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A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL CONSENT IN
NICARAGUA AND THE UNITED STATES

LINA RUTH DUIKER
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Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Sarah Clark Miller
Associate Professor of Philosophy, Bioethics, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Thesis Supervisor

Brady Bowman
Associate Professor of Philosophy
Honors Adviser

Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor
Professor of English and Women's Studies
Honors Adviser

Matthew Restall
Professor of Colonial Latin American History, Anthropology, and Women's Studies
Honors Adviser

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

ABSTRACT

Globally there is not a consensus on the moral acceptability of sexual violence. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how culture, gender, and empathy can impact perceptions of sexual violence and consent. The first chapter introduces some of the many complications of sexual violence. The second chapter defines sexual violence and the different types of sexual violence. Chapters three and four examine the cultural contexts of Nicaragua and the United States, with a special focus on attitudes towards sexual violence, and responses to sexual violence. Chapters five and six explore consent and empathy, and their relation to sexual violence. In chapter seven, I present a study that I conducted in Nicaragua and the United States to investigate the connections between gender, cultural influences, consent and empathy, and I offer primary results from the study. In chapter eight I consider some primary psychological conclusions, and in chapter nine, I examine philosophical conclusions based on a care ethical framework. The study results show that people from Nicaragua are more likely to have less empathy, and higher perceptions that consent was given than people in the United States. This thesis argues that the cultural context of machismo and marianismo in Nicaragua might be driving factors in this difference. This thesis also argues that Michael Slote's care ethics finds sexual violence to be unacceptable and concludes with a call to action; societies must inculcate empathy in children, and must teach consent in order to combat the high rates of sexual violence apparent.

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Author's Note: In this paper, sexual violence will be assumed to occur within a heterosexual

relationship, and the perpetrator will be referred to be male while the victim is referred to as female. This

is not to say that all sexual violence occurs in heterosexual settings. This is not the case. Neither is it the

case that the perpetrator is always male, nor the victim always female. Nevertheless, more often than not

the perpetrator is male and the victim is female, and thus in this thesis, the victim will be referred to as

female, and the perpetrator will be referred to as male.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Sexual violence occurs in many forms. There is sexual violence that occurs in relationships or with strangers. Sometimes the victim is female, and sometimes the victim is male. The aggressor can be either male or female as well. There can be interracial rape and rape driven by homophobic attitudes. Some people believe that situations of sexual violence can be justified, while others believe that sexual violence is never justified. In still other situations, the perpetrator will not think that the action they committed is sexual assault while the victim will. It is safe to say that sexual violence is complicated. And yet, the complicated aspects of sexual violence demand clarity. Our society is responding to these demands by conducting studies to examine sexual violence, by initiating sex education programs, and by publicizing the misdemeanors that occur. However, while there has been a lot more attention given to sexual assault in recent years, there is still confusion about sexual assault in our culture, as well as in cultures around the world. For example, it is only in the past 6 months that India's supreme court ruled that sex with an underage wife is rape (Meixler). In India, the age of consent is 18, and it is illegal for a person to be married when they are younger than the age of consent (Meixler). It is surprising that this ruling was not made earlier. And yet this example demonstrates how sexual violence can be complicated.

This thesis will explore the complications of sexual violence in many ways. First I will examine what sexual violence is and the many different categories and situations in which sexual violence occurs. Next I will examine how culture can influence sexual violence. Specifically, I

will look at how machismo might influence sexual violence by conducting a cross-cultural analysis of Nicaragua and the United States. I will analyze the relationship that consent and empathy have with sexual violence. And then I will present the study that I conducted specific to all of these themes. I conducted surveys in both Nicaragua and the United States, and these surveys look at how empathy and perceptions of consent related to each other. I will analyze the results from this study first through a psychological lens, and then from a philosophical viewpoint. However, it is important to first understand the many complications that surround the topic of sexual violence.

One of the complications with sexual violence is that there are differing opinions on whether certain acts constitute sexual violence. This can be due to the circumstances surrounding the situation. For example, in a situation where a woman is drunk, some will argue that she is not able to give consent, while others will argue that she is able to give consent. They might argue this regardless of whether or not the man asked for consent. Consent is a tricky subject as well because there isn't one solid definition of what consent is, and there are many confounding factors.

The differing opinions might also occur because of a variety of empathic responses. A person might empathize more with the victim or with the perpetrator, and this might influence whether they believe that there was sexual violence or not. There is also the dilemma of how different ethical frameworks can impact perceptions of sexual violence. With the complexity that surrounds sexual violence, and the emergence of more conversations on sexual violence, it is important to have more discourse on the topic so as to clarify and the complications that surround the topic. One of the more recent ways that people have been examining sexual violence and creating discourse on this topic is through an ethical framework.

When looking at sexual violence from an ethical perspective, the first question that needs to be answered is why sexual violence happens in the first place. In order for person A to harm person B, person A must have a certain ethical or moral code that allows them to harm the other person in that situation. It is possible that person A might not realize that they are harming person B. However, this still does not mean that they are not ethically responsible for the harm they are causing, it just means that there is another complication to sexual violence. And there are many more complications that arise from the issue of sexual violence. A person who is in a committed relationship and commits sexual violence in that context might or might not have the same ethical code as a person who sexually assaults a stranger. Sexual violence covers a wide range of actions, and each person has his/her own set of moral codes. But are there similarities between ethical codes of people who commit different forms of sexual violence?

It is important to examine the question of ethics in relation to sexual violence if our society hopes to eliminate the sexual violence that is present. By understanding why sexual violence happens, a way to combat sexual violence could be developed. If a certain moral or ethical decision has to be made in order for sexual violence to occur, is there a way for society to reject these kinds of decisions? Or is there a way for societies to reject or reform the moral codes that give rise to the possibility of such decisions being made? Is it possible for society to curtail sexual violence by establishing that sexual violence is an ethical offense? If so, what is it about our society today that allows for sexual violence to occur?

Qualitative research has shown that in many parts of the world, marriage vows are interpreted as granting a man the right to unconditional sexual access to his wife (Ellsberg 2). In this way, society is establishing that married men could be justified in sexual violence against their wives, or at least is not acknowledging it as an act of sexual violence. When a society

decides whether sexual violence is justified or does not acknowledge sexual violence as such, there is a value judgment that the society is making on the victim. Society is establishing that the perpetrator is entitled to access to the victim's body, and by doing so they establish that the victim is less important than the perpetrator. The victim's pain is discounted, and in this way, society is establishing that the victim is of little value in society.

When there are situations where there is a lack of justice for perpetrators of sexual violence, the government is sending a message to the public about the values that they assign to the perpetrators and to the victims. For example, in 2016, Brock Allen Turner was found guilty of 3 felony counts of sexual assault, and yet was only sentenced to 6 months in jail and 3 years probation (Stack). In this case, there is a value judgment being made on both the victim and the perpetrator. The judge said that "a prison sentence would have a severe impact on him" (Stack), referring to the perpetrator. In this way, the judge, and through him, the government, is establishing that Turner is of greater value than the victim. Turner got what many consider a lenient sentence, most likely because he was a college athlete and the judge did not want to ruin his future prospects (Stack). The victim's future was not considered, and she denounced the role of class and male privilege in the trial (Stack). She believed that Turner did not receive a fair sentence, and thought that this was due to the fact that he was a white male who was a part of the upper class. It also might be argued that the judge had these privileges as well, and was not able to give a fair sentence because of his bias. When a government appears to sanction sexual violence by failing to obtain justice for the victims, is there more sexual violence present? Could a change in the rates of sexual violence be affected by harsher punishments on the one hand, or a show of government support for victims on the other?

Another problem with the leniency towards sexual violence is the question of consistency. If sexual violence is "acceptable" in one circumstance, then why wouldn't it be allowed in another? For example, society used to accept that husbands were entitled to sex from their wives. If a husband is entitled to sex from his wife, why wouldn't any man be entitled to sex from a woman? Similarly, if a soldier is able to rape women from an enemy country and not face repercussions, what message does this send to the rest of society? State-sanctioned violence, such as civil wars, will often also increase the amount of violence against women (Walker 22). If the government supports violence in this one situation, men seem to assume that they are supported in their violence against women. So how does the general public react when the government does give what is considered to be a lenient sentence to a criminal? Or when the government doesn't seem to have a response to sexual violence in the military or the prison system? When the government supports violence in times of war, there is a value judgment placed on the enemies. Their lives are seen as less valuable than the lives of our citizens. This can be seen through the dehumanization of enemies. This value judgment that is placed on the enemy seems to have an effect on the value judgment that men have on women, because there is an increased amount of violence against women. Is the same reaction taking place with the relation of the government and sexual violence? Does the government assign a value to woman because of the way they react to sexual violence? And does this value affect the value that the general public sees women to have?

When looking at the government and its acceptance of violence, it is also necessary to look at the social context. How do society and culture impact the ethics of citizens? Are there certain practices that are deemed acceptable because of the way society reacts to them? What are people being taught through socialization that shapes their thoughts and moral codes? For

example, "We know that men's attitudes about women in general, and about rape in particular, being social attitudes, do not emerge out of thin air but rather are at least partially the result of socialization" (Senn 97). If socialization really does partially cause the attitudes men have about women, it follows that socialization would also probably partially cause the sexual violence that occurs because of male entitlement. This also means that the rate of sexual violence could be lowered through a different kind of socialization.

There is also the question of whether the socialization of women can lead to reactions by victims of sexual violence that perpetuate the cycle. In some societies women condone sexual violence. They believe that men are entitled to certain acts, or believe that promiscuous women are asking to be assaulted. In this way, our society might encourage sexual violence through rape myths and reactions to a rape. If most of the people in our society believe rape myths, it is unlikely that they will see the sexual violence as wrong. Even if they do see it as wrong, they would still probably attribute some of the blame to the victim. If we blame the victim it becomes harder for the perpetrator to actually be punished properly and for future victims to come forward about the violence they experience. If socialization is occurring, does our society have an ethical responsibility to socialize in a certain way? Does our society have to teach certain values, and is society responsible for the actions that result because of the socialization? It is also important to examine the question of human rights. What is a right and what is a privilege? Do humans have a right to bodily integrity?

This paper will focus on care ethics and how a care ethics based in empathy might get to the core of the complexities of sexual violence. I have focused on care ethics because of its emphasis on interpersonal relationships and especially on relationships that involve intimacy in many forms. In the context of a sexual relationship, there is an intimacy that I believe cannot be

addressed completely without focusing on the aspect of relationships. I believe this to be so because there is often an emphasis on the ultimate good, and moral frameworks often consider things to be either right or wrong without considering the relationships that people have. And yet it can be more complicated because of the relationships involved. So, for example, if it is considered wrong to steal in an ethical framework, it wouldn't matter what the reason for stealing is. However, if Johnny has stolen food because he has no other way to feed his family, someone might have a gut reaction that does not blame Johnny for caring for his family. It might still not consider his actions to be morally right, but it also considers that perhaps there was a justified reason for why he had to do what he did.

I believe that care ethics would be able to provide an understanding of this situation that takes his relationship with his family into account, and I believe that these relationships are important to consider. Ethical frameworks such as deontology, consequentialism and utilitarianism are not as focused on relationships as care ethics. These frameworks also do not have as much of an emphasis on the role of empathy. In the field of care ethics, I have focused on empathy because of the possible influence social scientists have found it to have on sexual violence and on our responses to that violence (Marshall, McGrath). Empathy appears to be prevalent in many caring relationships, especially when there is a certain degree of intimacy. A lack of empathy can also be found, but these relationships seem to look very different. In the context of sexual violence, if a lack of empathy is often found to be a characteristic of perpetrators, it seems natural to consider empathy when considering the ethical rightness or wrongness of sexual violence.

Chapter 2

Sexual Violence

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, there are many different manifestations of sexual violence. One of the many ways that sexual violence can vary is based on the perpetrator's degree of intimacy with the victim. The prior contact that the victim and the perpetrator have had is often examined when sexual violence has occurred. This can influence the perceptions of consent of the general public. Three of the types of sexual violence that are based on the degree of intimacy between the perpetrator and the victim are stranger-based sexual violence, intimate partner sexual violence, and acquaintance sexual violence.

Stranger-based sexual violence is the form of sexual violence that is assumed to be most prevalent in our society. Stranger-based sexual violence is when someone assaults a stranger. This form of sexual violence is often thought of first when the word rape appears. Because of this, adults will often teach children to be aware of this type of violence, and to try to protect themselves from this form of violence. This is one of the reasons why girls are taught to walk with their keys in their hand to use as protection, to never walk alone at night, and to carry pepper spray with them. In this way, society can oftentimes overlook the sexual violence that occurs in other situations and, in fact, the forms of sexual violence that are most prevalent. There is so much of a focus on the sexual violence that occurs within the context of strangers, that sexual violence within a family or within a friend group can go under the radar. However, research has found that people the victims know most often commit sexual assaults. It is estimated that acquaintance rapes make up more than 80% of all sexual assaults (Pazzani 719).

RAINN reports that in the National Crime Victimization Survey conducted from 2010-2014, 28% of all rapes reported were committed by someone known to the victim, while 45% were committed by an acquaintance, and 25% were committed by a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend ("Perpetrators of Sexual Violence").

While stranger assaults are not as prevalent as acquaintance rapes, they still happen. In general, variables associated with a culture of hypermasculinity are related to increased sexual assaults by strangers (Pazzani 719). Hypermasculinity is when there is an emphasis on being an overly macho male; this includes "(a) callous sexual beliefs, (b) belief that violence is manly, and (c) a view of danger as exciting" (Bartolucci 76). Because of these three beliefs that are consistent with hypermasculinity, it doesn't seem surprising that there would be increased rates of sexual assault in a culture of hypermasculinity. If men have callous sexual beliefs, it makes sense that they might perceive women as acting in sexual ways (Bartolucci). Similarly, if men believe that violence is manly, and they wish to feel or be seen as manly, it is not surprising that there would be an increase in violence against women. Even the idea that danger is exciting would support actions that deviate from societal norms, such as sexual violence against women.

It was also found that variables associated with higher levels of gender equality and female organization are in general related to lower levels of acquaintance assaults (Pazzani 719). Female organization is when women form political or social groups together to combat problems that women are facing. This suggests that when women are seen as equals, and are valued as such, less sexual violence of acquaintances occurs. This is especially important because there are such high rates of acquaintance assaults. This also suggests that culture and society could reduce rates of sexual violence through female organization and the levels of gender equality.

First of all, the idea that female organization can reduce sexual violence is important because of the fact that women could be part of the problem of sexual assault in the first place. Women can support cultures of sexual violence by supporting rape myths and blaming the victims. In this way they condone the sexual violence that occurs, and men might feel justified in their violence. Women can also reinforce gender roles, and hypermasculinity can also be supported by hyperfemininity (Fulu; Bartolucci 76). Hyperfemininity occurs when there is an exaggerated expression of the stereotypic femininity and when women are attracted to men that also fill traditional gender roles (Bartolucci 76). When hyperfemininity occurs and supports hypermasculinity, there might be an increase in sexual violence, as seen with the higher rates of stranger-based sexual violence. However, when there is female organization and higher levels of gender equality, it is unlikely that there would be a lot of hyperfemininity seen, and it makes sense that there would be less sexual violence seen in these cases.

Second of all, culture and society can have a large impact on whether there are high levels of gender equality. It takes a long time for society to be receptive to the change involved in reaching gender equality, as can be seen in the United States. We are still struggling to attain gender equality in many areas. The situation that the society is in will determine how easy it is to make progress in the field of gender equality. For example, it would probably be harder to achieve gender equality in a society where machismo is prevalent because so many people would be opposed to it and society has already established a social sphere where gender inequality is embraced. For example, if most of the people in a society believe that a woman should stay at home and be a mother, they will probably not be receptive of efforts to gain equal pay. Because of the differences in gender equality, gender violence will likely vary based on the country and society. In a study done on more than 10,000 men and 3,000 women across six countries in the

Asia-Pacific region, acceptability of violence against women varied in this study based on the

site location (Fulu). Because this is the case, we can see that acceptance of violence against

women might be able to change if it isn't static between cultures.

Acquaintance violence occurs in many other relational contexts and often occurs on

college campuses: "Ninety percent of college women who are victims of rape or attempted rape

know their assailant. The attacker is usually a classmate, friend, boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, or other

acquaintance (in that order). Most acquaintance rapes do not occur on dates; rather they occur

when two people are otherwise in the same place" ("Acquaintance Rape of College Students" 3-

4). It can take many different forms, and happens in many different places. For example, it can

take the form of "party rape, date rape, rape in a non-party or non-date situation, rape by a

former intimate, and rape by a current intimate" ("Acquaintance Rape of College Students" 6).

While this happens to a large number of women in college, a person does not have to be in

college, or college-aged, in order to be raped by an acquaintance. However, a large amount of

rapes happen to women in college, and a large number of women in college are raped. In a

Campus Sexual Assault (CSA) study done in December of 2007, 19 percent of females reported

that they had experienced a sexual assault or an attempted sexual assault since entering college

(Beaver 258).

Intimate partner violence occurs when the perpetrator is in a relationship with the victim

as a boyfriend/girlfriend or a spouse. Intimate partner violence can include sexual violence,

physical violence, psychological abuse and emotional abuse (Jewkes Intimate Partner Violence

1423). Intimate partner violence can occur with any combination of these three abuses. Similar to

stranger assaults, cultural and societal views also influence intimate partner violence: "Risk of

intimate partner violence varies between countries and between otherwise similar settings within

countries. These differences persist after adjustment for social and demographic factors, relationship characteristics and other risk factors" (Jewkes Intimate Partner Violence 1424). Because the risk of intimate partner violence varies between countries, it seems that the different values that societies have could impact the prevalence of partner violence. Even the fact that the risk varies between similar settings within countries might support this conclusion, because within countries there could be cultural differences in the status of women (Jewkes Intimate Partner Violence 1424). There might also be cultural differences in the views on relationships and the responsibilities and expectations of each of the partners. In some cultures, women are expected to be helpers in the relationships while the men are expected to be leaders. In this context, men might have the responsibility of punishing women, and honor might be very important to the status of a man. This might make it more socially acceptable for the man to use violence in a relationship. These cultural expectations can be present in any relationship or friendship and can encourage the presence of violence in these situations as well.

There are other factors that can complicate sexual violence and campus sexual assault, such as alcohol. 11.1 percent of females indicated that an assault happened while they were incapacitated by alcohol in the study done by CSA (Beaver 258). Alcohol is often used as an excuse for sexual violence, by either claiming that the victim deserved the violence because she was drunk, or by claiming that the perpetrator was drunk and was unable to control his actions. In this way, alcohol has been argued to be a factor in sexual violence. In fact, research shows that most of the time when sexual misconduct happens on college campuses, it starts between acquaintances who have been drinking, and at some point consensual contact may become nonconsensual (Beaver 261). The issue of consent is also a complicating factor, because some people believe that once someone gives consent she or he are unable to take that consent back.

There are also people who do not understand what consent is, and there are many different definitions of consent that can further complicate sexual violence.

While all of these forms of violence occur, and the experiences of the victims are important, this thesis will focus on sexual violence. I will not be examining domestic violence in this thesis although domestic violence can oftentimes occur in conjunction with sexual violence. I am focusing specifically on sexual violence because I am interested to examine how intimacy, empathy and ethics all interweave to allow sexual violence to happen. A sexual relationship normally requires a certain level of intimacy. Would a person be more likely to have more empathy for a person they are intimate with? Would this affect whether they believe that it is morally permissible to sexually assault someone else? It is also important to consider the relationship of the perpetrator and victim. Some rapists might be willing to rape strangers but would not ever rape their family. Other rapists might never rape a stranger, but rape or sexually abuse their family. What causes a person to be comfortable in one situation, but uncomfortable in another? I believe these questions are important, and I will attempt to explore the relationship between ethics, empathy and intimacy throughout this thesis.

When considering the many factors that contribute to the prevalence of sexual violence it is important to have an intersectional analysis. Identities such as gender and sex are seen as obviously influencing sexual violence. However, aspects such as socioeconomic status, race, sexual orientation and disability can also contribute to assaults. Power dynamics are also an important factor to consider in situations of sexual violence. For example, an employer might be able to abuse the power he has over his employees, and it might be easier for him to abuse someone because of the power he has over them and their livelihood. Power dynamics have been shown to influence sexual violence throughout history. Serfs, slaves, and servants have all been

abused throughout history by their owners or employers. There has also been a history of rapes that are racially motivated. While this paper will not focus on exploring the connection of these identities in sexual violence, it is important to note that these identities will complicate the discussion of sexual violence.

In general, rape is associated with a sense of entitlement and a lack of belief of gender equality (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morell, and Dunkle 5; Fulu et. Al), as I noted above. Men who have exaggerated performances of heterosexuality, which is seen as having had more partners, were also more likely to rape (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morell, and Dunkle 5). Views on gender equality differ between cultures, and these views could also lead to feelings of entitlement based on whether the genders are equal or not. This observation suggests that the way that a culture or society educates children about gender equality or entitlement can influence the number of rapes that occur. Culture could be important in other aspects of sexual violence as well, and for that reason, I will examine how culture might affect perceptions of consent and empathy.

Chapter 3

Nicaragua

In order to understand the scope of the problem of sexual assault, it is important to examine the cultural context of the country in which any given sexual assault takes place. When I first started looking into the topic of sexual violence, I was interested to explore machismo and sexual violence in Latin American culture. I thought that it would be interesting to see how machismo might influence or form a person's ideas about whether sexual violence is acceptable or not. I began to look into countries in Latin America and Central America that had high rates of sexual violence. I found that Nicaragua has been ranked in the top 8 countries worldwide in reported rapes per million people since 2006 ("Crime>Violent crime>Rapes per million people"). There have also been many studies that examine gender violence conducted in Nicaragua. I decided that it would be interesting to examine whether machismo was prevalent in Nicaragua, in order to further examine how machismo might be a factor of the high rates of sexual violence.

Nicaragua is located in Central America, above Costa Rica and below Honduras. Nicaragua is a part of Latin America, and because of this, there are many social similarities prevalent in Nicaragua that can also be found in the rest of Latin America. One of the social phenomena present in Nicaragua and in the rest of Latin America is *machismo* (Ellsberg 1606). Machismo "exaggerates the differences between men and women, emphasizing male moral, economic, and social superiority over women" (Ellsberg 1606). Machismo relies on a patriarchal society but takes the value given to a male in a patriarchal society and magnifies it. In these societies, aggressiveness and sexual prowess are valued in males and this creates an environment where men have to prove their masculinity by aggressively pursuing sex (Ellsberg 1606).

Machismo is also sometimes accompanied by *marianismo*, which requires women to act as the saintly Virgin Mary, being sexually pure (Ellsberg 1606). It is present in countries that have strong religious ties, and marianismo suggests that a woman is unable to have sexual autonomy (Ellsberg 1606). Marianismo emphasizes femininity and reinforces men's gender roles in society (Salazar 133). Machismo and marianismo co-constitute an expectation of binary gender relations in Latin American countries. Women are expected to be docile and submissive, while men are expected to be dominant and aggressive (Ellsberg 1606).

Marianismo and machismo are prevalent in Nicaraguan society, and are thought to have some influence in the rates of sexual violence and domestic violence. As many as 3 out of 10 women report experiencing some form of sexual violence before the age of 19 in Nicaragua (Salazar 132). While there is some research on sexual violence in Nicaragua, the focus of most research in Nicaragua related to sexual violence is on domestic violence. This could be related to the fact that sexual relations in Nicaragua are closely linked to marriage (Jewkes 1423). Because of this reason, even though it is not the focus of my thesis, I will present research specific to domestic violence from Nicaragua, and then will look at some of the attitudes towards this sexual and domestic violence from the perspectives of both the women and the men of Nicaragua.

Domestic violence is recognized as a public health problem in Nicaragua, and physical abuse in a relationship is often accompanied by sexual coercion (Ellsberg, Winkvist, et. al. 547-548). This sexual coercion can be found in two of the biggest cities of Nicaragua: "22 percent of women in León and 29 percent of women in Managua reported having ever been forced by a partner to have sex" (Ellsberg, Heise, et. al. 13). Often times the sexual abuse found in a relationship is accompanied by physical and emotional violence; in fact, 21% of ever-married women reported all 3 forms of violence (Ellsberg 1600-1601). In these intimate partner

relationships, the concept of marianismo and machismo are often defining of the gender roles and the acceptability of violence in the relationship. This is because a woman living in an abusive relationship is still expected to hold her family together, even at the cost of her happiness and safety (Ellsberg 1606). Machismo and marianismo suggest that it might be the man's responsibility to punish his wife through physical violence. Marianismo also suggests that the woman's role is to take care of the family, and because Nicaraguan society has such an emphasis on marianismo and machismo, a woman would probably face a lot of backlash for leaving her husband because he is abusive. This could also cause the lack of openness about this violence. In a 2005 study conducted by scholars on violence against pregnant women in Nicaragua, more than 80% of two groups believed that family problems should only be discussed within the family, and almost 45% believed that a woman must obey her husband even if she disagrees with him (Valladares 1246-1247). If this is prevalent in physical violence, it might also be apparent in sexual violence as well. While machismo and marianismo are prevalent in Nicaragua, society seems to be progressing away from these forms of gender socialization.

In Nicaraguan history, women have worked to achieve certain victories, and this work shows that marianismo is not accepted by all women. In the 1990s for example, when the government overthrew many of the public programs benefitting women, women created nongovernmental institutions to provide women in Nicaragua with reproductive and social services (Salazar, Goicolea et. al 319). Women also pressed the government for better social conditions for women, which resulted in legislative gains that enhanced women's protections against intimate partner violence and sexual assault (Salazar, Goicolea et. al 319). However, though such legislative reforms are in place, there is a lack of funding to adequately put them into practice (Salazar, Goicolea et. al 319).

In spite of the social changes mentioned above, sexual assault and intimate partner violence still are very prevalent in Nicaragua, and there are many conflicting discourses about women's rights. In 2016, Mariano Salazar, Isabel Goicolea and Ann Öhman (scholars from Sweden) published a study that aimed to identify these discourses. Eight focus groups consisting of 59 women found that there were three main discourses: a *contested traditional femininity* discourse, a *dominant ambivalent modern femininity* discourse, and a *pro-women's rights resistant* discourse (Salazar, Goicolea et. al 321). The contested traditional group, which represented a form of marianismo, argued that men are unable to control their sexual drive and that women's inappropriate behaviors foster sexual violence (Salazar, Goicolea et. al 322). The dominant ambivalent group argued that men have control over their sexual drive, but that women's inappropriate behavior foster sexual violence (Salazar, Goicolea et. al 322). Finally, the pro-women's rights group argued that men are able to control their sexual drive and women have rights to nonviolence regardless of their respectability (Salazar, Goicolea et. al 322).

In these three groups we see three different discourses about the responsibility of males and females in sexual assault. The first is a discourse that absolves men of all responsibility in sexual assault because they are provoked by women's behavior and can't control their responses, which is a traditional response of marianismo. A slightly more progressive group thought that men didn't have to commit sexual assaults because they could control themselves, but still believed that men are only partly responsible for sexual assaults because the women could provoke the men. The most progressive group absolved women of all responsibility in sexual assaults because they believed men can control themselves and there are fundamental rights to nonviolence that women have. This last group is a radical contrast to the traditional approach of marianismo that would be expected in a Latin American country (Salazar, Goicolea et. al 328).

The study found that the traditional discourse was slightly more present among rural women, and the most progressive discourse was slightly more present among urban educated women (Salazar, Goicolea et. al 329).

Mariano Salazar and Ann Öhman also conducted a similar study on 91 men from rural and urban sites in order to understand the beliefs that the men of Nicaragua have about sexual violence (Salazar 131). Researchers found four different discourses: a discourse of *challenging inequality,* an *ambiguous liberal* discourse, a *paternalistic ambiguous* discourse, and a *hostile macho* discourse (Salazar 137). The *challenging inequality* discourse argued that men are responsible for sexual abuse and that men have to respect women's bodies and autonomy (Salazar 137). The *ambiguous liberal* discourse argued that men are partially responsible for sexual abuse, and advocated for limiting women's autonomy and subordinating their sexuality (Salazar 137). This discourse was considered ambiguous because it had an ambiguous stance on physical intimate partner violence; these men believed that in most circumstances physical partner violence is unacceptable, but also believed there were some situations where it was acceptable, such as when a man's pride or honor is attacked (Salazar 138). It was considered liberal because it partially recognized women's autonomy; women are given more autonomy in the private sector to challenge men's opinions, but male control is reinforced in the public realm (Salazar 138). Similarly, women's sexuality is encouraged as long as it is enacted in a stable relationship, which is slightly more progressive than some discourses (Salazar 139). The *paternalistic ambiguous* discourse also argued that men are partially responsible for sexual abuse, but advocated for men's full control over women (Salazar 137). This discourse was considered paternalistic because it considered men to have complete control over women, and traditional femininity was encouraged (Salazar 140). It was considered ambiguous because it had

a similar stance on physical IPV and for the responsibility for sexual assault (Salazar 140).

Finally, the *hostile macho* group argued that men are not responsible for sexual abuse and argued

that violence is needed to maintain men's hegemony (Salazar 137). This hostile macho group

represents the traditional views of machismo, while the other three groups are each more

progressive.

Thus, it is not only the women of Nicaragua who are straying from the marianismo and

machismo, but the men are also exploring other views of gender and gender relations. In fact, the

hostile macho discourse was rare in this study, and it seemed that both ambiguous discourses

were the more common (Salazar 145). The social culture is changing in Nicaragua and a more

progressive view of gender hierarchies is emerging. However, although there are these changes

to the views of gender relations, there is still a high prevalence of sexual assault in Nicaragua.

This implies that although social discourses are changing, the actions of male violence perhaps

are not changing as quickly.

Chapter 4

United States

Originally I had decided to focus my thesis on Nicaragua because of the high rates of sexual violence that are apparent there. However, while I was conducting my research in Nicaragua, I found myself wondering how the data would relate to people back in the United States. Recently, there has been more of a focus on sexual violence that occurs throughout the United States, and because of this, I decided to conduct my surveys in the United States as well. I also decided to do this because I believe a cross-cultural analysis might offer some insight on whether culture really affects sexual violence. However, the main focus of this thesis is Nicaragua, and how machismo influences sexual violence, and for that reason, I am exploring how the United States compares secondly. In this chapter I will examine the prevalence of sexual violence, possible theories on the causes of the prevalence, empathy, and the sexual education that we have in the United States.

While the United States is seen as a very developed and modern country by most people, there are surprising rates of sexual violence. Because the United States is thought to be progressive in many areas, it is surprising to see that the problems of gender inequality and sexual violence are so prevalent. In 2011, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey was presented in the United States and estimated that 19.3% of women have been raped during their lifetimes, while an estimated 43.9% of women have experienced other forms of sexual violence during their lifetimes (Breiding). In 2017, the National Crime Victims' Rights Resource Guide confirmed that 19% of women will have been raped over their lifetime and 44%

of women will experience other forms of sexual violence ("2017 National Crime Victims'

Rights"). RAINN states that in 2015, 321,500 Americans 12 and older were sexually assaulted or

raped, and 1 out of every 6 American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed

rape in her lifetime ("Scope of the Problem"). The FBI is reporting almost 80,000 rapes a year,

with an estimate that a forcible rape occurs once every seven minutes (O'Toole 86). The rates are

even worse when looking specifically at college atmospheres: in 2015 "one out of four college

women were victims of sexual violence, and between one-fifth and one-quarter of women

students will be victims of completed or attempted rape" (Wies 276). Obviously America still

has work to do with regard to sexual violence and gender equality. But what are some possible

reasons for why the rates of sexual violence are so high?

O'Toole, Schiffman, and Edwards have a few possible hypotheses for why sexual

violence is so prevalent in American society. They argue that one of the reasons that there is so

much sexual violence is the fact that there is an objectification of and also a scientization of

sexual acts (O'Toole 90). This scientization is argued to be the way that sex is perceived now as

a means to an orgasm and satisfying biological needs (O'Toole 89). In this way, the purpose is to

orgasm, and the means of achieving that purpose do not really matter (O'Toole 89). The sexual

acts serve as objects that are used in order to get to the end goal (O'Toole 89). According to this

viewpoint, because sexual acts are seen as objects, they are seen as things that can be obtained

(O'Toole 90). Prostitution helps to foster these thoughts because in those situations people are

paying for services, and the sex becomes part of a transaction (O'Toole). When this

objectification occurs, people don't pay attention to how they are obtaining the sex. In this way,

people start to use force to get the objective that they want, just like people might use force to get

physical objects. When sexual acts are seen as objects, they seem to lose a bit of their meaning.

They are no longer intimate and personal experiences, but are instead things that are given or taken in order to reach an end goal. It feels less morally wrong to take an object from someone then it does to engage in an intimate act with them against their will.

Sexual objectification occurs through many different means, but especially through the media. Not only are sexual acts objectified, but women's bodies are also objectified. In this way, there is a depersonalization that occurs in American life that transfers to sexual life (O'Toole 90). In sexual relations, people tend not to really see the other person, and men especially tend to see women as objects that are potential sources of sexual satisfaction (O'Toole 91). This might be argued to occur simply through the new culture surrounding sex, especially in colleges. It seems to be liberating to women, in that women are now able to go and have sex with people if they want to. And yet, the culture also might to be oppressive, in the sense that there is a lack of emotional connection, and people might be said to just be using each other for sexual gratification. This could be oppressive in the sense that women could just be getting used and treated like objects and there is no longer a value that is placed on the intimacy that is found in sex. While this works well enough when both parties are consenting individuals, it creates a culture where there is a lack of caring for the other person, and maybe even a lack of consideration of the other person in sex, which might lead to more sexual violence.

O'Toole also offers the idea that sexual violence might be a product of the expectations that are placed on men. There is an idea that is engrained in boys and men that they are supposed to be attracted to any sexy woman. There is also an oversexualization of men, in that they are expected to be able to perform in any instance (O'Toole 92). In this viewpoint, a man is supposed to take any sex that is offered to him and be attracted in an instant in order to be considered virile. The result of this is that sex becomes depersonalized, because there is a lack of

feelings of warmth and caring (O'Toole 92). Sex turns into a competition between men in order to determine who is most manly (O'Toole 92). Men are also taught from a young age to be aggressive and to take what they want in many situations, such as in their careers, and this can translate to a man thinking he must be aggressive in relationships (O'Toole 95).

The last hypothesis that O'Toole, Schiffman and Edwards offer concerns the social inequalities of women in our society (O'Toole 96). There is a devaluation of women in our society, and men have considerably more power (O'Toole 96). This can be seen by the way that claims of victimization are often not taken seriously, and even when offenders are sentenced, they do not receive harsh punishments (O'Toole 96). This results in coercive sexual acts, because men have power in all aspects of our culture and "power is central to the entire phenomenon of coercive sexuality" (O'Toole 96). All of these hypotheses are plausible, and sexual violence does not necessarily have to originate exclusively from any one of these possibilities. I believe it is probably a combination of different factors that cause the problem of sexual violence. However, I will say that I do believe that the objectification of women in our society is particularly problematic, and is so invasive because of advertisements, movies, music videos and social media. Young people are exposed to the objectification of women from such an early age, and I cannot help but believe that this has an influence on how boys see women's bodies, how girls see their own bodies, and how they develop their views of sexuality.

The fact that men hold power in our society might also influence the presumed low rates of reporting sexual violence. Because the perpetrators normally have more power than the victims, they are able to intimidate the victims into not reporting their sexual assaults. Women might also be reluctant to report their sexual assaults to men in the justice system for fear that they would not believe them or would side with the perpetrator. There is also a social stigma

associated with sexual violence that might cause many survivors to not want to report they were

assaulted. Part of this can be related to the perceptions of survivors of sexual assault, because of

the many rape myths that suggest that women wanted the sexual activities or were dressed in

such ways that they were asking for it. There are also ways that survivors who go to the police

for help can be revictimized through the legal process. The police might not believe them, or the

jury might not believe them, or their friends and family might not believe them. Because of this,

the rates of reporting might be much lower than the rates of perpetration.

Similarly, there are probably high rates of underreporting from perpetrators as well

during studies that focus on rates of perpetration. These studies focus on collecting data from

people to determine what rates of perpetration are, but this is something that the perpetrators

probably would not want to admit to a lot of people. I suspect that this is the case because of self-

preservation, and also because of a lack of understanding of what perpetration actually is. Even

though the studies are anonymous, people still tend to want to preserve their image and also to

protect themselves from possible prosecution. However, even if the rates are not as accurate as

we would hope, these studies are still done and are important because they can reveal possible

estimates for rates of perpetration, and also can give us a view into the rationale for the sexual

violence from the perpetrator's mind.

Abbey, Parkhill, et. al. (2006) conducted a study to examine the cross-sectional predictors

of sexual assault perpetration in a sample of African American and Caucasian men, which gives

us a view into how these perpetrators justified their sexual violence. In this study, 64% of the

participants reported perpetrating some form of sexual assault since the age of 14, and 60% of

these men reported having perpetrated more than one sexual assault (Abbey, Parkhill, et al. 8). It

is important to note that 60% of the men reported perpetrating more than one sexual assault,

because that implies that they might not see their actions as wrong. Oftentimes people will say that in the heat of the moment they accidentally committed a sexual assault. These men cannot use that excuse credibly because they committed multiple assaults. It might also be possible that society is to blame for some of the assaults because the perpetrators might not have been punished for the first assaults, and might not have been shown that it was wrong.

The fact that some of these men started perpetrating acts of sexual violence from the age of 14 is important because it might change the way we approach sexual violence. What are the reasons that these children are committing sexual assaults, and is society part of the problem? Is the media influencing their actions, is society encouraging them to justify their actions, or is it an action that is seen at this young age because it is natural? What are the reasons that some men (and children) are able to justify sexual violence? One of the theories is that low empathy could be linked to perpetration. In this study, empathy was examined as relating to sexual assault, and it was found that men with higher levels of empathy committed relatively low levels of sexual assault while men with low levels of empathy committed increasing numbers of sexual assaults relative to their levels of sexual dominance (Abbey, Parkhill, et al. 10). These results seem to suggest that by attempting to create prevention programs or treatment programs that focus on increasing empathy, the rates of sexual violence might drop.

American society does not have much prevention education that targets young men. While there are sexual education classes in some public schools, the rates of sexual violence are high enough to suggest that more is needed. There are very few prevention programs that can be found outside of college campuses, so there is relatively low exposure for these prevention programs (Abbey, Parkhill, et al. 14). Abbey, Parkhill, et al. believe that general education and primary prevention programs are needed for young men. In addition, programs that can teach

young boys about healthy relationships and sexual intimacy are needed in elementary and middle schools (Abbey, Parkhill, et al. 14).

If issues of sexual violence are really important to our society, we should be proactive instead of reactive. We ought to teach children about respect in relationships and how to have healthy relationships. This can be as simple as teaching children that hands are not for hitting, they are for helping. While I do not presume that this would stop all violence, I do believe that it could make a difference in how these children treat their peers and their families. What we are doing now is attempting to teach men about consent and sexual relationships when they are in college. However, by the time they make it to college, these men may have already formed ideas of how relationships are supposed to be based on the media and on their experiences of relationships in their families. It is much harder to change someone's formed opinions than it is to help form their opinions in the first place. Programs should therefore begin when children are still formulating opinions about relationships and about the opposite sex.

While these programs should begin while children are still young and are formulating opinions about the world, there also seems to be a need for a change in the perspectives of college aged males. There is a very high rate of perpetration of sexual aggression by college male students, with most studies finding between 15% and 25% of these students engaging in some form of sexual aggression (Malamuth, Sockloskie et al. 670). These high rates may occur because of the different college subcultures that encourage men to be very masculine, such as fraternities or sports groups. These groups emphasize the importance of power, toughness, dominance, aggressiveness, and competitiveness, and these qualities can infiltrate the other aspects of their lives (Malamuth, Sockloskie et al. 671). Because of this, men might be more aggressive and dominating when interacting with women so as to emphasize their masculinity, or

they might even be hostile to women and qualities that are associated with femininity (Malamuth, Sockloskie et al. 671). Once these men are parts of such organizations and subgroups on college campuses, they form bonds with other likeminded men that are not easily broken. In order to be accepted into a group like a fraternity, you have to have fairly similar opinions as the people already in the fraternity so that they will accept you as part of the group. If a fraternity had a culture that supported sexual violence, a pledge might have to also support sexual violence in order to be accepted into the frat. Universities see the high rates of sexual violence that surround college campuses and are trying to work to lower these rates. And yet it can seem pretty difficult to lower the rates when there are cultures that support excessive drinking and one-night stands.

While the United States is making some progress to combat sexual violence, especially recently with the increase of media attention on sexual violence and sexual harassment, there is still a lot of work to do to lower the rates of sexual violence. There are still high rates of perpetration in the United States, and these are only the rates of reported perpetration. When considering the many people that do not report their rapes for fear of repercussions or social stigma, the problem of sexual violence in the United States becomes even more alarming. There are still men who feel justified to rape because of feelings of entitlement. There is still a lack of education about empathy and consent. Programs on empathy are important because sexual violence perpetration has been shown to be linked to low levels of empathy. If empathy can be taught, it is possible that empathy education might lower the rates of sexual violence. Similarly, if we have more of a focus on consent education, it is possible that the rates of perpetration could also drop.

Chapter 5

Consent

One of the reasons that I hypothesize sexual assault is so prevalent in both of these countries is the problem of a lack of understanding about what consent really is. If people do not understand what consent is, how to obtain consent, or how to give consent, it complicates sexual violence. If sexual violence is considered to be sexual acts that are done to a person without their consent but the idea of consent is not clear, how can a person understand what sexual violence really is? If a person doesn't understand what sexual violence is, how can they realize that they are committing assaults? Consent is a very complicated concept to understand because it does not have one clear definition. In fact, in 2015, only seven of the 50 states had explicitly defined consent (Hust). Consent can also be complicated because of situational variables, such as the presence of force or coercion (Beres 97). Some scholars believe that consent is defined as "any yes," which means that these scholars ignore the possible presence of these complicating factors (Beres 97). However, other scholars such as Hall (1998), Hickman and Muehlenhard (1999), and Humphreys (2005) have argued that it is not possible for a person to give consent when there is coercion or force present, because consent has to be given freely (Beres 98). Still other scholars argue that it is not even possible to have heterosexual consensual sex because of the power relations between men and women (Beres 98). MacKinnon (1989) argued that in patriarchal systems, men always have power over women, so women are not ever free subjects, and thus cannot give consent (Beres 98).

Not only is there much confusion about the circumstances needed for consent to be given, there is also confusion about how consent can be communicated. Some believe that consent is a psychological act, while others believe that it is a physical act, and still others believe it is a mix of the two. The scholars that believe that it is a physical or behavioral act believe that consent can be expressed through actions (Beres 99). However, this definition of consent requires standards or information about what specific actions would express consent; Sherwin (1996) argued that a legal standard must be made for an objective definition of consent, and a list of behaviors would be created to establish actions that indicate non-consent (Beres 99-100). However, it would be difficult to create a list of actions, especially when considering non-conventional ways of expressing consent (Beres 100). Because of this, many theorists have viewed consent as an act of the mind, where there is more of a focus on the intent to engage in sexual activity (Beres 100). However, the problem with this approach is that there is no way to know whether the responding partner is giving consent or not, as it is a matter internal to the mind (Beres 100). Because of this, many researchers apply a mix of both psychological and behavioral aspects to conclude that consent is a psychological state, but requires some conduct as evidence of that state (Beres 100-101).

Obviously, consent is very complicated if researchers and scholars who study consent and consensual relations have this much difficulty determining what exactly it is. Because of this, it is really not very surprising that there are such high rates of sexual assault in many different countries around the world. Consent becomes even more complicated when considering the differences in how different sexes express and interpret consent. Men and women have often reported using different cues to communicate willingness to partake in sexual relations, and this can cause confusion (Hust). For example, in a 2014 study done by Jozkowski et al., "college men

were more likely than college women to indicate desire to have sex through nonverbal cues;

women were more likely than men to communicate their consent to sex through verbal cues"

(Hust). This can cause much confusion between two people because the woman could be waiting

for the man to express his desire verbally, while the man thinks that he is expressing his desire in

a way that the woman should understand. The man could also be waiting for the woman to

express her desire behaviorally while the woman thinks that she is displaying her desire or lack

thereof in a way the man should understand. For example, because of the rape myth that women

play hard to get but still want sex, when a woman says no to sex, the man might assume that the

woman just feels a social obligation to say no. An honest mistake in interpretation could result in

non-consensual sex.

Because of these complications, many universities across the United States are attempting

to respond to the problems of confusion with consent. There are "No means no" programs and

"yes means yes" programs being implemented (Jozkowski). The "non means no" programs

suggest that when a person says no, consent is not given. These programs only focus on when

consent isn't given in the situations where the victim says no. However these are the easiest

situations to determine that consent was not given. In an ambiguous situation, it is not as easy to

determine whether consent was given or not. These programs do not take into account coercion

which can force someone to participate in a sexual act even though they don't want to do it. In

these situations the victim might not actually verbalize their no for several reasons. They might

be afraid of the repercussions to saying no. They might be in a state of shock where they are

unable to speak. They might just think it is easier to be quiet than to say no. They might think the

perpetrator won't listen to them. They might think they had already made it clear that they were

not interested through body language. There are many reasons why a person might not feel

comfortable actually saying no and that is a problem these programs do not address. They also do not take into account pressure that can eventually wear a person down so that they say yes when they might not want to do a sexual act. In this situation, the person is giving consent verbally, but the consent is not given freely. It is coerced through the persistent pushing from another person, and because of this should not be considered to be affirmative consent. Similarly, a person who is not conscious would not be able to say no to a sexual encounter and these programs do not address this problem either. Because of all of these loopholes that can be found in the "no means no" programs, there are new programs that are being established to hold universities and people to a higher standard when considering whether consent was given or not.

These programs are called the "yes means yes" programs. They suggest that consent is "a voluntary, affirmative, conscious agreement to engage in sexual activity, that it can be revoked at any time, that a previous relationship does not constitute consent, and that coercion or threat of force can also not be used to establish consent" ("Yes Means Yes"). These programs would hopefully reduce the amount of misunderstandings of nonverbal cues because people would have to explicitly communicate consent (Jozkowski). While these programs do suggest that affirmative consent can be given either verbally or nonverbally, they do not establish what giving consent nonverbally would look like. This still leaves some confusion regarding what affirmative consent looks like in all situations. All of these complications prove that there is much confusion about what consent is, how to express it, and what conditions are necessary to give consent.

Chapter 6

Empathy

Empathy is a concept that has recently been receiving more attention in scholarly circles, as a lack of empathy has been seen to increase aggressive behaviors, and empathetic disturbances have been seen to be present in many mental illnesses (Carré 679). There are many different definitions of empathy and various different conceptions of the different components of empathy. For this thesis and the surveys that were conducted, I consulted the psychological literature on empathy, and I used the definition of Rogers (1951). Rogers (1951) defines empathy as "the concept of the 'as if'" (Rogers 129). In this way, the "as if" refers to a persons ability to act as if they were the other person. Rogers uses this to mean that empathy is related to the ability to connect with another person, to understand what is causing another person's feelings, and to feel similar emotions (Carré 680). There is a conception of empathy based on an affective component and another conception based on a cognitive component; in this way empathy is concerned with sensitivity to distress and also sensitivity to the mental and emotional states of other people (Carré 680).

The basic empathy scale was developed by Jolliffe and Farrington (2006) to overcome the weaknesses of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Carré 680). The basic empathy scale focuses on affective empathy, which is defined as "the ability to feel an appropriate emotional response when one is confronted with the mental state attributed to another person," and cognitive empathy, which is defined as "the understanding of another person's affective state" (Carré 680). Recently however, empathy has been considered to rely on three components (Carré

680). The first is emotional contagion, which relates to the automatic replication of another person's emotions (Carré 680). The second is cognitive empathy, which relates to the ability to understand another person's affects (Carré 680). The third component is emotional disconnection, which is defined as a regulatory factor that involves self-protection (Carré 681). Emotional disconnection is an important added feature, because it relates to control and regulation of emotions. It is considered a response to protect individuals from excessive emotional reactions (Carré 686). A study done by Carré et al in 2013 found gender differences in empathy. Women were found to score significantly higher on emotional contagion, and significantly lower on the emotional disconnection factor (Carré 685). As for the cognitive empathy factor, "the mean score achieved by the women was marginally higher than that of the men" (Carré 685).

Research has also been done to examine the relationship between empathy and sexual assault. Specifically, some researchers have hypothesized that men who commit sexual assault or sexual violence are deficient in empathy, which is why they can become aroused even as they are hurting another person (Marshall). Because of these hypotheses, many studies have examined sex offenders and their empathy levels in order to determine whether there is a correlation between low empathy levels and sex offending. In McGrath (1998), child sex offender groups were compared to controls and nonsexual offenders (McGrath). The study concluded that the sexual offenders showed less empathy to victims of sexual abuse than the controls or nonsexual offenders (McGrath 33). Similarly, Rice (1994) conducted a study on convicted rapists and non-rapists to examine sexual arousal in regards to rape situations. The men would hear situations where there was consensual sex, nonsexual interactions, nonsexual violence and nonconsensual rape (some where the women enjoyed it and others when the women didn't) and their penile

reactions were measured (Rice 445). In this study, "indexes of relative sexual arousal to rape and to nonsexual violence were significantly negatively related to measures of empathy" (Rice 445).

There is also other research that suggests that rapists have low levels of empathy, and these low levels allow the person to disinhibit sexual arousal, which can contribute to offending (Varker 254). The reasons why the offender has low empathy regarding victims are still unknown and could be related to the offender being unable to understand the experience of the victim or because they don't care about the victim at all (Varker 254). Referring back to the Rice study, one of the possible explanations for this phenomenon was that while hearing the stories of rape, the non-rapists empathized with the victim and were not able to be aroused because of that empathy (Rice 445). However, the results of this study should be taken with a grain of salt because the group of rapists that were used as participants were convicted because of particularly violent rapes and might not be representative of all rapists (Rice 446). That is something to consider with all studies that are done on sex offenders or rapists that have been convicted.

As shown in most research that has been conducted on empathy, empathy is "positively related to prosocial behavior and an inhibitor of aggression and antisocial behavior" (Rice 436). This suggests that rapists would not experience high levels of empathy because of the aggression that is involved in sexual assault and rape. There are, of course, different levels of aggression used in different acts of sexual violence. However, there still has to be a level of aggression that causes harm to the victim, and in order for that to happen the perpetrator has to be ok with causing that harm to the other person. This would be harder to do if a person had more empathy than it would be if a person had less empathy. However, in some studies, measures of general empathy have not been able to differentiate non-offenders from incarcerated sex offenders (Wheeler). This suggests that the non-offenders and the incarcerated sex offenders did not have

different measures of general empathy, and the sex offenders didn't have lower levels of empathy. These studies were unable to distinguish non-offenders from incarcerated sex offenders, non-offenders from adult child-molesters, and violent sex offenders from less violent sex offenders with regard to general empathy (Wheeler). Of course, one of the possible reasons that this could occur is because of the generalized form of empathy that was examined. If there was a more specific form or component of empathy, there might be a correlation to be found in these instances.

Because of the discrepancies that are found when trying to find a correlation between empathy and sexual assault, it looks as though the role of empathy is much more complex than originally thought (Wheeler). Just because a person has less empathy than another does not necessarily mean that the person is more likely to commit a sexual assault or that the person will commit a sexual assault. There are many different factors that need to be in play in order for sexual violence to occur—of which empathy is only one—and it is a combination of the factors that lead to the perpetration. For example, hypermasculinity, a lack of empathy, and a lack of understanding of consent all found in the same individual might result in an increased likelihood that such a person will commit a sexual assault. The lack of empathy itself is perhaps not the reason that the assault happened, but it contributes to the likelihood. In this way, a lack of empathy likely is a contributing factor to sexual violence.

One of the ways that empathy could be seen as much more complex is through the conceptualizations of general empathy, victim empathy, and victim-specific empathy. The difference between victim empathy and victim-specific empathy is that victim empathy is empathy related to any class of victims, while victim-specific empathy is empathy specific to a perpetrator's victim. General empathy has an affective and cognitive component of empathy, as

seen in the definition explained earlier in this thesis (Varker 253). When a person lacks victim empathy, this means that there are empathy deficits for classes of potential victims (Varker 254). This could be explained as a person who lacks empathy towards all women or all children (Varker 254). Victim-specific empathy is defined as empathy for the offenders' own specific victim, and whether or not an offender has victim-specific empathy deficits has also been examined (Varker 254). This means that victim-specific empathy is the empathy that the perpetrator has for the person that they assault, or a person has for any specific victim of a crime. Common sense argues that a perpetrator would be assumed to have low empathy for their victim if they were able to commit a crime against them. However, this also relates to people that would see the victims of specific crimes and either have empathy for them or not. So in the case of sexual violence, people might have low empathy for the victims of sexual violence if they believe rape myths and blame the victim.

Research is still being developed on these different forms of empathy. There are also the complications of age, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and other forms of identity with regards to empathy. Regarding age specifically, because the brains of adolescents are still developing, it has been shown that empathy is supposed to increase with age (Varker). However, it has been hypothesized that some traumatic experiences, such as child abuse, can halt the development of empathy in sex offenders (Varker). It is possible that all of these complications affect whether people have empathy for others. For example, a person who is racist might not have empathy for a black male regardless of the situation. In this way, empathy can be complicated through the many identities that comprise a person.

Chapter 7

Study Results

As seen in these past few chapters, there are many complications to the issue of sexual violence. Intimacy, empathy, consent, and culture are just a few of the complicating factors. This thesis is examining how these factors interact. Just from looking at the past few chapters, some assumptions can be made about the connections between these factors. A person who lacks empathy would probably be unable to perceive consent as well as a person who is empathetic. They would not be as good at determining what the other person is feeling, so they might not be able to determine whether consent is being given. A person that is less empathetic would also probably presume that consent is given more often in ambiguous situations because they wouldn't be able to read the signs that consent is not being given. The relationship between intimacy and empathy also is complicated. Common sense suggests that the more intimacy that is present in a relationship, the more empathy that should be present as well. This makes sense because when you are in some kind of intimate relationship, you might be more likely to care about the other person. However, this doesn't always seem to be the case because of the rates of domestic violence and intimate partner violence.

Culture and empathy also interact. In cultures that have machismo or hypermasculinity, there should be less empathy. This is true because machismo puts more value on "masculine" traits such as aggressiveness and devalues "feminine" traits like empathy. Therefore, because in these cultures there should be less empathy, people should also presumably assume that consent is given more often than it actually is. Similarly, in these cultures there would probably be less

intimacy in relationships because this intimacy is seen as an undesirable "feminine" trait. So, in cultures that have machismo it can be assumed that sexual violence would be more prevalent than in cultures that do not have machismo because of the lack of empathy, the increased perceptions that consent is given, and the lack of intimacy in relationships.

While we have these preliminary connections, we have not examined data yet that could help us to see whether these statements are possibly true or not. We also have not examined how ethics relates to all of these factors. Most philosophers seem to prefer to look at qualitative data in order to examine why certain phenomena are occurring. Most psychologists prefer to focus on quantitative data to reach conclusions about how and why things occur. I think there is value in quantitative data that can be examined through a philosophical point of view. I believe it is important to look at the facts about what is happening, and then to try to reach conclusions about why things happen. Because of these reasons, I chose to conduct surveys in such a way that I would be able to retrieve quantitative data and analyze them from a somewhat psychological stance, and then continue to analyze them through a more philosophical lens.

In order to examine empathy, intimacy, consent, culture, and ethics I decided to conduct surveys that mainly examined empathy and consent. I was able to examine culture because I conducted surveys in both Nicaragua and the U.S. Intimacy had a much more subtle role in the surveys because there were not overt questions about intimacy. However, intimacy is very much involved in sexual relations, and because of this it is also connected to sexual consent. For this reason, although I do not overtly examine intimacy, intimacy still plays a role in the results. I chose to incorporate ethics in this survey in the analysis of the results, so as to examine how an ethic approaches the intersections of all these factors.

I wanted the surveys to be short surveys that would take participants about 10-15 minutes to complete. Originally, I only meant to conduct the surveys in Nicaragua, and I set a goal of 300 participants. The participants were approached and were told that the surveys were to help complete a thesis regarding empathy. When I introduced the survey to prospective participants, I introduced it as a survey on empathy and I did not mention that the survey would also be examining sexual consent so as to not influence the way the participants responded to the surveys. I asked the participants if they were over the age of 18. If they replied that they were, I asked if they wanted to participate in the survey and told them that they would receive a granola bar or fruit snacks in return. I informed them that they could answer whichever questions they wanted, and if at any point they wanted to stop, they could. They were also told that they could stop completing the survey without forfeiting their compensation.

The surveys were set up so that a basic empathy scale of 20 points was first[1]. The empathy scale evaluated emotional disconnection, emotional contagion, and cognitive empathy. In this scale 1 meant that they strongly agreed with the statement, while 5 meant that they strongly disagreed with the statement. They could give any response between 1 and 5 depending on how strongly they disagreed or agreed with the statement. After this scale, 20 consent vignettes were presented, and the participants had a scale on which to determine whether they strongly agreed that consent was given, strongly disagreed that consent was given, or a range of answers in between. These consent vignettes represented a man and a woman who were in certain situations. No information about the relationship between the man and woman was given. The man would proposition some kind of sexual activity to the woman and the woman would respond with a clear yes, clear no, or an ambiguous response. The responses could be verbally

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[1] I have included a copy of the survey in English at the end of this thesis.

expressed, expressed through body language, or there could be no response. The participants had to respond to the various scenarios based on a scale based from 0-5. 0 meant that they strongly disagreed that consent was given, while 5 meant that they strongly agreed that consent was given. In this case, participants had to answer whether they thought that consent was given or not in some way. There was not a completely neutral answer in which they could answer that they were not sure if consent was given.

Once the participants finished completing the survey, I thanked them and offered them the granola bar or fruit snack. I was able to receive permission from la Universidad Centroamericana de Nicaragua to ask people on their campus to participate in the study. The surveys were completely in Spanish and were explained in Spanish. There were mostly younger adults on the campus, but there were also some older adults that were able to complete the survey. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 72, with the vast majority of participants in the 18-24 range. Participants didn't reveal any information that would compromise their anonymity. They wrote their age, the number of years they lived in Nicaragua, and their gender at the top of the paper. 311 participants were recruited in Nicaragua. 169 of these participants were female, and 142 of these participants were male.

After conducting these surveys in Nicaragua, I decided to also conduct the surveys in the United States so I could look at possible cultural differences in empathy and perceptions of consent. I conducted surveys at the Pennsylvania State University, in the HUB Robeson Center. The contents of the survey for the United States were the same as the surveys in Nicaragua, except that for the consent vignettes some of the details were changed in order to be culturally relevant. For example, I changed the names of the people in the surveys so that they would be names that were common in the United States instead of names that are common in Nicaragua.

However, none of the important details were changed. These surveys were conducted in English, and the instructions were explained in English. There were 141 participants. 84 participants were female, and 56 participants were male. 1 participant identified as transgender. When analyzing the data, the participant that identified as transgender was not included in the analysis because there were no hypotheses that were related to transgender people. The participants varied in age from 18 to 63, with the vast majority in the 18 to 24 range.

Before conducting the surveys, I created several hypotheses based on the research I had done on the literature surrounding empathy, consent, and culture. I will explain how the data presented earlier in this thesis led to the hypotheses that I created at this point. As discussed in Chapter 6, studies have found empathy has been found to be more prevalent in women than in men. There is also the conception that because empathy is associated with femininity, males who are trying to distance themselves from femininity might also distance themselves from empathy (Gold 165). In fact, it has been found that more macho men are likely to inhibit empathy and caring (Gold 166). The macho identity has been shown to be a correlate of sexually aggressive behavior as well (Gold 166). While there has not been research done specifically on Nicaraguans and whether they have less empathy, Nicaragua has been shown to be a country where machismo is prevalent and marianismo is a supporting factor. Because of this connection, it is possible that Nicaraguans would be less empathetic than a country where hypermasculinity is not widely accepted.

In chapter 6, the connection between empathy and sexual violence was also examined. Although consent was not directly examined, if lower scores of empathy result in more sexual violence, it follows that lower scores of empathy would also result in higher perceptions that consent was given. I believe this is so because if a person has low empathy, they are presumably

less able to understand another person's feelings. They would be less likely to feel the same feelings the victim is feeling, and more able to separate themselves from the situation. In this way, they would probably not realize that the victim is feeling uncomfortable in the situation. Furthermore, they might be more likely to assume that consent is given because they don't have as good of an ability to understand another person's feelings of comfortableness. It is likely that this would be possible for overall consent scores, but also for situations that are ambiguous or in which a person issued a clear "no."

Rape myths might influence a person's perceptions of consent in many ways. For example, a rape myth that is common is that a woman might feel compelled to say no to sex because they fear being seen as promiscuous. However, in this situation, the woman wants to engage in the sexual activity. This might influence a person's response in a clear no situation. If a person believes this rape myth, they might see a situation in which there is a clear no and yet believe that there is still the possibility that the woman might be giving consent for the sexual activity. Similarly, because of the higher levels of aggression that occur with hypermasculinity and machismo, it is possible that a no from a woman might result in a person thinking they have to put more effort into convincing the woman, but that it is not necessarily a sure no. Because of these reasons, I was able to create my first hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Participants from Nicaragua will have lower overall scores of empathy than participants from the United States will.

Hypothesis 2. As scores of overall empathy go down, perception of overall consent given will rise.

Hypothesis 3. Participants from Nicaragua will have higher perceptions of consent scores than will participants from the United States.

Hypothesis 4. Participants from Nicaragua will have higher perceptions of consent scores

than will participants from the United States when consent responses are ambiguous.

Hypothesis 5. Participants from Nicaragua will have higher perceptions of consent scores

than will participants from the United States when consent responses are clear no.

Relating to the idea of hypermasculinity being connected to lower levels of empathy and

the idea of a macho man being more aggressive and less empathetic, there also might be a

connection between empathy and sexual violence. Empathy is typically seen as a "feminine"

quality, and it is not considered manly to be empathetic. As stated before, lower empathy has

been shown to be related to higher rates of perpetration, and thus it can be assumed that lower

empathy would be related to higher perceptions that consent was given. This might be true for

general consent scores, but also for ambiguous situations, and also for situations of a clear no.

My next hypotheses were created based on these relations:

Hypothesis 6. Male participants in both Nicaragua and the US will have higher perceptions of

consent scores than will female participants.

Hypothesis 7. Male participants will have higher perceptions of consent scores in ambiguous

situations than will female participants.

Hypothesis 8. Male participants will have higher perceptions of consent scores in clear no

situations than will female participants.

Hypothesis 9. Male participants will have lower overall scores of empathy than female

participants will.

These were the official hypotheses that I created for this study. The data was analyzed in

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), which is a software package that is used to

conduct statistical analyses on data. Findings were said to be significant if the p value was less

than .05. I will not be reporting the specific results that were found because this is not a

psychological thesis, and I am more interested in simply whether or not there are significant

results. The hypotheses are all listed again on the next page.

Results

Hypothesis	Supported or Not Supported?
Hypothesis 1. Participants from Nicaragua will have lower overall scores of empathy than participants from the United States will.	Supported
Hypothesis 2. As overall empathy goes down, perception of overall consent will rise	Supported
Hypothesis 3. Participants from Nicaragua will have higher perceptions of consent scores than will participants from the United States.	Supported
Hypothesis 4. Participants from Nicaragua will have higher perceptions of consent scores than will participants from the United States when consent responses are ambiguous.	Supported
Hypothesis 5. Participants from Nicaragua will have higher perceptions of consent scores than will participants from the United States when consent responses are clear no.	Supported
Hypothesis 6. Male participants will have higher perceptions of consent scores than will female participants.	Not Supported
Hypothesis 7. Male participants will have higher perceptions of consent scores in ambiguous situations than will female participants	Not Supported
Hypothesis 8. Male participants will have higher perceptions of consent scores in clear no situations than will female participants	Not Supported
Hypothesis 9. Male participants will have lower overall scores of empathy than female participants will.	Supported

While I did not make official hypotheses on how the different components of empathy interacted with the different situations of consent, I was interested to see whether there were connections between them, and because of this I did some exploratory analysis. I found there was a significant but very weak negative relationship between emotional contagion and overall consent. This means that as emotional contagion rises, perception of consent falls. This was also true when consent response is ambiguous and when there is a clear no situation, but the relationship is not very strong. There was a significant weak negative relationship between cognitive empathy and overall consent. This means that as cognitive empathy rises, perception of consent falls. This was also true when consent response is ambiguous and when there is a clear no situation, but the relationship is not very strong. There was a weak negative relationship of emotional disconnect with overall consent, ambiguous consent, and consent in a clear no situation. This means that the more emotionally connected a person is, the less likely they are to perceive consent. The last relationship I examined was that of average overall empathy with overall consent, ambiguous consent and consent in a situation where there is a clear no response, and found that there was a weak negative relationship. This means that the more empathic a person is, the less likely they are to perceive consent.

There were some limitations to the study that are important to keep in mind when looking at the results of this study. First of all, size of the study is a major limiting factor. There were only 452 participants total in this study, so the sample size is something to keep in mind. This study is also cross-sectional. In Nicaragua, the participants were all collected at one university setting, and this is similar to the study I conducted in the United States. This can impact the data because the participants are more likely to be well-educated than the overall population of the countries. The location can also have an impact. Managua is a city that has over 2.5 million

people in the metropolitan area ("Nicaragua Population"), and participants from a city might have very different opinions on issues than participants from the rural areas of the country. Similarly, State College is a college town, and is very liberal compared to the rest of Pennsylvania. This could impact the way that the United States sample responded to the consent vignettes.

All in all, the purpose of this study is mostly to shed light on the possibility of connections between empathy and perceptions of consent and to comment on the ethical implications of these connections. It would be helpful for similar studies with larger sample sizes to be conducted in many different locations in the United States and in Nicaragua, or even in Central America. A longitudinal study might also be helpful to determine how participants are developing their perceptions of consent and developing empathy. It might also be interesting to compare the different ages of participants and examine whether there is a possible connection between age and empathy, and age and perceptions of consent. It could also be interesting to add more detail to the consent vignettes and examine why the participants answered in the ways they did. Similarly, another interesting aspect could be to flip the scenarios and have the women proposition the men. This might change the perceptions of consent. There is more research to be done in these areas and more complicated studies might offer more interesting and meaningful results.

Chapter 8

Discussion and Primary Conclusions

The results from the current study provide several important findings. The data obtained through this study suggests that there is a relationship between lower empathy and perceptions of consent depending on the cultural context. Some of the data supported this in the sense that Nicaraguans were shown to have lower overall scores of empathy than Americans, and Nicaraguans were shown to have higher perceptions of consent scores in ambiguous situations and also in situations where the consent responses are clear no. However, some of the data did not support the conclusion that lower empathy and perceptions of consent have a connection. Male participants were shown to have lower overall scores of empathy than female participants, but male participants were not shown to have higher perceptions of consent scores than female participants in any of the situations. This suggests that culture might have a big impact on perceptions of consent. However, I don't think that this discredits the idea that lower empathy suggests higher perceptions of consent. I think this because of the cultural aspects that could cause this lack of empathy and these higher perceptions of consent. Mainly, I believe that cultures that create a lack of empathy in their citizens will be more likely to have citizens that perceive consent in ambiguous situations.

It is possible that machismo and marianismo had an impact in this sample, because the Nicaraguans had lower empathy than participants from the United States. If machismo and marianismo caused participants to have lower empathy scores, that could be the reason why the participants had higher perceptions that consent was given. However, because both of these are

working together in the males and the females of the groups, it is not that surprising that there was not much of a difference between the perceptions of consent in the males and the females in Nicaragua. It would be interesting to examine women who did not follow the traditional gender roles and did not support machismo through marianismo, and see whether their perceptions of consent and their scores of empathy would be different from the males and from the females who do support machismo through marianismo. Of course, this data does not say that machismo and marianismo were the causes of these low empathy scores and high perceptions of consent, but the fact that the cultural aspects seem to affect these scores suggests that machismo and marianismo could be participating factors.

The data also suggests that there might not be a connection between perceptions of consent and gender. Hypothesis 6 was not supported, and men were not found to have higher perceptions of consent than women had. This could be because of response bias on the part of the different genders. It could also be a function of the culture as shown before. The responses of the Nicaraguan female participants assumed consent was given more often than the American female participants, and the Nicaraguan male participants assumed consent was given more often than the American male participants. However, when the overall groups of females were compared to the overall groups of males, the differences averaged out. However, as the data stand, there did not seem to be a connection between perceptions of consent and gender. There was, however, a connection between gender and empathy, as seen in Hypothesis 9. This could be related to the socialization of the different genders. With the machismo and the hypermasculinity that could be prevalent in either society, there is a rejection of the feminine quality of empathy, and this could have had an influence on the difference in empathy levels for the different genders.

All of the exploratory analyses that I did seemed to confirm the relationships common sense would predict. Emotional contagion was defined earlier as the automatic replication of another person's emotions. The study found that as emotional contagion rises, perception of consent falls. If a person is able to replicate the feelings of another person well, they would probably not want another person to feel awkward or uncomfortable in a situation where they are being propositioned because then they would also feel the awkwardness. For this reason, they might be able to understand when a clear no is given. They might also assume that consent isn't given in most ambiguous situations because they would be able to relate to the person and feel the same uncomfortableness the person is feeling. Cognitive empathy also was found to relate to perceptions of consent. As a person has more cognitive empathy, their perception of consent given lowers, meaning that they would perceive consent happens less frequently in scenarios. This also makes sense because cognitive empathy was defined as the ability to understand another person's affects. If a person can understand another person's affects, the same argument as for emotional contagion comes into play. In this case however, the person might not be feeling the same emotions as the victim. However, they are able to see that the person is feeling a certain way, and maybe even understand why the person is feeling that way. In this way, if a person is able to understand how another person is feeling, they would be able to read situations better than someone who is unable to understand how another person is feeling.

The relationship of emotional disconnect with perceptions of consent was also understandable because of the definition of emotional disconnect. Emotional disconnect was defined as a factor that involves self-protection so that a person does not feel too many emotions. In this way, a person is able to suppress their emotions, and would thus be able to suppress empathic responses as well. If a person is emotionally disconnected, they might be able to stop

themselves from feeling the emotions of another person. Because they stop themselves from feeling the emotions of other people, they would not be able to relate to the other person's feelings. They would probably not have as good of an understanding of the emotions of a person in a situation that they have never been in before, because they have never experienced those emotions before, and are not letting themselves feel the emotions of the other person. It might also be difficult for them to understand the emotions of a person in a situation they have been in before, because they do not allow themselves to be transported to that place again and feel those emotions again.

In this study, the more emotionally connected a person is, the less likely they are to perceive consent was given. This makes sense because if a person is emotionally connected, they can perhaps be overwhelmed with the emotions of the other person, and they can feel the emotions of the other person. It would make sense that it might be harder for a person who is emotionally connected to say that consent was given if they are not sure. When a person is more empathic they are more likely to understand the situation, and be able to discern the emotional undercurrents in the situation. They are more likely to be able to feel the same emotions as the people in the situations. For this reason, if they are unsure if a person gave consent, they are probably unwilling to say that the person gave consent. This would happen because they realize the emotional repercussions of misunderstanding consent, and assuming consent when none was given. This situation would be one of sexual violence and the victim would be hurt because of that violence. An empathic person can understand that their decisions and understandings of the situations could cause the person pain, and so they would be less likely to make a decision that could cause pain.

I would like to examine a few more theories of why sexual violence occurs before considering sexual violence from an ethical perspective. I believe this is important in order to understand a little more about how morality might factor into actions of sexual violence. We have already examined some in chapter 2, such as the idea of socialization causing sexual violence.

The first theory I am going to examine is the evolutionary theory. This theory suggests that in the human species, females get to choose their mates to a larger extent then males do, and so males have to compete to get chosen (Johansson 190). For the males that are able to attract females there is no problem with this structure. They compete against the other males and the females choose them to mate with. However, when there is a socially unsuccessful male, they are not able to get sex through the normal means of competition (Johansson 191). Because of this, they are more likely to use rape in order to maximize their potential of continuing their genetic line (Johansson 191). Rape is not viewed as a strategy that is only available to a small subset of the male population, but is viewed as an ability that all males have, and an ability that is activated when the benefits outweigh the costs (Johansson 191). According to this theory, if a society does not have strict punishments for rapists, men would be more likely to rape because the benefits seem to outweigh the costs. This theory also argues that males desire more sexual variety than females do, are less able to interpret desire in potential partners, and tend to use force to attain a reward (Johansson 191). Sexual coercion is found to be influenced by genes, in that there is likely a general heritable tendency for antisocial behavior that can be seen in these males (Johansson 199). For this reason, socialization cannot be the only aspect that causes sexual violence (Johansson 199). In summary, this theory suggests that rape happens because males desire to continue their genetic lines, and there are some males that are unable to receive

consensual sex, so they use rape to complete this goal. I don't think this theory accounts for all the other forms of sexual violence that are not rape if the end goal is to reproduce. A sexual assault has no impact on reproduction and sexual harassment generally doesn't either. Similarly, this theory would not be able to explain why a rapist would use a condom. However, it is thought that genetics and the desire to reproduce could be factors that cause sexual violence.

There are also thoughts that sexual violence could occur because of societal norms, and the expectation of sex that males might have. Studies have found that a common motivation that men report for rape perpetration is related to sexual entitlement and the idea that men have the right to sex, regardless of whether it is consensual or not (Fulu, Warner, et. al). However, while there are some men that use violence against women, many men do not (Fulu, Warner, et. al). There are some men that are frustrated with the general consensus on what it means to be a man, and the ideas of hypermasculinity and machismo could be frustrating because of the way they portray men should act (Fulu, Warner, et. al). This creates the impression that it is not innate to male's nature to believe that they are entitled to sex. In fact, it appears that socialization might have a large role to play in the creation of men who believe they have the right to access women's bodies.

The idea that societal norms play a big part in perpetration of violence against women is also apparent because of how the acceptability of violence against women depends on cultural context; only 5% of men in an urban site in Indonesia believed that there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten, while 62% of men in a rural site of Bangladesh believe it (Fulu, Warner, et. al). This could be due to differing levels of education, cultural contexts, or other factors, but it seems that this is something that might be taught to men based on the views of others around them. Of course, this was physical violence and not sexual violence. However, I

believe that the concept of culture affecting social acceptability of violence can be extended to sexual violence as well. In this study, the women who were surveyed tended to be more conservative and gender inequitable than their male counterparts (Fulu, Warner, et. al). The women in these countries were actually reinforcing gender norms, and this might have contributed to men's use of violence (Fulu, Warner, et. al). All in all, this theory suggests that socialization and education of children can contribute significantly to sexual violence. When boys are taught that they are entitled to sex, regardless of whether there is consent or not, they will take that entitlement with them when they are adults. They will assume they are entitled to sex because that is all they know, and this might cause them to commit sexual violence if women are not receptive to their approaches.

Feminist theorists have also developed theories of rape. Rape is the "ultimate expression of a patriarchal order," and yet there are differing opinions on whether the wrong is based in the violence used or in the sexual act (Cahill 2). In the second wave of U.S. feminism, there was a conceptualization of rape that focused on rape as a violent act (Cahill 16). Susan Brownmiller attempted to counter the perception of rape as a sexual act, and instead focused on the political motivations for rape (Cahill 16). Brownmiller believed that rape was a tool used by all men to keep all women in a state of constant fear (Cahill 16). This would require females to be protected by men and prevented women from being autonomous beings (Cahill 17). Brownmiller also argues that rape can be seen as a method of power, especially as rape has been used as a form of destroying other men's property (Cahill 17). Rape is primarily political, in order for men to continue to dominate women (Cahill 18). In this conceptualization of rape, the act of rape is not individualistic; the dominant class commits this violence against the women in order to keep their power as a class (Cahill 19). Because this theory of rape separated sexuality from rape, it

takes away the possibility that rape happens because of the attractiveness of the victim, and thus takes away any possible blame that might be attributed to the victim (Cahill 20).

Most of the conceptions of rape in the second wave of U.S. feminism were based on liberal feminism. Radical feminists also had theories regarding rape, and one of the most prominent of these theories was Catherine MacKinnon's. For MacKinnon, the heart of the issue with rape is that we have a construction of heterosexuality where the use of force is prevalent (Cahill 37). Because violence and force is in some ways used in consensual sex, the question becomes whether there is a difference between rape and "normal" heterosexual sex (Cahill 37). The violence in rape is indistinguishable from the violence used in imposing compulsory heterosexuality (Cahill 38). MacKinnon considers heterosexuality to be compulsory because in our society heterosexuality is valued more than other sexual identities (Cahill 38). Social pressures that encourage women to be heterosexual and reward women who are heterosexual cause restrictions that make it so that there isn't really a "true choice" for heterosexuality (Cahill 38). Heterosexuality in itself consists of male dominance and female submission (Cahill 39). MacKinnon argues that "rape varies from normal heterosexual intercourse only in quantity (its violence is more palpable, its level of coercion is more blatant and explicit), not in its quality" (Cahill 40).

Cahill argues that both of these perspectives do not encompass the problem of rape because they are too focused on either violence or sexuality, and don't examine how the two interact. Brownmiller is so focused on the violent aspect of rape, that she does not examine how sexuality is a factor (Cahill). Brownmiller essentially argues that rape is an assault just like any other physical assault (Cahill). However, it looks as though there is a difference between a rape and a beating, and this is why it is important to examine how sexuality functions in rape. On the

other hand, MacKinnon claims that all heterosexuality is incapable of being consensual (Cahill 43). However, people that are raped often find that experience to be different than their consensual heterosexual encounters before the rape (Cahill 43). MacKinnon also renders it impossible for a woman to have agency in a heterosexual relationship, which is not the case (Cahill 43). It might be possible to reconstruct heterosexuality in such a way that most of the coercive elements are not involved any more (Cahill 43).

While these theories could be supported or not supported with the data collected from my surveys, they still seem inadequate to determine how a person can ethically justify their decision to commit sexual violence. In fact, most of them don't really touch on ethics overtly. Perhaps this relates back to whether the society has ethics that allow for sexual violence to happen. If society determines that sexual violence is not acceptable and actually backs up this claim with actions, there might be a change in the prevalence of sexual violence. For this reason, I will be examining *The Ethics of Care and Empathy*, by Michael Slote, to decide whether Care Ethics might be an acceptable ethic that rejects the possibility of sexual violence. I believe that because sexual violence is such an intimate action, it is important to examine how intimacy affects how and why the violence is perpetrated. I don't believe that any of these theories have adequately examined how intimacy and relationships really affect sexual violence. I hope that through an exploration of care ethics and sexual violence, we will be able to examine how intimacy, relationships, and empathy all affect sexual violence.

Chapter 9

Philosophical Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter, I will be conducting a discussion about sexual violence and the study that I conducted. First I will provide a brief overview of care ethics, and Michael Slote's views on care ethics and empathy. Then, I will discuss what this ethical framework has to say about sexual violence and different specific situations of sexual violence. I will also examine what Michael Slote suggests we do as a society. I will conclude by providing my own suggestions on what I believe our societies need to do in order to combat sexual violence.

Care ethics has historically been thought of as a feminine ethics. Nel Noddings was one of the first people to try to describe an ethics of care and she thought care ethics are distinctively feminine, but that men are also capable of thinking in terms of an ethics of care (Slote 10). According to Noddings, care ethics requires a person to act caringly, so that an action is morally permissible if it exhibits caring (Slote 10). Care has many different definitions, but one of the most popular definitions of care, offered by Tronto and Bernice Fischer, defines care as "a species of activity that includes everything we do to maintain, contain, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment ("Care Ethics"). Genuine acts of caring require an emotional sensitivity to other people, which for Noddings means that a person can have an attitude of caring towards people they know, but they can't have an attitude of caring towards people they don't know (Slote 11).

Many care ethicists disagree with Noddings on this point. For example, Michael Slote argues that a person is able to have an attitude of caring towards people they don't know; it will just be less caring than it would be for people they do know (Slote 11). Personal caring is the type of care that we have for people that we know. Humanitarian caring is when we care for people that we don't know. A person is normally willing to do more for people they know, and so the strength of personal caring is stronger than humanitarian caring (Slote 11).

Slote argues that empathy plays a determinative role in an ethics of caring (Slote 12). In fact he believes that care is "best understood as virtuous motive or communicative skills," and he "equates care with a kind of motivational attitude of empathy" ("Care Ethics"). In this way, caring is the natural action that follow an empathic response. Slote argues that empathy plays a role in an ethics of caring because he believes that "empathy is a crucial source and sustainer of altruistic concern or caring about (the wellbeing of) others" (Slote 15). The difference in strength of empathy will determine the actions a person takes in the context of an ethics of caring (Slote 15). One of the complications of an ethics of care that relies on empathy is that an action can show an empathically caring attitude toward one person, while also showing a lack of empathic caring towards another (Slote 21).

For example, lets say I had a commitment to my parents to go to dinner with them and spend time with them today. I haven't seen them in three weeks, and know that they are really looking forward to spending time together. However, right when I am about to leave to go to their house, my friend texts me that she just broke up with her boyfriend and wants some company. In this situation empathy works in two different ways. It would be empathetic for me to go spend time with my friend and comfort her. However, it would also be empathetic for me to spend time with my family because I know how disappointed they would be if I didn't make

it. In this case, either action might show empathic caring to one person, and a lack of empathic caring towards the other person. I would have to weigh the benefits of either action, and try to negotiate in such a way as to minimize the amount of harm I would cause to either person. So in this situation, a compromise would be to reschedule dinner with my parents for later in the week, and hang out with my friend today since the harm to her would probably be greater than the harm to my parents. This is just one of the complications of an ethics of care, and these complications require clarification.

Slote explores the ideas of immediacy and distance to examine how an individual chooses between empathic impulses. In a situation where a person is present and there is danger, a situation might have a vividness or immediacy that causes a person's empathy to engage (Slote 23). A situation that has immediacy causes a different empathic response than dangers that a person simply knows about (Slote 23). In this way, if a person is in danger right in front of me, it feels morally worse for me to ignore their cries for help than it does for me to refrain from helping people who are starving from a famine in Egypt (Slote 23). There also might be a difference in proximity when a negative action is taken. Slote gives the example of shootings; it seems more morally wrong for someone to shoot children and civilians when the shooter can see them than it does for someone to shoot children and civilians from an airplane where they cannot see their victims (Slote 25). It would seem that we have a greater obligation to people that we can see than we do to people we can't see or to situations we only hear about.

Slote also argues that temporal proximity or distance is also important (Slote 25). He uses an example of miners trapped in a coal mine, and suggests that we would be more morally compelled to save the miners than we would be to install safety devices at the same cost which would save many more lives in the future (Slote 25-26). Slote argues that even if we don't know

either the miners that are currently trapped or the people in the future that we could save with

the safety devices, we are more inclined to save the miners that are trapped now because of the

immediacy of the situation (Slote 26). I would argue that it is possible that this might also have

something to do with the fact that we know that the miners are going to die if we do not help

them, whereas the people in the future might not have any problems with the mines even if we

don't install the safety devices. However, Slote also adds that compassion is a key factor in this

situation, because a person who prefers to invest in the mine-safety equipment does not have

compassion for the people in the mine, and cannot really be said to be a compassionate person

(Slote 26-27). Empathy is the ability to feel for another person, while compassion takes empathy

a step further. Compassion is when a person feels for another person, and feels compelled to take

action to try to alleviate the pain or suffering of the other person. It follows that the person who

chooses to install the safety equipment is probably less empathetic than the person who chooses

to save the miners who are trapped (Slote 27).

Slote argues that there is a responsibility of parents and educators to inculcate in children

the habit of thinking about the effects of their actions on other people, and especially on people

in other countries (Slote 30). Because "a full development of the natural human capacity for

empathic concern for others" can include empathic concern for people in different temporal

spaces, and physical spaces, it is important for us to teach children how to have empathic

concern in these situations (Slote 30). Slote argues that "actions are morally wrong and contrary

to moral obligation if, and only if, they reflect or exhibit or express an absence (or lack) of fully

developed empathic concern for (or caring about) others on the part of the agent" (Slote 31). This

criterion accounts for the possibility that it might be morally wrong for us to show empathic

concern for people whom we know if it shows a lack of developed empathic concern to people

we don't know (Slote 31). While it would be complicated to teach all of these aspects of

empathy to children, Slote still argues that it is necessary for us to do so.

Slote argues that it is not too difficult for us to act in ways that are empathetic and align

with an ethic of care (Slote 31). He argues that we are capable of doing so even if we are

incapable of the empathy, because we are still able to do the actions that a person with fully

developed empathic concern would do (Slote 31). While we are not compelled to take the action

because of our empathy, we are still able to make the same choices that an empathetic person

would make. In this way, a person who is unable to care about others doesn't necessarily always

take actions that are morally wrong (Slote 32). Rather, an act is wrong if a person performs an

act that exhibits their uncaringness or lack of fully developed empathic concern (Slote 32). In

this way, a person who does not necessarily have the fully developed empathic concern is still

able to act in the same way that a person with the fully developed empathic concern; they don't

have to care, but they are not allowed to act in ways that reflect their lack of caring (Slote 33).

While this person is able to act the same way as a person with a fully developed empathic

concern, it is probably not likely that they will do so because they do not feel empathy in the

situation. However, this gives us hope that teaching people empathy might have a big impact on

people's actions. Even if people are not naturally empathic, they would be able to act in ways

that follow this ethics of care, and we could teach them to recognize the actions they should take

in situations. Slote does not comment on how strong the obligations are and how different the

obligations are for people in the present with us, and also for people we know, because as

individuals, as societies, and as a species we have not developed our empathic capacities for

concern as much as we can (Slote 33). Because our empathic capacities are not fully developed,

Slote believes that a fully developed empathic concern would cause us to act differently than

we do now, by making greater personal sacrifices than we do now (Slote 33).

Slote also examines the area of respect with regards to empathy. He argues that a person

"shows respect for someone if, and only if, one exhibits appropriate *empathic* concern for them"

(Slote 57). This can still result in a situation where a person, x, makes a decision regarding

another person, y, that y does not believe is the best choice and causes y pain, and yet x can still

be demonstrating respect for y. This would happen in the case of a parent and a child. A child

might not want to go to the doctor's to get shots, and the shots might cause them pain. However,

if this parent empathizes with the pain that the child is going to experience, and yet still realizes

that the shots are good for the child, they can still choose to take the child to the doctor and still

be respecting their child (Slote 57). Slote argues that what most characterizes acts of intolerance

toward others is a failure to empathize with the point of view of others, which fuels a lack of

respect for the other person (Slote 59). In Slote's description, respect must be present in an ethics

of caring because empathy is inherent in both aspects.

So how does sexual violence, consent, and the study that I conducted factor into an ethics

of care that focuses on empathy? First of all, Slote would probably argue that the reason there

was such variety in empathy levels is because we are not educating people about empathy and

inculcating them when they are young. Because of this, they are not able to reach their full

capacities of empathy. In this way, it is necessary for us as a members of humanity to teach our

children empathy. The fact that there was less empathy in a country where machismo is prevalent

suggests that there might need to be an overhaul of societal views on gender. If we start teaching

the new generation how to be empathetic, and teach them that being empathetic is a good thing,

we might see a change in the overall empathy of Nicaraguans. Slote argued that this inculcation

needed to happen mostly to teach children to be empathetic to people they do not know. It is likely more natural for people to have empathy for people that they know. Because of this, it is important to focus on teaching children how to be empathetic to people that they don't know, because it is harder for them to do so. Children should be taught to be empathetic even when they cannot see the other person, or do not know the other person. This would help them to be empathetic in all situations, and I believe that an increase in empathy will result in a decrease of acts of sexual violence.

Empathy seems to vary based on several aspects. My study showed that the culture that you live in might influence how much empathy you have. The literature we examined earlier in chapter 6 suggested that there might be a difference between the empathy levels of the different genders. Culture and gender might influence each other in the aspect of empathy. For example, if society believes that empathy is a feminine trait, we might be focusing on persistently teaching females about empathy more than focusing on males. However this raises the question of whether it actually is natural for women to be more empathic, or whether we teach women to be empathic. Did the views that women are more empathetic come first, and then girls were taught to be empathetic? Or were women more empathetic and this caused people to have the view women are more empathetic? Whatever the case, societies today, especially societies that have machismo, put a greater emphasis and value on women being empathetic because of their perceived role as mothers and nurturers, as well as supporters to husbands. Even with societies that have more progressive views on women, there still is backlash against women who are not empathetic. This difference in empathy might be part of the reason that sexual violence is happening. There are more male reported perpetrators of sexual violence than there are women.

So is the lack of empathy in males a factor in the sexual violence that is apparent in societies? And what can we do to try to combat this?

The first thing we should do is try to solve the problem of differences of empathy in genders. If we believe that empathy can be taught, which is supported by literature as there are prevention and treatment programs of sex offenders that teach them empathy, then it seems that the solution to this difference in empathy between genders is to educate both boys and girls on empathy and to educate them in the same way. This would help them to be more moral people according to Slote, and would help us as a society to more fully develop our moral capacities. In fact, it is unethical in the framework of care ethics for us to refrain from teaching children empathy. If we consider the consequences of not teaching children empathy, there are more possible actions that will be taken in the future that will lack empathy. If we don't teach people how to have empathy for others, when they are older and are in positions of power they are likely to take advantage of others. These actions will all be impermissible in the care ethics framework we have discussed. Our personal empathies should rebel from this possibility because of all the possible harm that could occur to other people. They should also rebel on account of the people who would commit the wrongs in the future. We should want people to live lives that are morally right, because they will be more fulfilled than lives that are filled with morally impermissible acts. We should consider it our moral duty to inculcate empathy in children, because it shows that we genuinely care about them and their futures.

In the case of sexual violence, Slote's thoughts imply that sexual violence is morally impermissible because it does not show empathy for the victim. As we mentioned before, Slote argues that "actions are morally wrong and contrary to moral obligation if, and only if, they reflect or exhibit or express an absence (or lack) of fully developed empathic concern for (or

caring about) others on the part of the agent" (Slote 31). Sexual violence requires a person to hurt another person or ignore the desires of another person in order to get something that they want. In fact, it seems like during an act of sexual violence it would be hard for a person to be acting with a fully developed empathic concern for the other person, and because of this, sexual violence would have to be considered morally wrong. When a person is empathetic, they are able to understand another person's emotions. An empathetic person would not be able to ignore the distressed emotions of another person, and would not be able to carry out an act that caused another person great distress for the sole benefit of themselves.

I do not believe that a perpetrator is capable of sufficient empathy for the victim if they are able to cause them harm in this way, because they have to be placing their interests above those of the victim. They consider their sexual gratification to be more important than the right the other person has to be free from harm. In this way, even if they do feel empathy for the victim, and feel a twinge of guilt before committing the act, they have to push aside those feelings in order to be able to commit the act. As was discussed earlier with the example of the parent taking their child to the doctors office, it is possible for someone to feel empathy and yet still cause someone harm because it is for their own good. It is possible for a person who is committing sexual violence in order to punish the victim to also feel as though the act of sexual violence is for their own good. However, I am not sure that I believe that the person is empathetic to the other person in this case. In this case, they are maybe considering what they believe is just. However, I believe they still have a lack of consideration for the person's feelings and how much the act is hurting them.

It is possible that someone who commits the violence to claim that they did have empathy for the other person. But I do not believe that there is any situation that justifies sexual violence,

so I don't believe there is ever a time when a person deserves to be sexually violated. I believe that someone who has a fully developed empathy would not be able to justify sexual violence in order to punish someone else. The care ethics that Slote described is one that suggests that selflessness is necessary. It is necessary in all situations, including situations of sexual violence. Most sexual violence occurs because of a sense of entitlement of the perpetrator, and this sense of entitlement requires the person to be selfish. A care ethics would require people to put aside their sense of entitlement, so as to be selfless and think about the victim. Ideally, the person wouldn't have the sense of entitlement at all, but they would have to think about the other person before their own desires because the action could be morally wrong if they do not show a fully developed capacity for empathy.

It is also interesting to note that most of the time the perpetrator knows the victim. Slote would find that this is even more morally impermissible than sexually assaulting a person you don't know, because he believes that you are more empathetic to people that you know. In this way, a person should be more empathetic towards people they know, and even more empathetic for people that they are in relationships with or who are their family. Because of this, Slote would probably find that we have more of an obligation to refrain from participating in intimate partner violence and acquaintance rape than from stranger violence. So, a person who sexually assaults a family member or a spouse or someone else who has some kind of relationship with them would have a poorly developed capacity for empathy. I believe that Slote would argue that the fact that most of the sexual violence that occurs in our society is perpetrated by people that the victim knows suggests that there is a great lack of empathy in our societies. This would make it even more urgent to teach children empathy, no matter whether the empathy is for people they know or people they don't know.

There are several situations that make sexual violence complicated. I am going to discuss three situations now with regard to our care ethical framework: 1. A situation where the perpetrator claims the violence was an accident, 2. A situation where the victim originally gives consent, but then withdraws it, and 3. A situation where the victim is in some way impaired or unable to give consent. One of the complications with sexual violence is that sometimes people say that it was an accident. They imply that they thought the other person was enjoying the actions, and did not realize that there was no consent. This is the complication that we have seen already with consent. In the study, there was confusion on clear no situations, and on ambiguous situations of consent. The issue with consent is that it seems to be easier for people who are empathetic to determine whether consent is given or not. If a person has cognitive empathy and also the emotional contagion we saw in the study, they have to be able to understand other people's emotions, and also to feel those emotions as well. If a person is able to do this, it would be fair to assume that they should also be able to understand and feel these emotions when a person is giving or not giving consent. This person should be able to discern the emotions of the other person when there are verbal cues, but also through cues such as body language.

In this case, if a person appears uncertain, afraid, or hurt, among many other negative or ambiguous emotions, the empathetic person should be able to determine that the other person is not fully comfortable with the situation, and does not appear to be giving willing consent. Even if the empathetic person cannot determine exactly what the other person is feeling, and might not be able to name the emotion, they should still be able to get a general grasp on the situation. If a person is not comfortable with the situation, it would be the initiator's moral duty to stop what they are doing until the person is comfortable. So in the case of the person who claims they thought the other person was consenting, it would appear that they perhaps are not very

empathetic people. They might not be empathetic because they were not able to understand that the other person was not consenting to the actions, or they might not be empathetic because they did not stop doing the actions when the person was uncomfortable. However, a fully developed empathetic concern requires the ability to discern another person's general emotions, and understand how that person is feeling, and why they are feeling that way. Not only does a person have to understand, but they also have to act according to that understanding; if a person does not seem comfortable with sexual advances, the initiator must stop those advances.

This line of thinking can also be used in the cases where a person gives consent, but later determines that they do not want to consent to the actions any longer. Some people claim that once you have given consent, you are unable to take it back. However, an empathetic person would realize that the other person is no longer a consenting partner and would refrain from continuing the actions. I believe an empathetic person would be able to understand that a person has the right to determine whether they are comfortable with actions as the actions progress. They might insist instead that a person is able to withdraw consent at any moment, and that according to care ethics it would be the duty of the sexual partner to stop the actions without placing any blame on the other person.

Similarly, when a person is under the influence of alcohol, or is otherwise incapacitated, an empathetic person would not even think of taking advantage of the situation. They would be concerned with the safety of the other person, and would ignore any sexual impulses they might have. An empathetic person would also refrain from attempting to pressure someone or guilting them into having sexual relations with them. Pressuring someone else to do something that they do not want to do is ignoring the emotions of the other person that are causing them to not want to do it. An empathetic person is not able to ignore those emotions, because it goes against their

care ethics and against their character. In addition to not wanting the other person to feel bad, they themselves will feel bad if the other person feels bad. Guilting someone into having sexual relations would also never occur with an empathetic person, because guilt is not a positive emotion that is conducive to consensual sex.

In conclusion, a care ethics based in empathy would consider sexual violence to be a moral wrong. An empathetic person has to be in tune with other people's emotions, and would not be able to ignore those emotions for their own self-gratification. They would consider consensual sex to be much more pleasurable because they would not have to feel the negative emotions that they would feel in the case of nonconsensual sex. Sexual violence ignores the desires of the victim and focuses on the desires of the perpetrator. This is a very selfish action, and a care ethics based in empathy calls for selflessness, understanding, and caring actions towards other people. It is not possible to reconcile a care ethic that is based in empathy with sexual violence.

So what does this mean that we as a society should do? We must consider the connections between empathy and sexual violence. We must consider the differences in empathy that are apparent between the genders, and consider whether the way that we raise children is affecting their empathy. And we must consider how big of a problem sexual violence is to us. Is it important enough to us that we are willing to put resources towards finding a solution, and implementing possible solutions? If so, I suggest that we start by attempting to implement Michael Slote's suggestion of inculcating empathy in children. Other ethicists, such as Noddings, also suggest that education programs should be created to develop caring and empathy. There is the possibility that sexual violence does not occur because of a lack of empathy, and might instead occur because of genetics, or socialization in other ways. However, I believe that there is

enough evidence that there might be a connection that it is worth it to attempt to fix the problem. I also do not think that there is a problem with teaching children how to be empathetic in any case. Carol Gilligan proposed that "care represents a different moral voice to the traditional emphasis on rights and justice" (White). Because of this, people might argue that a person who has an ethics of caring would not be able to be as just in situations as a person who has an ethics based on rights and justice. While some might argue that people who are more empathetic are less just, I would argue that justice without empathy is not real justice.

In addition to the inculcation of empathy, I believe that there has to be a better program for teaching consent in our societies. While the United States does have sex education in most, if not all, schools, there is still some confusion about ambiguous situations. People are normally able to determine what a person wants if they verbally consent or verbally decline. However, once there is the issue of a lack of verbal cues, or ambiguous verbal cues, people are less able to determine whether consent is given or not. Understanding consent could be a key factor in decreasing the amount of sexual violence that we see. I propose an interweaving of the two educational topics. When children are young, it is possible for us to teach them empathy, and also teach them about consent in a nonsexual way. For example, if Toby wants Gabriella's toy, a teacher can show Toby how to properly ask Gabriella if he can have her toy, and can also show Toby how to react to Gabriella's responses. We can teach children about consent involving their bodies. We can teach them how to listen to other kids when they ask them to stop touching them when they are wrestling or playing together. In this way, consent can be taught in a very clear and noncontroversial way.

However, as children get older, it is important to explain how to determine whether consent is given through cues that are not all verbal. It might be important to teach children how

to read body language, and how to ask for clarification if they are unsure of how the other person is feeling. Teaching empathy will help with this, because it will teach children how to determine other people's feelings. It is also important to continue this education through middle and high school, because these are formative times in adolescent development. If we want to instill empathy in adolescents, it is important to have a continuous inculcation. It is also important to clarify sexual consent in these times as well. When children are taught about sex, they should also be taught about consent, and how to determine whether the other person is consenting or not. They should be taught how to determine whether the other person is able to give consent, and they should also be taught that they are never obligated to give someone else sexual favors. In teaching both how to determine if someone else is giving consent, teaching people how to give consent clearly, and also teaching people their bodily rights, I am convinced that there will not be as much sexual violence in our society. Empathy education will assist in supporting this consent education, and this consent education will assist in supporting the empathy education.

Copy of Survey

Read each of the following scenarios and mark the extent to which you believe the woman in each scenario has given consent for sexual/romantic physical contact.

0 = I strongly disagree that consent was given
1 = I moderately disagree that consent was given
2 = I slightly disagree that consent was given
3 = I slightly agree that consent was given
4 = I moderately agree that consent was given
5 = I strongly agree that consent was given

_____ 1. Maria Luisa and Marcus are hanging out at Ashley's apartment watching a soccer game. Marcus looks longingly at Maria Luisa and asks if she wants to spend half-time with him in the bedroom. Maria Luisa shrugs.

_____ 2. While Gabriela and Jose are studying on Jose's bed, Jose turns to Gabriella and says, "Can't we have more fun with the lights off?" Gabriella responds, "Who knows?"

_____ 3. Davíd and Sara are going to a friend's wedding. As Sara comes out of the bedroom, Davíd smiles and says, "Wow, that dress looks amazing on you. I wonder if it looks as good off of you as it does on." Sara laughs and says, "You want to have sex now?" When Davíd nods enthusiastically, Sara looks at her watch and says, "Okay. How fast can you undress?"

_____ 4. Santiago and Sofia are vacationing in Costa Rica. After hours on the beach, they go inside the hotel to dry off. When Santiago starts to lift up Sofia's shirt, she helps him take it off before unbuttoning his pants.

_____ 5. While watching television, Sebastián puts his arm around Isabella and says, "You…me…bedroom?" Isabella does not respond and remains quiet.

_____ 6. While cooking dinner together, Matías sneaks up behind Camila and kisses her neck. Camila turns to look at him and raises her eyebrows.

_____ 7. After a party, Nicolás drives Valentina home and says, "I didn't want to embarrass you in front of the others, but you look really sexy tonight. Can I come in? I would love to see you naked." Valentina answers, "Hmm."

_____ 8. Alejandro lies to help Daniela get out of trouble. Daniela thanks Alejandro and tells him that she owes him one. Alejandro leans in to kiss her, but Daniela pushes him away and starts to leave.

_____ 9. After closing the coffee shop for the day, Mateo and Mariana are cleaning up. When they are done, Mateo takes off his apron, turns to Mariana, and says, "Hey, we're alone. Do you want to help me take the rest of my clothes off? Could be fun." Mariana continues to sweep the floor.

_____ 10. Diego and Luciana are studying in Diego's room. Diego puts his hand near her inner thigh. Luciana responds, "I don't want to have sex with you; we really need to study."

_____ 11. After running a race together, Samuel and Martina return to Samuel's house for showers and protein bars. Martina tells Samuel that she is really tired. Samuel says that he is tired too, but that he has enough energy left to give her the sexual thrill of a lifetime. Martina flops down on the bed.

_____ 12. While walking along a secluded beach, Benjamín and Victoria stop to throw seashells into the ocean. Benjamín puts his arms around Victoria's waist, leans up against her back and says, "This is very romantic. Have you ever had sex in the ocean?" Victoria continues to throw shells into the ocean.

_____ 13. Daniel and Catalina go to a private beach to watch the sun set. Daniel starts to play with Catalina's bikini strings, inching his hand under her bikini bottoms. Catalina pushes his hand away and covers herself with her towel.

_____ 14. While watching TV, Tomas puts his head on Antonella's shoulder and his hand on the inside of her thigh and says, "I want you." Antonella continues to watch TV.

_____ 15. Lucas and Samantha spend the entire day at an amusement park. After their exciting date, they go back to Lucas' apartment for dinner and to watch a movie. During the movie, Samantha cuddles up next to Lucas who starts inching up Samantha's shirt. Samantha responds, "I'm so tired; I'm not in the mood for sex right now. Let's just watch the movie."

_____ 16. At the end of a pool party, Juan Pablo and Paula go inside. Juan Pablo starts touching and kissing Paula. In response, Paula slides her hand inside Juan Pablo's swimsuit.

_____ 17. Felipe and Diana are getting ready for a costume party. When Diana comes out in her nurse costume, Felipe says, "Wow, you look beautiful. Want to ditch the party, get naked, and play doctor?" Diana answers, "Maybe, maybe not."

_____ 18. Andrés and Alejandra are going to a formal. After a great night, Andrés walks Alejandra home and she invites him in. Andrés leans in and whispers to Alejandra, "I want you." Alejandra asks, "You want to have sex with me, right now?" Andrés whispers, "Yes." Alejandra whispers back, "Good. Let's go."

_____ 19. After watching a movie in bed, Pablo tells Amanda that he is really tired, but wants to have sex anyway. Amanda gets up to turn off the lights.

_____ 20. Carlos and Florencia are baking a cake. Carlos turns to Florencia and asks, "Do you think this frosting would taste better if I licked it off of you?" Florencia responds, "I don't know."

Rate each statement on a 5-point scale with 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree.

1. My friends' emotions don't affect me much _____

2. After being with a friend who is sad about something, I usually feel sad _____

3. I can understand my friend's happiness when they do well at something _____

4. I get frightened when I watch characters in a good scary movie _____

5. I get caught up in other people's feelings easily _____

6. I find it hard to know when my friends are frightened _____

7. I don't become sad when I see other people crying _____

8. Other people's feeling don't bother me at all _____

9. When someone is feeling 'down' I can usually understand how they feel _____

10. I can usually work out when my friends are scared _____

11. I often become sad when watching sad things on TV or in films _____

12. I can often understand how people are feeling even before they tell me _____

13. Seeing a person who has been angered has no effect on my feelings _____

14. I can usually work out when people are cheerful_____

15. I tend to feel scared when I am with friends who are afraid_____

16. I can usually realize quickly when a friend is angry _____

17. I often get swept up in my friends' feelings_____

18. My friend's unhappiness doesn't make me feel anything_____

19. I am not usually aware of my friends' feelings_____

20. I have trouble figuring out when my friends are happy_____

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Academic Vita

Lina Ruth Duiker
772 West Hamilton Ave
State College, PA 16801 lrduiker@gmail.com

Education:

Schreyer Honors College and Paterno Fellows Program

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy, Penn State University, Spring 2018

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Spanish, Penn State University, Spring 2018

Minors in Women's Studies and Latin American Studies

Thesis Title: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Perceptions of Sexual Consent in Nicaragua and the United States

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Sarah Clark Miller

Awards:

Dean's List: 6/6 semesters

Jabir Shibley Memorial Scholarship (Spring 2018)

Activities:

Alliance Christian Fellowship Concessions Stand Manager: Fall 2015-Spring 2017

Alliance Christian Fellowship Social Chair: Fall 2017-Spring 2018

Alliance Christian Fellowship Life Group Leader: Fall 2017-Spring 2018

THON dancer: February 2017

Mock Trial Member: Fall 2015-Fall 2016

Grants:

PIRE   International Thesis Research Grant

Erickson Discovery Grant   Liberal Arts Enrichment Fund