

Project Title: Exploring the intersectional complexities when using social media to identify perpetrators of gender-based violence

1.1 Project Summary

Our initial plan was to conduct a qualitative study interviewing survivors of gender-based violence about their experiences disclosing their perpetrators' identities on social media. However, due to sampling challenges, including the prevalence of bots and uncertainty surrounding online recruitment, we changed our approach to address these methodological concerns. Instead, we examined how people respond to survivors who disclose their perpetrators' identities on social media.

1.2 Student involvement

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1.3 Dissemination and Knowledge Mobilization

We have recently completed the data analysis and are currently developing three research products: two quantitative manuscripts examining credibility and informal social control, and one qualitative/mixed-methods manuscript examining respondents' reactions to social media posts. We are also developing an infographic as a knowledge mobilization product, which we plan to share with local community organizations, including services that support survivors, as well as the Calgary Public Library to reach a broader general audience.

1.4 Project Outcomes and Impacts

The goal of this project was to better understand the experiences of survivors of gender-based violence who disclose their experiences on social media, with a particular focus on the potential impact of identifying the perpetrator. We conducted an experiment in which respondents were presented with different versions of a social media post and assessed their responses to the survivor and her disclosure. Previous research has demonstrated that characteristics of survivors and the circumstances surrounding an assault can influence how their accounts are perceived and judged. However, less is known about how specific features of social media disclosures, such as expressing uncertainty or identifying the alleged perpetrator, shape these responses. This project addresses this gap by examining how these increasingly common forms of online disclosure may influence perceptions of survivors. The project generated new empirical knowledge about how survivors may be perceived when they identify the person, they say

perpetrated the violence. For example, our analyses indicate that respondents viewed the survivor as less credible when she identified the perpetrator than when she did not. These findings contribute to research on credibility, victim blaming, and responses to disclosures of gender-based violence, while highlighting the importance of understanding how digital contexts shape perceptions of survivors. We are also exploring findings that reveal differences in respondents' perceptions of survivors' motivations and desired outcomes for the perpetrator. The project also advances our broader research program on gender-based violence and digital spaces and has generated new questions for future research, including how race and ethnicity may intersect with these patterns. We plan to publish our current findings and use the new research questions that have emerged from this project to inform an application for an Insight Grant. We are also developing the findings into scholarly publications and knowledge-mobilization materials that will share the research with community organizations and broader audiences.