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Recommended Citation

Tomino, Carla A., "Attribution of Responsibility to Victims of Sex Crimes and Victims of Non-Sexual Aggressive Crimes" (1975).
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ATTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY TO
VICTIMS OF SEX CRIMES AND VICTIMS
OF NON-SEXUAL AGGRESSIVE CRIMES

by

Carla A. Tomino

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

June

1975

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

VITA

The author, Carla Adelle Tomino, was born May 9, 1951 in Cleveland, Ohio. She is the daughter of Carl and Koula (Kachourbos) Tomino.

Following graduation from Collinwood High School, Cleveland, Ohio, in 1968, she entered John Carroll University, also in Cleveland, where she participated in the Honors Program for four years.

While attending John Carroll University, she was active in student government, was a member of Psi Chi, and was inducted into Gamma Pi Epsilon, the National Jesuit Honor Society for Women. She graduated cum laude in May, 1972 from John Carroll University, receiving an A.B. degree.

During the summer of 1971, she was enrolled in the Russian Language Summer School of Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont.

She began her graduate study in September, 1972 at Loyola University of Chicago, where she was awarded a research assistantship.

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INTRODUCTION

There is much current public interest in crime victims, especially rape victims, as evidenced by the number of recent movies and television stories portraying the plight of the rape victim. Although some of this attention is blatant exploitation, much is being done to assist rape victims in the way of legislation and rape crisis intervention centers (Chicago Women Against Rape, 1973).

Rape is a unique crime in that it is legally defined as happening only to women, and although basically a crime of aggression, the sexual nature of the crime calls forth attitudes and feelings not found with other aggressive crimes (Griffin, 1971). There seems to be a general tendency to blame the rape victim for the crime, much more so than other crimes (Lear, 1972). Oftentimes, it becomes encumbent upon the woman to prove she did not cause the rape. Police frequently do not take her story seriously. In court, her past sexual history can be and is admitted as evidence against her, although the defendant's past crimes, even rape charges or convictions, cannot be admitted as evidence. With present laws, it is difficult to prove she did not consent, especially if she was acquainted with the man prior to the rape

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(Amir, 1971). Apparently juries doubt the credibility of the woman, because there is a low conviction rate for rape, 1% of reported offenses, as compared with 11-15% for murder (Schultz, 1972).

This presents a shameful picture of treatment of rape victims. It is no wonder that women have been reluctant to report rapes, the FBI estimating that only one in every ten rapes is reported to authorities (Sagarin & MacNamara, 1968).

These examples of behavior towards rape victims point to underlying attitudes towards them which are negative and denigrating. Feminists are speculating on the reasons for these attitudes (see, for example, Women's Liberation of Michigan, 1972), these speculations basically dealing with the sexist nature of society.

The purpose of the present study is to seek some clarification of attitudes toward rape victims by examination of factors influencing attribution of responsibility to victims of rape as well as victims of other crimes of violence. Specifically, similarity of gender of the observer and the victim will be studied. Attitudes towards victims of armed robbery as well as rape will be studied to help clarify attitudes peculiar to the sexual crime of violence.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Research in defensive attribution has examined attributions of responsibility to victims of misfortunes. This particular line of research seems pertinent in analyzing the nature of the attitudes towards rape victims.

Defensive attribution is an observer's self-protective need to attribute responsibility for a misfortune. Blame is defensively attributed to potential perpetrators or victims of a misfortune in order that the observer may feel safe and secure that the accident could not happen to him/her because he/she is a different type of person, or would have behaved in a different manner.

Several principle findings have been reported in the development of defensive attribution theory. Walster (1966) had subjects judge the responsibility of a youthful car owner, whose car accidently rolled down a hill and caused either severe or mild consequences. Walster found that the more serious the consequences of the car accident, the more attributed responsibility for the occurrence assigned to the car owner. She theorized that as the magnitude of a misfortune or accident increases, the more unpleasant it becomes for an observer to realize that it could happen to him/her. Walster suggests that in order to protect ourselves from the feeling that a similar

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catastrophe could happen to us, it is reassuring if we consider the victim a different kind of person, for example, less careful in the accident.] An accident with mild negative consequences would not require this self-protective attribution of responsibility.

Lerner (Lerner and Simmons, 1966) cites Walster's (1966) study as an example of the general principle he derives from the finding that the more serious the outcome, the more an observer wishes to blame the possible perpetrator. [According to Lerner, people need to believe that there is an appropriate fit between their actions and the results, and that events do not take place in a capricious manner.] He presents what has come to be known as the "just world hypothesis" that people believe in a just world in which people get what they deserve, and deserve what they get. There are two senses in which people are considered to be deserving. People who fall victim to misfortune deserve it either because they are intrinsically evil people, or because they did something to cause it (personal worth versus performance).

In Lerner's (1966) experiment, subjects (all females) are led to believe that they are participating in a study of the perception of emotional cues. They observe what they believe is one condition of a learning performance experiment, in which a subject, actually a confederate, participates in a learning task, in which she receives supposedly painful electric shocks for incorrect answers.

Subjects are instructed: "Your job will be to observe closely the emotional state of the worker and to watch for cues which indicate her state of arousal" (p. 206). Subjects then watched the victim receive painful electric shocks. In describing the suffering victim after these observations, subjects rejected and devalued her when they believed that they would continue to see her suffer in a second session, and when they were powerless to alter the victim's fate. Rejection and devaluation were strongest when the victim was viewed as suffering for the sake of the subjects (martyr condition).

Using a similar method, Lerner and Matthews (1967) examined the reactions to suffering victims, when the observer is indirectly responsible for the fate of the victim. When pairs of subjects met for a study on human learning, they were faced with the prospect of one of them having to be in a condition of negative reinforcement, consisting of strong electric shocks, and the other in a control condition in which they merely received appropriate feedback about their answers. The decision as to which of them would be in the negative reinforcement condition, and which in the control was determined by the subjects selecting one of two slips of paper from a bowl, which they believed contained the words "shock" and "control." When subjects perceived the other person was responsible for her own suffering, subsequent descriptions of attractiveness of the other person were

relatively objective. When subjects perceived themselves
as responsible for the other person's fate, they tended
to devalue her.

Further studies tended to cast doubts on the
general finding that one tends to denigrate the victim
of a misfortune. Walster (1967) failed to replicate her
previous finding that increased severity of accidental
consequences leads to increased attribution of responsi-
bility. Subjects were told of a stimulus person who had
purchased a house. As a result of some environmental
change over which he had no control, he either broke even,
or gained or lost varying degrees of money. Subjects then
assessed the responsibility of the stimulus person for the
gain or loss. The results contradicted Walster's (1966)
previous study. The home purchaser was judged less
responsible when the gain or loss was substantial than
when it was of no consequence.

Shaver, (1970) conducted a series of experiments,
the first of which was an attempt to replicate Walster's
(1966) study. He reasoned that for the self-protective
motive to be aroused, a person must believe it is possible
for the accident to happen to him/her. He believed that
in Walster's (1966) initial experiment, involving the
youthful car driver, subjects could easily imagine them-
selves in the situation, whereas it is unlikely that the
subjects in Walster's (1967) later experiment could be

familiar with home purchasing and mudslide disasters. The absence of such situational relevance, Shaver suggests, arouses little threat to the subjects in that it could happen to them, and therefore no need to assign responsibility occurs.

In order to test the effects of the relevance of the person and situation to the subjects, Shaver employed Walster's (1966) paradigm, but varied the age of the stimulus person. "Lennie B.," the youthful car owner of Walster's (1966) experiment, was variously described as being older, younger, or approximately the same age as the subject. In Walster's experiment, Lennie was a 16 year old high school student. Shaver added descriptions of Lennie as being a 19 year old college student, and a 22 year old graduate student. The accident and the mild or severe consequences were described as in Walster. Shaver, however, used all male subjects. The results did not support Walster's hypothesis that increased severity of consequences leads to increase in attribution of responsibility. Shaver, however, did find a trend for subjects to attribute more carefulness to the same aged stimulus person.

This result led Shaver to analyze the concept of relevance. It would appear from Walster's study that increased relevance would pose more threat to an observer and thereby increase the need for defensive attribution,

since the misfortune is seen as more likely to happen to
the observer. However, relevance is composed of at least
situational similarity, that is, the perceived similarities
between the circumstances of the stimulus person and the
subject, and personal similarity, referring to the per-
ceived congruence of beliefs, values, and personal
characteristics. Shaver suggests that once the threat
has been aroused through situational similarity, varying
degrees of personal similarity may produce differences in
judgments of responsibility.

Shaver conducted a second experiment to further
test the effects of personal similarity. This experiment
was conducted with female subjects, and "Lennie B." was
changed to "Mary B." Subjects were instructed either
to imagine the stimulus person's personal characteristics
to be very similar to their own, or not at all like their
own. Only the severe consequences condition was utilized.
Shaver found that the subjects in the similar condition
attributed significantly less responsibility for the
accident than subjects in the different condition.

In a third experiment, Shaver kept situational
relevance constant, so that personal similarity was a
dependent variable. The stimulus person in the story
was a mechanical engineer, and the story emphasized his
occupational role, so Shaver reasoned that the story
would be differentially relevant to males and females.
Only severity of the consequences of the accident

possibly caused by the stimulus person was actually manipulated. Although similarity was denied by the relevant subjects (males) when the accident had severe consequences, attribution of responsibility did not also occur, as Walster's formulation would predict. However, Shaver's prediction that the more personally similar the subject is to the victim, the less responsibility assigned to him/her for an accident, was not supported. Instead a more confusing and inconsistent picture emerges. Shaver, however, believes that the inconsistent results in the composite of dependent measures point to the same underlying motive of self-protection. He explains that it is as if the subjects were trying to say "'I'm not at all like him (so if confronted by the same circumstances I won't make similar mistakes), even though he is not responsible because he is careful and couldn't have foreseen the accident (so just in case it does happen to me, you can't blame me for it).'" (p. 111) However, the inconsistencies of this study may be due to the use of gender similarity as a measure of personal relevance, since the greatest personal similarity was felt by female subjects for the male stimulus person (irrelevant subject condition) when the accident had serious consequences. This would not be expected if gender similarity was a salient form of personal similarity.

As a result of his research, Shaver (1975) modified the just world hypothesis by saying that perceivers will

use different strategies of attributing responsibility to
reduce the threat posed by a negative outcome. When faced
with a threatening attributional situation, in which threat
can be reduced by attributing responsibility to the victim,
and denying personal similarity, a perceiver will do so.
However, if personal similarity cannot be denied, a per-
ceiver will more likely attribute the negative outcome to
chance rather than to the victim, because the similar
perceiver would not wish him/herself to be judged by such
harsh standards.

Support for Shaver's defensive attribution formu-
lation was found by Chaikin and Darley (1973), Sorrentino
and Boutilier (1974) and McKillip and Posavac (in press).
Chaikin and Darley separated the roles of perpetrator of
the accident and victim of the accident. Subjects viewed
a videotape of a task in which they believed they would
soon participate, in the role either of a supervisor or a
worker. On the tape, an accident occurred, caused by the
supervisor, which had either mild or severe consequences
for the worker. Subjects who believed they would be
participating in the same situation as the supervisor
(perpetrator-relevant subjects) attributed the accident
to chance, more than did subjects who thought they would
be workers (victim-relevant subjects). Perpetrator-
relevant subjects (future supervisors), but not victim-
relevant subjects (future workers), derogated the victim
of the severe accident.

These findings support defensive attribution because subjects in both relevance conditions were motivated to protect themselves. When subjects believed that they might be in a position to cause an accident, they protected themselves by saying the accident was due to chance. When subjects believed they might be the victims of the accident, they blamed the perpetrator. Only future supervisors who observed the supervisor cause a severe accident felt the need to derogate the victim.

Chaikin and Darley manipulated situational relevance, instead of personal relevance, by having subjects believe they would be in a situation similar to that of either victim or perpetrator. However, subjects in the severe consequences condition, perceived themselves as more similar to the supervisor than mild-condition subjects. In addition, future supervisors saw themselves as more similar to the taped supervisor than did future workers. Chaikin and Darley suggest that manipulating situational identification with a perpetrator without simultaneously manipulating personal identification may be a difficult task.

In a study by Sorrentino and Boutilier (1974) subjects viewed a videotape of a learner participating in an experiment of the effects of negative reinforcement (shock) on a learning task. Subjects believed that they would either be chosen for the task later, or that they would merely be observing the experiment. Results

similar to those of Chaikin and Darley were found in that subjects who anticipated the same negative fate, derogated a victim of that fate less than subjects who did not anticipate a similar fate.

These authors manipulated similarity of fate between victim and observer because they believe that this component of similarity is of greater importance than perceived similarity of personality characteristics. It was found that when an observer believed he could suffer a similar fate as a victim, he/she devalued the victim less, as defensive attribution would predict.

One study that did however, utilize a personal characteristic as a measure of similarity was conducted by McKillip and Posavac (in press). Subjects made judgments about the responsibility of a person in an automobile accident, who had been using marijuana. Marijuana user subjects assigned less responsibility to the story actor than subjects who were not marijuana users.

Thus it seems the particular type of similarity which would lead an observer to lessen his/her derogation of a victim of a misfortune is not clearly established. An observer derogates a victim of a misfortune in order to protect himself from the threat that misfortunes are random, and could happen to him. A certain degree of situational relevance must exist for this threat to be aroused. However, when it is obvious the situation may happen to the observer, or when the victim is clearly a

similar type of person, an observer may not derogate the victim, because he/she would not wish to be blamed for the occurrence, if and when it happened to him/her. Therefore the derogation is less under these circumstances. Whether it is primarily the situational possibility, or relevant personal characteristics of the victim which may have led him into the misfortune situation, or some combination of these to be necessary for less derogation to occur is unclear. Whatever the determinants are, they must be strong enough to overcome the need to derogate the victim, and to cause the observer to avoid future blame for himself.

Aderman, Brehm, and Katz (1974) take issue with the just world hypothesis and postulate that Lerner's and Simmons' (1966) instructions to the subjects were empathy-inhibiting, thereby preventing a sympathetic reaction to the victim. In their study, similar to the Lerner and Simmons' paradigm, subjects were given instructions to either imagine themselves in the situation (empathy inducing), to watch the victim closely (empathy inhibiting), or the instructions employed by Lerner and Simmons, which were to observe the emotional state of the victim, prior to viewing the suffering victim. Those subjects who received the watch-her or the Lerner and Simmons instructions subsequently expressed strong derogation of the learner-victim, whereas the imagine-self subjects tended to rate the learner as more attractive than themselves. In addition, subjects were run either individually, or in

small groups. As predicted, subjects run individually expressed less derogation than subjects run in groups. The authors believe that the group situation inhibits empathy.

Although not mentioned by Aderman, Brehm, and Katz (1974), empathy between observer and victim can be thought to create a closer identification of the observer with the victim. It is possible that a stronger feeling of similarity exists for a person who feels empathy for another, than for one who does not feel empathy. This would be consistent with Shaver's defensive attribution notion of similarity with a victim producing less assigned responsibility. The fact that males and females show differential amounts of empathy (c.f. Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974) can confuse the findings of studies using male and female subjects. Most of the studies mentioned used subjects of only one sex. The effect of sex of victim and observer has not been systematically studied.

In the only study known to the author dealing with the attribution of responsibility to rape victims, Jones and Aronson (1973) utilized Lerner's just world hypothesis. According to the just world hypothesis, an individual is seen as deserving a misfortune either because he/she is an intrinsically evil person (personal worth), or because he/she behaved in a specific manner to bring about the bad outcome (performance). Extending this

reasoning, Jones and Aronson suggested that the more
respectable a victim of a misfortune, the more attribution
of fault assigned to the victim, because his/her intrin-
sically good character does not merit a bad outcome.
Their study focused on rape victims as victims of a bad
outcome, and their respectability varied as to whether
they were described as being married, a virgin, or a
divorcee. Jones and Aronson found in pretesting that a
married woman and a virgin were seen as more socially
respectable than a divorcee. They predicted that the more
respectable victims, the married woman and the virgin,
would be seen as more at fault in the rape than a divorcee.
Their results supported this prediction. There were no
sex differences in this attribution. This seems to
contradict Shaver's similarity/defensive attribution
formulation, since it would seem that rape would be more
situationally relevant to females, and they would attribute
less responsibility than would males. Perhaps this occurred
because similarity was not made salient in the experiment.

Thus, from this review of the literature, the
general finding that people need to attribute responsibility
for a misfortune in order to protect themselves from
thinking it could happen to them is established. The
specific circumstances in which more or less responsi-
bility is attributed is unclear. Walster demonstrated
that it is the severe misfortune that arouses the self-
protective motive. Lerner tells us categorically that

we tend to blame victims of misfortunes because we want to
believe people get what they deserve. According to Shaver,
people may believe in a just world, but if personal simi-
larity to the victim cannot be denied, people may not wish
to attribute high responsibility.

From available evidence, it appears that similarity
between observer and victim, whether in the form of situa-
tional similarity or personal similarity, is an important
factor in determining the degree of blame the observer
assigns the victim for his/her suffering. The most
frequently utilized experimental misfortune thus far has
been electric shock for mistakes in a learning task. This
situation, although containing elements of realism, is
hardly found in the "everyday world." The present study
seeks to introduce situations that may be more mundane,
specifically, rape and criminal assault.

Sex of the victim and of the observer is a basic
type of similarity which has not been systematically
studied. Since this study focuses on rape, it seems likely
that similarity of the sex of the observer and the victim
may be particularly relevant. Perhaps it is the male
dominated society which is so harsh in its judgment of
female rape victims.

It would be expected that the situational possi-
bility of rape would be perceived by females as much
greater than by males. The converse of this, however,
may not be true. Male rape (sodomy), although it does

occur, may not be perceived by males as being situationally relevant to them. Male rape, therefore, may not provide an adequate comparison of male and female attitudes towards male and female victims of rape. Consequently, another crime, armed robbery, will be introduced, which involves no clearly apparent differences in frequency of occurrence between males and females. This crime will be non-sexual in nature, but equated for severity with rape. Thus, the degree of attribution in light of the nature of the crime, as well as the sex of the subject and the victim can be evaluated.

It is predicted from the defensive attribution literature that subjects will be more lenient in their judgments of same-sexed crime victims (more similar), than they will be of opposite sexed victims (less similar). The effect on responsibility assigned the victim of the male rape victim cannot be reliably predicted, but it is hoped that any effects will be observed by comparison with the non-sexual crime (armed robbery). It is predicted that male rape will be judged infrequent and unusual by the subjects. In addition, subjects should perceive themselves more similar to the same sexed victims than the opposite sexed victims.

Other measures will also be included in an effort to determine some cultural attitudes towards the different crime victims, such as how much they are liked, how careful they are considered, and how serious the consequences of

the crime are for the victim.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Subjects will be more lenient in their judgments of same-sexed victims' responsibility for the misfortune (crime) than they will be of opposite-sexed victims.

Hypothesis 2: Subjects will consider the crime of male rape to be infrequent and unusual as compared to the other crimes considered.

Hypothesis 3: Subjects will feel more similar to same-sexed victims than opposite-sexed victims.

METHOD

Subjects

Eighty members (40 males and 40 females) of the Loyola University of Chicago subject pool served as subjects. The subject pool is composed of students in introductory psychology courses at Loyola who serve in a number of experiments in order to fulfill a requirement of the course. Subjects were recruited by having them sign up for times convenient for them. Seven subjects (four males and three females) did not fully complete the questionnaire and were eliminated from the data analysis. Consequently, seven new subjects were recruited from the same source. Subjects ranged in age from 17 to 31, with a mean age of 18.62. Sixty-two freshmen, 16 sophomores, and two juniors participated in the study.

Materials

The experimental material consisted of questionnaire booklets which contained descriptions of crimes, labeled Case 1, Case 2, and Case 3. Each case presented a short description of the victim which included the victim's age and sex, the "victim's story" of what transpired in the incident, and purported information from the "police report," giving the crime, and the injuries sustained by the victim. Although subjects were told

these stories were taken from actual police accounts, all the material was fictionalized.

All subjects received Cases 1 and 3, which were included as filler items to enhance the credibility of the cover story of actual police cases, and as such, were not the primary focus in the study. Case 1 involved a female victim of a hit and run automobile accident and reads as follows:

Case #1
Victim: female, age 32

Victim's story: I approached the street corner. The light was just about to change. Just as I stepped off the curb, I saw the light turn green. It didn't occur to me to look both ways, since I had the light. The accident must have happened a few seconds later. I didn't see the car that hit me. The driver didn't stop, but the police later apprehended a suspect that fit the description of witnesses. I woke up in the hospital.

Police report:

Crime: Assault by auto; hit and run driving

Injuries sustained by victim: broken arm, fractured rib, slight concussion.

Case 3 involved a male victim of a robbery in which he is held hostage and reads as follows:

Case #3
Victim: male, age 44

Victim's story: I work in a gas station. I have the night shift, and I'm usually alone. It was about 2:A.M.

and these two guys drove up to the pump. I walked out to the car. One of the men got out and asked if he could use the phone in the office. I said sure, and went back to show him where it was. When we got inside he took out a gun and told me to give him the money in the cash register. Then the other one came in and said no one was around. I pushed the burglar alarm button while they were talking. I don't think they saw me. I was trying to stall and they told me to hurry. But I was so nervous anyway, I dropped some of the money. Although it seemed like a long time, the police were there in a little while, just as the men were getting ready to leave. The one guy saw the police coming and told the other one. He grabbed me and held the gun to my head. They dragged me outside towards their car. The police were outside by their two squad cars. The robbers yelled they would kill me if the police tried anything. I was pretty scared. The man looked crazy. The police started backing away, and the two holdup men pushed me into their car. They told me they didn't want to hurt me, but if I got out of line, they would shoot me. They told me to lie down in the back seat and then they drove away fast. A few seconds later the car crashed into something. The two men jumped out and started running. I was still in the back seat. I heard some gun shots. A few minutes later, the police came and got me out of the car. I wasn't hurt, but I was pretty shaken up.

Police report:

Crime: armed robbery

Injuries sustained by victim: No physical injuries; some psychological trauma requiring sedatives.

There were four versions of Case 2, each representing a combination of two types of crimes (armed robbery and rape) with two types of victims (male and female). Thus, there was a crime of armed robbery involving a male victim, a crime of armed robbery involving a female victim, a rape involving a male victim, and a rape involving a female victim.

The situation in the four versions of Case 2 was identical until the commission of the crime. The crimes of armed robbery and rape were equated for severity using Sellin and Wolfgang's (1964) index of seriousness of elements of crimes, involving such things as type of crime, type of injury to the victim, and amount of theft. For the particular rape situation in the story, the equation for severity of the crime is as follows: 10 (Victim of forcible sex intercourse) + 2 (Intimidated by weapon) + 1 (Minor injury to victim) = 13. For the particular type of armed robbery situation in the story, the equation for severity of the crime is as follows: 7 (Victim hospitalized) + 4 (Intimidation of persons in connection with theft by weapon) + 2 ($10-$250, value of property stolen) = 13.

The particular situation utilized in Case 2 was chosen from a number of different situations pretested with 26 subjects (13 male and 13 female) who were not involved with the later experiment. These subjects were members of a social psychology class. The pretested situations involved a victim whose sex was not mentioned and the story ended before the commission of the crime. Subjects were asked to answer on a seven point scale ranging from "not at all responsible" (1) to "completely responsible" (7), "How responsible is the victim for getting into this situation?" Out of the ten situations pretested, eight were written with the intention of having a relatively moderate degree of victim responsibility. Two other situations were written to serve as anchors. In one situation, the victim was highly responsible, and in another the victim was blameless.

The situation which was eventually included in the experimental manipulation had no sex differences in judgments' of responsibility on the pretest. The situation was moderate in overall judgment of responsibility of the victim, in order to allow for the observance of variability when the crime and victim were introduced ($\bar{x}=2.80$).

In Case 2, the victims were male in half of the presentations, female in the other half, and all were age 20. The victim's story began as follows:

It was about 11:00 P.M. and I was waiting for the bus.

It was cold, and the wind was blowing, so I stepped into the doorway of an apartment building. I knew the bus wouldn't come for another ten minutes, so I went into the lobby. There weren't many people on the street. I saw one man walking across the street. He looked at me for a while. I guess he was wondering what I was doing. I didn't really think anything of it, except that maybe he was the janitor. A few minutes later the man--at least I thought it was the same man--came in the lobby where I was. I started to leave, when he grabbed me from behind and held a gun to my head.

At this point, the story varies, according to the type of crime manipulated in this experiment. The armed robbery conditions continue:

He asked for my money. He told me he would kill me if I didn't give it to him. I had just cashed a check and had almost $250. I fumbled with my wallet (purse) and he hit me with the gun. I started to fall, but he kept hitting me with his fist and the gun. He must have knocked me out, because I don't remember anything else. I woke up in the hospital.

Police report:

Crime: Armed robbery and assault with a deadly weapon. Injuries sustained by victim: Victim seriously beaten; hospitalized with a head concussion, bruises and lacerations.

The account for female rape continues:

He put his arm around my throat and mouth and forced me to the floor. He ripped off my clothes and raped me. I was afraid to struggle because he said he would kill me if I did. After he left, I called the police.

Police report:

Crime: Rape

Injuries sustained by victim: No serious physical injuries; treated for bruises and released.

The account for male rape continues:

He put his arm around my throat and mouth and forced me to the floor. He ripped off my clothes and sexually attacked me. I don't know if you can call it rape, but it was an awful experience. I was afraid to struggle because he said he would kill me. After he left, I called the police.

Police report:

Crime: sodomy (forced anal intercourse)

Injuries sustained by victim: No serious physical injuries; treated for bruises and released.

The completed booklet contained a top page which asked subjects to fill in their name, sex, age, and year in school. A second page introduced the cover story. It stated: You are asked to read carefully the following descriptions of crimes drawn from actual police accounts. Please consider each one separately. At the end of each, you will be asked to answer questions concerning your

feeling about the case. Please be thoughtful in your answers. Thank you.

Cases 1, 2, and 3 were then introduced, each followed by a list of ten questions concerning the subject's feelings about particular aspects of the case. These questions were:

1. How responsible is the victim for getting into this situation?

```
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
Not at all                                                      Completely
responsible                                                     responsible
```

2. How careful do you think the victim is?

```
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
Very careless                                                   Very careful
```

3. In your opinion, how serious is this crime?

```
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
Not at all                                                      Very serious
serious
```

4. In your opinion, how serious are the consequences for the victim?

```
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
Not at all                                                      Very serious
serious
```

5. In your opinion, how frequently does this crime occur?

```
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
Not at all                                                      Very
frequently                                                      frequently
```

6. In your opinion, how unusual is this crime?

```
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
Very unusual                                                    Very common
```

7. How similar are you to the victim?

```
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
Not at all                                                      Very similar
similar
```

8. How much do you like the victim?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dislike very much						Like very much

9. How likely is it that this could happen to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all likely						Very likely

10. If you had been in this situation, could you have foreseen the consequences?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Could not have foreseen the consequences						Could have foreseen the consequences

Subjects were asked to circle a number on the seven point scale for each question. The questions served to test the hypotheses.

The final page asked the subject whether he/she had ever been the victim of a crime; if so, what crime; and how responsible he or she felt for it's occurrence. The last page also solicited comments about the experiment and thanked subjects for their participation.

Procedure

The testing was conducted in several group sessions, with approximately 25 people in each. Subjects met at the appointed time in an empty classroom and were seated. When everyone was present, the experimenter passed out the experimental booklets. Approximately equal numbers of all conditions were handed out to both male and female subjects in each session. Ten males and ten females completed

questionnaires of each of the four versions. The experimental design, then, was a 2 X 2 X 2 factorial design, the factors being specifically, Sex of Subject (S) (male and female), Sex of Victim (V) (male and female), and Type of Crime (C) (armed robbery and rape).

Verbal instructions were given to the subjects to the effect that they would be reading a number of stories, and then be required to answer some questions following each story. They were then requested to fill in descriptive information on the face sheet of the test booklet. After everyone finished, they were told to turn the page and read the instructions. The experimenter asked if there were any questions. Subjects were then told to proceed through the booklet, and that when they had finished, they were to turn in the booklets. Subjects were told that any questions about the experiment were welcome and would be answered after they were finished. Subjects were thanked for their participation.

RESULTS

Each case was analyzed separately. Case 2, involving the crimes of armed robbery and rape with male and female victims, was the focal case in evaluating the major hypotheses. The data from Case 2 were analyzed utilizing a 2 X 2 X 2 factorial design. The factors are Sex of Subject (S), with two levels, male and female; Sex of Victim (V), male and female; and Type of Crime (C), armed robbery and rape. An analysis of variance was performed for each of the ten dependent measures.

Evaluation of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 is as follows: Subjects will be more lenient in their judgments of same-sexed victims' responsibility for the misfortune (crime) than they will be of opposite-sexed victims. This hypothesis is evaluated by examining the SV (Sex of Subject X Sex of Victim) interaction for question 1, "How responsible is the victim for getting into this situation?" The $\underline{F}$ ratio for this interaction was not significant ($\underline{F}(1,72)=.23, \underline{p} < .63$). In addition, the SVC (Sex of Subject X Sex of Victim X Type of Crime) interaction for question 1 was not significant ($\underline{F}(1,72)=.57, p < .45$), indicating that this relationship did not hold over any one of the crimes. Thus, hypothesis 1 was not supported.

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Hypothesis 2 is as follows: Subjects will consider the crime of male rape to be infrequent and unusual as compared to the other crimes considered. This hypothesis was evaluated by question 5 ("In your opinion, how frequently does this crime occur?") and question 6 ("In your opinion, how unusual is this crime?"). The highly significant VC (Sex of Victim X Type of Crime) interaction for questions 5 and 6 supports this hypothesis.

For VC, question 5, $F(1,72)=53.12$, $p<.001$. Table 1 shows the means for subjects' judgments for question 5, of the frequency of armed robbery and rape with male and female victims. The higher the mean, the more frequent the judgment of the crime. The lowest mean is for the crime of male rape ($\bar{x}=3.70$). Probing with the Neuman-Keuls test, (Winer, 1971), it was found that this mean is significantly different from all the other means ($p<.01$). The other means do not significantly differ from each other.

The VC interaction for question 6 was also highly significant ($F(1,72)=34.77$, $p<.001$). Table 2 shows the means for subjects' judgments of how unusual they believe the crimes of armed robbery and rape with male and female victims to be. The higher mean indicates the more common crime. The lowest mean is for the crime of male rape ($x=3.40$). Testing with the Neuman-Keuls test, this mean is significantly different from all the other means ($p<.01$). The other means do not significantly differ from each other.

TABLE 1

SUBJECTS' MEAN EVALUATIONS OF THE FREQUENCY OF THE CRIME

		SEX OF SUBJECT	
		MALE	FEMALE
TYPE OF CRIME	ARMED ROBBERY	6.45	5.90
	RAPE	3.70	6.35

TABLE 2

SUBJECTS' MEAN EVALUATIONS OF HOW UNUSUAL THE CRIME IS

		SEX OF SUBJECT	
		MALE	FEMALE
TYPE OF CRIME	ARMED ROBBERY	6.20	5.95
	RAPE	3.40	6.10

Hypothesis 3 is as follows: Subjects will feel more similar to same-sexed victims than opposite-sexed victims. This hypothesis is evaluated by question 7, "How similar are you to the victim?" Examining the significant SV (Sex of Subject X Sex of Victim) interaction ($F_{(1,72)}=9.67$, $p < .003$), we find at first glance that males did feel more similar to male victims than female victims ($\bar{x}$ MSMV=2.95 > $\bar{x}$ MSFV=1.65), and female subjects did feel more similar to female victims than male victims ($\bar{x}$ FSFV=4.25 > $\bar{x}$ FSMV=3.20). (See Table 3) Testing with the Neuman-Keuls test, the mean for perceived similarity of male subjects for male victims (2.95) is significantly higher than the mean for perceived similarity of male subjects for female victims (1.65), $p < .05$. In addition, the mean for perceived similarity of female subjects for female victims (4.25) almost approaches significance over the perceived similarity of female subjects for male victims (3.20), $.10 > p > .05$.

However, the mean for perceived similarity of male subjects for female victims (1.65) is also significantly lower than the mean for perceived similarity of female subjects for male victims (3.20), $p < .05$; and the mean for perceived similarity of male subjects for male victims (2.95) is significantly lower than the mean for perceived similarity of female subjects for female victims (4.25), $p < .05$. This indicates that females feel more similar to male victims than males feel toward female victims. In addition, females feel significantly more similar to female victims than males feel to male victims. This heightened

TABLE 3

SUBJECTS' MEAN EVALUATIONS OF PERCEIVED SIMILARITY TO THE VICTIM

		SEX OF SUBJECT	
		MALE	FEMALE
SEX OF VICTIM	MALE (MSMV)	2.95	3.20 (FSMV)
	FEMALE (MSFV)	1.65	4.25 (FSFV)

perceived similarity of female subjects to the victims in general is reflected in the overall main effect of Sex of Subject for perceived similarity ($\underline{F}(1,72)=14.23$, $\underline{p}<.001$). Females feel significantly more similar to the victims than do males.

Manipulation Check

It was assumed that there was no difference in subjects' evaluations of the seriousness of armed robbery versus rape. This was borne out by evaluating question 3, "In your opinion, how serious is this crime?" No significant difference was found for question 3, main effect for type of crime ($\underline{F}(1,72)=.29$, $\underline{p}<.59$). However, subjects believed that when the crime victim was female, the crime was more serious than when the crime victim was male (Main effect, Sex of Victim, question 3, $\underline{F}(1,72)=14.52$, $\underline{p}<.001$). In addition, there was a marginally significant effect for the SC (Sex of Subject X Type of Crime) interaction for question 3, ($\underline{F}(1,72)=3.63$, $\underline{p}<.06$). Probing with the Neuman-Keuls test, it is observed that the mean for females' judgments of the seriousness of female rape is significantly higher than their judgment of the seriousness of male rape, (6.70 versus 6.20, $\underline{p}<.05$). (See Table 4) These findings indicate that introducing a particular type of victim affects the seriousness of the crime, although in general, there is no difference in the severity of armed robbery versus rape.

TABLE 4

SUBJECTS' MEAN JUDGMENTS OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE CRIME

		SEX OF SUBJECT	
		MALE	FEMALE
TYPE OF CRIME	ARMED ROBBERY	6.45	6.25
	RAPE	6.20	6.70

Other Results: Female Victim Complex

In further analysis of the data, other significant differences were found. One general pattern that seems to emerge in these differences may embody the theme of a female victimization complex. A main effect for the Sex of Subject was found for question 1 ($\underline{F}(1,72)=5.81$, $\underline{p}<.02$). Males believed the victims were more responsible for getting into the crime situation than did females. This may point to greater sympathy of females for the victim, perhaps because of a closer identification of the females with the victims.

Females believed that the crimes were more frequent (Main effect, S, $\underline{F}(1,72)=5.19$, $\underline{p}<.03$), and more common (question 6, main effect, S, $\underline{F}(1,72)=9.60$, $\underline{p}<.003$), than did males, perhaps due to an increased salience of the victim situation for them.

Females liked the victims (question 8) more than males did (main effect, S, $\underline{F}(1,72)=10.69$, $\underline{p}<.001$), also perhaps indicating a closer identification with the victim.

A significant SVC interaction was found for question 9, "How likely is it that this could happen to you?" ($\underline{F}(1,72)=6.29$, $\underline{p}<.014$). Two main effects were found related to this interaction. Females believed that the crimes were more likely to happen to them ($\underline{F}(1,72)=45.73$, $\underline{p}<.001$). Subjects in general thought armed robbery was more likely to happen to them ($\underline{F}(1,72)=15.02$, $\underline{p}<.001$).

The SVC interaction (see Table 5) tells us that males could least see themselves in the rape situations (1.90=$\bar{x}$ male rape and 1.00=$\bar{x}$ female rape), as compared with the armed robbery situations (3.60=$\bar{x}$ male victim/ armed robbery, and 2.80=$\bar{x}$ female victim/armed robbery). Females, on the other hand, could see themselves even in the male rape situation ($\bar{x}$=3.20), as well as the female rape story ($\bar{x}$=5.10). The females also strongly saw themselves in the male armed robbery situation, ($\bar{x}$=5.60), as well as the female armed robbery situation, ($\bar{x}$=4.30). This finding may express the female's strong belief in vulnerability to victimization.

Evaluation of the Crimes Reflecting Cultural Beliefs

Several other results indicate a trend toward a cultural belief of armed robbery being considered a more appropriate crime for a male victim, and rape being a more appropriate crime for a female victim. A nonsignificant trend was observed for the VC (Sex of Victim X Type of Crime) interaction for question 2, "How careful do you think the victim is?" ($\underline{F}(1,72)=3.58$, $\underline{p}<.06$). Subjects judged the male rape victim as more careful than the female rape victim, and the female armed robbery victim as more careful than the male armed robbery victim. (See Table 6) This may be an expression of a belief that females should know they might get raped, and males should know they might get robbed, and should be more careful in

TABLE 5

SUBJECTS' MEAN JUDGMENTS OF
"HOW LIKELY IS IT THAT THIS COULD HAPPEN TO YOU?"

		SEX OF SUBJECT	
		MALE	FEMALE
MALE VICTIM	ARMED ROBBERY	3.60	5.60
	RAPE	1.90	3.20
FEMALE VICTIM	ARMED ROBBERY	2.80	4.30
	RAPE	1.00	5.10

TABLE 6

SUBJECTS' MEAN JUDGMENTS OF CAREFULNESS OF THE VICTIM

		SEX OF VICTIM	
		MALE	FEMALE
TYPE OF CRIME	ARMED ROBBERY	3.65	4.10
	RAPE	4.35	3.55

in these situations.

Another near significant trend was found for question 8, "How much do you like the victim?" of the VC interaction. ($\underline{F}(1,72)=3.84$, $\underline{p}<.054$). There was a nonsignificant trend for subjects to like the female armed robbery victim and the male rape victim, more than the male armed robbery victim and the female rape victim. (See Table 7) Thus, subjects may also like the victims they consider more careful.

A significant effect was found for question 10, "If you had been in this situation, could you have foreseen the consequences?" of the VC interaction ($\underline{F}(1,72)= 5.36$, $\underline{p}<.02$). Probing with the Neuman-Keuls test, there is a significant difference between the means for the male rape victim story and the female rape victim story (3.05 versus 4.60), $p<.05$. (See Table 8) That is, subjects say, had they been in the situation, they could least have foreseen the consequences if the story had a male rape victim, and could most have foreseen the consequences if the story had a female rape victim. Although not significant, there was a tendency for subjects to say they would have foreseen the consequences more if the story had a male armed robbery victim, than a female armed robbery victim (4.1 versus 3.7). This finding may also point to the cultural frequency of female rape as compared with male rape, and a tendency to believe in the relative

TABLE 7

SUBJECTS' MEAN JUDGMENTS OF LIKING FOR THE VICTIM

		SEX OF VICTIM	
		MALE	FEMALE
TYPE OF CRIME	ARMED ROBBERY	4.15	4.80
	RAPE	4.40	4.10

TABLE 8

SUBJECTS' MEAN JUDGMENTS OF FORESEEABILITY OF CONSEQUENCES

		SEX OF VICTIM	
		MALE	FEMALE
TYPE OF CRIME	ARMED ROBBERY	4.10	3.70
	RAPE	3.05	4.60

appropriateness of a male armed robbery victim as compared with a female armed robbery victim.

Another finding observed was a significant main effect for Type of Crime on question 7, "How similar are you to the victim?" ($\underline{F}(1,72)=9.67$, $\underline{p} < .003$). Subjects felt more similar to the armed robbery victims than to the rape victims. It appears that if given a choice, subjects would prefer to identify with victims of the non-sexual aggressive crime.

Results From Cases 1 and 3

Although the major focus of this study was Case 2, Cases 1 and 3 were also analyzed for ancillary information.

Case 1, involving a female victim of a hit and run automobile accident, was analyzed for sex differences, since all subjects received it. A one-way analysis of variance was performed on the data.

Several significant sex differences were observed in Case 1. Females believed the crime was more frequent (question 5) than the males ($\underline{F}(1,78)=19.84$, $\underline{p} < .001$). Females also thought the crime was more common (question 6) than the males ($\underline{F}(1,78)=10.49$, $\underline{p} < .002$).

Also in Case 1, a marginal effect was observed for females expressing a greater liking for the victim (question 8) than males($\underline{F}(1,78)=3.25$, $\underline{p} < .075$).

Females also believed the situation was more likely to happen to them (question 9) than did males ($\underline{F}(1,78)=$

4.52, $p < .04$). Males, however, felt that if they had been in the situation, they could have foreseen the consequences (question 10) more than the females ($F(1,78)=4.11$, $p < .05$).

Case 3, involving a male victim of an armed robbery and hostage, was also analyzed for sex differences, since all subjects received it. A one-way analysis of variance was performed on the data.

Several significant sex differences were observed for Case 3. Females believed the seriousness of the consequences for the victim (question 4) to be greater than did the males ($F(1,78)=5.35$, $p < .02$).

In Case 3, females again believed the crime to be more frequent (question 5) ($F(1,78)=3.85$, $p < .05$), and more common (question 6) ($F(1,78)=5.45$, $p < .02$) than did males.

A marginal effect was found in Case 3 for perceived similarity of subject with victim (question 7), in that males perceived themselves more similar to the victim than did females ($F(1,78)=3.40$, $p < .069$).

Subjects' Crime Victim Experiences

Only 25 subjects (13 males and 12 females) reported being crime victims. Although these data were few, they were analyzed for differences and trends.

The first analysis involved the frequency of subjects' experience as crime victims. It was noted that the crimes tended to be minor (small theft) or more serious (assault, attempted rape, armed robbery, car theft). Five

males experienced minor crimes, and eight experienced serious crimes. Eight females experienced minor crimes and four experienced serious crimes. These data were analyzed with a Chi Square test. In this case, Chi Square =1.98, d.f.=1, .25 > p > .10. This indicates a trend for females to be more often the victim of a minor crime than a serious crime, and males to be the victim of a more serious crime than a minor crime.

An analysis of variance was performed on subjects' judgments of "How responsible did you feel for it (the crime) happening to you?" This was analyzed using a 2 X 2 factorial design, the factors being Sex of Subject, male and female, and Seriousness of the Crime, minor and serious.

A significant main effect was observed for Sex of Subject ($F(1,21)=11.03$, $p < .01$). Males felt significantly more responsible for the crimes than did females.

In addition, a significant main effect was observed for Seriousness of the Crime ($F(1,21)=14.04$, $p < .01$). Significantly more responsibility was felt by the subjects for the minor crimes than for the serious crimes.

DISCUSSION

The main hypothesis derived from defensive attribution theory, that subjects will attribute less responsibility for getting into the situation to same-sexed victims than to opposite-sexed victims, was not supported. This type of personal similarity, gender similarity, was not adequate in arousing defensive attribution. The results, however, do suggest another pattern that may offer support for defensive attribution. This explanation is of course, post hoc, and would require further research to substantiate it.

One general interpretation based on the results is an indication of a greater identification of females with the crime victims than the males, and an expression of less derogation of the victim by the females, as compared with males. Females perceived themselves to be more similar to the crime victims than did the males. This finding is bolstered by other findings that suggest that females have a victim complex, or can easily see themselves as victims. For example, females believed that the crimes were more common and more frequent than males across all three cases, suggesting that the situational possibility of being a crime victim is particularly salient to females. In addition, females believed that the crimes were more likely to happen to them, whereas males had difficulty

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in perceiving the situations as happening to them.

It is possible that the nature of the crime had an effect, because males could not at all see themselves in the rape situations and had difficulty in seeing themselves in situations where there was a female victim. There was a slight tendency for males to identify with the male armed robbery victim--to feel similar to him, and to imagine that he (the subject) could be in that situation. Males in general, however, had difficulty in believing the crimes could befall them. Females, on the other hand, could see the situations happening to them, not only when the victim in the story was female, but even when the victim was male. Females, much more so than males, could imagine themselves in the male rape situation.

It is easy to understand how females may acquire such an attitude. In terms of sheer physical strength, females would be relatively powerless if attacked. This knowledge could intensify the threat of attack, may lead to greater preoccupation with the possibility of being a crime victim, and may consequently cause females to believe that all crimes, not only those that happen to females, occur more frequently. Subjects in general recognized the seriousness of the crime which had a female victim, perhaps indicating a belief that the victim situation is a more serious event for females, due to their relative powerlessness as victims, as compared with males.

Because females more often see themselves as victims, they can easily identify with male victims, and do not judge them harshly, even though males would probably fare better if attacked. There is some evidence to suggest that there is a tendency to derogate the male armed robbery victim, but females generally did not blame the victims.

Thus the data indicate a tendency for females to perceive themselves similar to crime victims, as compared with males. Shaver would predict, that the more similar an observer feels to a victim of a misfortune, the less blame assigned to the victim. This is exactly the pattern of attribution found in this study. Males, who perceived themselves less similar to the victims, assigned more responsibility to the victims, than did females, who perceived themselves as more similar to the victims. In addition, males expressed derogation of the victims, whereas females expressed a greater degree of liking for them. This data, then, albeit in post hoc theorizing, is consistent with Shaver's defensive attribution.

It appears, then, that gender similarity may not be the relevant dimension of similarity in this case, but that situational possibility, in how likely it is that the observer may find him/herself in the same circumstances, is the important consideration. This is consistent with the results of Chaikin and Darley, and Sorrentino and Boutilier who found that if an observer could expect to

find him/herself in a misfortune situation, he/she attributed less blame to the victim, and devalued the victim less.

Several results pointed to the cultural denigration of the rape victim. Subjects judged the female rape victim as least careful, and they also liked her least. Subjects could also foresee the consequences if the story had a female rape victim. This however, seems to be related to subjects' beliefs about the frequency of the crimes' occurrence. Subjects' judgments of the female rape victim are quite similar to those of the male armed robbery victim. These two crimes are also judged to be the most frequent. It is as if subjects are saying that males should know they might get robbed and beaten, and females should know they might get raped, so they should take extra precautions in those regards. However, it is not clear whether this effect is due to the extreme unusualness of male rape, so that subjects found it difficult to say that a male rape victim wasn't careful.

Thus, introducing a crime of male rape created some problems in clear interpretation. Because the crime is so unusual and unforeseeable, subjects could hardly blame a male rape victim. There is evidence that an armed robbery victim approaches situational relevance for males, at least compared with male rape. Males did blame female armed robbery victims more than they did male armed robbery victims, but this difference is very slight. It

can also be noted that males blamed female rape victims slightly more than male rape victims. Females, on the other hand, although assigning much less responsibility in general, blamed female victims of armed robbery slightly more than male armed robbery victims, and blamed female rape victims slightly more than male rape victims. This possible female denigration of females could be one concern of future research.

Judging from the limited data collected from the subjects on their own crime victim experience, it appears that females felt less responsible for crimes happening to them, especially when they were serious. Subjects, in general, felt less responsibility for the crime when it was serious, although males felt more responsible than females. This would be consistent with the results of this study, in that females assigned less responsibility to the victims because they themselves would not wish to be blamed for the crime. They did indeed assign less responsibility to themselves. Males on the other hand, judged themselves more severely for the crime's occurrence, as they did the crime victims. This is another indication that males feel the crime victim situation is remote for them, or else when found in that situation, they cannot be as victimized, since they have the means to protect themselves (e.g., physical strength). Collecting more data from crime victims, and their perceptions of themselves as victims would be valuable information in helping

to change attitudes towards crime victims and in particular rape victims.

In the present study, the nature of the responsibility for the crime is ambiguous. Therefore, data should be collected from subjects about what they feel the reasons to be for their judgments of the victim's responsibility for the crime.

A further area of future research would be to test various types of victim situations in order to find which kinds would be more relevant to males and females. Perhaps the ones employed in the present study were only situationally relevant to females. Perhaps some situations can be identified in which males feel similar to the victim. In addition, the personal characteristics or actions of the victim can be manipulated, irrespective of the situation. Although victims can be in the same situations as those in which females can highly imagine themselves, perhaps different personal reactions of the victim would create different responses in male and female subjects. For example, a victim could assert him/herself, and overpower the attacker. This could provide a test of the effects of situational relevance versus personal similarity. The pervasity of the female victim complex could be tested by using situations other than criminal assault.

It does seem, however, that in order to alleviate the degrading position of the rape victim, people must

develop the perception that they are somehow similar to her. This could be done through the fostering of empathy for the victim, perceiving oneself as being able to be in the situation, or seeing certain relevant personal characteristics of the victim as similar to one's own.

SUMMARY

 The present study focused on the attribution of
responsibility to victims of misfortune. The type of
misfortune employed was criminal assault, specifically
rape and armed robbery. Male and female subjects read
hypothetical accounts of crimes involving male and female
victims of armed robbery or rape. This resulted in a
2 X 2 X 2 factorial design, the specific factors being
Sex of Subject (male and female), Sex of Victim (male and
female), and Type of Crime (armed robbery and rape).
Subjects were asked to judge how responsible the victim
was for getting into the situation, the prediction being
that subjects would be more lenient in their judgments
of same-sexed victims than opposite-sexed victims. This
hypothesis was not supported. It was found that males,
irrespective of crime and sex of victim, were more severe
in their judgments of the crime victims. The overall
pattern of results, such as females' greater perceived
similarity with the victims, females' greater liking for
the victims, and females' significant tendency to believe
the crime situations could happen to them, suggests a
female victimization complex in which females can more
easily identify with crime victims. It is suggested that
it is this increased perceived similarity of females with
crime victims that led to their lower attribution of

responsibility. This is consistent with Shaver's defensive
attribution formulation that the more similar an observer
perceives him/herself to be to a victim, the less likely
he/she is to blame them for the misfortune.

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APPROVAL SHEET

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The final copies have been examined by the Director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

_____   _____
        Date   Signature of Director