 3x2 *self-categorization* (intergroup, cross-group, and control) by *group membership* (Canadian and student) Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the measure of Willingness to Help yielded a significant main effect of *self-categorization*, $F(2, 233) = 4.69$, $p = .01$. The main effect of *group membership* was not significant, $F(1, 233) = .18$, $p = .67$, nor was the interaction effect, $F(2, 233) = 1.39$, $p = .25$. Post-hoc comparisons using the Fisher LSD test indicated that although participants in the cross-group helping (M = 4.42, SD = 1.47) and the control (M = 4.42, SD = 1.52) conditions did not differ significantly, both were significantly more willing to help than those in the intergroup helping conditions (M = 3.79, SD = 1.45).

I hypothesized (1b) that moral convictions, inclusion of the outgroup in the self, empathy, and self-serving motivations would mediate the relationship between *self-categorization* and willingness to provide help. To test this multiple mediation, I used the bootstrapping approach to estimate the indirect effect of *self-categorization* on willingness to provide help through each of the four motivation measures. Since I had no specific predictions for the control conditions and this condition produced levels of helping very similar to the cross-group helping condition, the control condition was not included in this analysis. Consistent with hypothesis 1b, the indirect effect through inclusion of the outgroup in the self was significant (IE = .13, SE = .07, 95% [CI] = [.03, .29]). However, there were no significant indirect effects through morality (IE = .02, SE = .04, 95% [CI] = [-.03, .14]) or self-serving motivations (IE = .00, SE = .03, 95% [CI] = [-.06, .07]). In addition, this analysis showed a strong relationship between empathy and willingness to provide help, β = .39, t = 3.38, p < .01. However, the unique effect of *self-categorization* on empathy was not significant, β = .24, t = .27, p = .21, thus the indirect effect of *self-categorization* on willingness to provide help through empathy was not significant (IE = .09, SE = .08, 95% [CI] = [-.03, .30]). This suggests that the manipulation of *self-categorization* has the greatest influence on inclusion of the outgroup in the self, and only inclusion of the outgroup in the self and empathy are uniquely related to helping in this context.

Hypothesis 2a and 2b. I hypothesized (2a) that within the intergroup helping conditions, those who were self-categorizing as Canadians would report more willingness to provide help than participants self-categorizing as students. In addition, I hypothesized (2b) that the Canadian identity would be associated with stronger group helping norms than the student identity, which would in turn lead to higher willingness to provide help. To test these two hypotheses, I used the bootstrapping approach. Consistent with hypothesis 2a, the direct effect of *group membership* on willingness to provide help was significant, β = -.64, t = -2.05, p = .04 indicating that participants thinking about themselves as Canadians (M = 4.02, SD = 1.52) were more willing to provide help than participants thinking about themselves as students (M = 3.57, SD = 1.35). However, the indirect effect through group helping norms was not significant, (IE = .19, SE = .15, 95% [CI] = [-.02, .58]), indicating that the effect of *group membership* on willingness to provide help was not mediated by group helping norms.

Discussion

Self-Categorization

The results of this study provide preliminary evidence that thinking of oneself as an individual leads to more willingness to provide help to an outgroup than thinking of oneself as a group member. However, participants in the control conditions, who did not receive any manipulation of *self-categorization*, were just as willing to provide help as participants in the cross-group conditions. This suggests that when providing help to an outgroup, thinking of oneself as an individual may be the default. It is, of course, possible that this particular default view of the self when helping an outgroup is specific to our sample of students at a Canadian university (see Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, these data support the idea that it may not be necessary to remind the helper of their individual identity, as thinking of oneself as an individual may be the default self-representation.

Although the current study demonstrated that cross-group helping seemed to lead to more willingness to provide help to an outgroup than intergroup helping, this may not always be the case. This study also suggests that willingness to provide help is dependent on the group membership that is made salient – there was more willingness to help when thinking of oneself as a Canadian than as a student. Furthermore, it

may be possible for group helping norms to be influenced by current events (for example, the SFU United Way Campaign could have increased the group helping norms of students) so that current events increase or decrease willingness to provide help. These ideas lead to the possibility that some groups at certain times could be willing to provide even more help than individuals. Therefore, although participants in the cross-group conditions were more willing to provide help to sub-Saharan Africans than participants in the intergroup conditions in this study, it may be possible for group members to provide just as much help or more help than individuals. The primary implication of the main effect of *self-categorization* is that in a given context, the level of identity that is currently salient can influence willingness to provide help. However, it is likely that whether it is individuals or group members who provide more help will depend on the current context or even the outgroup who is in need.

Motivations for Outgroup Helping

It may be that feelings of inclusion of the outgroup in the self provided a partial explanation for the higher level of helping found in the cross-group helping context than in the intergroup helping context because inclusion of the outgroup in the self involves the *individual* developing a sense of closeness and connection with a group (Wright et al., 1997). Therefore, this particular motivation for helping may only be relevant in the context that directly alludes to the individual self. Perhaps the personal/relational nature of the inclusion of the outgroup in the self motivation makes it particularly relevant to the cross-group helping context.

Empathy was also a strong predictor of outgroup helping, but *self-categorization* did not have a significant effect on empathy. Therefore, both participants in the cross-group and the intergroup helping conditions were motivated to help by empathy. This suggests that empathy, an other-oriented motivation, may always be an important predictor of helping, regardless of how one is currently self-categorized.

Unexpectedly, self-serving motivations did not mediate the relationship between *self-categorization* and willingness to provide help. Participants in the cross-group and intergroup conditions showed about equal levels of self-serving motivations for helping. Perhaps self-serving motivations not only make group members more inclined to help, but individuals as well. Past literature on outgroup helping has suggested that groups may be motivated to help disadvantaged groups to gain meaning (van Leeuwen, 2006), improve impressions of their group (Hopkins et al., 2007), or gain power (Nadler, 2002), but it can be argued that individuals could also be motivated to help the disadvantaged for these same reasons but at the individual level.

Specific Group Memberships

The current study showed that participants thinking about their Canadian identity were more willing to provide help than participants thinking about their student identity. It was predicted that this result would emerge because Canadians would be perceived to have stronger group helping norms than students. However, group helping norms were not found to be a mediator of this effect. Therefore, something else must account for why being a Canadian leads to higher willingness to provide help than being a student. Perhaps participants thinking about themselves as Canadians are reminded of the ample resources that Canadians possess in comparison to sub-Saharan Africans and feel like they have enough resources to be able to help. In contrast, participants thinking about themselves as students may be reminded of the financial struggles and the busy lifestyle that is associated with being a student, which decreases their willingness to provide help. This explanation could account for why student helping norms are

perceived to be comparable with Canadian helping norms, yet their willingness to help is significantly lower.

During November 2013, the time of data collection, there was a great deal of advertising for the SFU United Way Campaign. The goal of this fundraising campaign was to raise funds for local agencies and programs that provide support to children and seniors living in poverty, as well as to provide support for programs that help prevent bullying among children. This may have created a confound for the current study because it could have reminded participants of their identity as an SFU student and depicted SFU students as particularly helpful. This may have temporarily inflated participants' perceived group helping norms of students. Thus, it may be that at another more neutral time we might have found the predicted higher group helping norms for the ingroup Canadians compared to students, and this would have strengthened the preferential influence of the Canadian identity in producing outgroup helping.

Conclusions

In summary, the findings of the current study suggest that self-categorization does indeed have an impact on willingness to provide help to an outgroup and the relevance of at least some of the motivations for doing so. When self-categorization was manipulated, people who were thinking about themselves as individuals tended to be more willing to provide help than people who were thinking about themselves as group members, and it appears that greater inclusion of the outgroup in the self when thinking of oneself as an individual may be at least one of the reasons for this. In addition, it appears that feelings of empathy may also be a strong motivation for outgroup helping, but empathy can be experienced in both a cross-group and an intergroup helping context.

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Gender Differences in Paranormal Belief

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This paper aims to review evidence for the existence of a gender difference in belief in paranormal phenomena. Women are typically found to be more likely to endorse belief in paranormal concepts than are men. The gender difference has been found in various countries, and across various measures, although use of Tobacyk and Milford's Paranormal Belief Scale is extremely common. Factors underlying the gender difference are not clear. However, gender differences in both thinking style and coping style are explored as potential origins. If there is indeed a genuine connection between coping, gender, and paranormal belief, this may have relevance to health outcomes. Additionally, research in this area may prove to be valuable to research investigating why and how people come to form both paranormal and non-paranormal beliefs.

***Keywords*:** Cognitive style, coping style, gender, paranormal belief

From religion to witchcraft, it has been estimated that 90% of the American population holds one form of paranormal belief or another (Rice, 2003). Why do so many people hold beliefs in such phenomena, despite the lack of scientific evidence to legitimize them? As researchers have attempted to answer this perplexing question, a correlation between gender and belief in paranormal phenomena has emerged.

It is the author's belief that women's greater scores on measures of paranormal belief relative to men reflect a genuine difference in their respective degrees of belief. Research suggests that women are more likely than men to hold a variety of paranormal beliefs because they rely more heavily than men on intuition, as opposed to analytic thinking. This reliance on intuition and emotion leads women to be less critical when forming beliefs. This susceptibility to uncritical belief formation is particularly important when one considers that a reliance on intuition and emotion may also lead women to favor passive coping styles, as opposed to coping through actively attempting to change the distressing situation. In this case, the passive coping takes on the form of a paranormal belief.

To begin exploring these concepts more fully, some issues regarding the measurement of paranormal belief are discussed. Subsequently, as the gender and paranormal belief connection has yet to thoroughly be explored, a few possibilities as to the origin of this connection are presented. Finally, a brief discussion will follow of the importance of exploring the gender difference further in future research.

How Is the Concept of Paranormal Belief Measured?

Tobacyk and Milford's (1983) Paranormal Belief Scale (PBS) is commonly used to operationally define paranormal belief. Using a 5 point scale, participants indicate to what extent they agree with statements regarding a variety of paranormal phenomena. The PBS measures seven components of paranormal belief: traditional religious belief; parapsychological phenomena (psi), such as mind reading; witchcraft; superstition; spiritualism; extraordinary life forms, such as Big Foot; and precognition, such as prediction of the future

from dreams (Tobacyk & Milford, 1983). Occasionally researchers modify some aspects of the PBS, in which case it is referred to as the Revised Paranormal Belief Scale (RPBS; Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005; Rogers, Qualter, Phelps, & Gardner, 2006).

Men and Women Score Differently on Measures of Paranormal Belief

Compared to men, women have been found to score higher on measures of paranormal belief (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005; Pennycook, Cheyne, Seli, Koehler, & Fugelsang, 2012; Rice, 2003; Rogers et al., 2006). Interestingly, this pattern is not restricted to only one part of the world, and has been found with participants from England (Rogers et al., 2006), Finland (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005), and in an international sample with participants from the USA, the UK, Canada, Oceania, and Europe (Pennycook et al., 2012).

Unfortunately, it is often the case that when a significant difference is reported, the raw scores for each gender are omitted. In one exceptional case where the raw scores were reported (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005), the mean difference between men and women on the RPBS was only 0.24 points. While this data may offer some insight as to the magnitude of the gender difference, the extent to which men and women differ in paranormal belief will remain rather uncertain until more raw data is reported. The authors note that their sample, which was Finnish, had lower levels of paranormal belief than what is traditionally found with Canadian and American samples, potentially causing a floor effect (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005). That is to say, perhaps the level of belief in the sample was so low that the effect of gender was obscured. It is suggested that perhaps the gender difference would be more evident in areas of the world where the population generally has a higher degree of paranormal belief (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005.

In this particular study, gender was one of the principle variables under investigation (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005). Given this, it is surprising that there was no mention of how this variable was measured (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005). In fact, none of the studies discussed in this paper contain any information regarding the definition of the concept of gender. Given the silence on this subject, it is safe to assume that gender was defined on a male/female dichotomy.

Possible Origins of the Ostensible Gender Difference

While women score reliably higher than men on measures of paranormal belief, this does not necessarily mean that women really are more likely than men to be believers. Some potential alternative explanations to this finding are discussed below. Namely, the possibilities are explored that women's greater religious beliefs, or that something about the self-report process itself, contributes a great deal to the gender difference. Additionally, potential explanations for a genuine difference in likelihood of belief between genders are explored.

Women Are Simply More Likely than Men to be Religious

Importantly, the greater levels of belief in paranormal phenomena shown by women relative to men cannot be solely attributed to women's greater religiosity. While women have in fact been shown to score higher than men on the traditional religious belief subscale of the PBS, the current evidence does not support the notion that this is the main source of gender differences. For instance, though Aarnio and Lindeman (2005) found that women scored significantly higher than men on traditional religious belief, women also scored higher than men on nearly all of the other subscales. These results indicate that women had higher levels of paranormal belief in various domains, not only in the religious domain.

Further evidence comes from Pennycook et al. (2012), who measured religiosity and paranormal beliefs on separate scales. Consistent with the previous study, women scored higher than men on the measure of religiosity. In this case, the measure of religiosity was the Religious Beliefs Scale. The critical finding, however, is that women also scored higher than men on the PBS. The gender difference in scores on the PBS cannot be attributed to religiosity, because the traditional religious belief subscale of the PBS was entirely removed in order to avoid redundancy with the Religious Beliefs Scale. Therefore, women's greater scores on the PBS cannot be attributed solely to their greater religiosity.

The Difference is an Artefact of the Self-Report Measures

Problematically, research investigating paranormal belief using a measure other than the PBS is exceedingly scarce. One such investigation, however, examined data from the 1998 Southern Focus Poll (Rice, 2003). The data were weighted so as to provide a representative sample of the United States. This poll included 17 questions regarding religious and paranormal belief, and women were found to be more likely than men to affirm belief in the paranormal for 10 of those questions. In only one of the 17 questions were men more likely to affirm the paranormal statement than women. That the pattern of gender differences found with the PBS has been replicated with another measure supports that the PBS is reliable, and that the gender difference is not likely due to something about the measure itself.

The Southern Focus Poll data, as well as the replication of results using the PBS, are both limited in a way, because they are self-report measures. Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that the gender difference is due to something about the self-report process. Hence, the typical concerns that arise when interpreting self-report data apply. The most obvious concern is a gendered difference in motivated misreporting. In this day and age, where science is so highly valued (Rice, 2003), some people may be reluctant to admit to holding paranormal beliefs. More importantly, some people may be more reluctant than others. Men are typically expected to be more rational and analytic (e.g., Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005). Conversely, women are typically expected to rely more on intuition and emotion (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005; Fetterman & Robinson, 2013; Sigmon, Stanton & Snyder, 1995). Since paranormal phenomena, by definition, are outside of the realm of science (Tobacyk & Pirttilä-Backman, 1992), it would be more of a violation of gender roles for men to admit to having these unscientific beliefs than for women to do the same. Therefore, men should be more uncomfortable disclosing these types of beliefs relative to women. These concerns are allayed, though not eradicated, by the fact that anonymity, or at least confidentiality, is typically assured to participants of survey research. People should feel more at ease to disclose potentially embarrassing information when it cannot be traced back to them. Furthermore, the high levels of belief found with self-report measures (Lindeman & Aarnio, 2007; Rice, 2003) suggest that discomfort with disclosing paranormal beliefs is not an issue. This is logical, given the massive amounts of exposure we get to paranormal concepts through the media, such as in horoscope columns, or television shows about mediums, aliens, or ghosts, for instance.

The Different Scores Reflect a Genuine Difference in Belief

Finally, it is possible that the gender differences evident in measures of paranormal belief reflect a genuine difference in degree of belief between genders. If the difference is indeed genuine, the natural progression is to wonder why it exists at all. Thinking style and coping style are two variables which have been

shown to be related to belief in the paranormal, and which also show a gender difference themselves. Thus, the gender difference that arises in measures of paranormal belief may be partially attributable to a gender difference in these underlying factors.

Analytic vs. Intuitive thinking styles. Historically, information-processing has been hypothesized to be comprised of two independent systems. These systems are the intuitive and analytic systems, termed Type 1 and Type 2, respectively. Type 1 information-processing deals with heuristics, intuition, emotional, and non-verbal information (Bucci, 1985; Chaiken, 1980; Pennycook et al., 2012; Tversky & Kahneman, 1983). Type 2 information-processing handles verbal thought and logic, and is effortful, analytic, and systematic (Bucci, 1985; Chaiken, 1980; Pennycook et al., 2012; Tversky & Kahneman, 1983). Epstein's cognitive-experiential self-theory retains this systematic division, positing that the rational system is based on logic, and that the intuitive system is more subject to the influence of emotions (Epstein, Pacini, Denes-Raj, & Heier, 1996). While context sometimes influences which system will be used, the results indicated that people often tend to prefer using one style of thought more frequently, across a variety of contexts (Epstein et al., 1996). This enables an examination of whether individual differences in preferred thinking style have any relation to paranormal belief.

Thinking style and paranormal belief. According to cognitive-experiential self-theory, the intuitive system is responsible for creating longer-lasting beliefs that are more difficult to change (Epstein et al., 1996). Paranormal beliefs are extremely resistant to change (Alcock, 1995; Singer & Benassi, 1981), which suggests that they are created or processed by this intuitive system (Epstein et al., 1996).

More current research provides some evidence for this suggestion of a relationship between thinking style and belief in the paranormal. Aarnio and Lindeman (2005) conducted a study on 3141 Finnish students, whom were recruited through university mailing lists and were invited via e-mail to participate in an online survey. Pacini and Epstein's (1999) Rational-Experiential Inventory was used to measure analytic and intuitive thinking separately on 5-point scales. The RPBS was used to measure belief in the paranormal. The data indicated that an intuitive thinking style was positively associated with belief in the paranormal.

While the Rational-Experiential Inventory is a self-report measure, a similar relationship is found when thinking style is assessed more objectively. For example, Pennycook et al. (2012) recruited an international sample (n=287) via e-mail, who completed the study measures online. Responses on the cognitive reflection test (CRT) and the Base-Rate Conflict problems were used to measure thinking style. The CRT consists of problems with salient intuitive answers, which the participant must override to arrive at the correct answer, indicating a stronger tendency toward analytic thinking (Pennycook et al., 2012). In Base-Rate Conflict problems, participants are given probabilistic information (e.g., 80% of college graduates are arts students), as well as information that activates a stereotype (e.g., computer science students are introverts). These two types of information suggest to the participant different responses to the question at hand, which might be something like: What faculty did introverted student, Johnny, likely graduate from? Participants may use either their analytic system (using the probabilistic information), or their intuitive system (using the stereotypical information), to answer the questions. The RPBS was used to measure belief in the paranormal. The results indicated that an analytic thinking style was negatively correlated with paranormal belief. Thus, those were more likely to think analytically were also less likely to believe in the paranormal.

Thinking style and gender. Interestingly, research indicates that when making decisions, women are more swayed by emotions and rely on their intuitions, whereas men are more rational and analytic. For example, Robinson and Clore (2002) found that women consider themselves to be emotional beings more so than men do. Similarly, Fetterman and Robinson (2013) found that women were more likely than men to identify their "self" as residing in the heart ("heart-locators"), as opposed to in the head ("head-locators"). Additionally, these heart-locators were more likely to solve moral dilemmas emotionally than head-locators were. It was also found that women had greater affect intensity than men. That is to say, women rated their emotions to be more intense than men did. If women are used to being aware of their emotions and to relying on emotions to solve problems, then it is logical that this would manifest in their preferred thinking style, which in turn maps onto their degree of belief in the paranormal.

Indeed, women have been found both to use an intuitive thinking style more frequently when compared to men, and to use an analytic thinking style less frequently when compared to men. For instance, results from Pennycook et al. (2012) indicated that women were more likely than men to solve problems using intuition. The authors suggested that the gender differences in paranormal belief may be partially mediated by gender differences in analytic thinking style. This suggestion is supported by data from Aarnio and Lindeman (2005). Their results indicated that women were less likely to have an analytic thinking style compared to men, and were also more likely to have an intuitive thinking style; recall that analytic and intuitive thinking styles were assessed independently (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005). It was determined, through univariate analyses of covariance, that the gender difference in paranormal belief was indeed mediated in part by thinking style (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005).

Coping styles. Just as intuition or heuristics are often used to make decisions in uncertain situations (Tversky & Kahneman, 1983), so must we come to adapt to these uncertain situations when their demands exceed our available resources. The coping hypothesis proposes that paranormal beliefs serve a coping function during uncertain or uncontrollable situations (Irwin, 1993; Mathijsen, 2012; Singer & Benassi, 1981). One complication surrounding the coping hypothesis is that paranormal beliefs could potentially be viewed as both a passive form of coping, and an active form of coping (Mathijsen, 2012). On the one hand, belief in the paranormal can be seen as passive, because it involves absolving oneself of responsibility for a troubling situation by putting the responsibility on external forces, such as God (Mathijsen, 2012). Alternatively, paranormal beliefs can be seen as a form of active coping, since they may involve something action-based, such as casting a spell (Rogers et al., 2006).

Matud (2004) investigated gender differences in experience of stress as a possible source of gender divergence in coping style, by administering the Coping Styles Questionnaire (CSQ) to a large convenience sample (n=2816). The Coping Styles Questionnaire measures four different coping styles: rational coping and detached coping are said to be adaptive, while emotional coping and avoidance coping are both said to be maladaptive (Roger, Jarvis & Najarian, 1993). Women were less likely to use active coping, and more likely to use both emotion-based, and avoidant coping, when compared to men. This data is consistent with the research presented earlier, in terms of women being more likely to rely on their intuitive information-processing system.

While the coping hypothesis receives support from Callaghan and Irwin (2003), who found that paranormal beliefs are positively related to

avoidant coping, as well as to a lack of active forms of coping (as cited in Rogers et al., 2006), current research on the relationship between coping and paranormal belief is not unanimous. For instance, Rogers et al. (2006) failed to confirm these earlier findings using Lange, Irwin, and Houran's (2000) modification of the PBS. In this version of the PBS, the psi, superstition, spiritualism, and extraordinary life forms scales are grouped together to form the overarching category, labeled "New Age Philosophy" (Lange et al., 2000). The remaining scales are grouped together to form the second overarching category, labeled "Traditional Paranormal Beliefs" (Lange et al., 2000). The Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) was administered to a random sample, and no direct connection between coping style and RPBS score was found. However, a relationship was found between avoidant coping and endorsement of the New Age Philosophy subscale (Rogers et al., 2006).

Further doubt is cast on the coping theory of paranormal belief by Rice's (2003) analysis of the 1998 Southern Focus Poll. Coping theory would predict that marginalized members of society (e.g., those living in poverty) have greater levels of paranormal belief, in order to cope with their difficult situations. However, Rice's analysis (2003) was not consistent with what the coping theory would predict; relative to the non-marginalized, those who are marginalized were not found to be any more likely to believe in the paranormal. Given the mixed evidence, further research needs to be done to clarify the role of paranormal beliefs in coping.

While there is considerable evidence for a gender difference in paranormal beliefs, very few studies have directly attempted to examine why this may be. It has been suggested that a socialization process is at the root of the gender difference. Specifically, women are said to be socialized, maladaptively, to cope more passively and to express themselves emotionally (Sigmon et al., 2001). Conversely, men are said to be socialized, adaptively, to cope instrumentally (Sigmon et al., 2001). Some evidence for this socialization process comes from the finding that parents show less confidence in their daughters than their sons (e.g., to accomplish physical tasks), which may result in daughters having less self-efficacy (Pomerantz & Ruble, 1998). Self-efficacy relates to our confidence in our capacity to complete a task, or manage a situation, competently. Indirect evidence for this lack of self-efficacy comes from the finding that women tend to rate stressful life events as less controllable than men do (Matud, 2004).

A combination of feeling unable to control life's stresses, and a habit of dealing with problems using emotion-based coping may explain why women are less likely than men to use active coping, and thus form paranormal beliefs. These paranormal beliefs may serve as a distraction, or alternatively, may enable people to cope by helping them see their stressful situation in a new light.

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

Women have often been found to have higher levels of belief in paranormal phenomena using the PBS, and these findings have been replicated using other measures of paranormal belief as well. Furthermore, the gender difference that is evident when paranormal belief is measured with the PBS cannot be attributed solely to women's greater religiosity. The factors which contribute to, or are implicated in, paranormal belief formation are not entirely clear. However, factors which do have some support as being linked with paranormal belief, such as thinking style and coping style, also show gender differences. It is important that the gender difference in paranormal belief be investigated further; if paranormal beliefs are a way of coping with life's stressors, they are either adaptive or maladaptive. In either case, critical implications exist for the physical and psychological health of both men and women. As

evidence is mixed in terms of what underlies paranormal belief formation, pursuing the clues given by patterns of gender differences may also help to clarify the relationship between paranormal beliefs and other variables, such as coping.

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Pragmatics of Recognizing the Illusoriness of Free Will and Agentic Selves

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The majority of scientific and philosophic positions recognize the notion of free will as a necessary illusion that must be maintained for individual and collective functioning. Research has shown detriments in the disbelief of free will as expressed in lowered moral responsibility and greater general antisocial tendencies. However, this paper addresses that the recognition of the illusoriness of free will and agentic selfhood can promote a compassionate understanding of thoughts, reactions, and behaviours of self and others. Research has demonstrated significant positive correlations between habitual self-referential patterns/egoistic tendencies with depressive and other mood disorder related symptoms. Therefore, the recognition of causality and interdependence of the self and choices may potentially alleviate psychological and sociological dysfunctions. Psychological practices and philosophies such as mindfulness are explored as one of the individual methods for the promotion of the recognition of one's own free will. Lastly, theories of relational identity and enmeshment are addressed as potential pathways to promote the correlated characteristics of altruistic support of communal harmony and personal contentment.

Keywords: Free-will, identity, mindfulness, narcissism, self-determination

Topics and meditations on the nature of free will have roamed the intellectual and philosophical histories of our past with a pervasive fascination. When one contemplates upon the notion of free-will, one may realize that it is an experiential phenomenon that spans across all of our daily conscious experiences and collective social institutions (Harris, 2012). Historically, free will has been defined as the capacity to choose our own behaviours and decisions in life, liberated from the restraints of predetermined prophecies (Libet, 1999). Much of our historic philosophical and religious assertions explicitly reiterate this capacity as the defining characteristic of what makes us special as human beings. From our faith in free will, we may experience regret over a past mistake, confidence in a present achievement, and anxiety over a future performance. Regardless of any circumstances, we derive our conventional "humanness" from a silent faith that we are accountable and responsible for our individual choices and behaviours. In essence, questions of free-will and agentic selfhood are deeply significant and relevant to all possible levels of living experiences and events - it is naturally a notion of freedom that is significantly meaningful for much of our existence.

However, the conventional realism and pragmatism of free will are becoming increasingly questionable through the progression of philosophical and scientific contemplations. Neuroscientists such as Sam Harris (2012) have explicitly stated that "free will is an illusion; our wills are simply not of our own making" (p. 5) and outlined the pragmatic importance in the recognition of its illusoriness. Contrary to our intuitions, perhaps it is worth the uncomfortable but honest ponderance regarding the illusoriness of free will without necessarily succumbing to the

conclusion that we are simply meaningless automatons. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to address the pessimisms in the disbelief of free will as unnecessary and to argue that the acknowledgement and embracement of the illusoriness of free will and agentic self can lead to psychological and sociological benefits.

Neurological origins of free will

Prior to contemplating the pragmatics of the illusoriness of free will, it is only reasonable to first fully acknowledge its illusoriness in spite of our common intuitions. An illusion is defined as "a false appearance, a belief that does not have correlates in the physical world" (Modell, 2008). To our scientific knowledge, much of our mundane conscious experiences are predicated upon cognitive illusions that maintain stable and functional paradigms for conventional living (Wegner, 2005). We may conceptually understand the existence of grass through its visuals and fragrance as "green" and "fresh". However, the conceptual constructions of "greenness" and "freshness" are nonetheless derived from packets of photon and waves of chemical vapour that are neurologically processed and synthesized into emergent realities (Zeki, 1993). These realities are meaningful and "real" within our subjective experiences; nevertheless, they speak to the powers of neuropsychological constructions of subjective perceptions that demonstrate our abilities of interpreting the nature of reality. For instance, Libet (1999) conducted a series of experiments that demonstrated the neurological activations that constitute our cognitive and decisional processes, far precedes our conscious awareness of our own decisions by approximately 350-400 milliseconds. Libet's experimental methodology involved having the participants equipped with EEG electrode nodes as to observe and to record neural electrical activities through cognitive and motor processes. Participants were then asked to perform simple motor actions such as pressing a button or moving a finger while being visually exposed to a moving oscilloscope timer in front of them. They were instructed to initiate motor actions whenever they experienced the "conscious urge" to do so, and to record the specific mark of time on the oscilloscope in which they felt indicative of the start of their subjective experience of a "free-willed" drive to move. The experiment observed that "readiness potential" (accumulating neural electrical activities preceding motor acts) occurs approximately 550 milliseconds before an action is performed. However, it was also recorded that participants indicated the start of their felt awareness of the initial intention to act began approximately 350-400 milliseconds after the occurrence of readiness potential (Libet, 1999). Therefore, the result demonstrates that awareness of initial intention occurred after the already concluded presence of a "neurological decision" itself. This study was replicated by other researchers such as Soon et al. (2002) and has since expanded the knowledge of the preceding rate of unconscious neural forces to be up to 10 seconds before individuals were aware of their decisions. These experimental conditions may not represent universal contexts and neurological processes; however, one cannot deny that it is evidenced as fact that neurological processes do precede respective awareness in some instances, if not all. Therefore, contrary to folk intuitions on the realness of conscious wills, numerous experimental results would reveal the uncomfortable but honest truth otherwise.

Ultimately, recent neurological studies inspire a reawakening of the contemplations of philosophical stances on the existence of free will. Contemporary experimental methodologies along with advanced technologies for scientific investigation naturally expand our perceptual understanding and vicinity into the nature of reality. Specifically, understandings of phenomena are redefined through the scientific insights of physical materialism and the physical

laws that govern physiological and neurological systems such as our bodies and minds. It is this undeniable causal relation within our physical and mental reality that inspires a redefinition of the age-old philosophical position of the origin of our choices and the degree to which we have free will. This is not to endorse the insights of physical materialism as the dominion of ontological conclusions, as subjectivity and phenomenology are facets of experiences that cannot be necessarily objectively reduced into biological processes and causalities (Schwartz & Begley, 2002). However, even if one considers the epistemological approaches of personal investigations of subjective experiences, the notion of freedom of conscious choices still remains inapplicable.

Social and cognitive origins of free will

Upon the reflection of anyone's life history, factors such as genetics, gender, culture, familial atmospheres, and numerous other historical micro and macro conditions that contribute to the formation of our existence could not have possibly been under our control. Therefore, subjective experiences of knowledge, opinions, and ideas cannot exist without prior frameworks of reference. Ultimately, although our phenomenology is inherently valuable to our subjective experiencing, it would allow no more space for personal freedom than what is previously known and unpredictably exposed to our minds. Furthermore, if one attempted to maintain careful attention to any object of interest (the content of this paper, for instance), one would immediately realize the difficulty to sustain full concentration without the occasional arising of thoughts, memories, fantasies, or other states of mental distraction. Thoughts simply arise in consciousness without much prior conscious deliberation and may sometimes even overwhelm us with their excessive ramblings and irrelevant judgments (Epstein, 2004). Furthermore, even if one intentionally processes information and actively deliberates a "conscious" decision, how does one explain the origin of the mental commentaries that put forth the preferences and finalization of the decision? Does an individual truly have the capacity to process every single possible decisional outcome within the universe? Or are one's preferences and decisions inevitably defined by what is only known previously, which are substantiated by preceding unpredictable and coincidental exposures to certain environments and events. Therefore, only two explanations may account for the arrivals of decisions and choices – spontaneous emergences with unknown precursors or known precursors that justify the logic of causality. In either case, the logic of free-will remains inapplicable. As Harris (2012) succinctly states: "You cannot think a thought before you think it".

Free will and its moral implications

Despite the growing philosophical and scientific consensus for the conclusion that our experience of free will is a neurological illusion, numerous scholars hold the position that it is a necessary illusion that must be maintained for the sake of individual well-being and collective order (Metzinger, 2003; Vonasch & Baumeister, 2013; Wegner, 2005). For instance, social psychologist Daniel Wegner defends the position in supporting the necessity of free-will illusion for the maintenance of what he calls an "authorship emotion" (Wegner, 2005, p.30). Specifically, every act of behaviour and decision under the experience of the authorship or free will maintains the feeling of individual distinctiveness. The feeling of distinctiveness allows individual agents to experientially acknowledge the difference between events initiated by one's self, others, and external environments (Wegner, 2005). In addition, concerns regarding individual morality and ethics in association with the absence of free will have also been raised through various experimental implications. For

instance, Baumeister et al. (2009) conducted an experiment where subjects were primed with "non-free-willist" statements (i.e., "Everything is caused by preceding forces") and are tested on attitude checklists emphasizing moral characteristics. Their results have shown a positive correlation between a disbelief in free will and maladaptive behaviours such as dishonesty, irresponsibility, and indifference to moral standards. Therefore, the research concludes that individuals may increase their antisocial inclinations as "attitudes of passivity, indifference and…disregard for moral responsibility" may be promoted (Baumeister et al., 2009 p. 743).

However, individuals who relish in the lightened burden of less personal responsibilities may still be intuitively approaching situations with a free willed paradigm. If the individual truly disbelieves in free will, then all external and internal phenomena would be perceived under the paradigm of causality and predetermination. Therefore, if all matters are either predetermined, impersonal, or both, then experiences such as feeling responsibility, guilt, and the desire to escape such burdening reminders will be nulled as irrelevant and inapplicable. This does not imply that such individuals are irresponsible by default or unaccountable for their actions, but that the justification of the lack of responsibility in the disbelief of free will does not apply because notions such as responsibility or guilt would then become irrelevant as conceptual entities themselves. In other words, non-free-willists would not attempt to justify immoral inclinations through the desire to gain agentic freedom from guilt-charged burdens of moral responsibilities simply because notions of responsibility and guilt do not apply in a consciousness without the belief in free will. Therefore, experimental conclusions such as Baumeister et al. (2009) most likely cannot be interpreted as reliable insights into the nature of the disbelief in free will as observed individuals may simply be justifying immoral inclinations through a remaining sense of free will and agency.

The pragmatics of the recognition of the illusoriness of free will

It is quite possible, however, to recognize the illusoriness of free will with achievable prosocial benefits, despite experimental implications on the detriments in disbelief of free will. A true acknowledgement of the illusoriness of free will would generate greater capacity for compassion, well-being, and thoughtful understanding towards one's self and others in general (Harris, 2012). Consider the case of any psychopathic serial killer. Upon reflection of their "evil" acts through the belief in their conscious wills, one may be tempted to perceive the perpetrator as deserving of a punishment that is equivalent to the suffering they have inflicted on others (Carey & Paulhus, 2012). This form of "justice" is inevitably coupled with various aversive states of disgust, hatred, and anger all supported by a belief that the convicted intentionally chose to cause undeserved suffering and is responsible for his/her actions. However, can one still condemn the psychopath under the convenient acknowledgement of a brain lesion that significantly affected their empathic capacities (Shamay-Tsoory et al., 2004)? Sensibly, the recognition of biophysical anomalies naturally dissolves our aversive states of vengeance since the effects of brain lesions represent an impersonal force that the perpetrator cannot be held accountable for. In other words, the forces represented by brain lesions are as uncontrollable and impersonal as hurricanes and earthquakes. One would not feel emotionally justified to experience vengeance towards wind or tectonic plates, unless an agency is assigned to their occurrences. Specifically, in the case of a murderer, a longitudinal tracking and investigation of the development of psychopathy reveals the impersonal and undirected forces of

genetics, familial atmospheres, and stress as analogous as successive "injuries" or "disasters" to what could have been a healthier lifestyle (Taylor, 2007).

If one were to replace one's own determinants with that of a murderer, one would simply proceed with the exact actions without any other "choices" available in one's mind. In other words, if one inhabited the genes, environments, and subjective experiences of an individual, one would simply be that individual. There is no separate "I" that inhabits a shell of genetic and social components, as we are the "shell" of combined influences (Zahavi, 2008). In other words, one cannot be a self by oneself. The self-emergence involves a continuous convergence of inter-subjective sharing of narrative with others and surrounding contexts, which renders the state of the self to be in constant fluidity, interchange-ability, and evolution (Zahavi, 2008). Therefore, one does not have a self in the same sense as having a static entity such as a heart or a nose (Taylor, 1989). In this sense, the acknowledgement of the lack of free will within behaviours naturally renders notions of justice with its aversive states as misdirected and unnecessary. Instead, wholesome and supportive experiences of compassion and understanding represent sensible orientations with more inclinations towards restorative/treatment programs rather than punitive models of justice in the recognition of an unfortunate positioning of the individual's life (Harris, 2012). This does not imply that dangerous criminals would be granted freedom on the basis of provisions of unconditional forgiveness and forgetfulness, rather, perpetrators would simply be perceived as unfortunate forces of nature that society needs to be protected from and as results of causality that can be pragmatically and compassionately treated (Harris, 2012).

Implications for mental health

Similarly, this type of understanding of causality can be applicable in all facets of subjective experiences for further psychological benefits. Ruminations and self-judgments of past regrets, remorse, and guilt would be intuitively less impactful if past events are fully recognized as uncontrollably determined and accepted as such (Schwartz & Begley, 2002). Consequently, one proceeds to perceive one's and others' conditions as "ideal" and the only condition as individuals could not have chosen to react, behave, think, and feel otherwise on the basis of all considered causal factors (Epstein, 2004). Therefore, maladaptive thoughts and emotions no longer represent mental irritants of one's own defects that must be aversively resisted and suppressed, but can be perceived with equanimity and compassion as natural impersonal mental phenomena simply reflective of the process of causality. In relation, studies have expanded the correlations between certain perceptual paradigms and mood disorders such as depression and generalized anxiety disorder with implications concerning the maladaptive consequences of the belief of a volitional self. Specifically, Desseilles et al. (2012) present a model that describes diagnoses of depression to be associated with greater activations of self-referential thoughts. In other words, depressive symptoms are observed to be caused and mediated through a negative self-referential process involving the belief that proximate negative outcomes and responses are attributed to one's own defects and experienced as personally accountable. Therefore, a perceptual bias arises for the deserving of one's and others' derogations upon one's "incorrect" choices of actions, thoughts, and presence (Bargh & Tota, 1988). As a result, individuals experience significant distress, contributive to the emergence of depressive symptoms from the belief that conditions and thoughts are inherently

reflective of the accountabilities of a flawed free agent.

On the other hand, one may claim the benefit in the belief of free-will during triumphant moments of success where the attempt to claim internal credit and self-recognition are normatively justifiable. One's identity may feel experientially bolstered or even immortalized under the recognition of one's victorious efforts and efficacy. However, perhaps it is also safe to acknowledge the inherent nature of vicissitudes and transiency of all conditions and entities. Events that imply and inform self-efficacy are inevitably temporary, similar to conditions that imply the neutrality and inadequacy of the self which exist within the gaps of triumphant moments. Therefore, consider the extreme psyche where one's identity and sense of self rests entirely upon the fluctuations of ever-changing circumstances, self-concept would be defined upon the basis of instability that manifests as greater self-fragmentations and mood fluctuations (Epstein, 2004). This does not mean that the importance of self-efficacy should be disregarded as a conceptual illusion, but that the conclusion of the sense of self does not necessarily have to be derived from the brief moments of fluctuating and changing events. Paradoxically, self-efficacy and a sense of stability can be argued to be maintained through the recognition of one's causal factors and preceding conditions (Harris, 2012). Instead of perceiving external events and internal reactions as personal conclusions with the natural risk of vicissitudes, conditions can be viewed as impersonal forces that one can oversee and direct under the strategic considerations of the causalities, habits, and dispositions that inform one's life-course (Harris, 2012). Essentially, this is not to argue in full opposition of recognizing one's success, but it is to conclude that perhaps a balance should be maintained with the urges to fully define one's sense of self upon external conditions, including instances of personal success.

Practices and therapeutic approaches such as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy have been demonstrated to be highly effective as direct treatments and relapse-prevention programs for mood disorders as their foundational philosophy depends upon the practitioner's capacity to recognize the impersonality of thoughts and conditions (Sharma et al., 2013). Participants of mindfulness meditation and therapies are instructed to attentively observe the nature of their thoughts without identifying with them or attempting to consciously control their process or contents. As a result, habitual mindfulness practice allows one to "de-center one's self from one's mental processes, and… be less attached to negative thoughts…" (Frewen et al., 2008, p. 772). Therefore, the effectiveness of mindfulness is not necessarily predicated upon the conventional approach of positive thinking; rather, it is derived from a change in the relationship with one's own thoughts and emotions regardless of their content. Thus, inner phenomena are perceived and accepted as impersonal forces without the necessity of asserting an independently willed agent that is damaged by personal defects (Donner, 2010).

Dysfunctions of the epistemology of free will

The philosophic orientation behind mindfulness-based therapy is ultimately founded upon the teachings of Buddhism and its contemporary interpretations. Essentially, Buddhism represents a pragmatic philosophy that recognizes the ubiquitous problem of dissatisfaction and suffering and attributes this problem to be caused by a misunderstanding of reality. Ultimately, one misunderstands reality when one perceives it on the basis of it being permanent and stable and desires it to be so (ie. life, relationships, statuses, possessions, etc.) (Neal, 2006). In addition, because we experience reality through the lens of permanence, we also experience our "selves" as permanent and stable beings, alienated from the nature and laws of the

"external" world and as agentic owners of mental and physical experiences (Donner, 2010). We approach internal and external phenomena with a misunderstood model of reality that ultimately produces experiential frictions and dysfunctions with laws of nature. Specifically, a sense of alienation pervades our consciousness that generates much of our psychological and cultural problems (Taylor, 2005). Therefore, the solution for the misunderstanding lies within a perceptual shift of consciousness that acknowledges the fluidity, interconnectivity, and causality that pervades all existence (Fontana, 1987).

The misunderstood perceptions of reality along with their detriments however, are not necessarily present across all conditions of human history. For instance, Julian Jaynes (1976) theorized that volitional consciousness and agentic paradigms rose from an increase of complex symbolic/language systems. Through the evolution of culture, information, and language, conceptions of self and agency became consolidated and conventionally legitimized. Similarly, psychologist Steve Taylor (2005) describes that collective human consciousness became "sharpened" in dualistic paradigms over the millenniums, with the natural world increasingly being perceived as the cold and alienated "external". This perception causes us to become over-vigilant to the dangers of the external (material environments and out-groups) and overprotective of our internal and self-important existences. Consequently, a collective perceptual habit evolves into an ego-consciousness that views itself as ultimately separated from the laws and forces of the natural world. However, this rise of the independent and "freed" ego develops frictional conflicts with laws of nature because of the increasing rejection of its own connections with nature and causality itself (Watts, 1951). Therefore, seemingly mundane natural laws of change and fluidity are perceived with tremendous individual distress and collective disorder. Events such as old-age, death, illness, and general instabilities are taken to be defects deserving of solutions, despite their events being the very reflections of our in-separation with nature.

Philosopher Alan Watts (1951) has described this alienation from causality to be indicative of personal conundrums of self-conflict in modern societies, which is composed of an excessive craving for self-expression/promotion and a simultaneous contradicting tendency for self-derogation. Specifically, individuals become alienated and conflicted with their "selves" as inner phenomena are simultaneously rejected for the evidence of our inescapable connections with nature and personally identified with that which is rejected. This type of "mind-split" is pervasively reflective of the "moral" laws of many major religions as well as mainstream abstinence cultures. The religious and cultural standard of "purity" is reflective of a self-conflicting paradigm with its expectations of achieving abstinence of body and mind. The agentic "I" experiences guilt, shame, or anger against the natural/primal "me" who simultaneously experiences restraint and imprisonment.

Implications for a holistic paradigm

If a major root cause of all conflicts is the evolved consciousness of alienation and of the independent agentic self (Taylor, 2005), then individual and collective efforts should be directed to attempt to "re-evolve" a perceptual paradigm shift (under impersonal and causal forces) that acknowledges the interconnection, interdependence, and continuous causality pervading all experiences of selfhood and agency. In other words, a new perceptual understanding of our individual narratives and identities should consist of a holistic framework inclusive of micro-meso-macro forces. In addition to a self-narrative that exclusively derives its reality from one's own individual characteristics, unique history, and "choices," self-concept can also expand its conceptual and experiential vicinity to include

facets of broader social surroundings. Although we are inherently defined by preceding social circumstances and physiological/neurological make-up, it does not necessarily imply a reductionism of our individual worth, nor should it be a justification for the devaluation of meaning within our lives and relations with others. Rather, awareness of causality can be a space of recognizing the inherent interdependency of our identities and narratives with the world around us. Individuality does not need to be restrictively defined by an alienated self narrative of separated agency, but can be holistically expanded to include and integrate the identities and narratives of other individuals, cultures and histories (Taylor, 2005). Therefore, the self and our sense of agency would be understood within the frameworks of contextual fluidity and reciprocated connection instead of static entities existing in separation.

This paradigm shift would activate particular levels of self-definition that would contribute to the construction of intergroup and interpersonal connections. Essentially, the self can be defined by three levels – individual (differences, uniqueness), relational (interpersonal relations), and collective (intergroup relations) (Brewer & Garnder, 1996). The activation of each level of the self is dependent upon the saliency of certain situational and attitudinal cues. In relation, cultivation and promotion of the relational and collective self have shown to be involved in reduced intergroup conflicts and increased quality of friendships in general (Morry et al., 2013). When the self is defined on the basis of connectivity and involvement in relational causalities rather than individual uniqueness and agency, a condition for self-expansion for the inclusion of others is supported (Brody et al. 2008). Specifically, when relational and collective selves are activated, other members within one`s relational and collective social circle become enmeshed into one's self-definition. Others are then treated as part of one's own existence and meaning, bridging an empathic link with other members (Brody et al. 2008).

Sensibly, individual and cultural practices should prioritize increasing the saliency of situational and attitudinal cues for the greater activation of both relational and collective self definitions. Therefore, an important step in revolutionizing social paradigms into adaptable and functional ways of existence would be to reorient individual perceptions of reality itself. This would involve the promotion of the acknowledgement of interdependence and the illusoriness of separated agentic selves. Ultimately, a holistic perceptual paradigm of individual identities, narratives, and behaviours should be emphasized as both conceptual and experiential engagements that are beneficial to the functioning of social relations with self, others, and the environment. In all, the recognition of connections and causality represent epitomizing forces of a cooperative and empathically linked humanity that can reduce suffering on both individual and collective levels.

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Crime and Punishment: Public perceptions versus reality and the impact on sanctions for offenders

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Appropriate responses to crime and offenders are integral to maintaining a functioning society. However, political systems across the globe appear to prefer a punishment-based approach to criminal offenders over other responses. While crime rates are declining in many countries, including Britain, the United States and Canada, the literature suggests that punishment-based approaches are neither the cause of this decline in crime rates, nor effective in reducing recidivism. Therefore, in attempting to explain their continued popularity, this paper weighs up the relative merits of incarceration and alternatives to punishment and touches on the 'punishment as an appropriate response' view. It then focuses on examining the gaps that exist between reality and perceptions regarding crime rates, appropriate sanctions for offenders and the risks posed by offenders generally, and mentally disordered and white collar offenders in particular. This examination shows that inaccurate, media-fuelled perceptions underlie the continued adherence to punishment-based approaches for offenders. In other words, these approaches are a reflection of public perceptions rather than reality.

***Keywords*:** Perceptions, crime, punishment, offenders, media

In recent years many western democracies including Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States have become increasingly punitive with respect to sanctions for criminal offenders. This has occurred against a back drop of falling crime rates and a strong body of evidence which suggests that punishment-based approaches are ineffective with respect to reducing both crime rates and recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Farrell, 2013; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Ouinnet, 2002). Of course this situation could have arisen either because punishment-based approaches to offenders are still superior to other approaches, or as a result of the 'punishment as appropriate response' view. However, this paper suggests that a more fruitful line of inquiry concerns the gaps that exist between reality and perceptions regarding crime rates, appropriate sanctions for offenders and the risks posed by offenders generally, and mentally disordered and white collar offenders in particular. In fact it proposes that instead of being based on reality, punishment-based sanctions are a function of inaccurate, media-fuelled public perceptions.

In recent decades, crime rates have declined markedly in most Western democracies. For example, the Crime Survey for England and Wales for the period ending December 2013 estimated that there were 7.5 million crimes in England and Wales in the previous 12 months (Office for National Statistics, 2014). This represented a 15% drop compared with the previous year and was the lowest estimate since the survey began in 1981 (Office for National Statistics, 2014). Similar patterns have been observed in Canada. A report by Brennan and Dauvergne (2011) indicated that in 2010 police-reported crime in Canada as a whole reached its lowest level since the early 1970s, with crime rates and severity declining across most types of crime.

Despite this decline in crime rates,

punishment-based approaches to offending and the severity of punishments are increasing. For example, in Canada, Stephen Harper's government has introduced a raft of 'tough on crime' bills in recent years that have included measures such as tougher mandatory minimum sentences, the removal of pre-trial credit from sentence calculations, abolition of the "faint hope" clause for offenders sentenced to life, and much harsher penalties for youth offenders (Mallea, 2010). Similarly, the response to the August 2011 riots in Britain focused on punishing the rioters, rather than trying to ascertain and treat the underlying causes of the riots. What is more, in almost every offence category the sentences received by rioters were longer and harsher than those given to offenders who committed similar offences in non-riot situations (Sim, 2012).

While at first glance it may seem curious that legislators are introducing harsher criminal justice measures when crime rates are declining, there may be a simple explanation for this. Quite possibly, the severity of punishment was the central reason for the crime rate decline and therefore legislators persist with punishment-based approaches because it is the only way crime rates will be maintained at relatively low levels.

Admittedly, there is controversy about the causes of the fall in crime, though most researchers concede it probably has multiple causes (Blumstein & Rosenfeld, 2008; Farrell, 2013; Levitt, 2004). Fifteen possible explanations for the drop have been identified in the academic literature (Farrell, 2013). These include changing demographics, strong economies, high prison populations, the legalization of abortion, and improved security (Farrell, 2013). This means, of course, that it is impossible to state categorically why crime rates fell, though increased security that provided reduced opportunities for crime might satisfactorily explain the decline in some types of crime (Farrell, 2013). Still, it is possible to draw conclusions about the role played by high prison populations in the fall in crime rates.

The idea that a rising prison population was a major contributor to falling crime rates was first forwarded by researchers trying to pin-point the reasons for the decline in U.S. crime in the 1990s (Blumstein & Rosenfeld, 2008; Levitt, 2004), and it is still mentioned as a contributor in media reports on recent crime rate reduction in the United States and elsewhere (Travis, 2013; Wilson, 2011). However, a major problem with this explanation is that while the United States and the United Kingdom experienced rising imprisonment levels during the crime drop period, other countries in which crime declined had either stable or falling prison populations (Farrell, 2013). A case in point is Canada. As Ouimet (2002) observed, between 1991 and 1999 Canada and the United States recorded similar crime rate reductions, yet Canada's already lower incarceration rate declined by 3%. A similar trend was also observed in a number of European countries (Farrell, 2013). Thus, increased incarceration certainly does not explain why crime declined in countries like Canada.

In fact, a rising prison population does not even provide an adequate explanation for the crime rate decline in the United States. One reason for this opinion is that the incarceration rate tripled in the United States between 1973 and 1991 but the crime rate increased, rather than decreased, during this period (Farrell, 2010). Yet another factor challenging the increased incarceration explanation is that in the 1990s Texas increased its prison population markedly and by 2000 it had an incarceration rate second only to Louisiana's, but its crime drop for the 1995-1998 period was only 5% (Ouimet, 2002). By contrast, California and New York with lower incarceration rates had crime rate falls of 23% and 21% respectively (Ouimet, 2002). Finally, the incarceration explanation is undermined by research that shows imprisonment does not have the effects claimed by its proponents. According

to Levitt (2004), increased imprisonment led to reduced crime via two mechanisms: the incapacitation effect and deterrence. The incapacitation effect refers to the fact that when an offender is imprisoned he/she is removed from the streets and is unable to commit any crimes (Levitt, 2004). Deterrence, on the other hand, occurs when someone refrains from committing a crime as a result of the increased threat of punishment (Levitt, 2004). However, as Andrews and Bonta (2010) demonstrate, punitive approaches to punishment such as mandatory prison sentences, lengthy incarceration, scared straight programs, and boot camps, might temporarily remove offenders from the streets but they do not reduce recidivism or deter potential criminals. Instead, the greatest contribution of increasingly punitive approaches to society may be the increased incarceration costs and deteriorating prison conditions. Additionally, Henggeler and Schoenwald (2011) in their research on juvenile offenders and the effectiveness of interventions, indicate that methods such as incarceration may actually have a synergistic effect and increase offending among some populations. This finding is not really surprising. After all, adult and juvenile correction establishments group antisocial individuals with common histories together. This in turn can lead to things like criminal networks being created and expanded, inmates increasing their knowledge about specific crimes, and antisocial behaviour being reinforced (Bayer, Hjalmarsson & Pozen, 2009; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011).

Of course, even though punishment-based approaches are not effective at reducing recidivism and deterring crime, one could argue that they still might be superior in these respects to less punitive measures. This is not the case, however. Despite the fact that less punitive approaches are not automatically superior to "tough on crime" measures (Henggler & Schoenwald, 2011), some very effective alternatives to punitive approaches have been identified for both juvenile and adult offenders. With respect to juvenile offenders, the Blueprints Initiative (Muller & Mihalic, 1999) used four criteria, including the stipulations that a program had to have a statistically significant deterrent effect and the deterrent effect had to last for at least a year, to isolate programs that could help reduce chronic and violent antisocial behaviour. They determined that three programs, namely, functional family therapy, multisystemic therapy, and multidimensional foster care, met their effectiveness criteria (Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Muller & Mihalic, 1999). Each of these programs has a slightly different focus but their success is based on some common features. They all target key risk factors for offending, are behavioural in nature, are individualized to the strengths and weaknesses of the offender, and are mainly designed for high-risk offenders (Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011). They are also designed to be community-based, though as Hennggeler and Schoenwald (2011) point out, there have been suggestions that these treatment programs can be successfully used in institutional environments as well. Thus, effective alternatives to punishment for juvenile offenders are available.

Other alternatives to punishment approaches, such as some drug treatments (Mitchell, Wilson & MacKenzie, 2012), cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; Lipsey, Landenberger & Wilson, 2007), and restorative justice (Latimer, Dowden & Muise, 2005; Public Safety Canada, 2003), have also been shown to be effective at reducing recidivism among adult offender samples. CBT, which seeks to change offenders' distorted cognitions or 'criminal thinking' including self-justification, displacement of blame, and impulsivity, seems to be particularly successful in this regard (Lipsey, Landenberger & Wilson, 2007). For example, Lipsey, Landenberger & Wilson's (2007) meta-analysis of 58 CBT studies found that CBT decreased the chance of

offenders recidivating within 12 months of receiving treatment by an average of 25%. This finding was also consistent with previous meta-analyses (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005). CBT is not only very effective at reducing recidivism but it can also be adapted to a range of adult and juvenile offenders, delivered in both community and institutional settings, and operate as both a stand-alone program or as part of a multi-pronged approach (Lipsey, Landenberger & Wilson, 2007). Thus, clearly a range of alternatives to punishment approaches exist that can reliably reduce offender recidivism.

Finally, it is clear that crime rates do not burgeon when less harsh measures are introduced. In fact, the evidence suggests quite the opposite. In 2003 the punitive *Young Offenders Act (YOA),* which resulted in Canada having one of the highest youth incarceration rates in the West, was replaced by the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA;* Mallea, 2010). This Act was designed to divert youth accused of non-violent and minor offences away from prison via the use of diversionary and extra-judicial measures. It was successful in this regard with the average number of youth in detention following conviction falling 42% between 2003 and 2009. More importantly, although the number of youth committing offences remained stable between 1999 and 2009, the total number of crimes committed by youth declined (Mallea, 2010). In other words, the introduction of a less punitive approach to youth justice was associated with lower crime rates. Thus, the evidence clearly negates the idea that punishment approaches to offenders are favoured because they have been shown to be superior to less punitive measures with respect to deterring crime and reducing recidivism.

Another possible contributor to the continued popularity of punishment approaches to offenders is that many people feel that punishment is the appropriate response and is proportionate to the crime committed. This outlook suggests that punishment might be directed at regaining a moral balance in society, or used to prevent further harm from being committed (Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002). While it is acknowledged that this explanation may well have some merit, it will be left to others to evaluate its importance. This is because a more fruitful line of inquiry seems to be offered by the perceptions that exist concerning various aspects of the criminal justice system in many western democracies. Consequently, the gaps between public perceptions and realities, the effects of these gaps, and the forces shaping them will be explored with respect to crime rates and some key offender groups, most notably mentally disordered and white collar criminals.

There is definitely a gap between public perceptions and reality with respect to crime rates. Duffy, Wake, Burrows, and Bremner (2008) discussed this phenomenon in the United Kingdom, noting that while crime had declined quite drastically over the decade prior to their publication, the public still reported feeling at risk and felt that crime rates were increasing. Similarly, police reported crime might have reached its lowest level since the 1970s in 2010 in Canada (Brennan & Dauvergne, 2011), but the 2009 General Social Survey found that when respondents were asked about the level of crime in their neighbourhoods compared with five years earlier 62%, believed it had remained the same, 26% believed it had increased and only 6% claimed it had declined (Brennan, 2011). Fitzgerald's (2008) study on the fear of crime in Canadian neighbourhoods also noted that perceptions of crime and disorder did not decline in concert with the crime rate, thus suggesting that perceptions of crime and disorder, rather than crime rates themselves, were influential in determining fear of crime levels.

It is significant that a majority of people perceived crime rates to be either static or increasing and that a link exists between fear of crime levels and perceptions. This is because

there is a strong body of evidence suggesting that people who possess a fear of crime or believe that crime is increasing are those who are most supportive of punitive sanctions for offenders. For example, an early study by Sprott and Doob (1997) that analyzed data from the Canadian General Social Survey program indicated that as the level of fear of crime increased so did the proportion of people who thought sentences were too lenient. Moreover, this was the case even when they controlling factors like age, gender and victimization status (Sprott & Doob, 1997). More recent studies, such as that conducted by Costelloe, Chirios and Gertz (2009) in Florida, have confirmed that fear of crime is a major predictor of punitive attitudes. On the other hand, several Australian studies such as those by Spiranovic, Roberts, and Indermaur (2012) and Roberts and Indermaur (2007) have emphasized the role played by perceptions of increased crime rates in predicting punitiveness. For example, although the Spiranovic et al (2012) study found that higher scores for fear of crime were also associated with higher scores for punitiveness, it was perceptions of crime levels that was the strongest predictor of punitiveness followed by education, the influence of commercial/tabloid media, and fear of crime.

Obviously, public perceptions about increasing crime rates and fear of crime would certainly have resulted in support for punitive sanctions for offenders, though as the Spiranovic et al. (2012) study showed they were not the sole factors involved in this. Nevertheless, it seems that a strong link also exists between these two factors and media messages, another of the major predictors of punitive attitudes. This link is not surprising in view of the large number of crime-based television programs and the media's love of sensationalism when it comes to crime and violence. A number of studies have examined this link. For example, Kort-Butler and Hartshorn (2011) suggest that how attitudes are influenced depends on what people are watching. They indicate that real life crime television resulted in greater fear of crime and beliefs that the crime rate was actually increasing, possibly because how it is portrayed results in the viewer estimating their own risk of victimization as being greater. In addition, they found that fictional programming does not influence fear but can play a role in an individual's support for more punitive treatment of violent offenders, such as support for the death penalty. The previously mentioned Spiranovic et al. (2012) study also found that individuals who reported commercial and tabloid media as their predominant news source had more punitive views. Similarly, Krause's (2014) survey experiment found that exposure to news reports of violent crime was related to a reduction of trust in criminal justice institutions, as well as an increase in support for punitive punishment approaches. For instance, participants in treatment group one, who were exposed to a news article about a murder as well as two news stories unrelated to crime, reported a much greater degree of victimization and more favourable attitudes to a pro-punishment politician than a control group just exposed to stories unrelated to crime (Krause, 2014). Of greater interest, however, is that this study is based in Guatemala, where there are high levels of violent crime. This means that while perceptions may actually be accurate in this circumstance, there is still a correlation between public perceptions of offenders and a push for punitive, rather than rehabilitative, approaches to them. However, it is important to remember that the exact nature of the relationships between perceptions, media influences and fear of crime is complicated and more research is necessary to establish how each of these factors condition or precede the others (Spiranovic, Roberts & Indermaur, 2012). Still, one cannot escape the conclusion that when perceptions of crime levels are distorted and portrayed dramatically, punitive attitudes are strongest (Spiranovic et al., 2012).

The idea that it is public perceptions that are reflected in support for harsher punishments in the criminal justice system is further strengthened by an examination of the gaps that exist between perceptions and reality with respect to the threat posed by an important segment of the offender population: mentally disordered offenders. The process of deinstitutionalization and a lack of community support for those with mental disorders have resulted in a greatly increased representation of this group in the offender population (Pogrebin & Poole, 1987). In fact, currently, there are greater numbers of individuals among the criminal justice population that have serious mental illness than in the general population (Pope, Smith, Wisdom, Easter, & Pollock, 2013). In the United States, half or more of all incarcerated offenders have mental health problems (Sarteschi, 2013).

Typically, people with mental disorders in general, and mentally disordered offenders in particular, are a highly stigmatized group. Andrewartha (2010) directly addresses this issue, indicating that as many as three quarters of the Australian population view individuals with mental disorders as both dangerous and violent. She also claims that one of the origins for this belief is media influences, such as crime dramas and news reports. Mental illness is not only frequently tied with crime within the media, but also the language used tends to give the viewer a biased perspective regarding mental illness, most typically one with negative connotations (Andrewartha, 2010). This view is supported by McKenna, Thom, and Simpson (2007), who suggest that the media is more likely to use sensationalized headlines and pictures and draw attention to the personal lives and details of offenders in homicides committed by individuals deemed not guilty by reason of insanity (NGRI), than those committed by individuals without mental illness. The probable effect of this is that these events are made more salient in the minds of the reader and thus reinforce perceptions that people with mental illness are violent (McKenna et al., 2007). The idea that media messages can contribute to inaccurate attitudes about the relationship between violence and mental illness is also reinforced by a recent experimental study, which examined the effects of news stories about mass shootings on attitudes towards people with serious mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder (McGinty, Webster & Barry, 2013). It found that compared with the control group, respondents who read a news story about a mass shooting by a person with a serious mental illness reported less willingness to live near or work closely with a person with a serious mental illness and perceived them as being more dangerous (McGinty et al., 2013). Thus, many people perceive those who are mentally ill as violent and dangerous; perceptions reinforced by the media.

As with perceptions relating to crime rates these particular perceptions do not match with reality. Admittedly, individuals with mental disorders have been found to exhibit levels of violence above those in the general population (Andrewartha, 2010; McGinty et al., 2013; McKenna et al., 2007). However, as Andrewartha (2010) points out this statistic needs to be put into context. When Corrigan and Cooper (2005) did this in a study which compared numbers of potentially violent individuals on the basis of gender, age and mental illness they found that the sample sizes of potentially violent youth and males were 115% and 299% larger than the group with mental illness respectively. Hazardous drinking is also a significantly better predictor of violence than psychosis (Andrewartha, 2010). Thus, the perception that everyone with a mental illness is violent and poses a risk to society is certainly a distorted one and does not accord with reality.

Arguably, mentally disordered offenders are those who could benefit most from replacing punishment-based approaches with treatment directed at their underlying issues. However, it

appears that one of the main barriers to this happening is the largely inaccurate public perceptions described above (Penner, Roesch, & Viljoen, 2011; Pope et al, 2013).

In fact, Andrewartha (2010) suggests that there is an indirect or circular relationship between perceptions and incarceration. As individuals do not seek or cannot access the treatment they need due to the stigma that surrounds mental illness in society, they are placed at greater risk of offending. Then those who do offend often receive longer sentences due to perceptions held about mentally disordered offenders both within and outside the criminal justice system (Andrewartha, 2010; Sarteschi, 2013). Finally, they generally do not receive the treatment and support they need when exiting the criminal justice system (Penner et al., 2011). This creates a perpetual pattern of recidivism, meaning that offenders with mental illness are continually seen as dangerous and face greater exclusion from mainstream society.

Although the evidence on mentally disordered individuals supports the idea that inaccurate public perceptions are strongly connected to the continued adherence to punishment-based approaches in the criminal justice system, a different picture might emerge from an examination of the changes that have occurred in perceptions of white-collar crime and its perpetrators. Despite the fact that white collar crime is highly detrimental to the functioning of society, until relatively recently it was viewed as being less of a problem than more personal types of crime and the public seems to have been indifferent to white collar criminals. One probable reason for this indifference is that the white-collar criminal does not match the general public's schema for what a typical criminal is like, this is possibly why they were not identified as being a serious risk. Demographically, white-collar offenders tend to be educated, well dressed, and gainfully employed, usually earning enough money that it is unnecessary for them to obtain more through criminal activities (Bucy, Formby, Raspanti, & Rooney, 2008). This is in direct opposition to the schema created for a street criminal, who is usually viewed as being unemployed or of a lower socioeconomic status, and who generally engages in more direct one-on-one offences. Another part of the reason for this initial indifference to white collar crime appears to have been a lack of awareness of the problem (Dodge, Bosick, & Van Antwerp, 2013; Simpson, 2013).

Today the situation with respect to white-collar crime and its perpetrators is totally different. Of course, the dangers that white collar-crime poses to the functioning of society probably have not changed. What has changed is that recent high profile cases have brought white-collar crime to the forefront of public attention. As part of this increased awareness, public perceptions regarding white-collar criminals and their crimes have also altered. In addition, studies show that harsher punishment-based approaches that are comparable to those handed down to violent and personal offenders are now being advocated (Dodge et al., 2013; Holtfreter, Van Slyke, Bratton, & Gertz, 2008).

As a result of this shift in public opinion about white-collar crime, one would expect to see an increase in the severity of punishments given to offenders engaging in such activities. At the moment, though, one cannot say for certain that this is occurring. Holtfreter et al. (2008) suggest that while public perceptions have changed and people are calling for harsher penalties for white-collar criminals, government policies do not yet reflect this change. Brickley (2006) disagrees with this belief. She argues that perceptions that many white-collar criminals go free, particularly the more powerful individuals, are in fact misdirected. Furthermore, she uses examples such as the Enron case to demonstrate the severity of punishments awarded to white-collar criminals. Certainly, in this highly publicized example of fraudulent practices by a multibillion

dollar company, many individuals wanted severe punishments to be awarded, a view that was subsequently reflected by the courts. Still, the controversy about whether changed public perceptions are now reflected in government policies is relatively unimportant. This is because it does not alter the fact that while white-collar crime and its consequences for society remained constant through time, there were marked changes over time in public perceptions of its dangers and how it should be sanctioned.

Clearly, in most Western democracies public perceptions do not match reality with respect to crime rates, the effectiveness of various sanctioning options, and the nature of different types of offenders. More importantly this analysis suggests that media-induced public perceptions play a much more important role in shaping sanctioning practices than do 'hard' evidence. Without a marked change in these public perceptions it is also hard to envision countries like Canada and the United States making a concerted move towards reducing their prison populations and making rehabilitation for offenders the norm. This is because the handling of offenders is inextricably linked to politics, and politicians generally promote the majority views of the public in order to enhance their chances of election. Of course, changing public perceptions is not an easy task, though initiatives that reduce media stigmatization of mental illness and encourage the media to take an educative approach to criminal matters rather than promote an emotional response, should be supported. In addition, opportunities must be taken to educate both the public and politicians concerning the 'realities' of crime rates, the causes of their decline, and the less punitive criminal justice systems that exist in many Scandinavian countries (Lappi-Seppälä, 2007; 2012).

Even if changes in perceptions occur and this results in politicians deciding to implement less punitive sanctions for offenders, problems can still arise. The obvious one is that politicians will tend to opt for a 'one size fits all' option. However, as indicated above, this would be an abject failure. Consequently, more research is needed to delineate appropriate target groups for the various promising alternatives to punishment and establish 'best practice' for each one. Researchers also need to ensure that policy makers are lobbied about this research. Initiatives like the Blueprints Project (Muller & Mihalic, 1999) and the Campbell Corporation's Systematic Reviews (Lipsey, Landenberger & Wilson, 2007; Mitchell, Wilson & MacKenzie, 2012) are leading the way, but more needs to be done. In this way, a system might emerge that reflects realities rather than perceptions.

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The Link between Alcohol Consumption and Sexual Violence: Review and recommendations

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This paper explores the nature of the relationship between alcohol consumption and sexual violence against women. It has been estimated that by adulthood, approximately 25% of women have been sexually assaulted in their lifetime and a wealth of research has established a correlation between alcohol consumption and sexual assault. Here, we review a triad of explanations for this correlation and routes through which the likelihood of sexual violence is increased. Major precipitating factors are reviewed including the cognitive deficits caused by alcohol consumption in perpetrators and/or victims, and how alcohol acts as a catalyst for social misinterpretation. The nature and prevalence of rape myth is reviewed in terms of its role in sexual violence occurrence and acceptance within the general public. Finally, this paper outlines some of the major damaging impacts that sexual violence has on its female victims. This paper is largely informed by the work of psychological researcher Antonia Abbey and provides a good general foundation for the understanding of the relationship between alcohol and sexual violence. Recommendations are made in terms of important future research, as well as the development, implementation and maintenance of various programs that support victims of sexual assault.

Keywords: Sexual assault, alcohol consumption, rape myth, prevention

There is an epidemic occurring in western cultures that affects a disturbingly large proportion of women. Sexual assault is defined by the Institute on Alcoholic Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA; 2011) as any "forced sexual acts, including forced touching or kissing, verbally coerced intercourse, and vaginal, oral and anal penetration". Extensive psychological research has indicated a relationship between alcohol ingestion and sexual violence, with the scientific community unanimously recognizing a strong correlation (Lovett & Horvath, 2009). Although alcohol is not considered to be a prerequisite for sexual violence (Abbey, 2011), their frequent co-occurrence is grounds for further investigations of causation. This relationship has been investigated extensively in the psychological community and various factors have been attributed to the causes behind this relationship. This paper will investigate the following questions surrounding alcohol and sexual violence: a) Of what nature is the relationship between alcohol and sexual assault b) What are the major precipitating factors behind this relationship c) What damaging impacts can be seen in terms of victim adjustment, and d) How does the public experience reactions to sexual violence and alcohol. It is important to recognize that while alcohol-related sexual violence against women is a serious and important topic of study, the fact remains that the majority of men do *not* engage in sexual violence. This paper does not suggest that all or even most men are likely to engage in sexual violence, but that risk may increase when alcohol becomes a factor.

Sexual assault is considered by many to be an epidemic as it occurs in high numbers with many instances going unreported entirely. According to

NIAAA it is conservatively estimated that at least 25% of American women have been sexually assaulted, either in adolescence or childhood. Equally shocking, approximately 18% of women in America have been raped (Paul, Zinzow, McCauley, Kilpatrick, Resnick, 2014), that being unconsenting vaginal, anal or oral penetration (NIAAA, 2011). The prevalence of sexual assault against males is understudied, however it is assumed to be significantly less frequent than sexual assault against females (Choudhary et al., 2012). As this is the case, sexual violence will suggest female victims and male perpetrators exclusively for the purpose of this present paper.

It is well known that unfortunately, the majority of sexual assaults are not reported to law enforcement officials. This is due in large part to the fact that most women who experience sexual assault and rape are not strangers to the male perpetrator, among other factors (Paul et al., 2014). According to NIAAA, less than 20% of rape fits the criteria of 'stranger rape', that being an instance of rape where the perpetrator is a complete stranger to the victim. The vast majority of rape instead is considered 'acquaintance rape', in which it is committed by someone that the victim knows, such as an acquaintance, friend, co-worker, date, or spouse (Abbey, 2011). A recent American study suggested that a rape victim is most likely to officially report a rape when she had consulted with other people who had encouraged her to do so (Paul et al., 2014), compared to women who either had not consulted with others or when her support system had not encouraged her to report. This study goes on to discuss the implications of formal rape reporting for the victims, including potential for emotional support and relief as well as potential risks (Paul et al., 2014). Studies such as this highlight the highly sensitive nature of rape reporting, a concept which will be re-visited later in this paper during recommendations.

Research almost unanimously suggests that alcohol ingestion (by the victim, perpetrator, or both), and sexual violence are positively correlated with one another. Approximately half of all unreported and reported sexual assaults involve the consumption of alcohol by either the perpetrator, the victim or both. Typically, it is seen that if the victim is consuming alcohol, most likely so is the male perpetrator (Abbey et al., 2011). As is the case with any two factors that are correlated, a triad of explanations must be considered (Abbey, 2011). The first of three explanations rests on the assumption that alcohol plays a causal role in sexual violence, an explanation that is the most intuitive and is supported by much psychological research. A recent study of college men in romantic relationships illustrated this explanation. Research by Shorey, Stuart, McNulty and Moore (2014) found that on days where alcohol is heavily consumed by college-aged men (at least 5 drinks), the prevalence of sexual and violent aggression increased dramatically compared to days of absent drinking. These findings contribute to a growing body of research that suggests positive relationships between acute alcohol consumption and sexual violence (Shorey et al., 2014). The second possible broad explanation of the correlation between alcohol and sexual violence is the inverse of the former, that sexual violence plays a causal role in alcohol ingestion. Although this is a more difficult explanation to defend intuitively, there are many instances in which a desire to be sexually active or aggressive results in the consumption of alcohol by the perpetrator, and pressuring of female victims to ingest alcohol (Romero-Sánchez & Megías, 2010). This pressure from male perpetrators for female victims to ingest large amounts of alcohol is a very common occurrence in many instances of sexual assault (Romero-Sánchez & Megías, 2010). Ensuring that a female victim is drunk is beneficial for a male perpetrator for several reasons. It allows him to easily gain

physical dominance over a physically incapacitated female, lowers her inhibitions, and decreases the amount social responsibility or blame should he be caught engaging in nonconsenting sexual activity (Romero-Sánchez & Megías, 2010). The third broad explanation of the relationship between sexual violence and alcohol is that there is a third variable at play which is responsible both for the ingestion of alcohol and the occurrence of sexual violence (Abbey, 2011). Psychological research indicates that some personality traits such as impulsivity and mindsets like conservativism are strongly linked to both heavy drinking and sexual aggression (Lambert & Raichle, 2000). This third explanation would mean that some men who commit sexually violent crimes do so not as a main result of alcohol consumption, but as a result of a personality trait or pervasive mindset. It is important to identify which of the three types of interactions apply to any individual, as interventions for sexual offenders would vary depending on the cause of the act. If for example a man commits sexual offenses because he is drunk and would otherwise not have acted aggressively sober, the sensible course of treatment would be to treat his heavy drinking. However, if he both drinks and commits sexual offenses because of an underlying personality trait, it would be more beneficial to engage him in therapy to manage the expression of these traits and therefore reduce the likelihood that he will reoffend.

Abbey, a leading psychological researcher on the topic of alcohol and sexual assault, has developed a theory that postulates two routes through which the likelihood of alcohol-induced sexual assault is increased. The first route occurs in the early hours of an encounter that will ultimately lead to a sexual assault, most likely at a bar or party. As is described by Abbey (2011), men frequently look for cues from a woman that they believe is an indication that she is sexually interested in him. In many instances when men are sober, these signals or 'signs' that women give are misinterpreted as sexual interest when there is in fact none. Intoxication greatly exacerbates the effect of misinterpretation, as alcohol results in cognitive deficits that cause men (and all individuals) to attend to the most salient cues or 'signs' in any given situation (Abbey, 2011). In instances where two people are at a bar or party and the man or both parties are consuming alcohol, cues such as dancing, laughing, and engaging in long conversation can be easily misinterpreted as interest, particularly when the man is intoxicated. At the same time that these 'yes' cues are perceived, frequently men will dismiss or ignore equally obvious 'no' cues, like backing away or a woman making repeated excuses to leave (Abbey, 2011). This again occurs during sobriety, and once again is exacerbated by intoxication. This phenomenon is similar in nature to a confirmation bias, in which evidence supporting a given belief (that a woman is sexually interested in a man) is readily noticed and accepted, while evidence refuting said belief is ignored and minimized (Aronson et al., 2012). This route can often lead to the second route through which alcohol can increase the likelihood of sexual assault occurring. In the second route, a man may react aggressively when a woman rejects his sexual advances. Often in acquaintance rape, there was an encounter and flirtation which preceded the actual sexual assault in which men could misinterpret the intentions of women and as a result feel 'led on' or 'teased' by the woman once she ultimately rejects him sexually (Abbey, 2011). This rejection can be dangerous as in many instances, men's cognitive deficits as a result of alcohol and their previously held sexist beliefs can result in their justification of sexual assault. This is seen in men who, after being convicted of sexual violence or rape, insist that their victim was 'asking for it', or 'deserved it'.

Male perpetrators however are not the only parties who are affected by alcohol and increase

the likelihood of sexual assault. Research by Loiselle and Fuqua (2007) was conducted in attempts to experimentally investigate the link between alcohol consumption and women's accuracy at risk detection in a risky sexual vignette. Fourty-two young women were recruited and randomly assigned into conditions in which they were asked either to drink alcohol or were given a placebo drink. They were then required to listen to a date-rape audiotape vignette and give feedback regarding the riskiness of the vignette situation. Results of the study indicated that women who have consumed even minimal amounts of alcohol (blood alcohol concentration was an average of .04 for women who were assigned to the alcohol-drinking group) were significantly less likely to recognize risk in a potentially risky situation. This again testifies to the effects of alcohol on cognitive functioning even in small amounts, and shows how the risk of sexual assault can increase dramatically as a result of alcohol ingestion. Another interesting and notable observation is that women in this study who had consumed alcohol indicated higher rates of rape myth acceptance, a concept which is discussed in detail shortly.

Further evidence that alcohol potentially increases the risk of victimization in women lies in the research of Pumphrey-Gordon and Gross (2007). This research indicates that women are far less likely to resist sexual aggression or persistence when they are intoxicated, *or* when they are expecting to receive alcohol from the male pursuer if they continue to tolerate his advances. Some studies suggest that women's heavy episodic drinking is a proximal risk factor in sexual assault and rape, having identified "incapacitated rape", which is rape of a woman who is too intoxicated to resist an attack, as the most common occurrence of rape within college settings (Testa & Livingston, 2009).

As previously mentioned, ensuring that his victim is drunk is beneficial for a male perpetrator as he is likely to be held less accountable for his sexual violence by his peers. This is a phenomenon commonly referred to as 'rape myth', occurring where the female rape victim is held at least partially accountable for the assault she has endured (Suarez & Gadala, 2010). In a study designed to examine the effects of intoxication on attributions of blame in a rape incident, 187 college students were required to read scenarios of an instance of rape in which either the victim, offender, both or neither were intoxicated by alcohol, and were required to make a series of judgments about the situation and responsibility of each individual involved in the rape (Richardson & Campbell, 1982). Results of the study indicated that when the offender was drunk, students rated the situation as being more reasonable than when the offender was sober, and rated the male offender as less responsible for the rape (Richardson & Campbell, 1982). Additionally, female victims were rated as more responsible for the rape occurring when she was drunk (Richardson & Campbell, 1982). This study has worrisome implications regarding the perception of sexual assault by third parties, as it seems to suggest that in many instances, the responsibility of rape may fall partially on the victim instead of the perpetrator. Moreover, rape myths continue to be very prevalent in today's society and in several ways contribute to the prevalence of rape (Suarez & Gadala, 2010). A meta-analysis of rape studies (37 total) by Suarez and Gadala was conducted, with results clearly showing that men in general display a significantly higher rate of rape myth acceptance (RMA) than women (2010). There appears to be a prototype of male who endorses RMA, which includes characteristics like sexism, classism, racism, heterosexism and ageism (Suarez & Gadala, 2010). These findings conclusively suggest that it is mainly men who endorse RMA, and that there are a series of characteristics that are usually correlated with men who take the position of RMA. Another factor that has been found to perpetuate RMA is the notion of 'just

world' beliefs. Researchers Lambert and Raichle (2000) suggest a relationship between victim-blaming attitudes and the just world hypothesis, which states that some people engage in victim-blaming in an attempt to preserve their view that people receive what they deserve. According to this research, people who are firmly conservative in their views are more likely to want to uphold traditional power dynamics between dominant and non-dominant groups (Lambert & Raichle, 2000). Together, this research cautions that a 'just world' belief, especially when held by a hyper-conservative person, increases the likelihood that a rape myth will be accepted and blame will be assigned to the victim of sexual assault.

It is therefore reasonable to suggest that during trials of rape, it could be useful to address whether jurors hold such beliefs, as it may influence the outcome of a trial (Hammond et al., 2011). A study by Stewart and Jacquin (2010) demonstrated this danger in an experiment where 229 mock jurors were asked to rate the defendant of a mock rape trial as well as the victim in their perceived responsibility for the rape that took place. The study found that the jurors who were highest in rape myth acceptance attributed highest amounts of blame to the victim, particularly when the situation described the woman as having been under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the rape incident. Jurors who did not accept rape myth attributed the highest amount of blame to the defendant, regardless of whether or not the victim was intoxicated by drugs or alcohol during the assault (Stewart & Jacquin, 2010).

A study by Toomey et al. (2012) was conducted in attempts to determine whether neighborhoods with high densities of alcohol establishments had higher rates of violent crimes, including rape. Four American cities were compared and findings found a positive correlation between number of alcohol establishments and frequency of violent crime being reported in the area. The authors of this study concluded that as a result of their findings, in addition to previous findings regarding the relationship between alcohol and sexual assault (and all violent crime), community leaders ought to be wary of increasing the density of alcohol establishments in their neighborhoods (Toomey et al., 2012).

To this point we have seen that alcohol and sexual violence are positively and strongly correlated, identified the three main ways in which we can interpret the correlation between alcohol and sexual violence, and have discussed possible precipitating factors and routes through which likelihood of sexual assault increases. It is important to furthermore note the significant damage that sexual violence can cause a woman, and the relationship between post-assault adjustment and the involvement of intoxication during the assault. A questionnaire developed by Davis et al. (2012) was administered to 225 men between the ages of 21 and 35 who had reported both inconsistent condom use and heavy episodic drinking, the aim of which was to assess the association between alcohol consumption and condom use during rape perpetrated by young men (2012). The results of the questionnaire indicated that while intoxicated, men were significantly less likely to use condoms during penetrative sexual assaults, with the rate of rape without condom being 70% overall. This lack of condom use during penetration can result in both pregnancy and the transmittance of sexually transmitted infections (STI; Carole et al, 1990). This of course can have catastrophic consequences for the female victim as she is forced not only to live with lasting emotional and psychological scarring of having endured sexual assault (Krulewitz, 1982), often manifesting as post-traumatic stress disorder (Watson et al., 2012) but is also at risk of further damage in the form of pregnancy or contracting an STI.

There is very new and budding interest in the psychological community regarding the

relationship between adjustment of sexual assault victims and the involvement of intoxication during the initial assault. It has been established that significant obstacles face sexual assault victims particularly when they were intoxicated during their assault (Wenger & Bornstein, 2006). For example, victims are less likely to receive compensation and justice in the form of prosecution of their perpetrators when the female had ingested alcohol at the time of the incident (Wegner & Bornstein, 2006). This can obviously have very damaging effects on the recovery process of victims. It is suggested that future research focus on the recovery process of women who have experienced sexual assault while intoxicated compared to those who have experienced similar assault while sober in terms of cognitive, psychological and emotional adjustments.

Early in this paper, the implications of rape reporting were outlined and the importance of formal reporting has been noted in terms of victim's healing success. It is suggested here that while it is valuable for many women to report their sexual assaults, this may not be an ideal choice for some victims of rape. Loss of anonymity, social isolation, re-victimization and harm from the perpetrator are all potential negative consequences related to formal reporting of a sexual assault (Paul et al., 2014). For some women, these consequences may out-weight the emotional support and justice brought forth by identifying a perpetrator and seeking legal action. For this reason, it is recommended that future programs and/or social campaigns are developed to support victims in formal rape reporting, while simultaneously remaining sensitive to possible consequences. Ultimately, the decision to report must lie with the victim herself.

In an attempt to eradicate victim-blaming and socially upheld notions of systemic violence, community engagement events like the "Slut Walk" should be championed. This campaign to end a phenomenon popularly termed "slut shaming" originated in Toronto, Canada and has become somewhat of a global movement. These events are positive examples of the potential for change in the social sphere of sexual violence against women, and it is recommended that similar events be developed and promoted to continue this effect. The goal of these 'walks' and other such events should focus on the eradication of rape myth acceptance, prevention of future sexual assaults and a show of community support for assault victims and all women.

Future research on the subject of alcohol and sexual violence ought to focus on rehabilitation programs for men who commit sexual assault as a result of a personality trait, as described earlier. Within the psychological community, it is widely known that personality traits are notoriously difficult (if not impossible) to modify, therefore the expression of these traits must be targeted in treatment.

Finally, it is recommended that future researchers investigate the efficacy of cognitive restructuring techniques in the 'treatment' of sexual violence perpetuating attitudes like Rape Myth Acceptance. Psychological research has long considered cognitive factors when studying sexual offenders (Drieschner & Lange, 1999), however little or no research has currently been conducted on the possibility of cognitive restructuring for non-offenders who hold Rape Myth beliefs. This is important research as it could potentially help to discontinue a culture of victim-blaming.

In conclusion, it is well documented in psychological literature that there is a relationship between alcohol consumption and sexual violence. There are three distinct ways in which the correlation between alcohol and sexual assault can be interpreted, and there are many demonstrated precipitating factors that can lead to an instance of sexual violence. Some of the most salient factors that are thought to contribute to the pervasiveness of alcohol-

involved sexual violence include alcohol-induced cognitive deficits in males who misinterpret signals of attraction and react aggressively to rejection, and in females who are less likely to notice and react to inappropriate or risky aggression from men. Other precipitating factors include rape myth acceptance and a demonstrated prototype of male who is likely to display RMA, and finally the density of alcohol establishments present in a given urban neighborhood. A host of damaging impacts can be seen in women who have suffered sexual assault, including lasting emotional and psychological damage, as well as possible risk of infection transmission or pregnancy. There is also a need to further investigate the relationship between progress in recovery and the involvement of alcohol in sexual assaults. Finally, we can see that there is cause for concern regarding the public perception of rape and the attribution of blame. The existence of rape myth acceptance and cognitive distortions of women is cause for concern both in men who are likely to commit sexual offenses, and in jurors who are responsible for assigning blame to the perpetrator. As this is the case, future research in the field of alcohol and sexual violence should focus on methods to correct the public's perception of rape myth, as well as other campaigns to eradicate sexual violence in general.

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