

**“She had it coming”: The effect of Denial of the
Victim arguments within simulated suspect
interviews on blaming victims in a control and
coercion context**

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M.Sc. Thesis

August 2021

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Abstract

Taking action against the offenders of Coercion and Control cases is often difficult, because of missing physical evidence. Investigative interviews are often the only opportunity to gather any evidence against the suspect. Suspects are highly manipulative and make use of influencing behaviours to protect themselves from getting convicted. This study focussed on the effectiveness of denial of the victim in shifting attributions of blame to the victim. Denial of the victim is an influencing behaviour, suspects use during investigative interviews to shift attributions of blame away from themselves onto the victim. They make negative claims about for example the behaviour of the victim. Therefore, different victim behaviours were also included to check whether negative victim behaviour solely had an effect. The participants of this study had to fill out a questionnaire after reading a case description and an investigative interview about a C&C case. These were used as manipulations. There were three different versions of the case description, representing the different victim behaviours. Also, two different versions of the investigative interview were randomly presented to the participants, representing the suspect behaviour. The main findings were that denial of the victim arguments increased negative attributions to the victim and reduced perceived sympathy, but not the perceived empathy, with the victim. When the victim had engaged in negative behaviour prior to the offence, attributions of blame to the victim increased, while perceived sympathy with the victim decreased independent of suspect behaviour. Exploratory results showed that higher hostile sexism leads to lower perceived empathy with the victim, but only when denial of the victim is used. Interviewers need to be aware of these effects during investigative interviews with suspects, to mitigate the observed effects. In a next step, it also needs to be tested, whether the changes in attribution affect legal judgements.

Introduction

Controlling and coercive behaviour within intimate relationships is a form of abuse where one partner acts in a (non-physical) way that harms and frightens their partner and makes the partner dependent on them. The victims of such behaviour often suffer during their daily life. Since 2015, this behaviour is considered a crime in England and Wales and therefore can be prosecuted (Serious Crime Act, 2015). The UK government defines coercive behaviour as ‘an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.’ whereas, controlling behaviour is defined as ‘a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependant by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.’ (The Code for Crown Prosecutors, 2017).

Stark (2009) stressed, that the harm caused by coercive control is structural, because it harms the autonomy of the victim. Additionally, it is psychological, because of the emotional aspects of control and coercion, e.g., psychological traumas. Control and coercion can also co-occur alongside physical or sexual abuse. An ‘intimate relationship’ is defined as two people either dating each other, being boyfriend and girlfriend, being fiancés or husband and wife. So far, coercive control is not a crime in any country of the European Union (EU). During the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention, whether to criminalize psychological violence as a form of Violence against Women was discussed, since it is only partly included in the legal concepts of domestic violence or intimate partner violence (Jeney et al., 2020). As a result of these discussions, a number of European member states, e.g. Germany, France, Greece and Poland, decided to take steps to include psychological violence within their legal system. However, even if these legal changes are not completed in all of the countries that committed to make changes, the notion of coercive control is not specifically included in any

of the definitions of the new laws. For as long as the lack of legal protection for the victims of Control and Coercion (C&C) remains, the victims will be left vulnerable. No legal help will be offered to them that would help them to escape this situation, because it is very difficult for the victims to achieve this by themselves. Especially, because the partner often makes the victim dependent on them, so the victim holds fears of losing everything when they do something against their partner and report the crime to the police.

Investigative interviews may often be the only opportunity to reveal sufficient evidence for a conviction of the suspect, because physical evidence is often missing in cases of Control and Coercion. As a consequence, the police often does not investigate in Control and Coercion but the police rather focus on the physical assault to investigate (Barlow, et al., 2020; The Code for Crown Prosecutors, 2017). Furthermore, the crime is traumatic for the victim and it could be highly psychologically demanding to help during the investigation, so some victims refuse to support the prosecution (The Code for Crown Prosecutors, 2017). Due to this, police officers may often not be able to identify and prove patterns of abuse that are indicative of C&C (Barlow, et al., 2020). Another reason for this failure may be the various suspect influencing behaviours.

Suspect Influencing Behaviours

Suspects can be highly manipulative to paint a more favourable picture of themselves during investigative interviews, and thereby mislead the investigation through the use of influencing behaviours (Watson, et al., 2018). Influencing behaviours are manipulative communications suspects use to guide the interview in a favourable direction for the suspect, e.g. to prevent getting convicted. Suspect influence behaviours are targeted not only at directly challenging evidence, but also at managing relationships and introducing bias into how evidence and others related to the case are appraised by the interviewer. If the suspect effectively uses influencing behaviours, it may be less likely that the police officer charges the

suspect, and more likely that prosecutors decide the evidence that exists would be insufficient to secure a conviction at trial. Therefore, the aim of this study will be to investigate how effective suspect influence behaviours are.

Denial of the victim

Different influencing behaviours were identified and categorised by Watson, et al. (2018). Transcripts of 29 interviews of C&C cases were analysed. Denial of the victim was the second most frequently used behaviour. The influencing behaviour is based on the 'techniques of neutralisation' defined by Sykes and Matza (1957).

The techniques of neutralization describe cognitive processes people use to justify their criminal actions to themselves. A neutralization aims at reducing negative attributions about the suspect that were made based on the suspects negative behaviour (Sykes & Matza, 1957). If someone is aware of their own misbehaviour, it is likely that they feel guilty and want to get rid of this feeling. Therefore, they tend to search for an excuse or a trigger, that can be made responsible for their actions. Thereby, they feel relieved and do not feel guilty anymore, because their own responsibility for their transgression is diminished (Sykes & Matza, 1957). Sometimes this negative behaviour directly or indirectly affects others. People might judge a person for this negative behaviour, which make the persons feel guilty about their actions again. Consequently, the person feels the urge to justify their behaviour to the other persons, so they are not seen as the bad ones anymore. Hence, they figure out a scapegoat, which can be a person, but also the circumstances in which they showed the negative behaviour, to attribute the blame to (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

With a Denial of the victim argument the suspect tries to make the interviewer fail to see the alleged victim as a victim (Sykes & Matza, 1957). The suspects try to neutralize their actions, by justifying them with the behaviour the victim previously showed. They want the interviewer to believe it is an acceptable response to this kind of behaviour, rather than being

a violation of law. The logical conclusion will be that if there is no criminal act, there also can be no victim. Therefore, there will be no need for the interviewer to further investigate against the suspect (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

One aim of a suspect using Denial of the victim arguments is to make the police believe that the evidence they have does not direct blame toward the suspect. They partly do this by shifting blame onto the victim. The suspect influencing behaviour Denial of the victim means that the suspect claims that their negative behaviour is justified, because it was provoked by the victim's own (negative) behaviour. When the victim actually behaved in a negative way, the attributions made about the suspect will be projected onto the victim, because of the negative behaviour the victim engaged in (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

One aim of this study is to explore possible mechanisms including shifting attributions by which denial of the victim may affect legal decision making.

Attribution Theory and Victim Blaming

Mechanisms of neutralizations and justification, as proposed by Sykes and Matza (1957), can be a possible strategy for shifting attributions. Watson, et al., (2018) proposed that shifting the perceptions of the interviewer so that the suspects actions appear more justifiable or reasonable based on the circumstances, is an aim of Denial of the victim arguments. Consequently, the suspect admits having committed some of the behaviours they are accused of, but always attributes parts of the blame to the victim. Denial of the victim as well as different victim behaviour, either in line with the suspects account, or contrary to the suspects account, could influence the attribution of blame in cases of C&C.

A theory that helps to explain how people make judgements and attribute blame is *Attribution Theory*. The Kelley's model of the attribution theory focusses on how other people attribute causes of behaviour and the process of attribution itself (Schmitt, 2015). Behaviour can be either attributed to the person itself, the stimulus, or the circumstances of the moment.

These three factors can be categorised into internal attributions (the person itself) and external attributions (the stimulus, the circumstances). People are actively interpreting events and try to make sense of them in a logical way. Personal, psychological and situational factors play an important role during this process because they can bias the observers view. Hence everyone has their own uniquely biased perspectives, which are used to view and interpret the same outcomes. The biases are linked to certain motivations that bring people to attribute causes to events. These motivations can either be the motivation to protect the ego (self-serving bias), to the need to believe in effective control, as well as to present the self positively to others (Schmitt, 2015). The need to believe in effective control leads to attributions towards controllable causes (Lerner & Miller,1978). This serves people to protect themselves by reducing the probability that negative events will happen to them. Consequently, the process of attribution can be malleable (Grubb & Turner, 2012). The results of the interpretation process are influenced by different cognitive and motivational biases. Consequently, non-factual interpretations of the event can differ from individual to individual.

When suspects use denial of the victim arguments, these can serve to protect the ego of the suspect, so they underlie the self-serving bias (Schmitt, 2015). The suspects might think unconsciously that by using denial of the victim arguments they are more in control of the situation. They can manipulate how the victim is perceived, so they can shift the attributions away from themselves onto the victim.

Attribution theory also serves as the basis for research on how victims of crimes are perceived (Grubb & Turner, 2012). Victims of intimate partner violence are often judged to be responsible for their own fate by people who assess the situation from the outside. Idisis & Edoute (2017) showed that even professional offender and survivor therapists did not solely attribute all the blame to the attacker, but also to some degree to the victim. People often hold negative social attitudes about rape victims and base their attribution of blame on these biases

(Culda, et al., 2018). This phenomenon is called *victim blaming* and entails individual's judgements of victims. If an individual focusses more on the victim as an individual while making their judgement, internal attributions are held towards the victim, in this case the victim is blamed more. External attribution is when the individual focusses more on the situation than on the individual itself, victims are blamed less in this case (Grubb & Turner, 2012). Consequently, when the victim showed negative relationship behaviour prior the offence, it is more likely that interviewers believe the victim is responsible for their own fate, because of their prior behaviour, and will attribute the blame to the victim.

Suspects that use Denial of the victim arguments try to shift the perceived causes for their behaviour from internal causes to external causes. They attribute the blame for their behaviour to the stimulus (e.g. negative victim behaviour) and the circumstances of the moment (e.g. negative feelings caused by the victim behaviour). Thereby, they aim to attribute more blame to the victim and justify their behaviour. If the victim cheated on the suspect, that provokes negative feelings within the suspect (e.g. fury, sadness, disappointment), so the suspect could use this negative victim behaviour and the resulting feelings as a justification for their own negative behaviour and therefore shift the responsibility for their own behaviour to the victim. As a result, the interviewer might be more likely to attribute the blame to the victim, which will lead to a more desirable outcome for the suspects, which will be in the best case, that they do not get convicted.

Suspects use denial of the victim to shift attributions, and evidence suggests that people are susceptible to blaming victims of intimate partner violence for their own abuse. In this study, it will be tested whether people are more likely to attribute blame to a victim in the presence of denial of the victim, especially when there is some truth to the allegations.

Sympathy and Empathy

Attributions of blame are both likely mechanisms for denial of the victim (Sykes & Matza, 1957; Watson, et al., 2018). Nevertheless, other possible mechanisms cannot be neglected. Sympathy and Empathy felt for the victim might be two viable alternative mechanisms by which denial of the victim arguments might also affect judgements.

The suspect intends to minimise their own actions and change the perception of the interviewer so that the alleged victim seems less sympathetic and less deserving of help. Sympathy affects the interviewers by influencing their judgements by provoking an emotional response (Wibowo & Rukmini, 2019). This response might be that the interviewer perceives less sympathy and empathy with the victim.

Sympathy is defined as an emotional state that is caused by something that has happened to someone else (Jeffrey, 2016), in this case the offence that is alleged to have happened to the victim. Adolfsson, et al. (2017) found, that the higher the level of sympathy perceived with the victim, the less blame is attributed to the victim and the more blame is attributed to the suspect. Consequently, the suspect will aim at reducing the sympathy perceived with the victim, to increase attributed blame to the victim and decrease the blame attributed to themselves.

Rational thinking and decision making are relevant in forming of judgements. Feeling sympathy makes decision making more affective and less rational, because it adds an emotional aspect to the judgement. Following from this, if the interviewer perceives higher sympathy with the victim than with the suspect, this might influence the building of the judgement of the suspect in a negative way, because the interviewer might then be more likely to decide in favour of the victim (Adolfsson, et al., 2017). Therefore, it might be in the interest of the suspect to remove sympathy from the victim by making the victim seem less sympathetic. If this is effective, it might be possible, that the interviewer rather decides in

favour of the suspect, based on the reduced amount of perceived sympathy for the victim (Adolfsson, et al., 2017). This decrease in sympathy felt for the victim might also occur when not only the suspect accuses the victim of negative behaviours as infidelity, but also when the victim has actually engaged in these negative behaviours.

Empathy can be defined as the ability to sense what another person thinks or feels (Warrier et al., 2018), which makes them feel emotionally closer to the person. Studies have shown that people feel empathy with innocent victims (Aderman, et al., 1974). During the interview the suspect reveals a lot of details about the relationship between the victim and themselves. However, it is still their version of the story and they can present it as they want, which might not always be the same story the victim will tell. Especially, when denial of the victim arguments are used, the suspect uses these arguments to justify their own actions with the negative behaviour of the victim. Probably the interviewer cannot empathize with the victim anymore, based on the negative behaviour the victim showed.

Additionally, it might be, that the alleged negative behaviour of the victim as well as actual misbehaviour of the victim make the victim seem less innocent and not as deserving of help (Aderman, et al., 1974). This will threaten the beliefs of the participants about the victim and lead to a lower perception of empathy with the victim. This might move the interviewer to act in favour of the suspect during the investigation. Hence, it is in the interest of the suspects to remove sympathy and empathy, from the victim to reduce the desire to help the victim from the interviewer, to make it less likely for themselves to get convicted.

A study by Muller, et al. (1994) discovered that the level of empathy perceived with the victims and their situations is one of the strongest predictors of victim blaming. Less empathy felt with the victim, predicts more blame is attributed to the victim. This higher victim blame is a result of the inability of the observer to gain an empathic connection to the victim. Hence, it will be favourable for the suspect to prevent the interviewer from becoming

empathically connected to the victim. If the interviewer will get no empathic connection with the victim, it is more likely that he will attribute the blame to the victim and not on the suspect (Muller, et al., 1994). This empathic connection might also be disturbed when the victim has engaged for example into past infidelity. The interviewers might fail to empathically connect with the victim, biased by the negative behaviour of the victim.

Just World Theory in relation to Victim Blaming

Factors that influence the attribution of blame are either the perceiver's beliefs or victim characteristics (Grubb & Turner, 2012). One important victim characteristic that people consider for their judgments about the attribution of blame is the behaviour of the victim (before, during and after the act of intimate partner violence (Culda, et al., 2018). They evaluate the behaviour and decide to blame the victim more or less for their fate, based on the way they behaved. A theory that deals with how people evaluate others according to their past actions is the *Just World Theory*.

Just World Theory states that an individual holds the belief that the world is a fair place, and the outcomes of behaviours are deserved (Dalbert, et al., 1987; Lipkus, 1991; Grubb & Turner, 2012). Individuals aim to maintain a sense of control and efficacy over the environment by holding this belief. The Belief in a Just World (BJW) can be seen as a coping mechanism when applied to victim blaming. Belief in a just world can be threatened by confrontation with an innocent victim because it contradicts the BJW view. To maintain their BJW, they attribute the blame to the victim. The perception of the victim deserving their own fate restores the view of the world as a just, fair and ordered place (Grubb & Turner, 2012). Suspects can use this view to manipulate how others attribute blame, because they can use the negative personality and behavioural traits of the victim to neutralize and devalue the victim's actions and thereby, remove sympathy from the victim and increase the likeliness of negative attributions towards the victim (Idisis & Edoute, 2017). All the effects discussed, are exactly

what the influencing behaviour denial of the victim aims to achieve. Consequently, the use of denial of the victim arguments might be especially effective when people hold high beliefs in a just world.

Applying the Just World Theory, it might also be true that the actual behaviour of the victim makes it easier for denial of the victim to be effective. People apply belief in a just world to make the world consistent again by attributing more blame to the victim and holding more negative views of the victim. A victim, who has engaged in negative relationship behaviour before being offended against, is more likely to be perceived by persons holding strong beliefs in a just world as deserving the negative treatment from their partner. So, the victim can be held responsible for their own fate, since it is the result of their own behaviour. Negative relationship behaviour by the victim threatens the belief in a just world and people will perceive lower levels of empathy and sympathy for the victim and consequently attribute more blame to the victim.

Ambivalent Sexism and its Influence on Victim Blaming

Sexism may also play a role in the attribution of blame in cases of C&C. Glick and Fiske (1996) defined sexism as a multidimensional construct consisting of two sets of sexist attitudes. The first, Hostile Sexism (HS), represents negative attitudes and sexist antipathy. The second, Benevolent Sexism (BS), represents a subjectively positive orientation toward women. Benevolent Sexism is not actually a positive attitude, because it relies on traditional stereotyping and masculine dominance (women as mother and wife), and its consequences can be damaging.

People who hold sexist attitudes in general see women as "saints" or "sluts" (Glick & Fiske, 1996). These polarized views may have influence on the attribution of blame. If a woman behaves in a manner that is not consistent with cultural stereotypes of how a "good girl" should behave, she will be blamed more in case of a victimisation (Grubb & Turner,

2012). People who hold more traditional attitudes are harsher with the victim and more lenient with the perpetrator. Higher levels of victim blaming can be expected, when traditional gender role stereotypes are promoted, so when people score high in either Hostile or Benevolent Sexism.

According to the construct of ambivalent sexism, it can be assumed that a victim, who has engaged in some negative relationship behaviour before being offended, is more likely to be perceived as a person who does not follow the cultural stereotypes of a “good partner”. Consequently, it is likely that the victim will be perceived as more negative by people, who hold sexist beliefs, and hence, more blame will be attributed towards the victim, especially when denial of the victim is used and the victim acted in order to the suspects account. Denial of the victim should be especially effective, when people hold high sexist beliefs. When the suspect presents the victim in a negative light, people will categorize the victim as a “sluts” and not as a “saint”. The same will happen when people get to know, that the victim actually engaged in infidelity. This categorization will trigger the Sexist beliefs of the observers and as a consequence either the suspect or the actual negative behaviour of the victim, will have been effective in reducing perceived sympathy and empathy with the victim, as well as in increasing attributions of blame to the victim by their denial of the victim arguments.

The current Study

There is a lack of knowledge on how blame is attributed in cases of C&C, since it is a relatively new crime, or rather, not a crime in most places, including Germany and the Netherlands (Jeney, 2020).

Therefore, this study will investigate the attribution of blame in cases of C&C within intimate relationship and the perception of empathy and sympathy for the victims in cases of C&C. The first independent variable will be “Suspect Behaviour”. Since denial of the victim is a frequently used suspect influencing behaviour, it will be tested whether this strategy

actually works as intended. The focus will be on whether the use of denial of the victim arguments actually increase internal attributions made about the victim and decreases perceived sympathy and empathy with the victim.

The second independent variable will be “victim behaviour”. Since the behaviour of the victim has shown to be influential on the perception of the victim, it will be tested how the dependent variables are influenced by different victim behaviours (Idisis & Edoute, 2017). Victim behaviour means that the victim actually engaged in an act that the suspect claimed the victim has been doing, e.g., cheating on their partner. The mentioned effects are expected to be stronger, if there is evidence that at least some of the accusations made by the suspect about prior negative victim behaviour are true.

Based on this the hypothesis tested in this study were:

H1: Suspect behaviour will increase the attributions of blame to the victim but will reduce the perceived Sympathy and Empathy with the victim.

H2: Victim behaviour will increase the attributions of blame to the victim but will reduce the perceived Sympathy and Empathy with the victim.

Some individual differences, in how strong these effects might be, will be explored as well. In particular, we also performed exploratory analyses to determine whether Belief in a Just World or Ambivalent Sexism moderate any of the hypothesised effects. The effects hypothesised above are expected to be stronger when Belief in a Just World, Hostile Sexism or Benevolent Sexism are higher than when they are lower.

Method

Design

The design used in this study is a 2x3 between participants design with the two independent variables being suspect behaviour and victim behaviour.

The first independent variable *Suspect behaviour* has the two levels of *denial of the victim* and *no comment*. In the *no comment* condition, the suspect refuses to give a comment during the whole interview, so no additional information about the crime are provided. In the *denial of the victim* condition the suspect tries to justify their actions and describes the victim as someone bad because of negative behaviour the victim showed. Therefore, the victim is to blame for their own fate.

The second independent variable *victim behaviour* has three levels, namely *negative victim behaviour*, *no negative victim behaviour* and *no information*. In the *no information* condition, no mention of victim behaviour is given to the participant in the scenario. This condition serves as a control condition. In the *negative victim behaviour* condition, there is information provided that the victim has cheated on the suspect, whereas in the *no negative victim behaviour* condition there is evidence provided that the victim has not engaged in infidelity. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions.

The dependent variables that were measured are *attribution of blame to the victim* and *sympathy/empathy for the victim*. *Sexism* and *Belief in a Just World* will serve as exploratory moderators. Ethical approval was given by the Ethics committee of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social sciences of the University of Twente.

Participants

For the study 155 participants were required, based on a G*power-analysis ($\alpha = 0.05$; $\beta = .80$) with a medium effect size of 0.25 (Cohen, 1992). The survey was completed by 194 participants. The participants were aged between 18 and 80 and 30.4% were male and 69.6% were female. Most of the participants were German (80.4%), some were Dutch (10.3%) and

the remaining 5.7% came from other countries, including America, Vietnam and Poland. Opportunity sampling was used to recruit the participants via the personal networks of the researchers (via social media) and the SONA system of the University of Twente (UT). Bachelor students at the University of Twente need to participate in various studies from Bachelor and Master students of the UT as a requirement to pass their studies, which is the SONA system. All participants participated voluntarily and needed to agree with an informed consent prior to their participation.

Materials

All study materials, including introduction and instruction texts, the questionnaires, the different versions of the case scenario and interview scripts and the debriefing can be found in Appendix A. The questionnaire was available for the participants in English and German.

Case description

A fictional case scenario about a Control and Coercion offence in combination with a fictional investigative interview script with the suspect (Mr Cooper) served as manipulations. The case scenario provides information about what has happened according to the victim (Ms Miller) and information about the relationship between the victim and the suspect. Specifically, the police receive a call from the victim who claims that her boyfriend tracked her location, and followed her to the meeting of her book club. There they had an argument in which he threatened her and accused her of infidelity. The suspect shows controlling behaviour over the past year of their relationship and accuses the victim of being unfaithful to him.

The cases described are all the same and differ only in the relationship behaviour of the victim. The case description was adjusted to match the three conditions: *negative victim behaviour*, *no negative victim behaviour* and *no comment*. In the *negative victim behaviour* condition, the participants receive information that the victim has actually engaged in the

negative relationship behaviour. The suspect has claimed the victim has engaged in infidelity prior to the offence, namely the victim cheated on the suspect, but it was some time ago. On the contrary, in the *no negative victim behaviour* condition, participants were given the information that there is evidence that the victim has not engaged in any negative relationship behaviour that the suspect accused the victim to be engaged in prior to the offence. In the *no information* condition, no information about the victims past behaviour is provided to the participants.

Interview script

The fictional investigative interview takes place in the police department with the suspect, who is accused of Control and Coercion, and a police officer as the interviewer. To test how effective the suspect influencing strategy Denial of the Victim is, we compare Denial of the Victim arguments to a No Comment interview. In the Denial of the Victim condition the suspect makes use of the behaviour Denial of the Victim arguments. He justifies his own behaviour as a response to a behaviour shown by the victim. For example, one response from the suspect in the Denial of the Victim condition is *“I’ve had to show her how relationships should actually work but she doesn’t care and shows no respect to me.”* In the No Comment condition, the suspect is asked the same questions about the crime, but responds “no comment” all the time. The No Comment condition serves as a control condition, since the constant refusal to give additional information prevents the reader from getting new information or context about the crime.

Measures

Socio demographics

The socio demographic information that was asked for was age, gender, nationality and highest level of education. Additionally, it was asked for the relationship status of the participants. The participants who indicated that they had/have a romantic relationship were

asked two questions about whether they had experienced cheating in one of their relationships. However, this information was not used in any of the analyses.

Belief in a Just World

The exploratory moderator Belief in a Just World was measured using the General Belief in a Just World Scale by Dalbert, et al., (1987) which consists of six items and had an acceptable reliability in our sample ($\alpha = .78$). A 5-Point-Likert scale was used for the participants to indicate their level of agreement with the items, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The following item is one of the six items of the scale: “*I believe that, by and large, people get what they deserve.*”

Ambivalent Sexism

The next scale was used to measure the exploratory moderator sexism. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI), developed by Glick and Fiske (1996), was used. It consists of 22 items in total and had a high internal reliability in our sample (HS $\alpha = .87$, BS $\alpha = .76$). Eleven items measure Hostile sexism, for example “*Women are too easily offended.*” and eleven items measure Benevolent Sexism. One example is “*Women should be cherished and protected by men.*” Participants could again indicate by a 5-Point-Likert scale to which extent they agree with the statements, where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 5 represents “strongly agree”.

Attribution of Blame to the Victim

Next, the participants were asked to rate how much blame they attributed to the victim. Six items were used, four of them were based on the *Items Assessing General Victim Blame* by Eigenberg & Policastro (2015), but the name of the victim was included in the items for clarification. For the analysis the first item needed to be excluded, because it does not measure the concept as intended. The item rather measured if the victim is actually a victim and did not measure if she is to blame for her becoming a victim. The scale had a high

reliability ($\alpha = .80$) and participants were asked to indicate with a 5-Point-Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), how much they agree with each of the items. One item that was used is: *“Miss Miller played a role in her own victimization.”*

Empathy and Sympathy

Six items were used in total to measure the construct of empathy. The items were taken from the State Empathy Scale, designed by Shen (2010), which had a good reliability in the sample collected ($\alpha = .74$). The original scale consists of twelve items, but only six were applicable to this study. Only the questions addressing the perception of the victim directly were used. All items addressing the situation of the participant in relation to the situation with the victim were excluded. There was too little information provided about the victim and her behaviour, since the interview only showed the perspective of the suspect, to answer these questions. The participants could indicate their level of agreement with a 5-Point-Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). One item of the scale is the following: *“I can see the victim's point of view.”*

Finally, there was a question about how much sympathy the participants felt for the victim, to which they also could respond with a 5-Point-Likert scale, ranging from 1 (None at all) to 5 (A great deal). The question was: *“How much sympathy do you feel for the suspect?”*

Attention Check

Two items were used to test whether the participants read the case scenario and investigative interview carefully. The items were: *“Based on the evidence provided how likely is it that Miss Miller cheated on Mr Cooper prior to the offence?”* and *“Based on the evidence provided how likely is it that Miss Miller is cheating on Mr Cooper right now?”*.

The participants were asked to indicate with a 5-Point-Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (extremely unlikely) to 5 (extremely likely), how likely it is that the victim engages in infidelity. In the no negative behaviour condition participants should answer that it is

extremely unlikely that Ms Miller has cheated on Mr Cooper in the past, whereas in the negative victim behaviour condition the correct answer would be that it is extremely likely. For the no information condition as well as the no comment condition participants should answer in the middle of the scale, because they cannot know whether it is true or false. Also, for the Denial of the Victim condition the answers should stay between likely and unlikely and should not reach into the extreme areas, because the participants get no information whether the victim is cheating on the suspect right now. However, participants, who got these questions wrong, were not excluded from the analysis.

Procedure

The study took place online. A web-link was distributed via social media and the SONA System of the University of Twente and by clicking it, the participants were directed to the questionnaire of the study. On the first page the participants were presented an introduction, which included the information necessary to collect informed consent from participants. On the next page, participants were asked for their demographic information. After that, participants were asked questions about the moderators Belief in a Just World and Ambivalent Sexism so that these would not be affected by the experimental manipulations. The participants were then informed about the definition of Control and Coercion as a crime in England and Wales, because C&C is not a crime in Germany or the Netherlands, the countries most of the participants were drawn from, and so participants might not be aware of the concept. They were then asked to read a case description of such a C&C case. Hereby, the participants were randomly assigned to one of the three victim behaviour conditions, so they randomly received one out of three different case descriptions. After that the participants were asked to read an interview script about this case. Again, they were randomly assigned to one of the two suspect behaviour conditions. The case scenario was followed by the attention

check questions, which asked whether the victim has cheated on the suspect to control if the participants read the case carefully and understood everything correctly.

The participants continued with the rest of the survey, by answering questions about attribution, empathy and sympathy. After finishing all these questions, the participants were directed to the last page, they got a debriefing, which explained some more background of the study and the purpose of the different conditions.

Data Analysis

To analyse the data gathered during the study, the IBM SPSS Statistics software Version 27 was used. The study included *Attribution of Blame to the Victim*, *Perceived Empathy with the Victim* and *Perceived Sympathy with the Victim* as outcome variables and *Suspect Behaviour* and *Victim behaviour* as predictor variables. *Belief in a Just World*, *Hostile Sexism* and *Benevolent Sexism* served as moderator variables. Cronbach's alpha was computed to test the reliability for our sample. Correlations for the variables were computed using Pearson's correlation, except for the ordinal variable *Perceived Sympathy with the victim* Spearman's correlation was used. To test for possible main, interaction and moderation effects, two-way ANOVAs were used, where the moderation effects were only checked for in exploratory analysis via general linear models.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Average scores were computed for all 194 participants for the dependent variables Attribution of Blame to the Victim, Perceived Empathy with the Victim and Perceived Sympathy with the Victim. The mean scores, standard deviations, and the minimum and maximum scores are shown in Table 1. The scale for Attribution of Blame to the Victim was clearly positively skewed, so the Log10 was computed and used for ANOVA analyses to account for the skewed data. For the dependent variables Perceived Empathy with the Victim and Perceived Sympathy with the Victim the scores were approximately normally distributed. Personal Belief in a Just World and Hostile as well as Benevolent Sexism were measured to serve as moderators in an exploratory analysis. The scores were also approximately normally distributed for personal Belief in a Just World, and Hostile sexism and Benevolent Sexism.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics.

| | Mean (<i>M</i>) | Standard Deviation (<i>SD</i>) | Minimum | Maximum | Median |
|---|----------------------|--|---------|---------|--------|
| Attribution of Blame to the Victim | 1.92 | 0.87 | 1 | 4 | 1.80 |
| Attribution of Blame to the Victim (Log10) | 0.25 | 0.17 | 0.00 | 0.60 | 0.26 |
| Perceived Empathy with the Victim | 3.22 | 0.86 | 1 | 5 | 3.35 |
| Perceived Sympathy with the Victim | 2.58 | 0.86 | 1 | 5 | 3.00 |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|------|------|---|---|------|
| Belief in a Just World | 2.81 | 0.70 | 1 | 5 | 2.83 |
| Hostile Sexism | 2.34 | 0.73 | 1 | 4 | 2.36 |
| Benevolent Sexism | 2.49 | 0.61 | 1 | 4 | 2.45 |

Inferential Statistics

The relationships between dependent variables and the moderators were analysed by using a Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the results are presented in Table 2. Attribution of Blame to the Victim and Hostile Sexism were found to be moderately positively correlated, as were Attribution of Blame to the Victim and Benevolent Sexism. Another relatively strong positive correlation was found between the moderators Hostile sexism and Benevolent Sexism.

The correlation between the dependent variable Perceived Sympathy with the Victim and the other dependent variables and moderators was analysed using a Spearman's correlation, the results are also shown in Table 2. A moderate negative correlation was found between the dependent variables Perceived Sympathy with the Victim and Attribution of Blame to the Victim, as well as between Perceived Sympathy with the Victim and the moderator Hostile sexism. Perceived Sympathy with the Victim is also moderately negatively correlated with the dependent variable Perceived Empathy with the Victim.

Table 2.

A Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship between the Dependent Variables and Moderators

| | Attribution of Blame to the Victim | Perceived Empathy with the Victim | Perceived Sympathy with the Victim | Belief in a Just World | Hostile Sexism |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Perceived | <i>r</i> = -.14 | - | | | |
| Empathy with the Victim | <i>p</i> = .059 | | | | |
| Perceived | <i>r_s</i> = -.49 | <i>r_s</i> = .26 | - | | |
| Sympathy with the Victim | <i>p</i> < .001 | <i>p</i> < .001 | | | |
| Belief in a Just World | <i>r</i> = .06 | <i>r</i> = -.04 | <i>r_s</i> = -.01 | - | |
| Hostile Sexism | <i>p</i> < .001 | <i>p</i> = .584 | <i>p</i> = .910 | | |
| Benevolent | <i>r</i> = .50 | <i>r</i> = .01 | <i>r_s</i> = -.32 | <i>r</i> = .03 | - |
| Sexism | <i>p</i> < .001 | <i>p</i> = .908 | <i>p</i> < .001 | <i>p</i> = .691 | |
| | <i>r</i> = .34 | <i>r</i> = .10 | <i>r_s</i> = -.11 | <i>r</i> = .08 | <i>r</i> = .57 |
| | <i>p</i> < .001 | <i>p</i> = .162 | <i>p</i> = .117 | <i>p</i> = .263 | <i>p</i> < .001 |

italics = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

bold = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Confirmatory hypothesis tests

To test the hypotheses, factorial ANOVAs were conducted. The results show that both victim and suspect behaviour affected attributions of blame to the victim and perceived sympathy with the victim. However perceived empathy was not affected by either victim or suspect behaviour. The results can be found in Table 3. and are explained in more detail for each dependant variable below.

Table 3.

Main effect and Interaction effect of the Independent variables on the dependent variables Attribution of Blame to the Victim (Log10), Perceived Empathy with the Victim and Perceived Sympathy with the Victim

| | Attribution of Blame to the Victim (Log10) | | | Perceived Empathy with the Victim | | | Perceived Sympathy with the Victim | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> |
| Victim Behaviour | 8.34 | 2 | <.001 | .6 | 2 | =.517 | 5.6 | 2 | =.034 |
| | | | | 6 | | | 0 | | |
| Suspect Behaviour | 4.44 | 1 | =.036 | .2 | 1 | =.601 | 4.5 | 1 | =.004 |
| | | | | 8 | | | 7 | | |
| Victim Behaviour* | 3.15 | 2 | =.045 | .9 | 2 | =.399 | 1.8 | 2 | =.155 |
| Suspect Behaviour | | | | 2 | | | 8 | | |

italics = Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

bold = Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

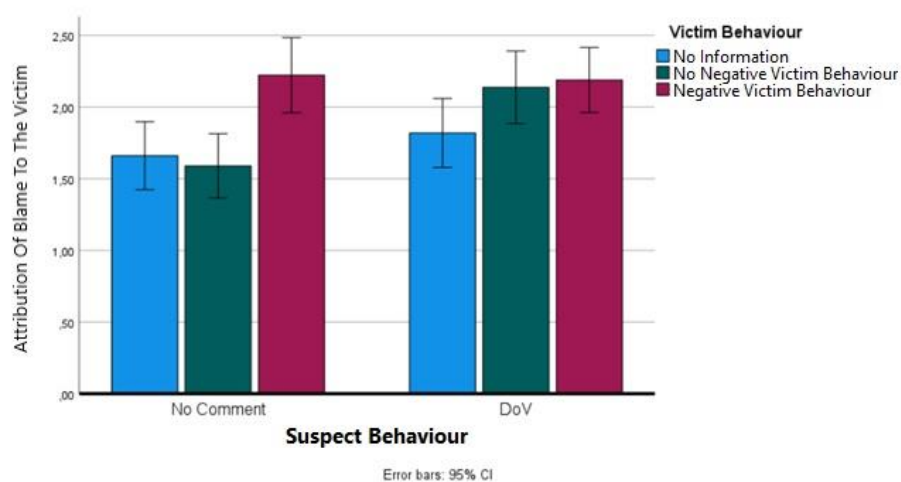
Attribution of Blame to the Victim

Both of the conditions the participants were assigned to had an impact on the Attribution of Blame to the Victim of the participants (see Table 3.). The results are visualized in Figure 1, which shows the estimated marginal means of each Victim Behaviour condition, split by Suspect Behaviour, with error bars representing 95% confidence intervals. If Denial of the Victim was used, participants attributed more blame to the victim than when the suspect did not give any comment ($M = 2.05, SD = 0.76$ vs $M = 1.79, SD = 0.66$). To gain a deeper insight into the direction of effects, a simple planned contrast was conducted for the three levels of Victim Behaviour with Negative Victim Behaviour as the reference category. These contrasts showed that more blame was attributed to the victim when the victim has engaged in some negative behaviour prior to the offence ($M = 2.20, SD = 0.70$) than when the victim has not engaged in any negative behaviour ($M = 1.83, SD = 0.76, p = .002$), or when no

information about victim behaviour was provided ($M = 1.74$, $SD = 0.65$, $p < .001$). When comparing the means of the No Information condition with the means of the Negative Victim Behaviour condition via an exploratory Bonferroni corrected post-hoc test, a significant difference was found ($p = .003$). Overall, these result show that participants attributed more blame to the victim when the victim engaged in negative behaviour prior to the offence than when the victim did not engage in such behaviour or when no information about victim behaviour was provided.

Figure 1

Estimated Marginal Means of Attribution of Blame to the Victim.



The interaction effect between the Suspect Behaviour conditions and the Victim Behaviour conditions was also found to be significant (see Table 3.) To further investigate this effect, the file was first split by Suspect Behaviour and an one-way ANOVA was conducted on Victim Behaviour at both levels of suspect behaviour. Generally better to talk about the general principles. A significant difference was found for the between groups comparison but only in the No Comment condition ($F = 9.54$, $df = 64$, $p = .004$). These findings show that the scores of Attribution of Blame to the Victim differ between the three Victim Behaviour conditions, only when the participant does not receive further information

about the case from the interviewed suspect. Further, the file was split by Victim behaviour and a t-test was conducted. There was only an effect of Denial of the Victim in the No Negative Victim Behaviour condition, whereby Denial of the Victim ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 0.84$) increased Attributions of Blame to the Victim compared to No Comment ($M = 1.59$, $SD = 0.59$, $t = -2.98$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). All other comparisons were not significant.

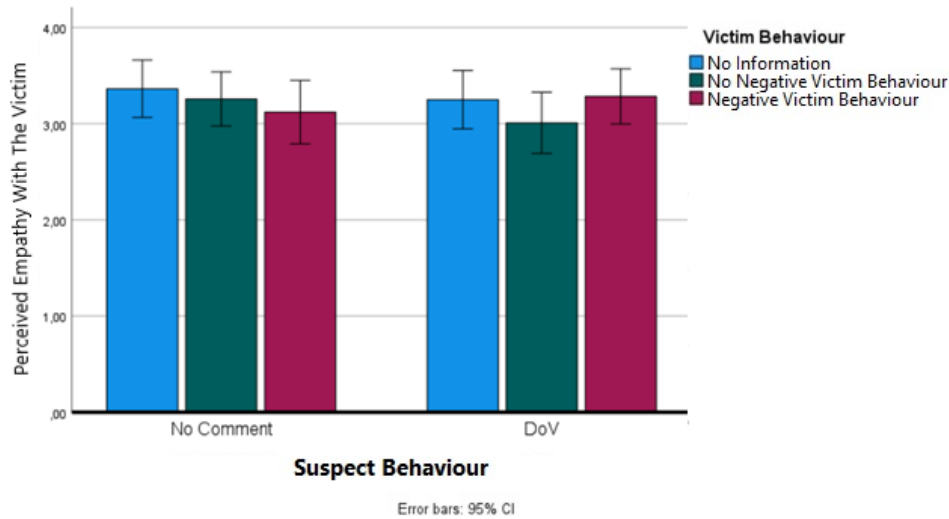
Perceived Empathy with the Victim

For the dependent variable Perceived Empathy with the Victim, none of the main effects were found to be significant (see Table 3.), nor was there any interaction between the two independent variables. Consequently, none of the conditions the participants were assigned to had an impact on the empathy the participants perceived for the victim. Visualized results can be found in Figure 2. The figure presents the estimated marginal means of each of the Victim Behaviour conditions, including error bars, representing 95% confidence intervals.

To explore whether there might be an effect between two of the Victim Behaviour conditions, a simple planned contrast was conducted. No significant difference was found when comparing the means of the No Information condition ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.95$) and the Negative Victim Behaviour condition ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.75$, $p = .500$). The comparison of the No Negative Victim Behaviour condition ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.89$) with the Negative Victim Behaviour condition also no significant difference was found ($p = .651$). Concluding from these results, it can be said, that neither Suspect nor Victim Behaviour had an impact on the level of Empathy the participants perceived for the victim.

Figure 2

Estimated Marginal Means of Perceived Empathy with the Victim.



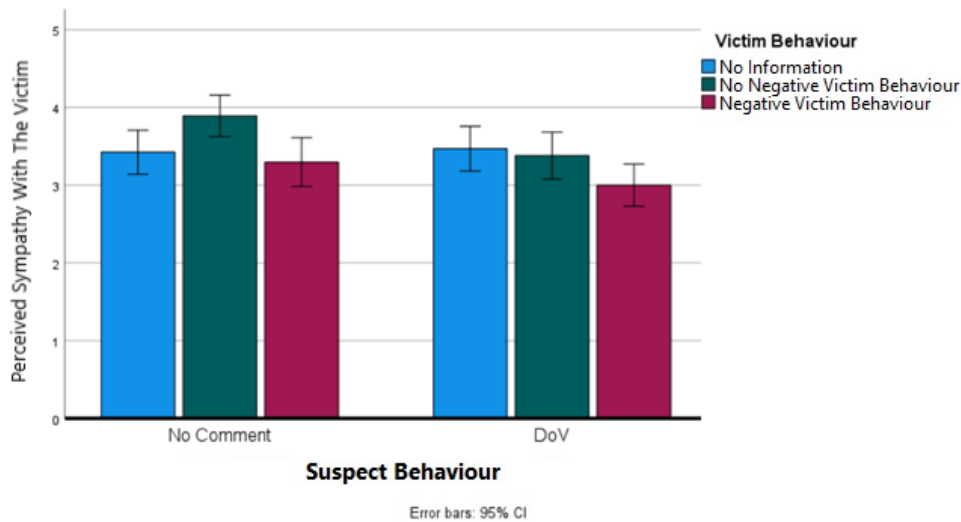
Perceived Sympathy with the Victim

It can be said, that if Denial of the Victim was used, the Perceived Sympathy with the Victim was lower than when the suspect refused to give any comment ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.90$ vs. $M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.80$) (see Table 3.). Simple planned contrasts were conducted on the three levels of Victim Behaviour. The Perceived Sympathy with the Victim was lower when the victim has engaged in some negative behaviour prior to the offence ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.92$) than when there was no information about the victim behaviour provided ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.83$, $p = .043$) and highest when the victim has not engaged in any negative behaviour ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.75$, $p = .001$). A Bonferroni corrected post-hoc test also showed a significant effect for the comparison of No Negative Victim Behaviour with Negative Victim Behaviour ($p = .001$). This means that the behaviour the victim showed prior to the offence has an impact on the Perceived Sympathy with the Victim. The resulting findings mean, that the participants perceived lower sympathy for the victim, when they had engaged in a form of negative behaviour prior to the offence than when no information was provided about Victim Behaviour. This effect was even stronger, when the victim showed some negative behaviour, compared to when evidence was provided that the victim did not engage in any form of

negative behaviour. The estimated marginal means with error bars, representing 95% confidence intervals of the three Victim Behaviour conditions are visualized in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Estimated Marginal Means of Perceived Sympathy with the Victim



Exploratory Analysis

Belief in a Just World

The personal Belief in a Just World of the participants was measured to test for a moderation effect on the three different dependent variables. A general linear model with Victim Behaviour and Suspect Behaviour as independent variables and Belief in a Just World as a moderator, which was modelled as interacting with both of the independent variables, was used to check for the moderation effect. For none of the dependent variables (Attribution of Blame to the Victim, Perceived Empathy with the victim and Perceived Sympathy with the Victim) was there any evidence for any moderation effect from Belief in a Just World (see Table 4.).

Table 4.

Main effect and Moderation effects of the Independent variables and the Moderator Belief in a Just World on the dependent variables Attribution of Blame to the Victim (Log10), Perceived Empathy with the Victim and Perceived Sympathy with the Victim.

| | Attribution of Blame to the Victim | | | Perceived Empathy with the Victim | | | Perceived Sympathy with the Victim | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> |
| Victim Behaviour | .98 | 2 | =.977 | .80 | 2 | =.449 | 1.53 | 2 | =.219 |
| Suspect Behaviour | .65 | 1 | =.653 | 2.14 | 1 | =.145 | .28 | 1 | =.599 |
| Belief in a Just World | 2.06 | 1 | =.153 | .22 | 1 | =.643 | .23 | 1 | =.631 |
| Victim Behaviour* | 2.81 | 2 | =.063 | 1.03 | 2 | =.359 | 1.96 | 2 | =.143 |
| Suspect Behaviour | | | | | | | | | |
| Victim Behaviour* | 1.81 | 2 | =.167 | .54 | 2 | =.586 | .97 | 2 | =.379 |
| Belief in a Just World | | | | | | | | | |
| Suspect Behaviour* | 1.94 | 1 | =.165 | 1.03 | 1 | =.168 | .00 | 1 | =.982 |
| Belief in a Just World | | | | | | | | | |

italics = Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

bold = Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Ambivalent Sexism

The level of Ambivalent Sexism of the participants was measured to test for a moderation effect. Ambivalent Sexism consists of two sublevels Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism. For each of them the effect was investigated separately.

Hostile Sexism

A general linear model with Victim Behaviour and Suspect Behaviour as independent variables and Hostile Sexism as a moderator, which was modelled as interacting with both of the independent variables, was used. The main and interaction effects across all dependant variables are shown in Table 5.

Table 5.

Main effect and Moderation effects of the Independent variables and the Moderator Hostile on the dependent variables Attribution of Blame to the Victim (Log10), Perceived Empathy with the Victim and Perceived Sympathy with the Victim.

| | Attribution of Blame to the Victim | | | Perceived Empathy with the Victim | | | Perceived Sympathy with the Victim | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> |
| Victim Behaviour | 1.01 | 2 | =.367 | 2.24 | 2 | =.109 | 1.01 | 2 | =.367 |
| Suspect Behaviour | .35 | 1 | =.556 | 5.60 | 1 | =.019 | .20 | 1 | =.657 |
| Hostile Sexism | 68.28 | 1 | <.001 | .02 | 1 | =.881 | 25.55 | 1 | <.001 |
| Victim Behaviour* | 1.97 | 2 | =.142 | 1.10 | 2 | =.337 | 1.85 | 2 | =.161 |
| Suspect Behaviour | | | | | | | | | |
| Victim Behaviour* | .02 | 2 | =.983 | 1.79 | 2 | =.170 | 1.64 | 2 | =.196 |
| Hostile Sexism | | | | | | | | | |
| Suspect Behaviour* | 2.08 | 1 | =.151 | 7.13 | 1 | =.008 | 1.49 | 1 | =.230 |
| Hostile Sexism | | | | | | | | | |

italics = Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

bold = Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For Attribution of Blame to the Victim the only significant effect was the positive main effect ($b = 0.11$, $SE = 0.03$, $t = 4.53$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) of Hostile Sexism (see Table 5.).

When the Hostile Sexism of the participants increases, then the participants attributed more blame to the victim.

Because of this very strong main effect of Hostile Sexism, the main analysis was conducted again, but this time with Hostile Sexism as a covariate. The results showed that the primary effect of the independent variables Victim Behaviour ($F = 10.22$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$) and Suspect Behaviour ($F = 6.78$, $df = 1$, $p = .010$) was still present even after controlling for the strong effect of Hostile Sexism in determining Attribution of Blame to the Victim.

For Hostile sexism and Perceived Empathy with the Victim significant effects were found for the main effect of Suspect Behaviour, as well as for the interaction between Suspect Behaviour and Hostile Sexism (see Table 5.), which indicates a moderation effect of Hostile Sexism. To further investigate this effect, a moderation analysis was conducted via PROCESS with a default of 5000 bootstrapping resamples to see at which level of Hostile Sexism the effect occurs. The results are presented in Table 6., and show a significant main effect for Suspect Behaviour, as well as a significant interaction effect of Suspect Behaviour and Hostile Sexism. Three levels of Hostile Sexism were selected (low (-1SD=1,60), medium (Mean=2,34) and high (+1SD= 3,07)). The analysis showed that when Hostile Sexism is low, the use of Denial of the Victim arguments increases empathy for the victim, however this effect is non-significant (see Table 7.). When Hostile Sexism is at the mean level for the sample then there is no effect of the use of Denial of the Victim arguments. However, the use of Denial of the Victim arguments significantly reduces the Perceived Empathy with the Victim when Hostile Sexism is high.

Table 6.

Regression analysis on the Main effect and Moderation effects of the Independent variable Suspect Behaviour and the Moderator Hostile Sexism on the dependent variable Perceived Empathy with the Victim.

| | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>t(df)</i> | <i>p</i> |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Suspect Behaviour | 0.98 | 0.41 | 2.37(1) | =.019 |
| Hostile Sexism | 0.23 | 0.12 | 1.95(1) | =.053 |
| Suspect Behaviour*Hostile Sexism | -0.45 | 0.17 | -2.65(1) | =.009 |

italics Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

bold = Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7.

Regression analysis on the Main effect of Moderator Hostile Sexism on the dependent variable Perceived Empathy with the Victim for Low Hostile Sexism (-1SD=1,60), medium Hostile Sexism (M=2,34) and high Hostile Sexism (+1SD= 3,07).

| | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>t(df)</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Low Hostile Sexism | 0.26 | 0.17 | 1.50(1) | =.134 |
| Medium Hostile Sexism | -0.06 | 0.12 | -0.52(1) | =.601 |
| High Hostile Sexism | -0.39 | <i>0.17</i> | -2.24(1) | =.026 |

italics = Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

bold = Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For Perceived Sympathy with the Victim the only significant effect found is the Main effect of Hostile Sexism (see Table 5.). This means, that people with more hostile sexism have lower perceived sympathy with the victims ($b = -0.50$, $SE = 0.14$, $t = -3.47$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). To control for the impact of Hostile Sexism, the main analysis was conducted again with Hostile Sexism as a covariate. The primary effects of the independent variables Victim Behaviour ($F = 6.43$, $df = 2$, $p = .002$) and Suspect Behaviour ($F = 5.41$, $df = 1$, $p = .021$) remain significant with Hostile Sexism as a covariate.

Benevolent Sexism

To test a possible moderation effect of Benevolent Sexism on the three dependent variables, a general linear model with Victim Behaviour and Suspect Behaviour as independent variables and Benevolent Sexism as a moderator, which was modelled as interacting with both of the independent variables, was used. The only significant effect found across all dependant

variables was the main effect of Benevolent Sexism on Attribution of Blame to the Victim (see Table 8.). To rule out that Benevolent Sexism overpowers the main effects of the independent variables, the main analysis was conducted again with Benevolent Sexism as a covariate. Both main effects remain significant for the independent variables Victim Behaviour ($F = 8.73, df = 2, p < .001$) and Suspect Behaviour ($F = 7.27, df = 1, p = .008$). All the other results for Benevolent Sexism as a possible moderator were not significant (see Table 8.).

Table 8.

Main effect and Moderation effects of the Independent variables and the Moderator Benevolent Sexism Hostile on the dependent variables Attribution of Blame to the Victim (Log10), Perceived Empathy with the Victim and Perceived Sympathy with the Victim.

| | Attribution of Blame to the Victim | | | Perceived Empathy with the Victim | | | Perceived Sympathy with the Victim | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> |
| Victim Behaviour | .68 | 2 | =.506 | 1.29 | 2 | =.278 | .54 | 2 | =.587 |
| Suspect Behaviour | .25 | 1 | =.619 | .82 | 1 | =.367 | .00 | 1 | =.989 |
| Benevolent Sexism | 26.50 | 1 | <.001 | 2.11 | 1 | =.148 | 1.89 | 1 | =.171 |
| Victim Behaviour* | 2.78 | 2 | =.065 | .96 | 2 | =.387 | 1.76 | 2 | =.176 |
| Suspect Behaviour | | | | | | | | | |
| Victim Behaviour* | 1.07 | 2 | =.344 | 1.01 | 2 | =.367 | .04 | 2 | =.965 |
| Benevolent Sexism | | | | | | | | | |
| Suspect Behaviour* | 1.41 | 1 | =.237 | 1.08 | 1 | =.299 | .29 | 1 | =.588 |
| Benevolent Sexism | | | | | | | | | |

italics = Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

bold = Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

Summary

Victims of cases of C&C suffer a lot during their daily life. Interviews are often the only chance to gather evidence to support successful prosecution of perpetrators, because there is often no physical evidence. Suspects of C&C have been shown to be highly manipulative during interview through the use of influencing behaviours like denial of the victim which were proposed to shift parts of the blame towards the victim, by claiming the victims provoked their behaviour. This study aimed to test how effective the use of denial of the victim arguments is and whether blame was successfully shifted onto the victim. We tested whether denial of the victim arguments did increase attributions of blame to the victim and decrease perceived empathy and sympathy with the victim.

The main findings were that denial of the victim arguments were effective in increasing the attribution of blame to the victim and decreasing the perceived sympathy with the victim, but this effect was not found for perceived empathy with the victim. The effect of denial of the victim on increasing attributions of blame was even stronger when there was some indication that the alleged victim has engaged in some negative relationship behaviour. The exploratory analyses for the moderators also revealed that when hostile sexism is high perceived empathy with the victim reduces, but only when denial of the victim arguments are used.

Attributions and Denial of the Victim arguments

The results of this study support the notion that denial of the victim affects attributions. Essentially, denial of the victim raised attributions to the victim to the level seen in the no comment condition when there was negative behaviour shown by the victim. So negative behaviour raises attributions of blame to the victim by itself, but denial of the victim can do this even when there is evidence the claims about negative victim behaviour are false.

The scores for no negative victim behaviour in the no comment condition were just as high as the ones for the negative victim behaviour when denial of the victim was used. These findings can be explained through attribution theory. External attributions focus on the stimulus for the event or the circumstances of the moment, rather than on the individual and its actions (Schmitt, 2015). Furthermore, because of the self-serving bias, people attribute the causes of negative events often to external causes (Seidel et al., 2010). Participants of this study see the victim's behaviour as a trigger, so a stimulus for the offence, so they will make external attributions towards the victim (Seidel et al., 2010). This will happen not only when the victim actually has engaged in negative behaviour, but also when the suspect claims the victim has engaged in some negative behaviour, even when there is evidence the victim has not, this is the case.

The culpable control model assesses attributions of blame and the conditions that lead to these attributions (Alicke, 2000). One condition that influences the attributions is the extent to which evidence, that is concerning harmful events, contributes to personal control. This impact is assessed and evaluated as either favourable or unfavourable. Spontaneous negative evaluations can lead to blame-validation, because the observer sees the evidence with a biased view. The observer overestimates the level of personal control, the observed persons have over their actions, and hence, lower their evidential standards of blaming (Alicke, 2000). These evaluations lead to ascribing the most blame to the person, whose behaviour confirms unfavourable expectations or who evoked most negative affect (Alicke, 2000). The culpable control approach would support the findings of the current study. With the denial of the victim arguments, the suspect is creating the impression of the victim having provoked the offence by the behaviour the victim has shown previous to the offence. Consequently, the victim confirms the negative expectations of the observer about the victim behaviour, which creates negative internal attributions towards the victim. The negative expectations are also

fulfilled, when the victim showed negative behaviour, which will result in the same negative attributions. As a result, in both cases the victim will be blamed more, which was confirmed by this study (Alicke, 2000). Consequently, denial of the victim has the same effect as actual evidence of negative victim behaviour concerning attributions.

When people hold internal attributions, they are focussing on the suspect as a person and how this person behaved (Schmitt, 2015). Since the suspect is accused of an offence, the suspect is claimed to have behaved badly. The aim of the suspect is to shift these attributions away from themselves onto the victim by using denial of the victim arguments (Watson, et al., 2018). Consequently, the victim is seen as a person who has behaved in a negative way and so internal attributions against the victim increase. If these statements of the suspect about the victim's infidelity are not true, the interviewer might also doubt the rest of the suspect's account. Contrary, if additional evidence proves this accusation is true, the interviewers might believe to the suspects arguments and change the impression they had about the victim. This is what was observed in this study. When denial of the victim arguments are used, attributions of blame to the victim increase. More specifically, the results show that in the negative victim behaviour condition, when the victim engaged in some negative relationship behaviour. There seems to be a kernel of truth to the denial of the victim arguments, which makes them more effective. As prior mentioned, this is exactly what was predicted using the attribution theory. It can be concluded that different victim behaviours influence the attribution of blame to the victim.

Sympathy and Empathy and Denial of the Victim arguments

Another form of external attributions addresses the circumstances of the moment (Schmitt, 2015). The circumstances of the moment are rated differently in different states of emotion. Since such a case of Control and Coercion, as presented to the participants, often involves a lot of different emotions, it is likely that there was an emotional response triggered

in the participants of the study while reading the interview. One emotional response that might have been triggered is Sympathy. Perceived sympathy with the victim has shown to be lower when negative victim behaviour was present, which is what was predicted. An explanation for this finding might be that the victim has caused negative feelings within the observers by their infidelity. As a consequence, the participants perceived lower sympathy with the victim, due to the negative victim behaviour (Jeffrey, 2016). The same effect can be caused with the use of denial of the victim arguments, where the suspect wants the victim to be seen in a negative light. So, participants feel more connected to the negative feelings the victim is claimed to have provoked and consequently perceive less sympathy with the victim. Additionally, in the interview, the participant only gets to know the perspective of the suspect and does not know the victim's version of the circumstances, this might result in a non-factual judgement of the whole situation (Grubb & Turner, 2012). The participants are missing a lot of information about the perspective of the victim. Hence, they cannot get a full impression about the case and the role the victim has in it. Moreover, the participants do not get to know the emotions of the victim within the situation first hand from the victim, so it is harder to feel and relate with the situation of the victim.

For empathy, none of the effects tested were significant. This means that the level of empathy was constant over the conditions and was not influenced by either denial of the victim arguments or actual misbehaviour of the victim. People feel empathy with victims of crime cases who are innocent of their own fate (Aderman, et al., 1974). Hence, it was predicted that they will also feel empathy with victims that have not engaged in negative behaviour in the C&C case presented, so the victim is innocent too. This was expected to be different, when the victim showed negative behaviour, because in that case the victim is not fully innocent anymore. The results have shown that this prediction was wrong, since participants perceived nearly the same amount of empathy for the victim in both cases.

As a result, it needs to be considered that all the judgements of the participants, including attributions of blame to the victim and perceived sympathy with the victim, might be biased by emotional responses and the circumstances of the moment. Therefore, future studies should focus more on these three aspects. Especially, since the emotional responses sympathy and empathy are still often neglected during legal decision making at the moment (Kunst & Schiltkamp, 2019).

Ambivalent Sexism and Denial of the Victim

Exploratory analysis revealed that there was also one factor that had an impact on perceived empathy. This is the moderator variable Hostile sexism. Empathy is the ability to think and feel as another one does. When people scored high in hostile sexism and denial of the victim arguments were used by the suspect, the empathy perceived with the victim was reduced. People high in hostile sexism would struggle to think and feel as the victim does, because it behaves in contrast to their beliefs, whereas the suspect's way of thinking and feeling is more in line with hostile sexist beliefs (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

This can be explained by the nature of hostile sexism as one side of ambivalent sexism. Hostile sexism entails negative attitudes and sexist antipathy. The victim behaved in a non-stereotypical way according to the story the suspect tries to convey via denial of the victim arguments. The victim had misbehaved and cheated on the suspect, which will confirm the beliefs of people with high hostile sexist beliefs. They would expect the victim to behave like a "saint", but according to the interview the participants read, the victim does not fit into this description. As a consequence, people high in hostile sexism will rather rethink their categorization and shift the victim into the category "slut". They hold negative attitudes and antipathy towards individuals from this category, consequently, they perceive the same for the victim. This antipathy leads to the reduction of perceived empathy with the victim.

Denial of the victim arguments are used by the suspect to list negative behaviours the victim allegedly has engaged in, so the suspect claims the negative stereotypes to be true. These alleged negative behaviours are used as justifications by the suspect for the own actions of the suspect. The suspect believes that the victim is unworthy of help based on the prior behaviour. A person high in hostile sexism would share these beliefs about the victim. Consequently, it was more likely that participants would not perceive empathy with the victim.

Benevolent sexism has not shown any moderation effect on the three dependent variables. This can be explained by the nature of benevolent sexism, which is a subjectively positive attitude towards women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Consequently, people high in benevolent sexism would not hold negative attitudes toward women no matter if they have engaged in negative relationship behaviours. People high in benevolent sexism are prone to always see the good in women and always want the best for them, so they will not attribute blame on them no matter what they did. As a result, people high in benevolent sexism would also not blame the victim for this behaviour and the later offence against them. Also, their perceptions about the victim will remain the same, in terms of sympathy and empathy perceived with the victim.

Belief in a Just World and Denial of the Victim

The predicted moderator variable belief in a just world also had no impact on the three dependent variables. This is in line with the findings of Muller, et al. (1994), who also tested belief in a just world as a predictor for victim blaming. They found that belief in a just world had no effect when other predictor factors for attributions of blame, such as empathy, were present. Prior research was inconsistent in results and it was found in different studies, that belief in a just world either had an effect on victim blaming or did not (Kerr & Kurtz, 1977 vs. MacLean & Chown, 1988). Muller, et al. (1994) claimed that these ambiguous findings can

be explained, insofar that the prior studies did not include further predictive factors as Muller et al. did. Also, in this study belief in a just world was only used as a moderator variable and other main predictor variables as were used. Consequently, the main effects of these variables cancelled out the effect of belief in a just world.

Limitations and Future Research

This study was based on written forms of the case description and investigative interview. It was decided to use a written version of the manipulation, to isolate the concept of interest – the effect of the use of denial of the victim arguments – as precisely as possible. Participants were only exposed to the wording of the stimuli and could not get distracted by other sensual stimuli, such as visual and auditory stimuli. So, the participants could solely focus on the content of the case scenario and the investigative interview. Feedback from some participants uncovered that they perceived the task to answer questions about how they perceive the victim of a serious crime, which they have never seen, nor have much information about or any behavioural cues, e.g. gestures, mimicry or intonation, as very tough. Especially, the concepts Sympathy and Empathy, which rely on emotional responses, were perceived as very difficult to rate. Many of the concepts analysed, especially perceived empathy with the victim, showed almost significant effects, but these effects were not strong enough to actually be significant. It might be, that the manipulation used was too weak to evoke the hypothesized effects of the independent variables on e.g. empathy in the participants. Therefore, it will be advisable to conduct this study, or a study with a similar framework, again, but this time with a stronger manipulation. However, Carlson and Schacke (1980) showed, that people have more possibilities of processing a stimulus when the stimulus is presented aurally. Therefore, a video recorded case description and investigative interview would be an option. The additional visual and auditory stimuli will add additional sensual experiences to the manipulation and the participants will be able to gain a fuller

impression of the main actors and their roles in the crime, before rating their emotional response towards them.

A second limitation might be that participants lack knowledge about Control and Coercion. A definition was provided several times during the study, so that participants could check if they were not sure anymore. However, it is not ensured that the participants read and understand the definition properly. Since C&C is not a crime in most places, some people might not have a clear understanding of what behaviours specifically are the violations of law in these kinds of crimes and in what forms they occur. They might recognized behaviours within the case as harmful. Probably, people might have perceived the crime as not that severe, because they are more used to crimes involving physical damage and lacking proper knowledge about control and coercion cases. Since most of the participants were German or from other countries which do not prosecute Coercion and Control as a crime, for this sample of participant it will add some understanding of the whole situation. Alternatively, a sample can be recruited, which comes from regions where Coercion and Control already is prosecuted as a crime, e.g. England and Wales, so they are more likely to have already heard of this types of crime. However, it can never be guaranteed that participants from these regions have heard of the crimes like these, therefore, the first version will be more appropriate.

Furthermore, the questionnaire was only available in German and English, consequently several participants were from other countries, not native speakers, and might have been struggling with the language. Hence, they might not have understood the case, the interview or the questions not fully or incorrect and their answers were biased because of this. Therefore, maybe some of the answers were different than they would have normally been, because of the lack of proper understanding. As a consequence some of the results might have been biased.

Another limitation is that the no comment condition is not optimal a control condition. The suspect refuses constantly to give any comment, which ensures that the participants do not get any further information about the crime and therefore need to rely fully on the case description and the questions of the interviewer to make their judgements. One would expect this to be a rather neutral condition then, but that actually is not the case (Stokoe, et al., 2016). Although, there is no answer with further information provided, people might interpret a lot in these words, according to the sentence: “No answer, is still an answer” (Stokoe, et al., 2016). This means, people suggest, when a person refuses to give an answer to an unpleasant question, it is always the most uncomfortable answer. In this case it would be, that the suspect is guilty of the crime. This results in totally different ratings for the perception of the victim, than when it is interpreted in the neutral way of simply not gaining new insights into the case.

Giving no comment can be mistaken as a silent confession, but this is not necessarily true, because every person has the right of remaining silent (Stokoe, et al., 2016). Watson, et al. (2018) proposed the “no comment” response to be an influencing behaviour itself. Suspects making use of their right to non-response to evade challenging questions and shut down the conversation as quickly as possible. Consequently, no comment response being an influencing behaviour itself is another reason for it being an imperfect control condition. Nevertheless, the No Comment condition was used as the control group in this study, because it provides the participant with no further information about the case, but the participant is still able to read a similar interview as the participants in the denial of the Victim condition.

A further limitation might be that most of the participants were female. This could have caused biases within the sample. The overrepresentation of women might have had the consequence that most of the women might have identified more with the female victim than with the male suspect. This might also explain the positive skew in the data for the variable attribution of blame to the victim. As a consequence, the attributions of blame to the victim

might have been more in favour of the victim, as well as perceived Empathy and Sympathy might have been higher than when the participant would not feel connected with the person of interest. Further, women might interpret the whole case with completely different emotions and consider different facts important about it than a male participant would. This would also lead to different ratings, either lower or more extreme scores, about the involved persons in the case, the victim and the suspect.

Conclusion

The study of Watson, et al. (2018) showed that denial of the victim behaviours were used and the aim of this seemed to be that it shifts attributions. The findings of this study show that the suspect influencing behaviour 'Denial of the victim' can be effective in changing the observer's perception about the victim in terms of attributions of blame and perceptions of sympathy, to the same extent as actual evidence of negative victim behaviour can. Interviewers need to always bear in mind, how manipulative suspects might be and that they may unconsciously try to attribute blame to the victim through denial of the victim arguments. Suspects will evoke emotional responses to lower the sympathy and empathy the interviewer might feel with the victim and use the resulting reduced desire to help in their own favour. Interviewers have to remind themselves to be aware of their emotional responses and try to remain (emotionally) neutral during the investigation to come to a rational, objective conclusion about the role of the victim and the suspect. Even if the suspect's account holds some truth and the victim has engaged in some negative behaviour prior to the offence, this can never justify any criminal behaviour and may never affect legal judgements. Future research ought to test whether these observed changes in attribution do lead to different legal judgements and on how to mitigate any observed effects regarding attributions of blame to the victim and perceived sympathy with the victim.

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Appendix A

English Version

Start of Block: Information Sheet

Introduction

What is the study about?

This study investigates how people attribute blame to victims and suspects of coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate relationships.

Am I eligible to take part?

To participate in this study, it is required that you are over the age of 18.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is your decision whether you want to participate in this study or not. You can withdraw from the study at any time without having to explain the reason and without facing any consequences by closing your browser window or tab. If you close your browser before the end of the study, all the data you will have entered will be deleted and you will no longer be included as a participant. However, once you completed the questionnaire, we will not be able to withdraw your data because all data is being collected anonymously and so it is impossible to identify your data after this point.

What will happen when I agree to take part?

If you consent to take part in this study, you will be directed to the questionnaire which will take you approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The questionnaire starts with some demographic questions which will only ask for basic information to preserve anonymity. Next, you will be asked about some of your personal beliefs. After that, you will read an account about an alleged case of Control and Coercion in an intimate relationship. You will then read a transcript of an investigative interview with the suspect of the described case. After this you will be asked some questions about the case and the interview. Finally, you will be asked questions about your attitudes. Please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers and that we want to know your personal opinion regarding these topics.

Risks of taking part

Please keep in mind that the case description and the questions that are being asked are about sensitive topics and that, as a participant, you will be exposed to descriptions of controlling relationship behaviour. If you think these descriptions are likely to upset you please do not start the experiment. If you start the experiment and later do not feel comfortable feel free to stop by closing your browser window. However, at the end of the study we will share links to relevant websites that can offer support around issues concerning domestic abuse.

What will happen to my data and to the results of this study?

This study is being conducted by two psychology master students of the University of Twente and the collected data will be analysed for each of our master thesis. Throughout the whole questionnaire no identifiable information is being collected. The collected data itself will be treated with absolute confidentiality and will not be identifiable or traceable. The data will be stored securely on a

password protected device. No individual responses will be presented but only aggregated data. The results of the study may be submitted for publication and used for further research in this area.

Contact details

Research supervisor: Steven Watson: s.j.watson@utwente.nl

If you want to participate in this study, please read the following statements and give your consent:

- I confirm that I voluntarily want to take part in this study and that I am over the age of 18.
- I have read the information sheet and understand the purpose of this study and that it will include discussion of domestic abuse.
- I understand that my data will be collected anonymously and that I will not be personally identifiable.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.

If you read and understand the statements above and want to consent to take part in this study, then you can click the button at the end of the page.

I Consent (1)

I do not Consent (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If What is the study about? This study investigates how people attribute blame to victims and su... = I do not Consent

End of Block: Information Sheet

Start of Block: Demographics

Gender

Gender

Male (1)

Female (2)

Other (3) _____



Age

Age

Skip To: End of Survey If Condition: Age Is Less Than 18. Skip To: End of Survey.

Nationality

Nationality

- German (1)
 - Dutch (2)
 - Other (3) _____
-

Education

What is your highest level of Education?

- Didn't finish Secondary School (1)
 - High-School Diploma (2)
 - College Education (3)
 - Bachelor's Degree (4)
 - Master's Degree (5)
 - Prefer not to say (6)
-

Relationship experience

What is your relationship (including dating) experience?

- Previously had/ currently in a romantic relationship (1)
- Never had a romantic relationship (2)
- Prefer not to say (3)

Skip To: End of Block If What is your relationship (including dating) experience? = Never had a romantic relationship

Skip To: End of Block If What is your relationship (including dating) experience? = Prefer not to say

Cheating

Have you ever been cheated on in a romantic Relationship?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Prefer not to say (3)
-

Cheated on

Have you ever cheated on your partner in a romantic Relationship?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Prefer not to say (3)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Belief in a Just World

BJW

How much do personally you agree with the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree (1) | Somewhat Disagree (2) | Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) | Somewhat Agree (4) | Strongly Agree (5) |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I think basically the world is a just place. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I believe that, by and large, people get what they deserve. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am confident that justice always prevails over injustice. (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am convinced that in the long run people will be compensated for injustices. (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I firmly believe that injustices in all areas of life (e.g., professional, family, politics) are the exception rather than the rule. (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I think people try to be fair when making important decisions. (6) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

End of Block: Belief in a Just World

Start of Block: Ambivalent Sexism

Sexism Below is a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement. How much do personally you agree with the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree (1) | Somewhat Disagree (2) | Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) | Somewhat Agree (4) | Strongly Agree (5) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality." (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men. (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist. (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Women are too easily offended. (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex. (6) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men. (7) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess. (8)

Women should be cherished and protected by men. (9)

Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them. (10)

Women seek to gain power by getting control over men. (11)

Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores. (12)

Men are complete without women. (13)

Women exaggerate problems they have at work. (14)

Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash. (15)

When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against. (16)

A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man. (17)

There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances. (18)

Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility. (19)

Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives. (20)

Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men. (21)

Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste. (22)

End of Block: Ambivalent Sexism

Start of Block: Case Description no comment

no Comment **C&C Definition**

Coercive and controlling behaviours in intimate relationships are a crime in the UK since the end of 2015. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutes criminal cases that have been investigated by the police and other investigative organisations in England and Wales. They define the crime as: “Any

incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.” (CPS, 2017).

Case Description The following text will describe an accusation of Control and Coercion. Please take your time to read it carefully as we will ask you questions about it later.

Alleged Offence: On 07/01/2021 the police received a phone call from Mr Cooper’s girlfriend: Miss Miller, alleging that she required immediate help.

Please see Miss Miller’s brief description of the events leading up to the police phone call on 07/01/2021:

- Miss Miller alleges that Mr Cooper is a very jealous individual within their relationship and that he regularly accuses her of infidelity.
- Miss Miller accuses Mr Cooper of constantly demanding access to her phone and texts.
- Miss Miller accuses Mr Cooper of frequently preventing her from leaving the house unless he accompanies her.
- Miss Miller accuses Mr Cooper of taking control over aspects of her free time activities, such as where she can go and for how long.
- She also states that he sends her abusive text messages after arguments and whenever she is coming home late.
- The night Miss Miller called the police she states that she went to her book club like she does every Wednesday. She believed that Mr Cooper somehow must have managed to track her location to follow her. According to Miss Miller, Mr Cooper approached the house, pushed his way inside and they had a heated argument in which he accused her of infidelity. She said Mr Cooper got very angry and threatened her. She felt very scared, so she called the police.
- This behaviour has been going on for 1 year and upon reflection Miss Miller believes she is the victim of coercive and controlling behaviour.

End of Block: Case Description no comment

Start of Block: Case Description neg victim behav

neg victim behav **C&C Definition**

Coercive and controlling behaviours in intimate relationships are a crime in the UK since the end of 2015. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutes criminal cases that have been investigated by the police and other investigative organisations in England and Wales. They define the crime as: “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members,

regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.” (CPS, 2017).

Case Description The following text will describe an accusation of Control and Coercion. Please take your time to read it carefully as we will ask you questions about it later.

Alleged Offence: On 07/01/2021 the police received a phone call from Mr Cooper’s girlfriend: Miss Miller, alleging that she required immediate help.

Please see Miss Miller’s brief description of the events leading up to the police phone call on 07/01/2021:

- Miss Miller alleges that Mr Cooper is a very jealous individual within their relationship and that he regularly accuses her of infidelity.
- Miss Miller accuses Mr Cooper of constantly demanding access to her phone and texts.
- Miss Miller accuses Mr Cooper of frequently preventing her from leaving the house unless he accompanies her.
- Miss Miller accuses Mr Cooper of taking control over aspects of her free time activities, such as where she can go and for how long.
- She also states that he sends her abusive text messages after arguments and whenever she is coming home late.
- The night Miss Miller called the police she states that she went to her book club like she does every Wednesday. She believed that Mr Cooper somehow must have managed to track her location to follow her. According to Miss Miller, Mr Cooper approached the house, pushed his way inside and they had a heated argument in which he accused her of infidelity. She said Mr Cooper got very angry and threatened her. She felt very scared, so she called the police.
- This behaviour has been going on for 1 year and upon reflection Miss Miller believes she is the victim of coercive and controlling behaviour. During the collection of investigation evidence, Ms Miller admits that she has been unfaithful to Mr Cooper in the past but that this was a few months ago and not recently.

End of Block: Case Description neg victim behav

Start of Block: Case description no neg victim behav

no neg victim behav **C&C Definition**

Coercive and controlling behaviours in intimate relationships are a crime in the UK since the end of 2015. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutes criminal cases that have been investigated by the police and other investigative organisations in England and Wales. They define the crime as: “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members,

regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.” (CPS, 2017).

Case Description The following text will describe an accusation of Control and Coercion. Please take your time to read it carefully as we will ask you questions about it later.

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Please see Miss Miller’s brief description of the events leading up to the police phone call on 07/01/2021:

- Miss Miller alleges that Mr Cooper is a very jealous individual within their relationship and that he regularly accuses her of infidelity.
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- Miss Miller accuses Mr Cooper of frequently preventing her from leaving the house unless he accompanies her.
- Miss Miller accuses Mr Cooper of taking control over aspects of her free time activities, such as where she can go and for how long.
- She also states that he sends her abusive text messages after arguments and whenever she is coming home late.
- The night Miss Miller called the police she states that she went to her book club like she does every Wednesday. She believed that Mr Cooper somehow must have managed to track her location to follow her. According to Miss Miller, Mr Cooper approached the house, pushed his way inside and they had a heated argument in which he accused her of infidelity. She said Mr Cooper got very angry and threatened her. She felt very scared, so she called the police.
- This behaviour has been going on for 1 year and upon reflection Miss Miller believes she is the victim of coercive and controlling behaviour. Ms Miller denies having ever been unfaithful and in the course of the investigation, no evidence was found which could indicate that Mr Cooper’s accusations have any truth to them.

End of Block: Case description no neg victim behav

Start of Block: Investigative Interview DoV

DoV

Interview Script

The following text will show an interview with Mr Cooper. Please read it carefully as we will ask you some questions about it afterwards.

Police interviewer: Hello, my name is detective constable Johnson, I will be conducting an interview with you today. So, you do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not

mention, when questioned, something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence. Would you like me to explain the caution?

Mr Cooper: No, that's fine.

Police Interviewer: The black box there on the wall is recording everything. If this investigation did go further, this recording can be used in court. Do you understand?

Mr Cooper: Er, yeah, I understand that.

Police Interviewer: Good stuff. So, you've been arrested on an allegation of controlling and coercive behaviour against you partner, Mr Cooper. This is alleged to have happened numerous times over the course of the relationship, which to my understanding is the past year. So, do you want to start from the basics and just tell me about the relationship?

Mr Cooper: We have been going out for just over a year and it was really good at the start. I'd say it was good for the first four months. The only problem is that she's not necessarily the most trustworthy person and lately she is acting very weird. She started to join this book club. It's almost like her new obsession because she's going there quite regularly now. Some nights I barely see her because of this club. I feel like this made me start to think that she might be like seeing someone else again. There were a few things that made me think that actually. And this is when the arguments started.

Police Interviewer: So, what were your reasons for the suspicion?

Mr Cooper: Different things. I mean she never used to read a single book in the past. And let's be honest, everyone who knows her knows that she doesn't have enough brains to read a whole book. Magazines and Instagram with lots of pictures are enough for her. Then she would like get really dressed up and do her hair and all that just to go there. Her little skirt barely even covered her up. Am I really meant to think she wasn't doing that to attract someone's attention? I mean would you get all dressed up like that to go to a book club? And not only that but the fact that she is going to a „book club“?! Have you ever heard that people actually join clubs like that? She couldn't have made it more obvious that something else is going on and I think we both can see that.

Police Interviewer: OK, you mentioned before about arguments, did you two argue a lot during the relationship?

Mr Cooper: Yeah, we do and also did in the past because my girlfriend has a hard time understanding what it means to be loyal in a relationship. This was also when our bigger fights started. I've had to show her how relationships should actually work but she doesn't care and shows no respect to me. Trust me when I say that she is snooty as hell and only has eyes for herself and other men and this behaviour doesn't help the arguments once she gets going. We had a massive blowout once because I didn't want her to leave the house. Like a few days before that she spent almost two hours at this supposed book club and that obviously made me go crazy because she's gone out dressed up like that and stayed away longer than she'd promised me she would be. At that time, I confronted her and asked her why it took her so long to be back and she just came up with all of these excuses and tried to make me think I'm the problem, but I just know that there is something she's hiding. I mean why else would she turn her phone off when she's there?!

Police Interviewer: Can you explain why you take control over aspects of Miss Miller's free time, such as where she can go and for how long?

Mr Cooper: Man, I just told you! She is a cheater. After all of this bullshit that I had to go through before I simply asked her to not be gone for longer than an hour and that I would want her to be

back on time and not be late. She freaked out but I just need to be able to trust her. So of course, I want to know where she is going and who she is going to hang out with.

Police Interviewer: OK so now I know a bit more about the relationship. I think we should move on to the incident that happened on the 7th of January 2021, when you went to Miss Miller's book club. Please explain in your own words what happened on the evening of that date.

Mr Cooper: Like I said earlier, she's been getting all dressed up recently and on that night she did it again. The longer she was at this supposed club the more suspicious I got. She wanted to be back at 9pm and she even promised it to me, but she was not home on time. I tried to call and texted her multiple times, but she wouldn't pick up, so I decided to use the tracking app I installed on her phone a few days before to check her location. I could just feel that there is something off, so I decided to drive to this location and to catch her in the act. The place I pulled up at did not look like there was a book club inside, it was just some house. By that time, it was already like 9:30pm and my thoughts were all over the place because I knew she must be cheating on me again. I was annoyed and couldn't wait any longer, so I just went in there. When she answered the door, she looked really flustered and embarrassed and I knew she didn't want to let me in, so I just sort of pushed my way in. I kept asking "where is he, where is he?" and she was just standing there speechless which only made me more annoyed because she wouldn't even explain herself. Then we had an argument and one thing I noticed while standing there was that there were also other people in this house including some men. She just keeps lying and lying to me as she promised me before that there weren't any men in this club and this honestly proves it to me that my suspicion was justified this whole time.

Police Interviewer: Can you tell me why you think she called the police?

Mr Cooper: I don't even know why she called the police. I mean she's the one dressing slutty and lying about meeting other men behind my back. Like I said earlier she is acting weird and this whole book club thing is just the tip of the iceberg. I don't know what she's told you, but she is a very good actress, and you can't believe a word she says. Also, it's not like I check her phone all the time. I only check her phone when she wants to have a look at mine.

Police Interviewer: Can you tell me about any threatening language that might have been used during the altercation?

Mr Cooper: I can't remember exactly what I said once she started going off at me. Who wouldn't be angry when their girlfriend is going out to secretly meet men in other people's houses? You know how it is, I reckon we both probably said quite bad stuff. Like I said it's all a bit of a blur. This is actually annoying me talking about it all again, can we take a break please.

Police Interviewer: Yes, that's fine, let's take a short break then. Just for the recording the interview is being paused at 3:43 pm.

End of Block: Investigative Interview DoV

Start of Block: Investigative Interview no comment

no comment **Interview Script**

The following text will show an interview with Mr Cooper. Please read it carefully as we will ask you some questions about it afterwards.

Police interviewer: Hello, my name is police constable Johnson, I will be conducting an interview with you today. So, you do not have to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention, when questioned, something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence. Would you like me to explain the caution?

Mr Cooper: No, that's fine.

Police interviewer: The black box there on the wall is recording everything. If this investigation did go further, this recording can be used in court. Do you understand?

Mr Cooper: Er, yeah, I understand that.

Police interviewer: Good stuff. So, you've been arrested on an allegation of controlling and coercive behaviour against you partner, Mr Cooper. This is alleged to have happened numerous times over the course of the relationship, which to my understanding is the past year. So, do you want to start from the basics and just tell me about the relationship?

Mr Cooper: No comment.

Police interviewer: No comment, okay. I've still got to go through all the questions. I know you've already indicated you're going to say "no comment", but I have to just cover everything anyway. We've been told you are often suspicious of Miss Miller's activities. Could you give us the reasons for your suspicion?

Mr Cooper: No comment.

Police interviewer: Did you two argue a lot during the relationship?

Mr Cooper: No comment.

Police interviewer: Can you explain why you take control over aspects of Miss Miller's free time, such as where she can go and for how long?

Mr Cooper: No comment.

Police interviewer: OK, I think we should move on to the incident that happened on the 7th of January 2021, when you went to Miss Miller's book club. Please explain in your own words what happened on the evening of that date.

Mr Cooper: No comment.

Police interviewer: Can you explain why Miss Miller thought that you must have tracked her location?

Mr Cooper: No comment.

Police interviewer: Can you tell me why you think she called the police?

Mr Cooper: No comment.

Police interviewer: Can you tell me about any threatening language that might have been used during the altercation that you were accused of?

Mr Cooper: No comment.

Police interviewer: Okay Mr Cooper, I've got no further questions. Is there anything else before I conclude the interview that you would like to say?

Mr Cooper: No.

Police interviewer: Okay, I'm going to conclude the interview, and the time is now 3:34 pm.

End of Block: Investigative Interview no comment

Start of Block: Manipulation Check

Man. Check **Please answer the following questions about the case you just read.**

| | Extremely unlikely (1) | Somewhat unlikely (2) | Neither likely nor unlikely (3) | Somewhat likely (4) | Extremely likely (5) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Based on the evidence provided how likely is it that Miss Miller cheated on Mr Cooper prior to the offence? (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Based on the evidence provided how likely is it that Miss Miller is cheating on Mr Cooper right now? (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

End of Block: Manipulation Check

Start of Block: Attribution of blame

Attribution

Coercion and control definition: “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.” (CPS, 2017).

Please complete this questionnaire about the case you have just read. Indicate how much you agree

with the following statements about the suspect (Mr Cooper) and the victim (Ms Miller) of the case above.

Based on the evidence provided in the case above, how much do you agree with the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree (1) | Somewhat Disagree (2) | Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) | Somewhat Agree (4) | Strongly Agree (5) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Mr Cooper's behaviour was the reason Miss Miller was feeling distressed. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Miss Miller is a victim of Control and Coercion in this case. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Miss Miller provoked Mr Cooper's behaviour. (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Miss Miller asked to be victimized. (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I think Miss Miller is a bad individual. (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Mr Cooper enjoys having control over Miss Miller's life. (6) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Miss Miller deserved to become a victim of Control and Coercion, because of her behaviour prior to the offence. (7) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I think Mr Cooper is a good individual. (8) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Miss Miller played a role in her own victimization. (9) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

I think Mr Cooper is a manipulating individual. (10)

End of Block: Attribution of blame

Start of Block: Empathy for the suspect

Sus. Empathy

How much do you agree with the following statements?

| | Strongly agree (1) | Somewhat agree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Somewhat disagree (4) | Strongly disagree (5) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| The suspect's emotions are genuine. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I experienced the same emotions as the suspect while reading this transcript. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I can feel the suspect's emotions. (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I can see the suspect's point of view. (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I recognise the suspect's situation. (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Sus. Sympathy

How much sympathy do you feel for the suspect?

- A great deal (1)
- A lot (2)
- A moderate amount (3)
- A little (4)
- None at all (5)

End of Block: Empathy for the suspect

Start of Block: Empathy for the victim

Vic. Empathy

How much do you agree with the following statements?

| | Strongly agree (1) | Somewhat agree (2) | Neither agree nor disagree (3) | Somewhat disagree (4) | Strongly disagree (5) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| The victim's emotions are genuine. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I can feel the victim's emotions. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I can see the victim's point of view. (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I recognise the victim's situation. (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Vic. Sympathy

How much sympathy do you feel for the victim?

- A great deal (1)
- A lot (2)
- A moderate amount (3)
- A little (4)
- None at all (5)

End of Block: Empathy for the victim

Start of Block: Guilt of suspect

Guilt

Coercion and control definition: “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.” (CPS, 2017).

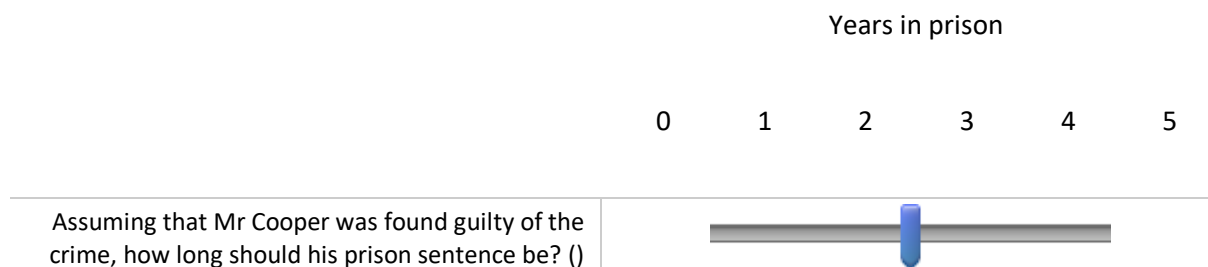
Please complete this questionnaire about the case you have just read. Indicate how much you agree with the following statements about the suspect (Mr Cooper) who has been interviewed.

Based on the evidence provided in the case above, how much do you agree with the following statements:

| | Strongly Disagree (1) | Somewhat Disagree (2) | Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) | Somewhat Agree (4) | Strongly Agree (5) |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Mr Cooper behaved toward Miss Miller in a way that can be defined as controlling and coercive behaviour. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I think Mr Cooper is guilty of Control and Coercion. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Punishment

For this question we would like you to disregard whether you believe Mr Cooper is guilty or not, and to answer the question as though he was guilty. In the case Mr Cooper was guilty, how long of a prison sentence do you feel would be appropriate? Please selected how many years the suspect should be sentenced to jail ranging from 0 to a max of 5 years.



End of Block: Guilt of suspect

Start of Block: Debriefing

Debriefing

Thank you for your participation in our research. This data will be used to explore how people attribute blame in cases of Control and Coercion. The behaviour demonstrated in the case you read was an example of controlling and coercive behaviour, which was criminalized in England at the end of 2015. The case presented in this study was fictional, none of these things have happened, but similar cases do occur.

Research has found that suspects use a variety of manipulation techniques within police interviews to try to convince interviewers to take their side during disputes. The one used in this interview is called Denial of the Victim, which means that the suspect admits to having committed some of the behaviour he is accused of, but justifies it by arguing the behaviour of the victim was unacceptable and therefore their behaviour was an understandable response to the negative behaviour of the victim. In this way they attribute the blame to the victim. To test whether this technique has any impact on how people attribute the blame in this case, two versions of the interview were used. Some people in this study were presented to an interview version where the suspect (Mr Cooper) gave extensive answers incorporating Denial of the Victim arguments, whereas others were presented with an interview where the suspect always answered 'No comment'. We also investigated the effect of different victim behaviours on the attribution of blame. Therefore, the case description also varied. In one case the victim (Ms Miller) cheated on the suspect earlier in their relationship, in another version she did not cheat on Mr Cooper, and in the third case, there is no information provided whether Ms Miller has cheated on Mr Cooper or not. The purpose of this manipulation was that despite the fact that denial of victim arguments do not offer evidential value, we want to know if people are more likely to be persuaded by those arguments, if they have any truth to them. We needed to make it clear that past infidelity does not excuse the suspects

behaviour, but we wanted to see if people think it (partly) does.

We hope that our study will help us to understand how blame is attributed in cases of Control and Coercion. Now, after your participation in this study, we want to remind you that all your data is collected completely anonymous and confidential. We are aware that some of the information provided in this survey may be sensitive and might disturb you. If this study has caused any personal issues for you, we advise you to visit these websites that include information and support for Control and Coercion:

English: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/coercive-control/>

Dutch: <https://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl/organisaties/voor-wie-hulp-zoekt>

Additionally, feel free to contact the researchers of this study in any case of questions.

Contact details

Research supervisor: Steven Watson: s.j.watson@utwente.nl

The researchers Alina and Chiara want to thank you for participating in this study!

End of Block: Debriefing

German Version

Start of Block: Information Sheet

Introduction **Worum geht es in der Studie?**

Diese Studie untersucht, wie Menschen Opfern und Verdächtigen von Nötigungs- und Kontrollverhalten in intimen Beziehungen die Schuld zuschreiben. **Kann ich an der Studie teilnehmen?**

Um an dieser Studie teilzunehmen, müssen Sie über 18 Jahre alt sein. **Muss ich an der Studie teilnehmen?**

Nein, es ist Ihre Entscheidung, ob Sie an dieser Studie teilnehmen wollen oder nicht. Sie können jederzeit ohne Angabe von Gründen und ohne Konsequenzen von der Studie zurücktreten, indem Sie Ihr Browserfenster oder Ihren Tab schließen. Wenn Sie Ihren Browser vor dem Ende der Studie schließen, werden alle Daten, die Sie eingegeben haben, gelöscht und Sie werden nicht mehr als Teilnehmer berücksichtigt. Sobald Sie den Fragebogen ausgefüllt haben, können wir Ihre Daten jedoch nicht mehr zurückziehen, da alle Daten anonymisiert gesammelt werden und somit eine Identifizierung Ihrer Daten nach diesem Zeitpunkt unmöglich ist. **Was passiert, wenn ich der Teilnahme zustimme?**

Wenn Sie zustimmen, an dieser Studie teilzunehmen, werden Sie zum Fragebogen weitergeleitet, für dessen Beantwortung Sie ca. 20-30 Minuten benötigen werden. Der Fragebogen beginnt mit einigen demographischen Fragen, bei denen nur grundlegende Informationen abgefragt werden, um die

Anonymität zu wahren. Als nächstes werden Sie nach einigen Ihrer persönlichen Ansichten gefragt. Danach lesen Sie einen Bericht über einen angeblichen Fall von Kontrolle und Nötigung in einer intimen Beziehung. Danach lesen Sie eine Abschrift eines Ermittlungsgesprächs mit dem Verdächtigen des beschriebenen Falls. Danach werden Ihnen einige Fragen zu dem Fall und dem Interview gestellt. Abschließend werden Ihnen Fragen zu Ihrer Einstellung gestellt. Bitte beachten Sie, dass es keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten gibt, wir interessieren uns für Ihre persönliche Meinung zu diesen Themen.

Risiken der Teilnahme

Bitte bedenken Sie, dass es bei der Fallbeschreibung und den gestellten Fragen um sensible Themen geht und dass Sie als Teilnehmer Beschreibungen von kontrollierendem Beziehungsverhalten ausgesetzt sein werden. Wenn Sie glauben, dass diese Beschreibungen Sie aufregen könnten, beginnen Sie bitte nicht mit dem Experiment. Wenn Sie das Experiment starten und sich später unwohl fühlen, können Sie es jederzeit abbrechen, indem Sie Ihr Browserfenster schließen. Am Ende der Studie werden wir Ihnen Links zu relevanten Websites zur Verfügung stellen, die Unterstützung bei Problemen mit häuslichem Missbrauch bieten. **Was passiert mit meinen Daten und mit den Ergebnissen dieser Studie?**

Diese Studie wird von zwei Psychologie-Masterstudenten der Universität Twente durchgeführt und die gesammelten Daten werden für unsere Masterarbeit ausgewertet. Während des gesamten Fragebogens werden keine identifizierbaren Informationen gesammelt. Die gesammelten Daten selbst werden absolut vertraulich behandelt und sind nicht identifizierbar oder rückverfolgbar. Die Daten werden sicher auf einem passwortgeschützten Gerät gespeichert. Es werden keine individuellen Antworten präsentiert, sondern nur aggregierte Daten. Die Ergebnisse der Studie können zur Veröffentlichung eingereicht und für weitere Forschungen in diesem Bereich verwendet werden.

Kontaktangaben Betreuer der Studie: Steven Watson: s.j.watson@utwente.nl Wenn Sie an dieser Studie teilnehmen möchten, lesen Sie bitte die folgenden Erklärungen und geben Sie Ihr Einverständnis: - Ich bestätige, dass ich freiwillig an dieser Studie teilnehmen möchte und dass ich über 18 Jahre alt bin. - Ich habe das Informationsblatt gelesen und verstehe den Zweck dieser Studie und dass sie eine Diskussion über häusliche Gewalt beinhalten wird. - Ich verstehe, dass meine Daten anonym erfasst werden und dass ich nicht persönlich identifizierbar bin. - Ich verstehe, dass ich jederzeit von der Studie zurücktreten kann. Wenn Sie die obigen Erklärungen gelesen und verstanden haben und der Teilnahme an dieser Studie einwilligen wollen, dann können Sie auf den Button am Ende der Seite klicken.

- Ich stimme zu (1)
- Ich stimme nicht zu (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If What is the study about? This study investigates how people attribute blame to victims and su... = I do not Consent

End of Block: Information Sheet

Start of Block: Demographics

Gender Geschlecht

- männlich (1)
 - weiblich (2)
 - divers (3) _____
-



Age Alter

Skip To: End of Survey If Condition: Age Is Less Than 18. Skip To: End of Survey.

Nationality Nationalität

- Deutsch (1)
 - Niederländisch (2)
 - Andere (3) _____
-

Education Was ist Ihr höchster Bildungsstand?

- Ich habe keinen Schulabschluss (1)
 - Schulabschluss (2)
 - Abitur (3)
 - Bachelor/Berufsausbildung (4)
 - Master (5)
 - Ich möchte es nicht sagen (6)
-

Relationshipexperience Was sind Ihre bisherigen Beziehungserfahrungen (Dating inbegriffen)?

- Ich hatte in der Vergangenheit/ habe aktuell eine romantische Beziehung (1)
- Ich hatte noch nie eine romantische Beziehung (2)
- Ich möchte es nicht sagen (3)

Skip To: End of Block If What is your relationship (including dating) experience? = Never had a romantic relationship

Skip To: End of Block If What is your relationship (including dating) experience? = Prefer not to say

Cheating Waren Sie in einer Beziehung jemals untreu?

- Ja (1)
 - Nein (2)
 - Ich möchte es nicht sagen (3)
-

Cheatedon Wurden Sie in einer Beziehung jemals betrogen?

- Ja (1)
- Nein (2)
- Ich möchte es nicht sagen (3)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Belief in a Just World

BJW Wie sehr stimmen Sie persönlich den folgenden Aussagen zu:

| | Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1) | Stimme eher nicht zu (2) | Stimme weder zu noch widerspreche ich (3) | Stimme eher zu (4) | Stimme voll und ganz zu (5) |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ich glaube, dass die Welt grundsätzlich ein gerechter Ort ist. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich glaube, dass die Menschen im Großen und Ganzen das bekommen, was sie verdienen. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich bin zuversichtlich, dass die Gerechtigkeit immer über die Ungerechtigkeit siegt. (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich bin davon überzeugt, dass die Menschen auf lange Sicht für Ungerechtigkeiten entschädigt werden. (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich bin fest davon überzeugt, dass Ungerechtigkeiten in allen Lebensbereichen (z.B. Beruf, Familie, Politik) eher die Ausnahme als die Regel sind. (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich denke, dass die Menschen versuchen, bei wichtigen Entscheidungen fair zu sein. (6) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

End of Block: Belief in a Just World

Start of Block: Ambivalent Sexism

Sexism Im Folgenden finden Sie eine Reihe von Aussagen über Männer und Frauen und ihre Beziehungen in der heutigen Gesellschaft. Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit Sie jeder Aussage zustimmen

oder nicht zustimmen.

Wie sehr stimmen Sie persönlich den folgenden Aussagen zu:

| | Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1) | Stimme eher nicht zu (2) | Stimme weder zu noch widerspreche ich (3) | Stimme eher zu (4) | Stimme voll und ganz zu (5) |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Egal, wie erfolgreich er ist, ein Mann ist als Person nicht wirklich vollständig, wenn er nicht die Liebe einer Frau hat. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Viele Frauen fordern unter dem Deckmantel der "Gleichberechtigung" besondere Bevorzugungen, wie z.B. eine Einstellungspolitik, die sie gegenüber Männern bevorzugt. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bei einer Katastrophe sollten Frauen nicht unbedingt vor Männern gerettet werden. (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Die meisten Frauen interpretieren unschuldige Bemerkungen oder Handlungen als sexistisch. (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frauen sind zu schnell beleidigt. (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Menschen sind oft wirklich glücklich im Leben, ohne eine romantische Beziehung mit einem Mitglied des anderen Geschlechts zu haben. (6) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feministinnen wollen nicht, dass Frauen mehr Macht haben als Männer. (7) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Viele Frauen haben eine Qualität der Reinheit, die nur wenige Männer besitzen. (8) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Frauen sollten von Männern wertgeschätzt und geschützt werden. (9)

Die meisten Frauen wissen nicht voll zu schätzen, was Männer für sie tun. (10)

Frauen versuchen, Macht zu erlangen, indem sie Kontrolle über Männer bekommen. (11)

Jeder Mann sollte eine Frau haben, die er anbetet. (12)

Männer sind ohne Frauen vollständig. (13)

Frauen übertreiben bei Problemen, die sie auf der Arbeit haben. (14)

Sobald eine Frau einen Mann dazu bringt, sich an sie zu binden, versucht sie normalerweise, ihn an die kurze Leine zu nehmen. (15)

Wenn Frauen in einem fairen Wettbewerb gegen Männer verlieren, beschweren sie sich in der Regel darüber, diskriminiert zu werden. (16)

Eine gute Frau sollte von ihrem Mann auf ein Podest gestellt werden. (17)

Es gibt nur sehr wenige Frauen, denen es Spaß macht, Männer zu reizen, indem sie sich sexuell verfügbar zeigen und dann männliche Annäherungsversuche zurückweisen. (18)

Frauen haben im Vergleich zu Männern tendenziell ein höheres moralisches Empfinden. (19)

Männer sollten bereit sein, ihr eigenes Wohlbefinden zu opfern, um die Frauen in ihrem Leben finanziell zu versorgen. (20)

Feministinnen stellen völlig vernünftige Forderungen an Männer. (21)

Frauen haben im Vergleich zu Männern tendenziell einen feineren Sinn für Kultur und guten Geschmack. (22)

End of Block: Ambivalent Sexism

Start of Block: Case Description no comment

no Comment

Kontrolle und Nötigung Definition: Nötigendes und kontrollierendes Verhalten in intimen Beziehungen ist in Großbritannien seit Ende 2015 eine Straftat. Die Staatsanwaltschaft (Crown Prosecution Service, CPS) verfolgt Straffälle, die von der Polizei und anderen Ermittlungsorganisationen in England und Wales untersucht wurden. Sie definieren das Verbrechen als: "Jeder Vorfall oder jedes Muster von Vorfällen von kontrollierendem, nötigendem oder drohendem Verhalten, Gewalt oder Missbrauch zwischen Personen ab 16 Jahren, die Intimpartner oder Familienmitglieder sind oder waren, unabhängig von Geschlecht oder Sexualität. Dies kann die

folgenden Arten von Missbrauch umfassen, ist aber nicht darauf beschränkt: psychologischer, physischer, sexueller, finanzieller und emotionaler Missbrauch." (CPS, 2017).

Fallbeschreibung Der folgende Text wird einen Vorwurf der Kontrolle und Nötigung beschreiben. Bitte nehmen Sie sich die Zeit, ihn sorgfältig zu lesen, da wir Ihnen später Fragen dazu stellen werden.

Vorgeworfene Straftat: Am 07.01.2021 erhielt die Polizei einen Anruf von der Freundin von Herrn Cooper: Frau Miller, die angab, dass sie sofortige Hilfe benötige.

Bitte lesen Sie Frau Millers kurze Beschreibung der Ereignisse, die zu dem Anruf bei der Polizei am 07.01.2021 führten:

- Frau Miller behauptet, dass Herr Cooper in ihrer Beziehung sehr eifersüchtig ist und dass er sie regelmäßig der Untreue beschuldigt.
- Frau Miller beschuldigt Herrn Cooper, ständig Zugriff auf ihr Telefon und ihre SMS zu verlangen.
- Frau Miller wirft Herrn Cooper vor, dass er sie häufig daran hindert, das Haus zu verlassen, wenn er sie nicht begleitet.
- Frau Miller beschuldigt Herrn Cooper, die Kontrolle über Aspekte ihrer Freizeitaktivitäten zu übernehmen, z. B. wohin sie gehen kann und wie lange.
- Sie gibt auch an, dass er ihr nach Streitigkeiten und immer dann, wenn sie spät nach Hause kommt, beleidigende Textnachrichten schickt.
- In der Nacht, in der Frau Miller die Polizei anrief, gab sie an, dass sie zu ihrem Buchclub ging, wie sie es jeden Mittwoch tut. Sie glaubte, dass Herr Cooper es irgendwie geschafft haben musste, ihren Standort zu verfolgen, um ihr zu folgen. Laut Frau Miller näherte sich Herr Cooper dem Haus, drängte sich hinein und sie hatten einen heftigen Streit, in dem er sie der Untreue beschuldigte. Sie sagte, Herr Cooper sei sehr wütend geworden und habe sie bedroht. Sie fühlte sich sehr verängstigt, so dass sie die Polizei rief.
- Dieses Verhalten dauert nun schon seit einem Jahr an und Frau Miller glaubt, dass sie das Opfer von Kontrolle und Nötigung ist.

End of Block: Case Description no comment

Start of Block: Case Description neg victim behav

neg victim behav

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- Dieses Verhalten dauert nun schon seit einem Jahr an und Frau Miller glaubt, dass sie das Opfer von Kontrolle und Nötigung ist. Während der Beweisaufnahme gibt Frau Miller zu, dass sie Herrn Cooper in der Vergangenheit untreu war, aber dass dies vor ein paar Monaten war und nicht in letzter Zeit.

End of Block: Case Description neg victim behav

Start of Block: Case description no neg victim behav

no neg victim behav

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- Frau Miller beschuldigt Herrn Cooper, die Kontrolle über Aspekte ihrer Freizeitaktivitäten zu übernehmen, z. B. wohin sie gehen kann und wie lange.

- Sie gibt auch an, dass er ihr nach Streitigkeiten und immer dann, wenn sie spät nach Hause kommt, beleidigende Textnachrichten schickt.

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- Dieses Verhalten dauert schon seit 1 Jahr an, und im Nachhinein glaubt Frau Miller, dass sie das Opfer von Kontrolle und Nötigung ist. Frau Miller bestreitet, jemals untreu gewesen zu sein, und im Laufe der Untersuchung wurden keine Beweise gefunden, die darauf hindeuten könnten, dass an Herrn Coopers Anschuldigungen etwas dran ist.

End of Block: Case description no neg victim behav

Start of Block: Investigative Interview DoV

DoV Der folgende Text zeigt ein Interview mit Herrn Cooper. Bitte lesen Sie es aufmerksam, da wir Ihnen anschließend einige Fragen dazu stellen werden.

Interview Skript

Polizei Interviewer: Hallo, mein Name ist Polizeiwachtmeister Johnson, ich werde heute ein Interview mit Ihnen durchführen. Also, Sie müssen nichts sagen, aber es kann Ihrer Verteidigung schaden, wenn Sie etwas nicht erwähnen, wenn danach gefragt wird, worauf Sie sich aber später vor Gericht stützen. Alles was Sie sagen, kann als Beweis verwendet werden. Möchten Sie, dass ich Ihnen

die Rechtsmittelbelehrung erkläre?

Herr Cooper: Nein, das ist in Ordnung.

Polizei Interviewer: Die schwarze Box da an der Wand zeichnet alles auf. Sollte diese Ermittlung weiterführen, kann diese Aufnahme vor Gericht verwendet werden. Haben Sie das verstanden?

Herr Cooper: Ehm, ja, Ich habe das verstanden.

Polizei Interviewer: Sehr gut. Also Herr Cooper, Sie wurden verhaftet aufgrund einer Anschuldigung für kontrollierendes und nötigendes Verhalten gegenüber Ihrer Partnerin. Das soll angeblich mehrfach vorgekommen sein im Verlauf Ihrer Beziehung, was nach meinem Kenntnisstand das vergangene Jahr ist. Also, wollen Sie mit dem Grundlegenden anfangen und mir einfach etwas über die Beziehung erzählen?

Herr Cooper: Wir gehen seit etwas mehr als einem Jahr aus und am Anfang war es wirklich gut. Ich würde sagen es lief gut in den ersten vier Monaten. Das einzige Problem ist, dass sie nicht unbedingt die vertrauenswürdigste Person ist und in letzter Zeit verhält sie sich sehr seltsam. Sie hat angefangen, diesem Buch Club beizutreten. Es ist fast so etwas wie ihre neue Obsession, denn sie geht jetzt ziemlich regelmäßig dorthin. An manchen Abenden sehe ich sie kaum noch, wegen dieses Clubs. Das hat mich dazu gebracht, zu denken, dass sie vielleicht wieder mit jemandem zusammen sein könnte. Es gab ein paar Dinge, die mich das tatsächlich denken ließen. Und dann fingen die Streitereien an.

Polizei Interviewer: Und was waren Ihre Gründe für den Verdacht?

Herr Cooper: Verschiedene Dinge. Ich meine, sie hat in der Vergangenheit nie ein einziges Buch gelesen. Und seien wir mal ehrlich, jeder, der sie kennt, weiß, dass sie nicht genug Hirn hat, um ein ganzes Buch zu lesen. Zeitschriften und Instagram mit vielen Bildern reichen ihr aus. Dann macht sie sich schick und stylt ihre Haare und sowas, nur um dorthin zu gehen. Ihr kurzer Rock hat nicht mal das Nötigste bedeckt. Soll ich wirklich glauben, dass sie das nicht getan hat, um die Aufmerksamkeit von jemand anderem auf sich zu ziehen? Ich meine, würden Sie sich so aufmakeln, um in einen Buchclub zu gehen?

Und nicht nur das, sondern die Tatsache, dass sie zu einem "Buchclub" geht?! Haben Sie jemals gehört, dass Leute tatsächlich solchen Clubs beitreten? Sie hätte es nicht offensichtlicher machen können, dass etwas anderes vor sich geht, und ich denke, das können wir hier beide sehen.

Polizei Interviewer: OK, Sie haben vorhin von Streitereien gesprochen, haben Sie beide sich während der Beziehung oft gestritten?

Mr. Cooper: Ja, das tun wir und haben es auch in der Vergangenheit getan, weil meine Freundin es nur schwer versteht, was es bedeutet, in einer Beziehung loyal zu sein. Das war auch der Grund, warum unsere größeren Streitereien anfangen. Ich musste ihr zeigen wie Beziehungen eigentlich funktionieren sollten, aber das ist ihr egal und sie zeigt mir keinen Respekt. Glauben Sie mir, wenn ich sage, dass sie verdammt hochnäsig ist und nur Augen für sich selbst und andere Männer hat, und dieses Verhalten hilft nicht bei den Auseinandersetzungen, wenn sie einmal in Fahrt ist. Wir hatten einmal einen heftigen Streit, weil ich nicht wollte, dass sie das Haus verlässt. Ein paar Tage davor war sie fast zwei Stunden in diesem angeblichen Buchclub und das hat mich natürlich wahnsinnig gemacht, weil sie so verkleidet ausgegangen ist und länger weggeblieben ist, als sie mir versprochen hatte. Damals habe ich sie damit konfrontiert und sie gefragt, warum sie so lange gebraucht hat, um wieder da zu sein, und sie kam nur mit all diesen Ausreden und versuchte, mich glauben zu lassen, ich sei das Problem, aber ich weiß einfach, dass sie etwas zu verbergen hat. Ich meine, warum sollte sie sonst ihr Telefon ausschalten, wenn sie da ist?!

Polizei Interviewer: Können Sie erklären, warum Sie die Kontrolle über Aspekte von Frau Millers Freizeit übernehmen, z.B. wohin sie gehen kann und für wie lange?

Mr. Cooper: Mann, ich habe es Ihnen doch gerade gesagt! Sie ist eine Betrügerin. Nach all dem Mist den ich vorher durchmachen musste habe ich sie einfach gebeten nicht länger als eine Stunde weg zu

sein und dass ich möchte, dass sie pünktlich zurück ist und nicht zu spät kommt. Sie ist ausgeflippt, aber ich muss ihr einfach vertrauen können. Also will ich natürlich wissen, wohin sie geht und mit wem sie abhängt.

Polizei Interviewer: OK, jetzt weiß ich ein bisschen mehr über die Beziehung. Ich denke, wir sollten mit dem Vorfall vom 7. Januar 2021 fortfahren, als Sie zu Frau Millers Buchclub gingen. Bitte erklären Sie in Ihren eigenen Worten, was am Abend dieses Datums passiert ist.

Mr. Cooper: Wie ich schon sagte, hat sie sich in letzter Zeit sehr herausgeputzt und an diesem Abend tat sie es wieder. Je länger sie in diesem angeblichen Club war, desto misstrauischer wurde ich. Sie wollte um 21 Uhr zurück sein und hat es mir sogar versprochen, aber sie war nicht pünktlich zu Hause. Ich hab mehrere Male versucht sie anzurufen und ihr zu schreiben, aber sie nahm nicht ab, also entschied ich mich, die Tracking-App zu benutzen, die ich ein paar Tage zuvor auf ihrem Telefon installiert hatte, um ihren Standort zu überprüfen. Ich konnte einfach spüren, dass etwas nicht stimmt, also beschloss ich, zu diesem Ort zu fahren und sie auf frischer Tat zu ertappen. Der Ort, an dem ich anhielt, sah nicht so aus, als wäre dort ein Buchclub, es war nur irgendein Haus. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt war es schon etwa 21:30 Uhr und meine Gedanken waren überall, weil ich wusste, dass sie mich wieder betrügen musste. Ich war genervt und konnte nicht länger warten, also ging ich einfach rein. Als sie die Tür öffnete, sah sie sehr aufgeregt und verlegen aus, und ich wusste, dass sie mich nicht reinlassen wollte, also drängte ich mich einfach hinein. Ich fragte immer wieder "Wo ist er, wo ist er?" und sie stand einfach nur sprachlos da, was mich nur noch mehr ärgerte, weil sie sich nicht einmal erklären wollte. Dann hatten wir einen Streit, und was ich bemerkte, während ich da stand, war, dass auch andere Leute in diesem Haus waren, darunter einige Männer. Sie lügt und lügt mich immer wieder an, weil sie mir vorher versprochen hat, dass keine Männer in diesem Club sind und das beweist mir ehrlich gesagt, dass mein Verdacht die ganze Zeit über berechtigt war.

Polizei Interviewer: Können Sie mir sagen, warum sie Ihrer Meinung nach die Polizei gerufen hat?

Mr. Cooper: Ich weiß nicht einmal, warum sie die Polizei gerufen hat. Ich meine, sie ist diejenige, die sich nuttig anzieht und darüber lügt andere Männer hinter meinem Rücken zu treffen. Wie ich schon sagte, sie verhält sich seltsam und diese ganze Buchclub-Sache ist nur die Spitze des Eisbergs. Ich weiß nicht, was sie Ihnen erzählt hat aber sie ist eine sehr gute Schauspielerin und Sie dürfen ihr kein Wort glauben. Außerdem ist es nicht so, dass ich ihr Telefon ständig kontrolliere. Ich überprüfe ihr Telefon nur wenn sie einen Blick auf meines werfen will.

Polizei Interviewer: Können Sie mir etwas über irgendwelche Drohungen sagen, die während des Streits gefallen sind?

Mr. Cooper: Ich kann mich nicht mehr genau erinnern was ich gesagt habe als sie anfang auf mich loszugehen. Wer wäre nicht wütend wenn seine Freundin ausgeht um sich heimlich mit Männern in fremden Häusern zu treffen? Sie wissen ja wie das ist, ich schätze wir haben beide ziemlich schlimme Sachen gesagt. Wie ich schon sagte, es ist alles ein bisschen verschwommen. Es nervt mich, wieder darüber zu reden. Können wir bitte eine Pause machen?

Polizei Interviewer: Ja, das ist in Ordnung, dann machen wir eine kurze Pause. Nur für die Aufzeichnung wird das Interview um 15:43 Uhr unterbrochen.

End of Block: Investigative Interview DoV

Start of Block: Investigative Interview no comment

no comment

Der folgende Text zeigt ein Interview mit Herrn Cooper. Bitte lesen Sie es aufmerksam, da wir Ihnen anschließend einige Fragen dazu stellen werden.

Interview Skript

Polizei Interviewer: Hallo, mein Name ist Polizeiwachtmeister Johnson, ich werde heute ein Interview mit Ihnen durchführen. Also, Sie müssen nichts sagen, aber es kann Ihrer Verteidigung schaden, wenn Sie etwas nicht erwähnen, wenn danach gefragt wird, worauf Sie sich aber später vor Gericht stützen. Alles was Sie sagen, kann als Beweis verwendet werden. Möchten Sie, dass ich Ihnen die Rechtsmittelbelehrung erkläre?

Herr Cooper: Nein, das ist in Ordnung.

Polizei Interviewer: Die schwarze Box da an der Wand zeichnet alles auf. Sollte diese Ermittlung weiterführen, kann diese Aufnahme vor Gericht verwendet werden. Haben Sie das verstanden?

Herr Cooper: Ehm, ja, Ich habe das verstanden.

Polizei Interviewer: Sehr gut. Also Herr Cooper, Sie wurden verhaftet aufgrund einer Anschuldigung für kontrollierendes und nötigendes Verhalten gegenüber Ihrer Partnerin. Das soll angeblich mehrfach vorgekommen sein im Verlauf Ihrer Beziehung, was nach meinem Kenntnisstand das vergangene Jahr ist. Also, wollen Sie mit dem Grundlegenden anfangen und mir einfach etwas über die Beziehung erzählen?

Herr Cooper: Kein Kommentar.

Polizei Interviewer: Kein Kommentar, okay. Ich muss trotzdem alle Fragen durchgehen. Ich weiß Sie haben bereits signalisiert, dass Sie mit „kein Kommentar“ antworten werden, aber ich muss trotzdem

einfach alles abdecken. Uns wurde mitgeteilt, dass sie oft misstrauisch gegenüber Frau Millers Aktivitäten sind. Können Sie uns die Gründe für Ihr Misstrauen mitteilen?

Herr Cooper: Kein Kommentar.

Polizei Interviewer: Haben Sie zwei viel gestritten während der Beziehung?

Herr Cooper: Kein Kommentar.

Polizei Interviewer: Können Sie erklären, warum Sie die Kontrolle über manche Aspekte von Frau Millers Freizeit übernehmen, wie zum Beispiel wohin sie gehen darf und für wie lange?

Herr Cooper: Kein Kommentar.

Polizei Interviewer: OK, ich glaube wir sollten zu dem Vorfall überwechseln, der sich am 7. Januar 2021 zugetragen hat, als Sie zu Frau Millers Buchclub gingen. Bitte erläutern Sie in Ihren eigenen Worten, was an diesem Abend passiert ist.

Herr Cooper: Kein Kommentar.

Polizei Interviewer: Können Sie erklären warum Frau Miller dachte, dass Sie Ihren Standort verfolgt haben?

Herr Cooper: Kein Kommentar.

Polizei Interviewer: Können Sie mir sagen, warum glauben Sie hat sie die Polizei angerufen?

Herr Cooper: Kein Kommentar.

Polizei Interviewer: Können Sie mir von einer bedrohenden Ausdrucksweise während der heftigen Auseinandersetzung berichten, der Sie beschuldigt werden?

Herr Cooper: Kein Kommentar.

Polizei Interviewer: Okay Herr Cooper, Ich habe keine weiteren Fragen. Ist da irgendetwas was Sie sagen möchten, bevor ich das Interview beende?

Herr Cooper: Nein.

Polizei Interviewer: Okay, Ich werde das Interview nun beenden. Die aktuelle Zeit ist 15:34 Uhr.

End of Block: Investigative Interview no comment

Start of Block: Manipulation Check

Man. Check Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen über den Fall, den Sie zuvor gelesen haben.

| | Sehr unwahrscheinlich (1) | Eher unwahrscheinlich (2) | Weder wahrscheinlich noch unwahrscheinlich (3) | Eher wahrscheinlich (4) | Sehr wahrscheinlich (5) |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Basierend auf den vorliegenden Beweisen, wie wahrscheinlich ist es, dass Frau Miller Herrn Cooper vor dem Vergehen betrogen hat? (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Basierend auf den vorliegenden Beweisen, wie wahrscheinlich ist es, dass Frau Miller Herrn Cooper aktuell betrügt? (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

End of Block: Manipulation Check

Start of Block: Attribution of blame

Attribution Kontrolle und Nötigung Definition: "Jeder Vorfall oder jedes Muster von Vorfällen von kontrollierendem, nötigendem oder drohendem Verhalten, Gewalt oder Missbrauch zwischen Personen ab 16 Jahren, die Intimpartner oder Familienmitglieder sind oder waren, unabhängig von Geschlecht oder Sexualität. Dies kann die folgenden Arten von Missbrauch umfassen, ist aber nicht darauf beschränkt: psychologischer, physischer, sexueller, finanzieller und emotionaler Missbrauch." (CPS, 2017).

Bitte füllen Sie diesen Fragebogen über den Fall, den Sie gerade gelesen haben, aus. Zeigen Sie, inwiefern Sie den folgenden Aussagen über den Verdächtigen (Herrn Cooper) und das Opfer (Frau Miller) aus dem vorherigen Fall zustimmen.

Basierend auf den Beweisen, die im Fall beschrieben wurden, wie sehr stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu?:

| | Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1) | Stimme eher nicht zu (2) | Stimme weder zu noch widerspreche ich (3) | Stimme eher zu (4) | Stimme voll und ganz zu (5) |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Herr Coopers Verhalten war der Grund warum Frau Miller sich verängstigt gefühlt hat. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frau Miller ist in diesem Fall ein Opfer von Kontrolle und Nötigung. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frau Miller hat Herr Coopers Verhalten provoziert. (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frau Miller hat es herausgefordert schikaniert zu werden. (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich denke Frau Miller ist eine schlechte Person. (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Herr Cooper genießt es Kontrolle über Frau Millers Leben zu haben. (6) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Frau Miller hat es aufgrund ihres Verhaltens vor dem Vergehen, verdient ein Opfer von Kontrolle und Nötigung geworden zu sein. (7) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich denke Herr Cooper ist eine gute Person (8) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Ich denke Frau Miller hat selbst zu ihrer Opferrolle beigetragen. (9)

Ich denke Herr Cooper hat eine manipulative Persönlichkeit. (10)

End of Block: Attribution of blame

Start of Block: Empathy for the suspect

Sus. Empathy **Wie sehr stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu?:**

| | Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1) | Stimme eher nicht zu (2) | Stimme weder zu noch widerspreche ich (3) | Stimme eher zu (4) | Stimme voll und ganz zu (5) |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Die Emotionen des Verdächtigen sind ehrlich. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich habe die gleichen Emotionen empfunden wie der Verdächtige, während ich das Transkript gelesen habe. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich kann die Emotionen des Verdächtigen spüren. (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich kann die Perspektive des Verdächtigen verstehen. (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich kann die Situation des Verdächtigen wiedererkennen. (5) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Sus. Sympathy **Wie viel Sympathie empfinden Sie für den Verdächtigen?**

- Eine Menge (1)
- Eher viel (2)
- Weder viel noch wenig (3)
- Eher wenig (4)
- Überhaupt keine (5)

End of Block: Empathy for the suspect

Start of Block: Empathy for the victim

Vic. Empathy **Wie sehr stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu?**

| | Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1) | Stimme eher nicht zu (2) | Stimme weder zu noch widerspreche ich (3) | Stimme eher zu (4) | Stimme voll und ganz zu (5) |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Die Emotionen des Opfers sind ehrlich. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich kann die Emotionen des Opfers spüren. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich kann die Perspektive des Opfers verstehen. (3) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich kann die Situation des Opfers wiedererkennen. (4) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Vic. Sympathy **Wie viel Sympathie empfinden Sie für das Opfer?**

- Eine Menge (1)
- Eher viel (2)
- Weder viel noch wenig (3)
- Eher wenig (4)
- Überhaupt keine (5)

End of Block: Empathy for the victim

Start of Block: Guilt of suspect

Guilt Kontrolle und Nötigung Definition: "Jeder Vorfall oder jedes Muster von Vorfällen von kontrollierendem, nötigendem oder drohendem Verhalten, Gewalt oder Missbrauch zwischen Personen ab 16 Jahren, die Intimpartner oder Familienmitglieder sind oder waren, unabhängig von Geschlecht oder Sexualität. Dies kann die folgenden Arten von Missbrauch umfassen, ist aber nicht darauf beschränkt: psychologischer, physischer, sexueller, finanzieller und emotionaler Missbrauch." (CPS, 2017).

Bitte füllen Sie diesen Fragebogen über den Fall, den Sie gerade gelesen haben, aus. Zeigen Sie inwiefern Sie den folgenden Aussagen über den befragten Verdächtigen (Herrn Cooper)

zustimmen. Basierend auf den Beweisen, die im Fall beschrieben wurden, wie sehr stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu?:

| | Stimme überhaupt nicht zu (1) | Stimme eher nicht zu (2) | Stimme weder zu noch widerspreche ich (3) | Stimme eher zu (4) | Stimme voll und ganz zu (5) |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Herr Cooper hat sich Frau Miller gegenüber auf eine Art und Weise verhalten, die als kontrollierendes und nötigendes Verhalten definiert werden kann. (1) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ich denke Herr Cooper ist schuldig für Kontrolle und Nötigung. (2) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Punishment

Für diese Frage möchten wir Sie bitten, nicht zu berücksichtigen, ob Sie glauben, dass Herr Cooper schuldig ist oder nicht, sondern die Frage so zu beantworten, als ob er schuldig wäre. Für den Fall, dass Herr Cooper schuldig ist, wie lange wäre Ihrer Meinung nach eine Haftstrafe angemessen? Bitte wählen Sie aus, zu wie vielen Jahren im Gefängnis der Verdächtige verurteilt werden sollte, von 0 bis max. 5 Jahren.

Jahre im Gefängnis

0 1 2 3 4 5

| | |
|---|--|
| Angenommen, dass Herr Cooper schuldig für das Verbrechen befunden wird, wie lang sollte seine Gefängnisstrafe sein? () | |
|---|--|

End of Block: Guilt of suspect

Start of Block: Debriefing

Debriefing

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme an unserer Studie. Diese Daten werden verwendet, um zu untersuchen, wie Leute die Schuld zuweisen in Fällen von Kontrolle und Nötigung. Das Verhalten, welches in dem Fall, den Sie gelesen haben, gezeigt wurde, war ein Beispiel für kontrollierendes und nötigendes Verhalten, welches Ende 2015 in England kriminalisiert wurde. Der aufgeführte Fall in dieser Studie war fiktional, keines dieser Dinge ist wirklich passiert, aber ähnliche Fälle kommen tatsächlich vor.

Die Forschung hat herausgefunden, dass Verdächtige verschiedene Manipulationstechniken während eines Polizei Interviews verwenden, um zu versuchen die Interviewer davon zu überzeugen sich auf ihre Seite zu stellen während der Verhandlung. Diejenige, die in diesem Interview verwendet wurde heißt „Verleugnung des Opfers“, was bedeutet, dass die Verdächtigen zugeben einige der Taten, die ihnen vorgeworfen werden, begangen zu haben, sie rechtfertigen diese Taten aber, indem sie argumentieren, dass das Verhalten des Opfers inakzeptabel war und ihr Verhalten daher eine nachvollziehbare Reaktion auf das negative Verhalten des Opfers war. Auf diese Weise weisen sie die Schuld dem Opfer zu. Um zu testen, ob diese Technik einen Einfluss auf die Art hat, wie Leute die Schuld in diesem Fall zuweisen, wurden zwei Versionen des Interviews verwendet. Einige Teilnehmer in dieser Studie haben eine Version des Interviews gesehen, in der der Verdächtige (Herr Cooper) ausführliche Antworten gegeben hat, welche Argumente zur Verleugnung des Opfers beinhalten, während andere ein Interview gelesen haben, in dem der Verdächtige durchgehend mit „kein Kommentar“ geantwortet hat. Wir haben außerdem den Effekt von verschiedenem Opferverhalten auf die Schuldzuweisung untersucht. Dafür variierte auch die Fallbeschreibung. In einem Fall hat das Opfer (Frau Miller) den Verdächtigen (Herr Cooper) früher während ihrer Beziehung betrogen, in einer anderen Version des Falls hat sie Herrn Cooper nicht betrogen, und im dritten Fall wurden keine Informationen darüber gegeben, ob Frau Miller Herrn Cooper betrogen hat oder nicht. Die Absicht dieser Manipulation war, dass wir, ungeachtet der Tatsache, dass Argumente zur Verleugnung des Opfers keine Beweiskraft haben, wissen wollen, ob Leute mehr dazu neigen sich von diesen Argumenten überzeugen zu lassen, wenn etwas Wahres in ihnen steckt. Wir müssen deutlich betonen, dass frühere Untreue das Verhalten des Verdächtigen nicht entschuldigt, aber wir wollen sehen, ob Leute denken, dass es das (teilweise) tut.

Wir hoffen, dass unsere Studie dabei helfen wird zu verstehen, wie Schuldzuweisungen in Fällen von Kontrolle und Nötigung stattfinden. Nun, nach Ihrer Teilnahme an dieser Studie, möchten wir Sie daran erinnern, dass alle Ihre Daten vollkommen anonym und vertraulich gesammelt werden. Wir sind uns bewusst, dass einige Informationen, die in dieser Umfrage gegeben wurden, sensibel sein können und Sie möglicherweise beunruhigen können. Wenn diese Studie irgendwelche persönlichen Probleme bei Ihnen hervorgerufen hat, empfehlen wir Ihnen eine dieser Webseiten aufzusuchen, die Informationen und Unterstützung bei Kontrolle und Nötigung bietet.

Deutsch: <https://www.re-empowerment.de/gewalt/gewaltbeziehungen/partnerschaft-oder-misshandlungsbeziehung/>

Niederländisch: <https://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl/organisaties/voor-wie-hulp-zoekt>

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End of Block: Debriefing