

Master Thesis: Belief in a Just World & Language Abstraction: Victim Derogation through Language Abstraction.

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ABSTRACT:

Three studies were conducted to find out whether people use language abstraction to derogate a victim who poses a threat to their Belief in a Just World (BJW). The theory of a Belief in a Just World essentially relies on the idea that people need to believe that the world is a just place in which good things happen to good people and bad things to bad people. People will use strategies to defend this belief. When people make themselves believe that a serious crime happened to a victim because of his/ her character or behavior, they don't have to admit that the world is not a just place. There are various ways to defend the BJW. In the current research I show that people defend their BJW through the use of language abstraction. I use the Linguistic Category Model (LCM) to categorize the level of language abstraction people used in their language to describe a victim. The language people use is classified by the LCM and the average language abstraction is calculated through the formula offered by the LCM. The LCM distinguishes between four levels of language abstraction. Level 1 constitutes of descriptive action verbs, level 2 constitutes of interpretative action verbs, level 3 constitutes of state verbs and level 4 of language abstraction constitutes of adjectives. Abstract language tends to be more general and says something about the character of a person while concrete or less abstract language is more situational bound and points out to more specific behaviors. In Study 1 I show that participants generally portray higher levels of language abstraction when their BJW is threatened than participants whose BJW is not threatened. Study 2 was designed to find language abstraction with a positive or negative meaning in order to be able to relate the language participants used to victim derogation (negative language in the current research is needed for victim derogation). Crime preventive (positive) and risk increasing (negative) behaviors were used as stimulus material in Study 2. Results showed that participants were not willing to portray abstract language when commenting on behaviors performed by the victim that might have increased the risk for a crime to happen (e.g. walking outside at night in unlit areas). Participants in Study 2 showed a general tendency to portray crime preventive behaviors performed by the victim with high levels of language abstraction which points out to the idea that people are not willing to obviously blame or derogate a victim. In Study 3 I used general behaviors that were unrelated to the crime performed of the victim in order to avoid that participants might feel that they are directly blaming the victim for the crime that happened to them. Study 3 clearly supported the main prediction of this thesis, specifically, participants whose BJW was threatened used relatively higher levels of language abstraction to describe the general negative behaviors performed by the victim than participants whose BJW was less threatened. Moreover, participants who experienced a high threat to their BJW also recalled relatively less positive facts about the victim than participants who experienced a low threat to their BJW. Both results point out to aspects of victim derogation. Besides the results found for victim derogation through language abstraction, the amount of words used (words in general and words that could be categorized by the LCM) and the recall of information turned out to be significantly different for participants experiencing a high threat to their BJW and participants experiencing a low threat to their BJW.

INTRODUCTION:

"I wish victim blaming was something new and hasn't been going on for ages. I really wish rapists weren't given a mere few years in jail and were directly blamed for their actions. Instead, survivors go through humiliating cross-examinations once they gather the courage to actually report it. To the rapists, the judges, the MRAs, the misogynists, and all the other asshats: it doesn't matter what a woman wore, how she acted, how drunk she was, if she said nothing, what her sexual history is, and it doesn't matter what she does for a living. These matters are not relevant in determining if a woman was raped or not, and if you use any of these to excuse your actions, you're probably a rapist, and fuck you." This example has been taken from the website <http://wordpress.com> from a web blog about victim blaming. From the above mentioned part one can clearly see an emotional reaction to the, according to the writer, age old effects of 'blaming the victim'. The victim who most probably already suffers a lot also has to deal with the view of the world upon him or her and the often irrational accountability that is ascribed to the victim. This line of research will look at victim blaming and victim derogation in relation with the theory of the Belief in a Just World (BJW).

The Belief in a Just World

To be able to understand why people in certain circumstances have the tendency to blame victims, it is necessary to first get a better understanding of social justice in general. A good starting point is the theory of a "social contract" that people have with society and the world. The term social contract describes a broad class of philosophical theories whose subjects are the implied agreements by which people form nations and maintain a social order. This means that people give up some rights to a government in order to receive social order. John Rawls proposed an approach to these theories in *A Theory of Justice* (1971). He states that rational people are setting aside their individual preferences and capacities under a "veil of ignorance," and would agree to certain general principles of justice. People have a contract with society so to say, because of living with social rights and duties people are part of a system with clear guidelines. People learn that they can invest in long term goals and that they are able to reach them. People have a personal contract (Lerner, 1977), they live up to the rules and rights of society because they believe that they will benefit from it after all. Hafer (2000b) argued that a primary function of the belief in a just world is to allow one to invest in long-term goals and to do so according to society's rules of deservingness. If a person decides to go to university for 4 years (a clear product of society) he or she can assume that generally spoken after graduation he/ she will have chances for relatively better jobs than people who did not go to university. In order to be able to believe that these 4 years of study will finally result in a better job, one has to assume that the world is a just place where investments lead to goals. A child learns and trusts that his world is a place where additional investments often entitle him to better outcomes, and that 'earning' or 'deserving' is an effective way of obtaining what he desires (Lerner et al., 1976). Virtually all people, as a result of intrinsic developmental forces in combination with a relatively stable environment, develop a commitment to deserving their outcomes and to organize their lives around the principles of deservingness. For this commitment to be maintained, people need to believe in a just world and therefore they are threatened by instances of injustice and motivated to reduce this threat to maintain the appearance that the world meets out resources and ill fate as deserved (Lerner, 1977).

This is part of the theory of the belief in a just world or 'Just World Belief' (BJW) which essentially builds upon the idea that the world is a just place where good things happen to good people and bad things to bad people. The theory proposes that people develop this general justice motive for a variety of reasons, the most well specified and unique of which is that people need to believe in a just world in order to maintain their personal contract (Lerner, 1977). Also Hafer (2000b) argued that a primary function of a belief in a just world is to allow one to invest in long-term goals and to do so according to society's rules for deservingness. If the world is not just in this sense, there is little point investing time, energy, and other resources in the hopes of obtaining the rewards one believes one deserves. One who does not endorse a belief in a just world may believe in a random world where there are no predictable ties between people's characteristics and behaviors and their outcomes (Hafer & Bègue, 2005). It is very important to know how the BJW theory integrates confrontations with injustice and more specifically with innocent victims like rape victims. BJW theory shows that people have the need to believe in a just world. So in vice versa reasoning, if something bad happened to you, somehow you must have done something wrong or you must have been a bad person. This is exactly what happens according to BJW theory. When it is not apparently possible to assign the responsibility to the victim's behavior, the BJW can be preserved by assigning the responsibility for what happened to the victim's character, which means derogating the victim (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Sometimes decent people even increase the victim's suffering because they need to believe they live in a just world, which means a world where people get what they deserve, and so there is no undeserved suffering (Lerner & Simmons, 1966).

People use several strategies to defend their BJW. The research of Lerner and Simmons (1966) analyzed the aspects of victim blaming and derogation. Through their research they have shown that when presented with a victim who suffered through little fault of their own, people compensate the victim if they believe they could effectively do so. People appeared to react with recognition of the unfairness of the situation and were motivated to respond with compassion. However, when presented with the same victim along with the expectation that the victim may continue to suffer, people derogated the victim's character, describing her in relatively more negative terms. When the notion of a just world is threatened, like the innocent victim in Lerner and Simmons experiment (1966), people may engage in a variety of behaviours that help maintain a sense of justice. For example perceiving the victim's fate as deserved (and therefore less unfair) because of her unworthy character (Hafer & Bègue, 2005). The BJW theory motivates people to defend their belief in a just world against contradictory evidence. Sutton and Douglas (2005) showed that people try to minimize the injustice they see happening to others. Also Zuckerman (1975) has shown that observers will instantly try to minimize the injustice by actively helping the victims but when this is not possible individuals may adopt cognitive strategies such as blaming and derogation to minimize the apparent injustice being suffered (Lerner & Miller, 1978). This is called secondary victimization, where after primary suffering from a crime, the victims are also dealing with dynamics of blaming and derogation by the outside world (Brickman et al., 1982). This also implies an absence of the social support which research has shown to be so crucial for the victims' physical and psychological well being (Cohen & Wills, 1985). To conclude, increased threats to the BJW are caused by situations where a victim is innocent and his/ her suffering cannot be relieved (Lerner, 1980). Especially under these conditions people will secondary victimize in order to restore their BJW.

Considerations for BJW stimulus material

BJW is a preconscious non-normative belief and people are not always aware of having this belief (Lerner, 1980, 1998). When people have enough time and cognitive resources they will not express this belief. People often deal with impression management (Lerner, 2003), they will reflect on the matter and thoughtfully frame their reactions within conventional norms when they have enough time and cognitive resources. If justice considerations appear after thoughtful considerations, they will be framed within appropriate norms, including the promotion of self interested norms (Miller, 1999). Lerner and Goldberg (1999) pointed to the modern dual process theories (Chaiken & Trope, 1999) according to which a stimulus that is not emotionally engaging will likely pose little threat to people's need to believe in a just world and, given adequate time and cognitive resources, will spark deliberate, thoughtful responses from individuals that reflect social norms about how one should respond to such a stimulus. A stimulus that is emotionally engaging will likely prime a more automatic, preconscious need to believe in a just world, motivating attempts to restore or maintain a sense of justice (Hafer & Bègue, 2005). Defensive attributions of blame as well as characteristic derogation are unlikely when they require a great deal of cognitive distortion (Lerner, 1980). Needed for successful experiments is the unconscious process and results of blaming and derogation. The theory on BJW suggests that one has to look for material that is emotionally engaging in order to stimulate the more automatic, preconscious needs to belief in a just world.

Language Abstraction

So far it has been shown that in certain circumstances people might use coping strategies as victim blaming and victim derogation to defend their sense of justice. I argue here that people express blame or derogation through the means of language. It is very interesting to look at the kind of language people tend to use in describing a victim because language is the primary mean by which we share our beliefs about people (Hamilton, Gibbons, Stroessner & Sherman, 1992). That is why for the current research I will look for aspects of victim derogation by looking at the language people use to describe a victim of a serious crime. The style and structure of language is responsible for the construction of a mutual shared sense of reality between communicators, liking and impression formation (Bradac, 1990). The fundamental function of words is to bring about changes in the speaker's environment and linguistic understanding consists in a grasp of these causal relations (Gauker, 1990). Besides that, language usage is primarily a device to drive attention to specific facets of the very same event (Semin, 2008). My Research predicts that people will use language to drive attention to certain aspects of the victim. The language people use to describe a victim is crucial here for the impression formation of a victim. In my research I will specifically look for language abstraction. The level of abstraction of the language people use in their descriptions will be addressed through the Linguistic Category Model (LCM) (Semin & Fiedler, 1988). This model distinguishes between different levels of language abstraction ranging from rather concrete and situational language to more abstract and dispositional language. The LCM gives us a chance to categorize and analyze language. The LCM distinguishes between four different levels of abstraction that correspond to four distinct word categories (Semin & Fiedler, 1988). Descriptive Action Verbs (DAV's) are the most concrete, and are used to convey a non-interpretative description of a single event. Interpretative Action Verbs (IAV's) also describe a

specific event, but are more abstract in that they refer to a general class of behaviors instead of a specific concrete behavior. State Verbs (SV) constitute the next category in degree of abstraction and describe an enduring emotional or cognitive state and not a specific event. The most abstract predicates are adjectives (ADJ); these generalize across specific events and objects and describe only the subject (Semin & Fiedler, 1988). Abstract language tends to imply that the described action is more characteristic of the actor (Wigboldus, Semin & Spears, 2000). Behaviors described at a higher level of abstraction are more likely to produce expectations of repetition in the future (Semin & Fiedler, 1988, 1991). Wigboldus et. al. (2000) found that specifically more abstract language tends to give a lot of dispositional information about the person described. A positive part of the use of language abstraction in testing for victim blaming and derogation is that there is evidence which suggests that people are not necessarily aware of their language abstraction choices (Franco & Maass, 1996). There is some indication that while people are able to detect bias in others' language use this appears to be less likely for one's own language use (Douglas & Sutton, 2008). In another paper Douglas and Sutton (2005) show that people are able to detect intentions of others through language, they report that describers who use relatively abstract language to describe others' behaviors are perceived to have biased attitudes and motives compared with those describers who use more concrete language. Because people are not always aware of the language abstraction that they use, I argue that this could be a very good measure related to victim blaming and derogation. Research following the LCM has greatly enriched knowledge about the interplay between language and social cognition at the intra-individual level (Semin & Fiedler, 1999, Semin & Marsman, 1994). Language can be used as a social tool and is not just something in somebody's mind. Results of 4 experiments of Stapel and Semin (2007) show that LCM categories shape the basic perceptual process: abstract predicates induced a global perceptual focus, while concrete predicates induced a local perceptual focus. Derogation of a victim is related to aspects of the character of the victim and especially abstract language allows the generalization of behavior across different situations and time, whereas concrete language contextualizes it (Maass, 1999).

Derived from this one could reason that victim derogation goes together with relatively higher levels of language abstraction since abstract descriptions such as traits give more information about the qualities of actors and less information about the qualities of the specific situation in which actors find themselves (Semin & Fiedler, 1988). This will happen specifically concerning information that makes the victim look bad. One can also imagine that one will use more concrete language when describing a victim performs positive behavior, if using less abstract language to describe this situation, the event will be attributed more to situational factors than to dispositional factors. By doing this the victim does not get "the credit" for something positive that happened. I predict that people portray facts about a victim in different ways through the use of language abstraction to make him/ her look either good or bad. This leads to the following general research question: Do people use language abstraction to describe the character or the behavior of innocent victims of serious crimes in a relative negative manner in order to maintain their image of a just world? The matching research hypotheses are:

People whose image of a Just World is threatened will use relatively more concrete language concerning a victim when confronted with positive facts about the victim than people of whom this worldview is less threatened.

People whose image of a Just World is threatened will use relatively more abstract language concerning a victim when confronted with negative facts about the victim than people of whom this worldview is less threatened.

Independent variable (threat to the BJW)

In order to get a preconscious reaction, the injustice that people are confronted with has to be highly arousing and personally engaging (Lerner, 2003). In order to make the stimulus material in this experiment highly involving, the victim in the case was a student at a university close to the university where the subjects were studying. This stimulates a clear identification; 'she could have been me' and in that sense poses a higher emotional threat (Lerner & Miller, 1978). In my experiments almost only female participants were asked to participate. Identification with the victim is very important in order to increase the possible threat to the personal BJW. Gender is a very salient in-group versus out-group variable in terms of which people categorize themselves and other people (Ashmore, 1981, Taylor, 1981). My choice for linguistic presentation of the stimulus material was due to the fact that it offers the chance for presenting more information about the victim which means also chance for more inferences about the victim. In my experiments it is crucial to have the chance to give information about the victim because the expected language abstraction should be found on especially these bits of information. The stimulus materials have been controlled for language abstraction. Information about the victim has only been presented on the lowest levels of language abstraction. Also filler tasks are used to minimize the direct effects of the article on the written parts by the subject. Lerner (2003) argues that a real injustice may be less emotionally engaging if the offense is very minor. That is why in the stimulus material a rape scenario has been used. This is emotionally very engaging especially with a target group of women. Penfold (1992) shows that there is also secondary victimization for sexually abused women. Stimuli in which the victim does not clearly continue to suffer may also have less impact (Correia & Vala, 2003, Lerner & Simmons, 1966). That is why the manipulation in the stimulus material shows that in the first case the perpetrators are not caught and the victim is still mentally suffering a lot. In the second case the perpetrators are caught and the victim is doing quite well nowadays. Because of this manipulation one expects different outcomes on language abstraction as mentioned in the introduction. Mainly the first case should theoretically lead to strong effects of derogation. In the first case the victim will keep on suffering and in the last case the suffering 'ended'. Also there will be no chance for subjects to restore to coping strategies as compensating the victim. This poses a high threat to the BJW (perpetrator has not been caught, victim mentally still suffering a lot). Under these conditions theoretically people will have to use victim blaming and if not possible derogation to restore their BJW (Hafer & Bègue, 2005).

Dependent variable (Linguistic Measures)

When presented with several descriptions of different levels of language abstraction, participants are able to compare and contrast them and may notice that abstract descriptions tend to be more evaluative, interpretive, and imply greater temporal stability (Semin & Fielder, 1988, Douglas & Sutton, 2008). This is one of the reasons why in my research open ended questions are used to avoid giving participants the chance to compare sentences of different abstraction levels in their answers. Another reason for choosing this design is that it is much more interesting to see people's own chosen words because this is also what happens in the real world. Participants

were asked to be as detailed as possible, this is supposed to stimulate participants to re-tell the story as much in line with the real story as they can and if people will use language abstraction they will do so anyway.

STUDY 1:

In this study participants will be presented with a newspaper article that threatens the BJW. The case has been written like a newspaper article of one of the biggest newspapers in the Netherlands (de Volkskrant). The case is inspired by 2 realistic articles published in this newspaper and the original writing style of the newspaper has been preserved as much as possible in order to look realistic. There were two conditions that participants were randomly assigned to. In one condition the threat to the BJW is very high because the perpetrators were not caught and the victim is still suffering a lot. In the second condition the perpetrators were caught and the victim was doing quite well nowadays. These descriptions were written as the final paragraph of the newspaper article. All participants received the same description of the crime (the first paragraphs of the newspaper article). The only difference was the final paragraph which was the manipulation of this study. After reading the article participants were asked to answer the following open ended question: 'Try now without going back to the newspaper article to describe as detailed as possible what you know about Alice H and what has happened to her.' The language that participants used to describe the victim (Alice H.) in the open ended question was screened for language abstraction and that language abstraction was categorized by the LCM. The LCM offers a way to calculate a score that reflects the level of abstraction of the used language. In the LCM a higher score stands for relative higher levels of abstract language. The average level of language abstraction was compared for participants in the two conditions. This study is explorative in the sense that it will try to discover if there are general differences in levels of language abstraction for participants with either a high BJW threat or a low BJW threat.

METHOD:

Design

This study is a between-subject, single factor design. The independent variable is the case of which one poses a high threat to the BJW and the other one a lower threat to the BJW (High BJW threat/ Low BJW threat). The dependent variable is the average language abstraction categorized by the four levels of the LCM and calculated by the formula offered by the LCM (Semin & Fielder, 1988).

Subjects

All participants were students at Utrecht University, participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire voluntarily without any financial compensation for it. Participants were randomly assigned to their conditions.

Questionnaire

In this study 3 additional scales were used: the emotional uncertainty scale (Greco & Roger, 2001), the affect intensity scale (Larsen & Diener, 1987, Larsen, Diener & Cropanzano, 1987, Larsen, Diener & Emmons, 1986) and a blaming and derogation scale (Bal & Van den Bos, 2008). The first two scales have been used as 'a filler task' but also as a control variable to explain the possible variation in language abstraction as the dependent variable. The

2 scales were also placed there to protect the direct influence of language of the stimulus material on language use in the re-tell assignment. The blaming and derogation scale was used as a 'back up' check to see if victim blaming and derogation was really taking place. To test whether the article is experienced truly as a negative story (so it poses a real threat to the BJW), the following question was put into the questionnaire: *what did you think of the situation described in the newspaper article?* Participants were asked to rate this question on a 5-point scale ranging from *very negative* to *very positive*. In order to be sure that both manipulations are experienced as either relatively positive or relatively negative the participants have also been asked the following question: *What do you think of the current situation of Alice H.?* Participants could rate the question on a 5-point scale ranging from *very negative* to *very positive*. It is important because previous experiments have failed to truly create this distinction (Hafer & Bègue, 2005). The open ended question (*'what do you know about Alice H. and what had happened to her?'*) clearly asks for a description of Alice H. This has been done to safeguard that participants will talk about the victim, which is the information that is needed to check for victim derogation through language abstraction. Only the sentences related to and referring to Alice H. were used for coding by the LCM, this means that all Descriptive Action Verbs, Interpretive Action Verbs, State Verbs and Adjectives related to Alice H and her behavior were used to be categorized by the LCM. Only descriptions related to Alice H were used because that is what needs to be analyzed if one wants to find effects of victim derogation. The complete questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

RESULTS:

Descriptive statistics

In total 69 participants participated in the experiment of which 7 were men and 62 were women. These participants were all students of Utrecht University in the Netherlands. In total 27 participants were assigned to the high BJW threat case and 32 participants were randomly assigned to the low BJW threat case. The average age was 22.5 years with a standard deviation of 2.2 years. The open ended question ('Try now without going back to the newspaper article to describe as detailed as possible what you know about Alice H and what has happened to her.') was on the average answered with 80 words with a standard deviation of 29. In Table 1 the significant results of Study 1 are presented.

	Threat			
	Low threat (rapist punished)		High threat (rapist not punished)	
<u>Language abstraction</u>	M	1.16	M	1.34
	(SD)	0.25	(SD)	0.34
<u>Number of LCM codable words</u>	M	3.03	M	3.95
	(SD)	1.35	(SD)	1.37
<u>Total number of words</u>	M	73.97	M	85.92
	(SD)	28.04	(SD)	28.49
<u>Rating newspaper article (positive - negative)</u>	M	1.94	M	1.54
	(SD)	0.91	(SD)	0.73

<u>Current situation Alice H.</u>	M	3.66	M	1.35
	(SD)	0.83	(SD)	0.54

Table 1. Differences in Mean scores (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for participants in the high BJW threat condition and low BJW threat condition for their average language abstraction, number of words that could be coded by the LCM, total number of words, rating of the newspaper article and the current situation of Alice H.

To answer the main question of this experiment a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of the case on the level of language abstraction. Participants were randomly assigned to either the high threat or the low threat case. There was a statistically significant difference at the level of $p < .05$ level in LCM scores for the two cases. $F(1,67) = 6.50, p = .013$. In the high threat case participants used significantly more abstract language ($M = 1.34, SD = 0.34$) than participants in the low threat case ($M = 1.16, SD = 0.25$).

Another one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to see whether the amount of words related to Alice H. that could be categorized by the LCM (*Number of LCM codable words*) was different between the high threat case and the low threat case. A significant difference was found $F(1,67) = 6.80, p = .011$. This means that participants in the high threat case used significantly more LCM coded words ($M = 3.95, SD = 1.37$) than participants in the low threat case ($M = 3.03, SD = 1.53$). The amount of LCM 3 coded words, the State Verbs which refer to an enduring emotional or mental state, do not come through the test of equality of error variance in the different cases (not at level significance level of .01 and .05). LCM 4 words, which are the adjectives, were not used at all by participants.

A one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate differences in the amount of LCM words used in the two different cases. The independent variable was the case (high threat or low threat) the two dependent variables were the amount of LCM 1 coded words and the amount of LCM 2 coded words, which are the Descriptive Action Verbs (DAV's) and the Interpretative Action Verbs (IAV's). Preliminary assumptions testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. There was no statistical significant difference found between the 2 cases on the combined dependent variables: $F(2,66) = 2.49, p = .09$.

To find out if there was a difference in the amount of words participants used in the two cases a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of the case on the amount of words participants used in their description. In general, although not significant $p > .05, F(1, 67) = 3.00, p = .084$ participants tend to use slightly more words in the high threat case ($M = 85.92, SD = 28.49$) than participants in the low threat case ($M = 73.97, SD = 28.04$)

On the question what participants thought of the news paper article subjects rated on the average with a 1.7 on a scale from 1 to 5. 1= *very negative* 5= *very positive* with a standard deviation of 0.84. However a significant difference was also found between the cases on this question $p < .05, F(1, 67) = 4.00, p = .049$. This is a

remarkable result because although participants in both cases were presented with exactly the same article, they valued it in a different way. I will return to this result in the discussion.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was performed to investigate the difference in valence of the current situation of Alice H. in the high threat case and the low threat case. A significant difference was found at the level of $p < .05$. $F(1, 67) = 192.9$, $p = 0.00$. The current situation of Alice H. was perceived as significantly more negative in the high threat case ($M = 1.35$, $SD = 0.54$) as in the low threat case ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.83$). Or also, the current situation of Alice was perceived as significantly more positive in the low threat case.

A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance was conducted to see if the personal affect intensity and emotional uncertainty scales influence the language abstraction as covariates. The independent variable was the high threat/ low threat case. The dependent variable was the average language abstraction. Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumption of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variance, homogeneity of regression slopes and reliable measures of the covariate. After adjusting for the 2 emotional uncertainty scale and the affect intensity scale, there was still a significant difference between language abstraction in the two cases. $F(1,67) = 6.90$, $p = .01$. $\eta^2 = .09$. No strong relations were found between the two scales and the dependent variable.

There is no significant interaction found between the case and sex on the average language abstraction. $F(1,67) = .65$, $p = .42$. This suggests that for man or woman there is no difference in their level of language abstraction. No effect was found of the case on the derogation – blaming scale $F(1,67) = .50$, $p = .48$. A small, although not significant, effect has been found of derogation blaming scale for the following questions; 1: *I think what happened to Alice is due to her personality* ($p = .15$), 10: *What happened to Alice was provoked by her behavior* ($p = .07$) and 11: *I think Alice has behaved in a stupid manner* ($p = .12$).

Detailed analysis manipulation

In Study 1 the experimental manipulated part was implemented in the newspaper article itself. The last paragraph of the newspaper article was different for the participants in the two conditions, the rest of the article was the same for all subjects in this study. Some additional tests were conducted to see if the difference in language abstraction in the two conditions was found in the general description of the newspaper article or whether it was found in the description people gave about the manipulated part (only the last paragraph) which was the current situation of Alice H. (High BJW threat / Low BJW threat). A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to see if there was a difference in language abstraction in the two conditions used to describe the manipulated part of the text. A significant difference was found at the level of $p < .05$. $F(1,43) = 4.08$, $p = .05$. This means that participants on the average use significant higher levels of language abstraction to describe the high threat manipulation ($M = 3.38$) than the language abstraction of the participants describing the low threat manipulation ($M = 2.21$). If the language abstraction of the manipulation is subtracted from the in total found average language abstraction, one can find the effects of the language abstraction solely for the newspaper article itself (not the manipulation). In this case the difference in language abstraction is not significant anymore at the level of $p < .05$. $F(1,66) = 1.97$, $p = .17$. This means that the significant difference in language abstraction was found in the part were subjects described the

manipulation and not in the description of the newspaper article itself. When the amount of words used to describe the manipulation are subtracted from the amount of words for the whole text, one ends up with the amount of words solely used to describe the newspaper article. Also this is not significant anymore when taking into account the amounts of words used to describe the manipulation part at the level of $p < .05$. $F(1,66) = 2.14$, $p = .15$. This should mean that the significant difference in the amount of words used should be found in the manipulated part. This was tested in another analysis and turned out to be true (almost significant): $F(1,66) = 3.49$, $p = .066$. Participants in the high threat case used marginally more words to describe the manipulated part $M = 15.83$ than participants in the low threat case $M = 11.09$. This means that the manipulation was responsible for creating the difference in language abstraction found in the two conditions. Another one way analysis of variance was conducted to see the difference in amount of LCM coded words used to describe the manipulation. A trend, although not significant result was found: $F(1,66) = 3.14$, $p = .081$. Participants in the high threat case used marginally more words that could be coded by the LCM $M = 1.31$ than participants in the low threat case $M = 0.84$.

DISCUSSION:

The main hypotheses of this first experiment can be supported by the found results. Participants in the high BJW threat case use higher levels of language abstraction than the participants in the low BJW threat case when writing about the victim. This is a very promising result and it paves the way for next studies to make a more in depth analysis of this result since the results of Study 1 clearly show that there is a difference in language abstraction for participants under high BJW threat and participants under low BJW threat. For the next study I will need to find additional information related to the relative positive or negative character, the valence, of the language that participants used. The valence is the positivity or negativity of the language. The valence is very important for the current studies because negative facts (behavior or characteristics of the victim) can lead to victim derogation when people present these negative facts about the victim with relative higher level of language abstraction than the positive facts. Basically, victim derogation can be expressed through describing positive facts about a victim in a concrete manner (low levels of language abstraction) so that these positive facts are ascribed to situational factors and not the character of the victim. At the same time one can derogate a victim by using higher levels of language abstraction on negative facts about a victim so that these negative things are ascribed to his/ her character and not to the situation. Both strategies make the victim look bad. In study 1 the found language was relatively low in abstraction (mainly Descriptive Action Verbs and Interpretative Action Verbs) so also the valence was relatively low. This can further be illustrated with an example. "to walk" is a Descriptive Action Verb (DAV, level 1) and is the lowest level of the LCM, one level higher we can find the Interpretative Action Verb (IAV, level 2). The matching IAV for "to walk" would for example be "to move". You can clearly see that to walk or to move is not really something negative or positive to do. Walking is a rather neutral activity. However when we go even one level higher to the State Verbs (SV, level 3), we find words that are for example related to an emotional state like "to love" or "to hate". Here we can clearly see that these words are valenced, "to love" carries a positive valence and "to hate" carries a negative valence. To discover victim derogation in these experiments, one needs words that can be categorized by the LCM with a negative or positive meaning/ valence related to the description of the victim. I need to know the valence of the language abstraction to be able to draw crystal-clear conclusions concerning victim derogation. In order to be sure to find valenced language, I will present participants with behaviors that are in themselves already positive or negative so that the language abstraction used to describe

these behaviors is automatically valenced. The more abstract a description is the more it is likely to be strongly valenced (Semin & Fiedler, 1998) but abstract language also could be a way of distancing oneself from events (Stapel & Semin, 2007). For Study 2 it is suggested to find this additional information (valenced language) in order to be able to draw conclusions on victim derogation through language abstraction.

The results of Study 1 show that most of the language abstraction was taking place at LCM level 1 and 2 (Descriptive Action Verbs & Interpretive Action Verbs). On the LCM level 3, state verbs, there was no equality in error variance. Since LCM 3 codings (State verbs about Alice H.) were found relatively less often, this is not such a surprising result. The statistical analyses show no significant difference in the LCM level 1 and level 2 used in the two cases so the difference is taking place at the LCM level 3. This means that significant differences in the descriptions about Alice H. were found in state verbs concerning Alice H. Two extra personality related scales were added to the experiment; the affect intensity scale and the emotional uncertainty scale. Results showed that these scales were not able to explain the variance in the dependent variable. This means that the results of the dependent variable are fully explained by the case in this experiment.

Effects of High Threat Condition

The found results in difference of language abstraction used to describe the victim and what happened to her could be explained by effects of the high BJW threat and but also by possible effects of empathy for example. For participants in the high threat case mentioning and talking about the suffering of the victim might have given them a chance to compensate the victim, by giving attention to her suffering. Empathy is usually defined as an affective trait e.g. the capacity to experience the emotions of another (Bryant, 1982) and/or a cognitive ability/ the capacity to comprehend the emotions of another (Hogan, 1969). By reflecting on the experienced suffering of the victim one shows signs of empathy by addressing attention to it. Explicit recognition of feelings can comfort a person (Zimmerman & Applegate, 1992). By writing things down about the suffering of Alice H. subjects might have felt that they were somehow able to compensate Alice for her suffering. Coulehan et al. (2001) also view empathy as formulations that accurately paraphrase factual content and the nature and intensity of a client's concern. This idea could be supported by the fact that participants in the high BJW threat case rated the general article (which was the same for both conditions) more much more negative than participants in the low BJW threat condition. This was most probably due to the manipulation. So, the found results could also be explained by emotional reactions of possible empathy by devoting attention to the suffering of the victim or as a mean to relief from negative emotions by writing them down and restore their BJW.

Another explanation could be that a high threat might attract more careful attention to the case. Participants in the high BJW threat condition also used more words in their description, because of this one could argue that participants might have paid more attention to the case because it posed a relatively higher threat and that is why they could describe it more extensively. It could also be that the high threat manipulation left a bigger impression on participants than the low threat manipulation. In the high threat case approximately 70 % of the participants mentioned in their writing about the current situation of Alice H. in the low threat case only 59 % mentioned it. This could have been because the situation for subjects in the low BJW threat case ended in a relatively satisfying way so there was no need to mention it. The small effect found on the derogation scale could be due to the fact that

giving subject the opportunity to write down what happened to Alice already restored the personal BJW. Writing can be seen as a way to express or ventilate emotions. For example Martens, Johns, Greenberg, Schimel (2002) used manipulations designed to reduce anxiety and arousal, such as expressive writing. It might have been the case that also here a writing task already was an opportunity for people to ventilate their emotions.

Amount of Words

By analyzing this result one should take into account that participants had the tendency to use slightly more words in the high threat case and also in their answers they have written down significantly more words that could be coded by the LCM. This does not say anything about the level of the used language abstraction. However it is an interesting result because participants seem to have a tendency to write more extensively and in more LCM codable words (hence, more information on the character or behavior of the victim). All together this means that the manipulation (the current situation of Alice H.) played a key role in the found language abstraction and the language abstraction used to describe the newspaper article itself turned out not to be significant anymore.

Contamination

The fact that participants judged the negativity of the general newspaper article in the 2 conditions significantly different (High threat case $M = 1.54$, $SD = 0.73$. Low threat case $M = 1.94$, $SD = 0.91$) might be due to the fact that the current situation of Alice H., which was the manipulated part, might have influenced the interpretation of the newspaper article, which remarkably enough was the same in both the high BJW threat case and the low BJW threat case. This could be addressed as an effect of contamination. It is a very interesting result because it shows how new information or current situations of victims or people in general might effect how people interpret the preceding information; a new light is shed upon the "history" through the eye of the current situation. This might be an interesting result for a new line of research, however, contamination effects will not be further addressed in this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In the next experiments it is very important to look in more detail to the valence of the manipulation, one should avoid using strongly valenced material in the manipulated part since it might influence the language people will use in their descriptions of the victim. Another important part in analyzing the results has to do with valence and the fact that the more abstract a description is the more it is likely to be strongly valenced (Semin & Fiedler, 1988). In Study 1 the valence of the language used to describe the current situation of Alice was not tested in a pilot study and the high threat case for example might have carried a stronger valence or had a stronger emotional effect than the low threat case. A strong recommendation for the following experiments is to make the manipulations more similar in content and aimed effect in order to understand and interpret results in a better way. It is inevitable to create manipulations that result into different emotional reactions, naturally, events that pose a high threat to the BJW often have a higher emotional impact. However it is worth it to make the stimulus material as equal as possible.

The language participants used in their descriptions in Study 1 was often neutral by nature. In order to look for aspects of blaming and derogation, in a following experiment the language abstraction should carry a valence. In

order to make sure that I can find valenced language, “positive” and “negative” facts about the victim have to be presented. This should be done because positive and negative facts about the victim already carry a valence and are not neutral by nature. So if language abstraction is used concerning the positive and negative facts about the victim, one can more easily relate this to blaming or derogation of the victim. In Study 2 I will try to avoid that people write about the manipulation, so that I can be sure that language abstraction is found on sentences of the text that were similar for everybody and carried similar valence (Hence, the actual newspaper article).

STUDY 2 (PILOT & COMMUNICATION GOALS):

Pilot study

The main aim of this Study 2 is to obtain suitable stimulus material for a next study. Study 2 will be run as a pilot study in order to find the right stimulus material for Study 3. In Study 1, the LCM categorized language was neutral by nature. In this current study the focus will be on obtaining language abstraction that clearly carries a valence. In order to link the language abstraction to victim blaming and derogation the subjects will be confronted with information containing safe behaviors and less safe behaviors that the victim might have taken in the light of a rape crime. The expectation is that if subjects want to blame the victim, they might phrase less safe behaviors in a relatively more abstract way and safe behaviors in a relatively more concrete way. In this way it looks as if it was due to the character or the behavior of the victim that made this crime happen. To make sure that the language abstraction is related to dynamics of blaming and derogation, the safe behaviors and less safe behaviors are tested in this pilot study on their valence. This is done in order to find the behaviors that people value truly see as safe or less safe (in this way one can also look at the valence, that both categories of behaviors carry similar valence) and by this increasing the chance of finding meaningful language abstraction in the dependent variable. The safe and less safe behaviors that carry the strongest valence resulted from the pilot study will be used in the newspaper article as stimulus material for the next study.

Communication goals

Next to running a pilot to find the right stimulus material for Study 3, in this study another aspect that will be looked at are the effects of communication goals on language abstraction. By looking at this one might more easily find effects of language abstraction. Recent research suggests that as well as being sensitive to describers' beliefs, language abstraction is also affected by social goals, even if it is unlikely that communicators are aware they are using language abstraction strategically (Douglas & McGarty, 2001, 2002). Study 1 was designed to discover if implicit intrapersonal motives of victim derogation result in certain usage of language abstraction. Research has also been conducted that looks more at the explicit and strategic use of language abstraction. People use language abstraction to achieve certain communication goals (Douglas & Sutton, 2003). According to the communication game of Higgins (1981) communication is a purposeful social activity used to achieve goals which may include advocacy, derogation, ingratiation, politeness and the construction of social consensus. People can use language abstraction strategically to portray certain information about a person or a situation in a subjective

way without explicitly mentioning their perspective on it. It is a tool that deceitful communicators may not realize they are using, sparing them the guilt and effort associated with other aspects of deceit, such as monitoring one's expressions and getting ones story straight (Ekman, 2001). Participants in studies of interpersonal processes appear to use language abstraction flexibly as a tool to achieve explicit communication goals (Douglas & McGarty, 2001). When communicators intend to produce language that may be biased, they can generate and select descriptions according to how well they fit their goal rather than how free from bias they subjectively appear (Douglas & Sutton, 2003). Also Douglas and Sutton (2003) have shown through several studies that explicit communication goals have strong effects on language abstraction that are independent of effects of describers' beliefs or expectancies. Part of Study 2 is trying to discover whether participants can use language abstraction as a tool or strategy to blame or exonerate a victim. Since the pilot study is aimed at finding the right behaviors (safe/ less safe behaviors) for Study 3, participants will also be asked to write down sentences about these behaviors from a certain communication goal perspective. I Expect that participants will show different levels of language abstraction when their communication goals are either to blame or exonerate a victim. In this part of the pilot study participants will be asked to present given information about a victim (with a very low level of language abstraction) through the perspective of a 1) prosecution lawyer/ feminist or 2) a defense lawyer/ sexist. Participants will not answer the questions through their own perspectives but they have a certain communication goals in mind, pretending to be a defense lawyer/ sexist or a prosecution lawyer/ feminist. This might make it easier for them to portray victim derogation through language abstraction since it is not their own perspective they are presenting. The choice for the prosecution and defense lawyer is based on the demonstration of Schmid, Fiedler, Englich, Ehrenberger, Semin (1996) that prosecution lawyers typically use abstract language to describe defendants, actions, implying dispositional and personal responsibility. Whereas defense lawyers use more concrete language, implying the situational factors were the cause, therefore deflecting the blame from the defendant. The first perspective is defending the side of the perpetrator and the second perspective is defending the side of the victim (to exonerate or blame the victim). Participants are asked to describe certain events that occurred that night from either of the two perspectives (between-subjects design). The subjects are presented with sentences containing behaviors of Alice that are either relatively less safe or relatively more safe in the light of a rape crime. Examples are: '*Alice carried pepper spray with her*' and '*Alice walked alone outside at night in an unlit area*'. Expected is that people are aware of communication goals and that naturally language abstraction might appear which supports the idea that people can use language abstraction to achieve communication goals, whether conscious or subconscious. One who wants to blame a victim might use more abstract language towards less safe behaviors of a victim if the goal is to make her look bad. This pattern would show that whether or not participants use language abstraction for the intra psychic defence of justice, they are able to use it when social circumstances call upon them to publicly portray the event as more or less just.

The empirical prediction for this study is that given a "blame" communication goal, participants would generate relatively more abstract descriptions of less safe behaviours and relatively more concrete descriptions of safe behaviours than subjects that are trying to exonerate the victim.

To summarize it all, the second study will give answers to which safe and less safe behaviors will be used for the news paper article in the next study. The pilot study will also show if people can deliberately use language abstraction to obtain certain communication goals and strategically use language abstraction.

METHOD:

Design

In order to be able to find valenced language in the dependent variable, the independent variable was behavior that the victim performed which was safe or less safe in the light of a crime. In this way the behavior is already seen as less safe or relatively safer. If one finds differences in language abstraction on either the safe or the less safe behavior it becomes easier to draw conclusions concerning victim derogation. If participants are relatively more abstract about the less safe behavior performed by the victim, they tend to blame and derogate her more than subjects who were relatively less abstract on the safe behaviors. This study is a mixed design with one between-subjects variable and one within-subjects variable. The independent variable is the case (High threat case/ Low threat case). The dependent variable is the average language abstraction on 1) safe behaviors 2) less safe behaviors. Partially a repeated measures design was used because participants were specifically asked to respond to both sentences with safe behaviors and less safe behaviors. Participants are tested in two different sets of materials one after another (within-subjects) from one of the two perspectives they were ordered to take (between-subjects).

Subjects

Participants were all related to Canterbury Christ Church University. Almost all of them were students but also some staff members filled in the questionnaire. Participants received a small amount of money (£ 2) for voluntarily filling in the questionnaire. Subjects were randomly assigned to their condition.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted out of a scale where people had to rate their perception of the safety of certain behaviors in the light of a rape crime. Examples of behaviors that were proposed to the subjects are: '*Alice walked alone outside at night in unlit areas.*' '*Alice drank several spirits and liqueurs in the bar.*' (less safe behavior) '*Alice put the phone number of the police in her speed-dial list.*' '*Alice asked others what they know about the guy she was talking to.*' (safe behavior). This was part of the pilot study since the 3 least safe and the 3 most safe behaviors will be used for the next study. In the second part of the questionnaire, questions about communication goals in relation to behaviors of a victim of a rape crime were asked: "Imagine that someone wanted to imply that Alice was partly to blame for this offence: (for example a sexist or a defense lawyer trying to secure a light sentence for the man who raped Alice). How might such a person describe each of the following events that occurred that night?" Subjects had to describe events like the examples mentioned above (*Alice walked alone outside at night in unlit areas*) from either the blame or the exonerate perspective. The answers that subject gave here were analyzed by the LCM for language abstraction. At last the BJW-other scale of Lipkus (1991) was used in order to measure peoples Belief in a Just World concerning other people. Because injustice is presumed to present a greater contradiction to people who strongly believe in a just world than those with only weak belief; thus, the former individuals should feel more threatened by the injustice, and therefore, should be more motivated

to engage in strategies for coping with threat (Hafer & Olson, 1998). This scale is taken in as an additional scale to explain possible variance. The complete questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

RESULTS:

In total 68 participants participated in this study of which 10 participants were male and 58 participants were female. The average age was 23.8. In total 33 participants were randomly assigned to the “no blame” / exonerate perspective questionnaire and 35 participants were assigned to the “blame” perspective questionnaire.

In Table 2 the mean (M) and the Standard Deviation (SD) of the two conditions on safe and less safe behavior are presented. To answer the main question of this study a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the language abstraction on positive and negative behaviors for the high BJW threat case and the low BJW threat case. There was a significant effect for the type of the behaviour (pos / neg) Wilks' Lambda = .862, $F(1,66) = 10.55$, $p = .002$. partial eta squared = .138. Also a small result was found for the interaction condition * behavior type (pos/ neg). Wilks' Lambda = .955, $F(1,66) = 3.15$, $p = .081$. partial eta squared = .045.

Table 2. Average Language Abstraction (M) and the matching Standard Deviation (SD) for participants in the blame or exonerate condition related to safe and less safe behaviors.

	<u>Communication goal</u>					
	<u>Blame</u>		<u>Exonerate</u>		<u>Total</u>	
<u>Safe Behavior</u>	M	2.50	M	2.08	M	2.29
	(SD)	0.78	(SD)	0.78	(SD)	0.56
<u>Less Safe Behavior</u>	M	2.14	M	1.98	M	2.06
	(SD)	0.74	(SD)	0.76	(SD)	0.53
<u>Total</u>	M	2.32	M	2.03		
	(SD)	0.63	(SD)	0.78		

Results showed a main effect for the average language abstraction. The average language abstraction on safe behaviors is significantly higher than the average language abstraction on less safe behaviors. Results also showed a main effect for the average language abstraction. The average language abstraction in the blame condition (M = 2.32, SD = 0.63) is significantly higher than the average language abstraction in the no blame condition (M = 2.03, SD = 0.78). There is a significant interaction between condition * behavior type. We can see that the “blame- safe behavior” group is significantly different from the 3 other groups, the interaction is taking place there.

DISCUSSION:

The results show that in general participants use more abstract language to describe safe behaviors. There were numerous of participants that, despite their condition to blame the victim, gave answers that exonerated the victim. This might be explained by the fact that participants are not willing to explicitly blame a victim for what happened to her. In this study the behaviors that were used were clearly related to the crime/ “adding up” to the crime. The

behaviors were seen in the light of a rape crime that happened later that night; this link might have been too clear and by that the blame too obvious and participants might not have been willing to express it.

Blame Condition

The significant main effect that was found for the blame effect was rather unexpected. Asking subjects to take the perspective of a sexist, might have led them to use relatively more abstract language than in the case where they had to exonerate the victim. A sexist might be associated with derogation of woman, and since derogation needs higher levels in the LCM (Because you are derogating the character of a person) this might have naturally led them to more abstract language. Also blaming a person might need more effort because socially it is less accepted; participants might have felt the need to use "stronger" language in order to be able to blame a person. Exonerating a victim is socially more accepted so possibly it doesn't need that much abstract language to support the exonerate perspective as it does in the blame perspective. It is hard to say which explanation is eventually at stake here and to give a clear fitting explanation for this result, a very important conclusion that we have to draw from this study is that using safe and less safe behaviors in the light of a rape crime might not have been the suitable material for finding results of victim derogation through language abstraction.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Because in Study 2 the expected results were not found, I recommend that in Study 3 the concrete behaviors of the victim that will be used as stimulus material are not directly related to the crime. The stimulus material of Study 3 should not be the safe and less safe behaviors used in Study 2. This is very important because the results of the pilot study show that there is a general unwillingness to derogate the victim. People in both conditions are relatively more abstract about the safe behaviors than about the less safe behaviors. Because the behaviors in the stimulus material were so closely related to the crime, the blame might have been too obvious and subjects might not have been ready to express such direct blame. To get a more subtle expression of victim derogation and/ or blame, the behaviors that are presented as stimulus material should show no relationship with the crime and should be general behaviors performed by the victim. The behaviors have to be positive and negative however, to make sure that the language abstraction participants use in their replies carries a relevant valence. The language abstraction has to have a meaning so one can clearly see if there are signs of victim derogation. An example of a positive but unrelated behavior to the crime / general behavior is: doing charity work in your free time. An example of negative but unrelated behavior to the crime / general behavior: lying to your friends. If participants use language abstraction on these types of behaviors it can make the victim look good or bad.

STUDY 3:

Because Study 2 did not show strong results, even if people did not have to present their own opinion but pretend to be somebody else and write sentences down through that perspective, another set of stimulus material is needed. Language abstraction in Study 2 was hard to find and people had the tendency to describe the relatively safe behaviors more abstract through all the conditions. This might show that overall there is not much readiness from people to derogate or blame a victim. Because Study 2 used behaviors that were clearly related to the crime, subjects might have been more hesitant to become more abstract on less safe behaviors because it might mean that you see those behaviors adding up to the rape, and by this saying that victim was partly to blame for what happened to her. Because of this reason in Study 3 I have tried to find a more sensitive measure by asking people to respond to unrelated behaviors to the rape performed by the victim. People might not be able to see the relation between these behaviors and their possible internal dynamics of victim derogation, they might be less able to control for their language since it will not feel like direct victim blaming. That is why 3 unrelated positive behaviors and 3 unrelated negative behaviors to the crime have been implemented in an article written about the rape. The following hypotheses are defined for the final study:

Participants in the high BJW threat case will use relatively more abstract language when describing unrelated negative behaviors of the victim than participants in the low BJW threat case in order to restore their BJW.

Participants in the high BJW threat case will use relatively more concrete language when describing unrelated positive behaviors of the victim than participants in the low BJW threat case in order to restore their BJW.

Participants in the high BJW threat condition will show relative higher scores on the derogation and disassociation scale than participants in the low BJW threat scale.

There is also an expectation regarding the recall of information. The idea is that when somebody wants to create a relative negative image of the victim in mind, hence their BJW is threatened, they might "suppress" the positive facts about the victim more easily than the negative facts and they might also do this more easily than the

participants in the low BJW threat condition. Lyons & Kashima (2003) found in their stereotype studies that stereotype consistent bias was driven by communication processes (e.g., communication goals) rather than stemming from general memory bias. The same thing might happen in this study where participants in the high BJW threat condition need to portray the victim in a negative way, as a communication goal, in order to restore their BJW. Because of this participants might mention less often the positive facts about the victim in order to portray the victim relatively more negative. An example from stereotype maintenance theory can be taken. Current findings have suggested that people generally favor the communication of stereotype consistent over stereotype inconsistent information (Harasty, 1996, Kashima, 2000a). In this study people might do something similar in line with their created image of the victim. Several studies before have been devoted to serial reproduction of information, also person impression formation (Gilovich, 1987). Also the general amount of words and the amount of words coded by the LCM will be taken into account since they proved to be relevant in Study 1.

METHOD:

Design

This study is a between-subjects, single factor, two levels design. The independent variable is the case (High BJW threat case/ Low BJW threat case). The manipulation of high BJW threat and low BJW threat has been made through describing the current situation of Alice H. / the victim. In the high BJW threat case participants got to read: 'The perpetrator was not caught; because of this Alice has not been able to put the trauma behind her.' In the low BJW threat case the participants got to read: 'The perpetrator was caught; because of this Alice has been able to put the trauma behind her.' The dependent variable was the average language abstraction of the descriptions people gave when they recalled the behavior of Alice H. before the rape analyzed through the LCM.

Subjects

Participants were all related to Canterbury Christ Church University. Most subjects were student but also some staff members participated in this study. Participants would receive a small amount of money (£ 2) for filling in the questionnaire voluntarily. Participants were randomly assigned to their condition.

Questionnaire

A self-report article of a rape has been used as the stimulus material (source guardian newspaper) with 6 unrelated behaviors (positive & negative) woven through the article. Participants all had to read a similar article with a report of Alice H. about her rape. This report is a rather personal report taken from a popular magazine. I have implemented 3 negative unrelated behaviors and 3 positive unrelated behaviors in the article. Some examples of positive behavior are: 'Spending a lot of time with my kids' 'Writing columns for one of UK's biggest scientific magazine'. Some examples of negative behavior: 'I told some untrue stories to my employer in order to get a promotion' 'I didn't talk much to other people about my self or my feelings'. The behaviors were unrelated to the rape crime to avoid direct blaming which participants might not be willing to do (see Study 2). A filler task was used in order for participants not to be able to remember the used sentences in the article literally. 2 scales were added to the questionnaire; a disassociation scale and a derogation scale. The disassociation scale (Hafer, 2000) measures the extent to which participants associate or disassociate themselves from the victim. The Cronbach's

Alpha for this scale is .95. A different derogation scale was used from Study 1 because Study 1 did not show that strong result of derogation on that scale. The derogation scale in this study is slightly more sensitive since it used 6 point scale with bipolar traits like: *friendly – unfriendly*. The selected traits came from a list that was used in past victim derogation research (Lot & Lot, 1986). These traits have been shown to distinguish between liked and disliked individuals (Lott, Lott, Reed & Crowe, 1970). This scale is used because as a defence mechanism people might disassociate themselves more from victims that keep on suffering in order to 'prove' to themselves that they are not like the victim so something similar could not easy happen to them. The dependent variable is the language abstraction on 1) negative unrelated behaviors and 2) positive unrelated behaviors in the answers participants gave when they were told to recall some information about Alice H.: "Now try to recall the first article you have read, without going back to the article itself. In the beginning of the article Alice H. gave some information about herself/ her life before the rape. Please write down as detailed as possible all the things you remember about the person Alice H. and her life before the rape (so not about the rape incident and her life after the rape):" The answers participants wrote down is analyzed by the LCM for the average language abstraction. Later on the average language abstraction for the participants in the two conditions will be compared.

RESULTS:

In total 50 participants participated in this study of which 6 were male and 44 female. The average age was 21.3 years. In total 25 participants filled in the questionnaire with the high BJW threat case and the other 25 participants filled in the questionnaire with the low BJW threat case.

A one-way between-group multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate differences in language abstraction on types of behaviors for subjects with the two cases. Two dependent variables were used: language abstraction on the positive unrelated behaviors and language abstraction on the negative unrelated behaviors. The independent variable was the case (high BJW threat/ low BJW threat). There was no significant difference found between the two cases on the combined dependent variables: $F(1, 28) = 1.65, p = .21$. Wilks' Lambda = .883. However when the results for the dependent variables were considered separately a marginal result was found on the average language abstraction on the negative unrelated behaviors: $F(1,28) = 3.13, p = .089$. inspection of the mean scores indicated that participants in the high BJW threat case report higher levels of language abstraction ($M = 1.82, SD = 0.49$) on the negative behaviors than participants in the low BJW threat case ($M = 1.53, SD = 0.37$).

A one-way between-group multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate differences in recall of the types of behaviors for participants with the two cases. Two dependent variables were used: recall of the positive unrelated behaviors and recall of the negative unrelated behaviors. The independent variable was the case (high BJW threat/ low BJW threat). There was a marginal difference found between the two cases on the combined dependent variables: $F(1, 49) = 2.79, p = .072$, Wilks' Lambda = .894. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately a significant result was found on the recall of positive information: $F(1,49) = 4.93, p = .031$. An inspection of the mean scores indicated that participants in the high BJW threat case recall less positive information ($M = 1.00, SD = 0.82$) than participants in the low BJW threat case ($M = 1.56, SD = 0.96$).

A one-way between-group multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate differences in amount of words used to describe the different types of behaviors for participants with the two cases. Two dependent variables were used: amount of words used to describe the positive unrelated behaviors and amount of words used to describe the negative unrelated behaviors. The independent variable was the case (high BJW threat/ low BJW threat). There was a significant difference found between the two cases on the combined dependent variables: $F(1, 49) = 5.97, p = .005$ Wilks' Lambda = .798. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately significant results were found for the amount of words used to describe positive information: $F(1, 49) = 6.95, p = .011$. Participants with the low BJW threat used significantly more words to describe positive facts about Alice H. (M = 14.60, SD= 11.53) than participants in the High BJW threat condition. (M = 7.52, SD = 6.88). Another statistical significant difference was found for the amount of words used to describe negative facts about Alice H. Participants in the high BJW threat condition used significantly less amount of words to describe negative facts (High threat M = 13.16 SD = 12.46) than participants in the low BJW threat condition (M = 23.12 SD = 16.87).

A one-way between-group multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate differences in amount of LCM coded words on types of behaviors for participants with the two cases. Two dependent variables were used: amount of LCM coded words on the positive unrelated behaviors and amount if LCM coded words on the negative unrelated behaviors. The independent variable was the case (high threat/ low threat). There was a significant difference found between the two cases on the combined dependent variables: $F(1, 49) = 3.97, p = .026$, Wilks' Lambda = .856. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately a significant result was found on the amount of LCM coded words for the positive behaviors: $F(1,49) = 7.51, p = .009$. An inspection of the mean scores indicated that participants in the low BJW threat case use more LCM coded words to describe positive facts (M = 1.96, SD = 1.54) than participants in the high BJW threat case (M = .96 SD = 0.98). In Table 3 the significant results of Study 3 are presented.

Table 3. the average score (M) and the Standard Deviation (SD) for participants in the high BJW threat condition and participants in the low BJW threat condition for the average language abstraction on negative facts about Alice H (1), the positive facts about Alice H. (2), the amount of words used to describe the negative facts (3), amount of words used to describe the positive facts (4) and the amount of words that could be coded by the LCM concerning positive facts about Alice H. (5).

	Threat			
	Low threat (perpetrator caught)		High threat (perpetrator not caught)	
(1)Language Abstraction (negative facts)	M	1.53	M	1.82
	(SD)	0.37	(SD)	0.49
(2) Positive facts recalled	M	1.56	M	1.00
	(SD)	0.96	(SD)	0.82
(3) Amount of words positive facts	M	14.60	M	7.52
	(SD)	11.53	(SD)	6.88
(4) Amount of words negative facts	M	23.12	M	13.16
	(SD)	16.87	(SD)	12.46
(5) Amount of codable words positive facts	M	1.96	M	0.96
	(SD)	1.54	(SD)	0.98

A one-way between groups multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate the difference of scores on the derogation scale for the high BJW threat and the low BJW threat condition. It appeared that 3 character traits of the derogation scale showed a significant difference for the traits: *careful-careless*, *talented-untalented* and *competent-incompetent* on the level of $p < .05$. In this scale a higher score refers to the negative side of the continuum of the trait on a 6 point scale. *Careful - Careless*: $F(1,49) = 5.39$, $p = .025$. Participants in the high BJW threat condition rated the victim significantly more as careless ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.87$) than participants in the low BJW threat condition ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.07$). *Competent - Incompetent*: $F(1,49) = 5.66$ $p = .02$. Participants in the high BJW threat condition rated the victim significantly more as incompetent ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.89$) than participants in the low BJW threat condition ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.12$). A marginal significant difference was found for the trait *Talented -Untalented* $F(1,49) = 2.88$, $p = .096$. Participants in the high BJW threat condition rated the victim as marginally more untalented ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.91$) than participants in the low BJW threat condition ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.24$). No significant differences were found for the *association / disassociation scale*, also not when controlled for sex and only female participants were used for the analysis. People also did not answer the questions about their impression on the rape article itself significantly different.

DISCUSSION:

The third study clearly supports the main question of this thesis. It appears that participants in the high BJW threat case use marginal higher levels of language abstraction to describe the negative behavior of the victim than participants in the low BJW threat case. Participants in the high BJW threat case have more reasons to derogate or blame the victim in order to protect their BJW, this appears through the higher levels of language abstraction on the negative behavior. Besides higher levels of language abstraction is it also the case that participants in the high threat case recall less of the positive behaviors than participants in the low threat case. This points out that possible differences in language abstraction might not be the only mean to derogate the victim. By recalling less of the positive behaviors of the victim, you are also portraying the victim in a more negative light. Results of Study 3 also show that people in the low threat case tend to use more words to describe both the positive and the negative information. A possible explanation for this results could be that because there is not really a threat to the BJW, participants are not trying to avoid the subject/ material and because of that answer more extensively than participants in the high threat case, a more all-embracing explanation for these results can be found in the general discussion.

Participants in the low threat case tend to use more words that were coded by the LCM to describe positive information than participants in the high threat case. This result is also in line with the idea that participants in the high threat case need to portray the victim in a more negative matter in order to restore their BJW. Words that were categorized by the LCM give information about the character and/ or behavior of the victim. When participants in the low threat case use more LCM coded words to describe positive behavior of the victim, they refer to relatively more positive aspect of the character and of behavior of the victim than participants in the high threat case, and by this portraying the victim in a relative more positive manner.

Recall

Participants in the low threat case have no reason to derogate the victim, so they more easily tend to portray also the good behaviors of the victim. A person who, because of the threat to the BJW needs to derogate the victim might obviously do this by recalling less of the positive information about the victim. It makes sense that participants in the low threat condition recalled more information on both positive and negative behaviors of Alice H. since participants in the low threat condition have no 'intrinsic' motivation to leave certain information out and will just perform at their best, whereas participants in the high threat do have a motivation to leave certain information out. This result has been found in Study 3.

Derogation Scale

Effects of blaming and derogation were found on 3 of the 10 traits. We can say that blaming or derogation was taking place at least on these 3 traits. The other traits might have been too much unrelated with the given information about the victim in the article like *sincere – insincere*, or too obvious; *intelligent - unintelligent* because Alice H. was writing for one of UK's biggest academic magazine so in a way she must be very intelligent. The more ambiguous traits like *competent* or *talented* might be more suitable for discovering aspects of derogation because they can be judged and interpreted in various ways.

Avoidant Behavior

Besides the confirmation by the results of the main research hypotheses, the results also point out to another possible explanation that appears to be suitable. The idea is that participants in the high threat condition feel a stronger need to divert their attention and focus away from the threatening stimulus. This idea can be supported by the results of this study because participants in the high threat case 1) recalled significantly less positive information 2) used significantly less words in general to describe the behaviors of Alice H. and 3) used significantly less LCM coded words in their descriptions of the positive behaviors of Alice H. The answers of the participants in the high threat condition are less extensive and cover less information of the provided stimulus material, especially concerning the positive information about Alice H. A study of Novak & Lerner (1968) showed that participants exhibited greater willingness to interact with other 'normal' students when these others were similar to themselves than when different. However, if the other student was emotionally disturbed (threatening, could also happen to me) the preference was reversed – greater unwillingness to interact with the similar, but disturbed student was found. Based on these results one can expect that in this study participants will also be less willing to interact with the victim Alice H. in the high threat case and because of this portraying avoidant behavior to talk about her. Lerner (1980) also mentioned that one of the strategies for preserving a belief in a just world is, one of the non rational strategies, withdrawal. The physical and mental avoidance of injustice in the first place as well as withdrawing both physically and psychologically from threats to the need to believe in a just world when they are encountered. This might result in the impairment of complete and detailed answers about Alice H. in the open ended question. McGinnies (1949) and Postman, Bruner & McGinnies (1948) were the first to suggest that the perception of external stimuli is not free of the shackles of internal events: attitudes, values, needs, and psychological defenses all impinge upon perception. Besides speaking of avoidant behavior one might also speak of the psychological term repression. The concept of repression is defined rather clearly by Rapaport (1946). The submergence in the unconscious of information or knowledge possessed, because of the danger hidden in that knowledge for the psychological equilibrium of the individual. Results of the studies of Weiner (1967) show that

subjects can 'turn something away from consciousness' during the storage period. He also argues that the cue function of anxiety influences storage, while the affective properties of anxiety hinder/ trace retrieval. Perceptual defense occurs when a person's value orientations act as a barrier to stimuli that are threatening (Runyon, 1977). People only perceive that information that conforms to their beliefs and attitudes.

Cognitive Load

Another way to look at the found result is by relating the impairment of correctly and broadly answering the open question in the high threat case to the idea that the high threat case might have created a higher cognitive load. Participants might have general justice concerns or concerns related to a threat to their BJW after reading the information in the high threat case. An added pressure or concern can create an extra situational burden that interferes with the ability to perform as well at a mental task as might otherwise be possible (Steele, 1997). Problems might arise with the working memory. Cognitive psychology has identified working memory capacity as the ability to focus one's attention on a given task while keeping task irrelevant thoughts at bay (Engle, 2001). There is evidence to suggest that chronic levels of stress and anxiety might be associated with lower levels of working memory capacity (Eysenck & Calvo, 1992). More general stress impairs working memory (Klein & Boals, 2001). An important and relevant effect of that preoccupation is that there would be correspondingly less cognitive resources available for attending to and engaging in more systematic thought processes or the influence of other motives (Lerner, 2003). This might have been the case in the current research for participants in the high threat case. Using less words in general and less LCM coded words (hence information about the behavior and/ or character of the victim) in the replies of the high threat condition are clear signs supporting an idea of distancing oneself or avoiding wide-ranging communication about the victim. However when three results are taken together 1) higher language abstraction on negative behavior by subjects in the high threat case 2) more positive behaviors recalled by subjects in the low threat case 3) more LCM codable words used in the descriptions of the positive behaviors by participants in the low threat case, one can clearly see an overall picture that points out to aspects of victim derogation.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS:

The answer to the main question of this thesis, whether people will use language abstraction to blame or derogate a victim when their BJW is threatened, can be answered with a "yes". Especially the third study confirms the research hypothesis. Higher levels of language abstraction were found by subjects in the high threat case on negative behaviors. These results show dynamics of victim derogation because the victim is portrayed in a relative more negative way by participants that received a high BJW threat. Besides this promising result it is important to know that in Study 2 participants showed a general tendency to portray positive information about a person/ victim in a more abstract way, no matter their case being under high threat or low threat regarding their BJW. It seems as if nowadays with the current 'Zeitgeist' victim derogation is less actively expressed. This can be due to the fact that through science, improved knowledge and understanding of our surroundings, blaming the victim is less and less 'needed' but also less accepted. That is why sensitive measures are needed like the ones used in Study 3.

The third study gives, besides the most important results related to language abstraction, very strong results regarding the low threat condition. In the low threat condition more positive information was recalled, more words

were used to describe both positive and negative behaviors and more LCM coded words were used in the descriptions of the positive behaviors. In the third study the manipulations were much more similar to each other than the manipulations in study 1. Study 3: High threat: *The perpetrator was not caught; because of this Alice has not been able to put the trauma behind her.* Low threat: *The perpetrator was caught; because of this Alice has been able to put the trauma behind her.* This manipulation also contains less details and bits of information than the manipulation in Study 1 and people did not write about this manipulation in their replies. This makes the results of Study 3 much more 'clean', and statistically more reliable. Because of this I will rely a lot on the results of Study 3 in the final discussion and conclusions.

In total 3 studies were conducted, Study 1 clearly showed us that people portrayed higher levels of language abstraction on the high threat case, this result supported the suggestion that the BJW effected the language abstraction people used. In Study 2 I showed that even when participants were instructed to blame a victim, their willingness to do so was rather low. General higher levels of language abstraction were found when people described safe behaviors of the victim. Participants showed a low willingness to use abstract language on the behaviors performed by the victim that might have increased the risk for the rape crime. This result indicated that participants were not that willing to directly blame the victim. In Study 3 I made some slight changes in the stimulus material by using negative and positive behaviors performed by the victim that were not directly related to the crime, to avoid subjects to feel as if they are directly blaming the victim. Study 3 clear supported the main prediction of this thesis, participants in the high BJW threat case used relatively higher levels of language abstraction to describe the negative behaviors of the victim. In this way the victim is portrayed in a negative manner. Moreover participants in the high BJW threat case also recalled relatively less positive information than participants in the low BJW threat case, both results point out to aspects of victim derogation. Study 3 offered the most valuable results that support the main question of this thesis. Throughout the studies some other important factors were identified that might be address in new studies as well. Besides our point of focus on language abstraction, it also turned out that the amount of words (general words to describe the event and the amount of words that could be coded by the LCM) seemed to be significantly different for participants in the high BJW threat and participants in the low BJW threat case.

SUGGESTIONS FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF STUDIES:

Implicit Measures of Victim Derogation

Implicit measures could be used to possibly find even stronger effects of victim derogation and replicate the current findings. Even measures of language abstraction might have to be measured in a more implicit way. BJW is a preconscious non-normative belief and a rather implicit assumption (Lerner, 1980, 1998). When people get enough time to use their cognitive recourses and control for certain reactions they might also control themselves for victim derogation which is socially not so widely accepted. Often when people have enough time and cognitive resources they will not express this belief. They will reflect on the matter and thoughtfully frame their reactions within conventional norms. They are dealing with impression management (Lerner, 2003). If you would want to find clear signs of derogation through language abstraction one might need to use methods to find peoples initial reaction. Defensive attributions of blame as well as characteristic derogation are unlikely when they require a great deal of cognitive distortion (Lerner, 1980) An example for a study that could be ran to find initial reactions is by

measuring reaction times to certain sentences. This can be done by presenting half of the participants with a case where the victim poses a high threat to the BJW and half of the participants with a case where the victim poses a relatively low threat to the BJW followed by sentences that present concrete behaviors performed by the victim. After reading the sentences the participants will be asked if a certain word was mentioned in the presented sentences. The word that will be presented is of a higher level of language abstraction than the word that was used in the stimulus sentence. Participants will be asked to answer as fast as possible if this word was present in the sentence. Both positive and negative sentences about the victim will be presented. An example: 'Alice put a coin in a charity box' followed by the word that is shortly presented: donate (higher level of abstraction). The prediction is that participants who have to derogate a victim (because of high threat to their BJW) will more easily think that negative abstract words were actually present in the sentences and will think this less easy with the positive behaviors presented in the sentences.

Writing as a Mean to Restore BJW

For people just writing down something about what happened in the article might already have been a way to compensate the victim or to relieve their possible negative effect. Measures should be used that avoid possible opportunities for relief, also one might control more for the writing because writing in itself gives more time to people to control their writing and carefully think of their answers. The idea that somebody else will read what you have written might make it harder for people to clearly express negative affect towards the victim. This also asks for measures that do not give any chance for cognitive processing, social desirable answers or relief of feelings that already restore the BJW. Since the BJW theory sees victim derogation more as a preconscious non-normative belief, one should come up with a measure suitable to discover this belief. Self-report measures of attitudes may be susceptible to self-presentation bias and subtle forms of stereotypes and prejudice are not captured by the explicit self-report measures (Dasgupta et al. 2000). To tackle this issue in a right way one could take examples from the stereotype literature and inspire themselves with the implicit measures which are used in that field. One could change the way people reply to stimulus material. Other measures could be used by letting both the victim and the participant actively be a part of the experiment, procedural unfairness could be used to 'create' the victim. Participants can be asked afterwards to talk about the victim and some of the behaviors the victim had shown (again these should be unrelated behaviors to the experiment, like shown in Study 3).

Recall of Information

More 'recall of information' studies could be done related to the BJW. Study 3 showed a very promising result concerning the recall of information about the victim. Another study also shows that positive and negative concrete behaviors are recalled in a different way. This study suggests that the threat to BJW might influence people to recall information in different ways. An unpublished work of Harris (2005) about the derogation of rape victims in memory showed that subjects whose BJW was threatened, recalled information about a victim in a relatively more negative way. For example recalling him/ her to donate less money to charity than he/ she actually did or reporting the victim to have fewer friends than he/ she actually had. The study of Harris together with my study shows that also recall is a very important aspect of victim derogation. This might be a very interesting starting point for further studies because it might reveal how victims are differently portrayed to the outside world in yet another way, through recall of information about a victim.

Cognitive load

Another possible explanation for the impaired answers in the high threat case was that of a higher cognitive load. To find out if this was at stake one could run certain tasks to discover the levels of cognitive load. Hafer (2000) found that witnesses of a serious injustice required longer recognition times in a subsequent 'Stroop' color identification task when the stimulus words, although not consciously recognizable, contained explicit justice-related content. Moreover, the extent of this interference, indicating preoccupation and concern, was predictive of the witness derogating the victim presumably as an attempt to restore justice. To find out if effects of selective perception/ perceptual defense or avoidant behavior are influencing the subjects in the high threat case in order to protect themselves from threatening or contradictory stimuli (Assael, 1992). One could easily use the Stroop task Hafer (2000) used. Much of the research that has been conducted on working memory capacity has been aimed at developing construct valid measures that can predict performance on complex cognitive tasks (Engle et al., 1999, Klein & Fiss, 1999). A dual process test called the 'operation-span task' that has been developed and used extensively by Engle and his colleagues to assess working memory could be used (La Pointe & Engle, 1990). This is an example of a test that could rule out cognitive load as an explanation for the found results.

Amount of LCM Coded Words

Study 3 clearly showed that participants in the low threat condition used more LCM coded words regarding the positive information about the victim. This is an important result because LCM coded words give information about either the behavior or the character of the victim. Participants in the low threat condition in that case gave more information regarding those aspects of the victim. They are not trying to avoid talking about her. In Study 1 more LCM coded words were used in the high threat manipulation. It is hard to say what was causing this effect. Possibly by addressing attention to the suffering of the victim, one could compensate the victim or express a form of empathy to restore their BJW but the amount of LCM coded words is surely something that should be taken into account in future research in the field of the LCM when trying to understand people's reactions in more depth.

Length of Replies

In Study 1 and 3 it appeared that participants tend to use relatively more words to describe the threatening information than information which contains low levels of threat. This result seems surprising at first sight because the rest of the results in Study 3 show that participants give more "complete" and "all-embracing" answers in the low threat condition. This seems slightly contradictory, nevertheless when looking through the filled in questionnaires it brings out a possible explanation. To blame or derogate a victim is something that people don't do so easily. First of all it is socially and often culturally not so accepted to blame a victim. Because of this people might use more words and more long winded / less concise explanations and phrases to prove their point. This idea also finds some support in the results that participants used higher levels of language abstraction to describe positive information about the victim Alice H. (Study 2). The reverse might be happening when giving longer and less concise reactions when describing something negative about the victim Alice H. Study 2 also shows that participants show relatively lower levels of language abstraction when they describe negative behaviors of the victim. More concrete sentences (DAV's, IAV's) tend to contain more words than abstract sentences (adjectives) For example concrete: 'Alex slapped Marina in the face' and abstract: 'Alex is aggressive'. The situational

descriptions in more concrete wording tend to be longer. Generally, it might just be easier to present positive information about a person/ victim in a more obvious way and negative information about a person/ victim in a more 'masked' way. To test this hypotheses further experiments could be run were one could look in the replies of participants on positive and negative information about a victim and looking for certain type of words like; if, but, although, sometimes, occasionally, however, nevertheless, on the other hand, even if etc. It is also very important to look for *hedges* in the replies of subjects. A hedge is a mitigating device used to lessen the impact of an utterance. Typically they are adjectives or adverbs. For example: *He is a slightly arrogant person.* (adverb) or *There might be a few non significant mistakes in his answers* (adjective). Quite a few of these hedges were found in Study 3 when participants had to describe negative behaviors of the victim. 3 examples taken from replies of Study 3: 'She was *slightly* stressed', 'she was a *bit* bothered, however convinced herself that to be normal', 'She told a *few* lies'. One can also look for *qualifiers*; this is a content word that qualifies the meaning of a noun or a verb. Further studies have to be conducted to look into depth and analyze by different means the language that people used in their replies to find a solid explanation for the longer reply sentences regarding negative information about the victim and to gain more insight in people's replies.

Hopefully the current research was able to show that victim derogation can happen through various ways. Even ways that are not that noticeable at first sight. Without being aware of it we might ourselves use language that makes a victim look bad but we can also be influenced by others who use this sort of language. Openly derogating a victim is not that much accepted in society. However, also implicit ways of derogating a victim still exist. My thesis might help to make people more sensitive towards these less visible signs of victim derogation. This awareness might help people to fight against these ways of expressing, even in the media, and by this making a small step towards diminishing the suffering of innocent victims.

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Appendix

Appendix A: questionnaires Study 1 (High threat case / Low threat case)

Vragenlijst

Rechtvaardigheid & Communicatie

NC

Kim Helder

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Deze vragenlijst gaat over rechtvaardigheid en communicatie. Je krijgt zo meteen een krantenartikel te lezen. Probeer een zo levendig mogelijke voortstelling te maken van het incident dat in het krantenartikel wordt beschreven. Daarna zal je worden gevraagd om een aantal vragen te beantwoorden. Beantwoord de vragen zonder terug te bladeren.

De vragenlijst in totaal zal ongeveer 20 minuten in beslag nemen.

Ik wil je bij deze alvast bedanken voor het invullen van de vragenlijst; dit zal mij enorm helpen bij mijn afstuderen!

Neem rustig de tijd om onderstaand krantenartikel te lezen:

Verkrachting Nijmeegse studente opgenomen op video

DE VOLKSKRANT, BINNENLAND, 3 SEPTEMBER 2007

De politie van Nijmegen heeft dit weekeinde een aangifte ontvangen van een drieëntwintigjarige studente Alice H. uit Nijmegen. Gewapend met een mes ontvoerde twee mannen het slachtoffer samen met haar vijfjarige nichtje vanuit een parkeergarage bij winkelcentrum Dukenburg.

Van onze verslaggever

NIJMEGEN

De studente stond op het punt iets uit de auto te halen, toen de twee verdachten haar onder bedreiging met een mes bevalen in te stappen en door te schuiven naar de passagiersstoel. Het 5 jarige nichtje van Alice H. zat al op de achterbank.

Na een autorit stopte de verdachte de auto in een bos bij het Duitse Kleef en verkrachtte de vrouw. Terwijl een van de daders de vrouw verkrachtte, filmde de andere dader alles met een in de auto gevonden videocamera. Bij een pompstation bij Beuningen verlieten de mannen de wagen, nadat zij het slachtoffer hadden bedreigd dat ze geen contact met de politie mocht opnemen. Het nichtje van Alice H. is getuige geweest van het hele incident.

De studente was die ochtend in haast op weg naar een familiebruiloft. Alice H had zich al omgekleed voor de bruiloft. Ze ging naar het winkelcentrum om de laatste inkopen te doen. Omdat ze zo snel geen parkeerplaats kon vinden, parkeerde ze de auto achterin de parkeergarage. De 2 mannen beslopen haar van achteren en bevalen haar in te stappen.

De politie heeft het signalement van de daders opgenomen. Momenteel ontbreekt nog elk spoor van de daders. De politie houdt er rekening mee dat de mannen meer slachtoffers gemaakt hebben.

De woordvoeder wil niets zeggen over de etnische afkomst van daders en slachtoffers. Wel heeft de Nijmeegse politie, volgens de woordvoerder, niet vaak zo'n gewelddadige verkrachting meegemaakt.

De huidige situatie van Alice H.:

De daders zijn nooit gepakt en lopen nog steeds ongestraft vrij rond, ook ontvangt Alice weinig steun vanuit haar naaste omgeving en maatschappelijke instituties. Hierdoor heeft ze veel last van angstaanvallen en ze gaat niet veel de straat meer op vanwege het idee dat ze de dader weer tegen het lijf zou kunnen lopen.

Deze schaal wordt gemeten op een 6-puntsschaal: 1 = nooit, 2 = bijna nooit, 3 = soms, 4 = meestal, 5 = bijna altijd en 6 = altijd. Omcirkel het juiste antwoord.

De volgende vragen hebben betrekking op emotionele reacties op algemene dagelijkse gebeurtenissen. Geef alsjeblieft aan hoe **jij** zou reageren op deze gebeurtenissen door een getal achter de vraag aan te kruisen. Baseer je antwoorden alsjeblieft op hoe **jij** zou reageren en *niet* op hoe jij denkt dat anderen zouden reageren.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Ik geniet er heel erg van om in het gezelschap van andere personen te zijn. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. | Ik voel me behoorlijk slecht als ik een leugen vertel. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. | Mijn emoties zijn vaak intenser van aard dan die van de meeste andere mensen. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. | Als ik een taak op weet te lossen waarvan ik dacht dat het onmogelijk was, ben ik verrukt. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. | Ik wordt zeer ontroerd door verdrietige films. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. | Als ik blij ben voel ik me onbezorgd en tevreden in plaats van levenslustig en opgewonden. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. | Mijn vrienden zouden over mij kunnen zeggen dat ik emotioneel ben. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. | Mijn leukste herinneringen zijn die van tijden waarin ik me onbezorgd en tevreden voelde in plaats van levenslustig en opgewonden. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. | Het raakt me diep als ik iemand zie die zwaar gewond is. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. | Als ik me goed voel raak ik gemakkelijk van een goed humeur in een echt opgewekte stemming. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. | De woorden 'kalm en onverstoort' beschrijven mij goed. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. | Als ik een beloning krijg voel ik me dolgelukkig. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. | Als ik ergens in slaag reageer ik kalm en tevreden. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. | Als ik iets fout doe, schaam ik me diep en voel ik me erg schuldig. | | | | |
| | <i>Nooit</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

15.	Ik kan rustig blijven, zelfs op dagen dat alles tegenzit.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
16.	Als ik boos ben kan ik nog gemakkelijk rationeel nadenken en reageer ik niet overdreven.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
17.	Als ik weet dat ik iets erg goed gedaan heb, dan voel ik me eerder ontspannen en tevreden dan opgewonden en opgetogen.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
18.	Gevoelens van bezorgdheid zijn bij mij meestal erg sterk van aard.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
19.	Als ik ergens enthousiast over ben wil ik mijn gevoelens met iedereen delen.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
20.	Mijn vrienden zullen waarschijnlijk van mij zeggen dat ik een gespannen of zenuwachtig persoon ben.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
21.	Wanneer ik me schuldig voel dan voel ik dit heel sterk.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
22.	Wanneer ik me blij voel is dat meer een gevoel van innerlijke rust en tevredenheid dan van vreugde en opwindning.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4

De volgende vragen kunnen beantwoord worden op een 5-puntsschaal, lopend van “nee” tot “ja”.
Omcirkel het juist antwoord.

1. Ik krijg het benauwd als dingen veranderen.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

2. Ik ga me zorgen maken als een situatie onzeker is.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

3. Onzekerheid maakt me bang.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

4. Als ik onzeker ben over wat ik moet gaan doen dan voel ik me gauw verloren.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

5. Als ik situaties niet duidelijk kan onderscheiden dan word ik ongerust.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

6. Onzeker zijn is een zenuwslopende ervaring.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

7. Bij het nemen van beslissingen word ik afgeschrikt door de angst om fouten te maken.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
8. Plotselinge veranderingen brengen mij van mijn stuk.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
9. Denken aan onzekerheid geeft me een depressief gevoel.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
10. Ik ben terughoudend als het om het maken van veranderingen gaat.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
11. Ik word echt heel erg bezorgd als ik niet weet wat iemand van me vindt.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
12. Als ik niet zeker ben wat iemands van mij wil, dan raak ik vaak van streek of word ik boos.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
13. Als de toekomst onzeker is dan verwacht ik in het algemeen het ergste.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
14. Als een situatie onduidelijk is word ik boos.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

15. Ik heb de neiging gemakkelijk op te geven als ik een situatie niet duidelijk begrijp.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

1. Ik denk dat hetgeen Alice overkomen is komt door de persoon die ze is.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

2. Ik denk dat Alice zich onverantwoordelijk heeft gedragen in haar situatie.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

3. Ik denk dat Alice onbedachtzamer is dan ik.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

4. Ik vind dat Alice beter had moeten weten.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

5. Ik denk dat Alice impulsiever is dan ik.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

6. Ik denk dat hetgeen Alice is overkomen aan haar gedrag te wijten is.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

7. Ik denk dat hetgeen Alice is overkomen te wijten is aan haar persoonlijkheid.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

8. Ik vind dat Alice weinig verantwoordelijkheidsgevoel heeft.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

9. Ik vind Alice een erg onvoorzichtig meisje.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

10. Wat Alice is overkomen, heeft ze uitgelokt door haar gedrag.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

11. Ik vind dat Alice zich dom heeft gedragen.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

12. Door hoe Alice is, zou zoiets haar nog wel eens kunnen overkomen.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

13. Ik denk dat Alice erg onvoorzichtig is geweest.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

14. Ik denk dat hetgeen Alice overkomen is komt door hoe ze zich gedragen heeft.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

1. Wat vind je van de situatie beschreven in het krantenartikel:

Erg negatief 1 2 3 4 5 *Erg positief*

2. Wat vind je van de huidige situatie van Alice H.:

Erg negatief 1 2 3 4 5 *Erg* *positief*

Demografische gegevens

Ik ben een man / vrouw

Ik ben jaar

EINDE VRAGENLIJST

Nogmaals bedankt voor het invullen van de vragenlijst! Zou je willen nakijken of je alle vragen hebt ingevuld? Ik kom de vragenlijst zo weer ophalen.

Vragenlijst

Rechtvaardigheid & Communicatie

PC

Kim Helder

kim_helder@hotmail.com

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De huidige situatie van Alice H.:

De daders zijn vrij snel na het misdrijf opgepakt. Zij zitten momenteel voor langere tijd vast in de gevangenis. Alice ontvangt veel steun vanuit haar omgeving en vanuit maatschappelijke instituties. Momenteel is Alice bezig met haar studie en doet vrijwilligerswerk voor slachtofferhulp.

Deze schaal wordt gemeten op een 6-puntsschaal: 1 = nooit, 2 = bijna nooit, 3 = soms, 4 = meestal, 5 = bijna altijd en 6 = altijd. Omcirkel het juiste antwoord.

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23. Ik geniet er heel erg van om in het gezelschap van andere personen te zijn.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

24. Ik voel me behoorlijk slecht als ik een leugen vertel.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

25. Mijn emoties zijn vaak intenser van aard dan die van de meeste andere mensen.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

26. Als ik een taak op weet te lossen waarvan ik dacht dat het onmogelijk was, ben ik verrukt.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

27. Ik wordt zeer ontroerd door verdrietige films.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

28. Als ik blij ben voel ik me onbezorgd en tevreden in plaats van levenslustig en opgewonden.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

29. Mijn vrienden zouden over mij kunnen zeggen dat ik emotioneel ben.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

30. Mijn leukste herinneringen zijn die van tijden waarin ik me onbezorgd en tevreden voelde in plaats van levenslustig en opgewonden.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

31. Het raakt me diep als ik iemand zie die zwaar gewond is.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

32. Als ik me goed voel raak ik gemakkelijk van een goed humeur in een echt opgewekte stemming.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

33. De woorden 'kalm en onverstoort' beschrijven mij goed.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

34. Als ik een beloning krijg voel ik me dolgelukkig.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

35. Als ik ergens in slaag reageer ik kalm en tevreden.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

36. Als ik iets fout doe, schaam ik me diep en voel ik me erg schuldig.

Nooit 1 2 3 4 5 6

37.	Ik kan rustig blijven, zelfs op dagen dat alles tegenzit.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
38.	Als ik boos ben kan ik nog gemakkelijk rationeel nadenken en reageer ik niet overdreven.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
39.	Als ik weet dat ik iets erg goed gedaan heb, dan voel ik me eerder ontspannen en tevreden dan opgewonden en opgetogen.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
40.	Gevoelens van bezorgdheid zijn bij mij meestal erg sterk van aard.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
41.	Als ik ergens enthousiast over ben wil ik mijn gevoelens met iedereen delen.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
42.	Mijn vrienden zullen waarschijnlijk van mij zeggen dat ik een gespannen of zenuwachtig persoon ben.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
43.	Wanneer ik me schuldig voel dan voel ik dit heel sterk.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4
44.	Wanneer ik me blij voel is dat meer een gevoel van innerlijke rust en tevredenheid dan van vreugde en opwindning.	<i>Nooit</i>	1	2	3	4

De volgende vragen kunnen beantwoord worden op een 5-puntsschaal, lopend van “nee” tot “ja”.
Omcirkel het juist antwoord.

9. Ik krijg het benauwd als dingen veranderen.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

10. Ik ga me zorgen maken als een situatie onzeker is.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

11. Onzekerheid maakt me bang.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

12. Als ik onzeker ben over wat ik moet gaan doen dan voel ik me gauw verloren.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

13. Als ik situaties niet duidelijk kan onderscheiden dan word ik ongerust.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

14. Onzeker zijn is een zenuwslopende ervaring.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

15. Bij het nemen van beslissingen word ik afgeschrikt door de angst om fouten te maken.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
16. Plotselinge veranderingen brengen mij van mijn stuk.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
9. Denken aan onzekerheid geeft me een depressief gevoel.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
16. Ik ben terughoudend als het om het maken van veranderingen gaat.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
17. Ik word echt heel erg bezorgd als ik niet weet wat iemand van me vindt.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
18. Als ik niet zeker ben wat iemands van mij wil, dan raak ik vaak van streek of word ik boos.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
19. Als de toekomst onzeker is dan verwacht ik in het algemeen het ergste.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*
20. Als een situatie onduidelijk is word ik boos.
- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

21. Ik heb de neiging gemakkelijk op te geven als ik een situatie niet duidelijk begrijp.

- Nee* *Meestal niet* *Geen mening* *Meestal wel* *Ja*

1. Ik denk dat hetgeen Alice overkomen is komt door de persoon die ze is.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

2. Ik denk dat Alice zich onverantwoordelijk heeft gedragen in haar situatie.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

3. Ik denk dat Alice onbedachtzamer is dan ik.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

4. Ik vind dat Alice beter had moeten weten.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

5. Ik denk dat Alice impulsiever is dan ik.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

6. Ik denk dat hetgeen Alice is overkomen aan haar gedrag te wijten is.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

7. Ik denk dat hetgeen Alice is overkomen te wijten is aan haar persoonlijkheid.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

8. Ik vind dat Alice weinig verantwoordelijkheidsgevoel heeft.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

9. Ik vind Alice een erg onvoorzichtig meisje.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

10. Wat Alice is overkomen, heeft ze uitgelokt door haar gedrag.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

11. Ik vind dat Alice zich dom heeft gedragen.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

12. Door hoe Alice is, zou zoiets haar nog wel eens kunnen overkomen.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

13. Ik denk dat Alice erg onvoorzichtig is geweest.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

14. Ik denk dat hetgeen Alice overkomen is komt door hoe ze zich gedragen heeft.

Helemaal mee oneens 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Helemaal mee eens*

1. Wat vind je van de situatie beschreven in het krantenartikel:

Erg negatief 1 2 3 4 5 *Erg positief*

2. Wat vind je van de huidige situatie van Alice H.:

Erg negatief 1 2 3 4 5 *Erg* *positief*

Demografische gegevens

Ik ben een man / vrouw

Ik ben jaar

EINDE VRAGENLIJST

Nogmaals bedankt voor het invullen van de vragenlijst! Zou je willen nakijken of je alle vragen hebt ingevuld? Ik kom de vragenlijst zo weer ophalen.

PC

Appendix

Appendix B: questionnaires Study 2 (High threat case / Low threat case)

*Perception on Safety of
Behaviour
&
Crime related information
processing*

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Before you start this questionnaire we would like to inform you that some questions will be related to a rape crime. If you or someone close to you had any personal experiences with a rape incident we ask you to take this into consideration and consider not filling in the questionnaire.

You will be presented with certain measures and precautions that a woman might take in the light of a rape crime. You will be asked to judge how relatively safe these behaviors are according to you on a scale from 1 to 6. Please encircle the answer that you find most appropriate.

- Wearing a short and sexy outfit.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Drinking several spirits and liqueurs in a bar.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Asking others what they know about the guy she is talking to.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Walking alone outside at night in unlit areas.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Telling her friends where she is going when she leaves a bar.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Putting the phone number of the police in her speed-dial list.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Carrying a pepper spray with her.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Accepting drinks from a stranger.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Kissing passionately with a stranger in a bar.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Telling good friends that she will text them ones she arrives home safe.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

Please take the time to carefully answer the following questions. The next questions are about a rape incident. Alice was walking home at night after she went to a bar. On the way home she got raped by a guy she met in the bar.

Imagine that someone wanted to imply that Alice was not at all to blame for this offence: (for example a feminist or, a prosecution lawyer trying to secure a heavy sentence for the man who raped Alice). How might such a person describe each of the following events that occurred that night?

Write your answers in full sentences (i.e., not in bullet points or note form).

- Alice wore a short and sexy outfit.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice drank several spirits and liqueurs in the bar.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice asked others what they know about the guy she was talking to.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice walked alone outside at night in an unlit area.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice told her friends that she was going home when she left the bar.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice put the phone number of the police in her speed-dial list.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice carried pepper spray with her.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice accepted drinks from a stranger.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice kissed passionately with a stranger in the bar.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice told her friends that she would text them when she arrives home save.

.....
.....
.....

You will be asked to answer the following questions on a scale from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 6 = *Strongly Agree*. Please encircle the answer that you find most appropriate.

-I feel that people get what they are entitled to have.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I feel that a person's effort are noted and rewarded.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I feel that people earn the rewards and punishments they get.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I feel that people who meet with misfortune have brought it on themselves.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I feel that people get what they deserve.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I feel that rewards and punishments are fairly given.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I basically feel that the world is a fair place.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

Demographic details:

Sex: male / female

Age:

NB

*Perception on Safety of
Behaviour
&
Crime related information
processing*

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- Wearing a short and sexy outfit.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very much more safe

- Drinking several spirits and liqueurs in a bar.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very much more safe

- Asking others what they know about the guy she is talking to.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very much more safe

- Walking alone outside at night in unlit areas.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very much more safe

- Telling her friends where she is going when she leaves a bar.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Putting the phone number of the police in her speed-dial list.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Carrying pepper spray with her.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Accepting drinks from a stranger.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Kissing passionately with a stranger in a bar.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

- Telling good friends that she will text them ones she arrives home save.

Very much less safe 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Very much more safe*

Please take the time to carefully answer the following questions. The next questions are about a rape incident. Alice was walking home at night after she went to a bar. On the way home she got raped by a guy she met in the bar.

Imagine that someone wanted to imply that Alice was partly to blame for this offence: (for example a sexist or a defense lawyer trying to secure a light sentence for the man who raped Alice). How might such a person describe each of the following events that occurred that night?

Write your answers in full sentences (i.e., not in bullet points or note form).

- Alice wore a short and sexy outfit.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice drank several spirits and liqueurs in the bar.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice asked others what they know about the guy she was talking to.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice walked alone outside at night in unlit areas.

.....
.....
.....

- Alice told her friends that she was going home when she left the bar.

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- Alice put the phone number of the police in her speed-dial list.

.....
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- Alice carried pepper spray with her.

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- Alice accepted drinks from a stranger.

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- Alice kissed passionately with a stranger in the bar.

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- Alice told her friends that she would text them when she arrives home safe.

.....
.....
.....

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-I feel that people get what they are entitled to have.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I feel that a person's effort are noted and rewarded.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I feel that people earn the rewards and punishments they get.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I feel that people who meet with misfortune have brought it on themselves.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I feel that people get what they deserve.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I feel that rewards and punishments are fairly given.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

-I basically feel that the world is a fair place.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Strongly Agree*

Demographic details:

Sex: male / female

Age:

B

Appendix

Appendix C: Questionnaires Study 3 (High threat case/ Low threat case)

Media Representation & Impression Management

Thank you for your willingness to fill in this questionnaire. This questionnaire is anonymous and will solely be used for scientific purposes. Your details will be handled strictly confidential. If you have any further questions or remarks about the questionnaire or you are interested in the results of this research, you are very welcome to contact me through: k.helder@kent.ac.uk

Before you start this questionnaire we would like to inform you that some questions will be related to a rape crime. If you or someone close to you had any personal experiences with a rape incident we ask you to take this into consideration and consider not filling in the questionnaire.

+

Please carefully read the following article, afterwards you will have to answer some questions about this article.

After I was raped, by 'Alice H.'

Alice H. Tuesday February 05, 2007 The Guardian.

I was just an ordinary woman with an ordinary life, mother of two kids and the wife of a devoted husband. Before my life drastically

changed, I spent a lot of time with my kids and watched those angels grow up. In my spare time I was writing a column for one of UK's biggest academic magazines and in the weekends I used to go to friends all the time.

On the other side I didn't talk much to other people about myself or my feelings, which I never did much anyway. Also there used to be some tension between me and my husband; I had the tendency to scream at him whenever we disagreed on something. Also I had told some untrue stories to my employer in order to get a promotion. These things were putting

some pressure on me, but my belief was that life always had two faces.

Then the summer came and we decided to go for a short holiday to a village in the country side. On July 4 2006 at 10.30 in the morning, I went for a walk along the country road in the village. It was a gorgeous day, and I didn't envy my husband, Tom, who had to stay inside and work on a manuscript. I sang to myself as I set out, stopping along the way to pick a few wild strawberries. An hour and a half later, I was lying face down in a muddy river bed, struggling to stay alive.

I had been grabbed from behind, pulled into the bushes, beaten, and sexually assaulted. Helpless and entirely at my assailant's mercy, I talked to him, trying to appeal to his humanity, and, when failed,

addressing myself to his self-interest. He called me a whore and told me to shut up. Although I had said I'd do whatever he wanted, as the sexual assault began I instinctively fought back, which so enraged my attacker that he strangled me until I lose consciousness.

When I came to, I was being dragged by my feet down into the ravine. I had often thought I was awake while dreaming, but now I was awake and convinced I was having a

nightmare. But it was no dream. After ordering me to get on my hands and knees, the man strangled me again. This time I was sure I was dying. But I revived, just in time to see him lunging towards me with a rock. He smashed it into my forehead, knocking me out. Eventually, after another strangulation attempt, he left me for dead.

I was initially reluctant to tell people (other than medical and legal personnel) that I had been raped. I still wonder why I wanted the sexual aspect of the assault – so salient to me – kept secret. I was motivated in part by shame, I suppose, and I wanted to avoid being stereotyped as a victim.

When resumed teaching, the first student who came to my office told me that she had been raped. Since I had spoken out publicly several months earlier about my assault, I knew that I would be in contact with other survivors. I just didn't realise that there would be so many - not only students, but also female colleagues and friends who had never told me that they had been raped.

I hope by sharing my personal story, I might be some kind of a support for those people who went through the same experience as I had to go through.

Alice H. (Pseudonym)

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The current situation of Alice H.:

The perpetrator was not caught; because of this Alice has not been able to put the trauma behind her.

The following questions are about the article you have just read. Please encircle the answers that you find most appropriate:

How interesting did you find the article?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very Much*

How engaging was the article for you?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very Much*

Did you find the article well written?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very Much*

How much did you enjoy reading the article?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very Much*

Please carefully read the following article, afterwards you will have to answer some questions about this article.

Are flat shoes bad for you?

Peta

Bee

Monday May 5, 2008[The Guardian](#)

They do little for a woman's stature, but the gladiator sandals and flat pumps seen adorning the feet of Sienna Miller, Kate Moss and Carla Bruni of late must surely be better for feet and ankles than a skyscraper wedge. Apparently not, foot experts warn that you face as many risks wearing 'flatties' as you do teetering on heels.

Sammy Margo, a spokeswoman for the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists, says a period of transition is needed with any style of shoe. "Go straight from wearing trainers, which have incredible amounts of support for the arch and upper foot, or from high heels in the winter to flat pumps in the summer and you risk pain and strain," she says. "You need to ease yourself into a new shoe style, wearing them for half an hour at first, then building up."

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According to Mike O'Neill, a spokesman for the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists, flat shoes can "strain the Achilles tendon that runs from the back of the heel, and also the calf muscles in the back of the leg". Pain can develop after as little as two weeks.

With no shock absorbency and little heel support, there is the added risk of developing a painful heel condition called *plantar fasciitis* if you wear them constantly, according to Margo. 'Flipflop' styles of sandal are even worse as there is no support whatsoever for the heel," she says.

So, what to do? Her advice is to alternate your shoe style - from high to low, trainer to boot - and avoid wearing a particular pair day in, day out. Calf stretches before, during and after long periods of flattie-wear can help to keep muscles loose and less vulnerable to strain. "This is advice to be followed by men too," she says. "Slightest changes in heel height can trigger problems."

Perhaps Nicolas Sarkozy should rethink those stacked heels he's been seen in recently.

The following questions are about the article you have just read. Please encircle the answers that you find most appropriate:

How interesting did you find the article?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very Much*

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Did you find the article well written?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very Much*

How much did you enjoy reading the article?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *Very Much*

The following questions are about Alice H., the main character of the first article. Please encircle the answer you find most appropriate:

How much do you like Alice H.?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very much*

To what extent do you think Alice H. is like you?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very much*

In general, how similar would you say you are to Alice H.?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very much*

Overall, how much do you identify with Alice H.?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very much*

You will be presented with several traits on a scale ranging from 1 to 6. You will be asked to encircle to number that matches the best the impression you got about Alice H.:

Responsible 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Irresponsible*

Careful 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Careless*

Unintelligent 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Intelligent*

Warm 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Not warm*

Untrustworthy 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Trustworthy*

<i>Talented</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Untalented</i>
<i>Insincere</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Sincere</i>
<i>Self centred</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Not self centred</i>
<i>Competent</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Incompetent</i>
<i>Helpful</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Unhelpful</i>

Demographic details:

Sex: Male / Female

Age:

Media Representation

&

Impression Management

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According to Mike O'Neill, a spokesman for the Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists, flat shoes can "strain the Achilles tendon that runs from the back of the heel, and also the

calf muscles in the back of the leg". Pain can develop after as little as two weeks.

With no shock absorbency and little heel support, there is the added risk of developing a painful heel condition called *plantar fasciitis* if you wear them constantly, according to Margo. 'Flipflop' styles of sandal are even worse as there is no support whatsoever for the heel," she says.

So, what to do? Her advice is to alternate your shoe style - from high to low, trainer to boot - and avoid wearing a particular pair day in, day out. Calf stretches before, during and after long periods of flattie-wear can help to keep muscles loose and less vulnerable to strain. "This is advice to be followed by men too," she says. "Slightest changes in heel height can trigger problems."

Perhaps Nicolas Sarkozy should rethink those stacked heels he's been seen in recently.

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Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 *very much*

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Responsible 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Irresponsible*

Careful 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Careless*

Unintelligent 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Intelligent*

Warm 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Not warm*

Untrustworthy 1 2 3 4 5 6 *Trustworthy*

<i>Talented</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Untalented</i>
<i>Insincere</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Sincere</i>
<i>Self centred</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Not self centred</i>
<i>Competent</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Incompetent</i>
<i>Helpful</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>Unhelpful</i>

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Sex: Male / Female

Age: