Reporting Rape: America vs. non-Western nations

How The New York Times uses elements of nationalism in reporting rape based on culturally varying nations

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, there has been an alarming concern of how mainstream media reports rape and on violence against women. While various scholars identified a link between further victimization of rape victims through media reporting, others have associated rape within the media politics related to male supremacy. Various cultural and social norms are also added to the ways different societies view rape. This forms an underlying community solidarity in how each nation manages rape incidents. The cultural and social undertones set apart how various nations view rape and the treatment of violence against women. Keeping this in mind, this paper looks at how The New York Times makes commonsense of rape based on the nations and the nationalities of the individuals involved. The research starts with American-based rape cases and in contrast looks at non-Western rape incidents where the culture and societal ideologies are fundamentally different. The results show the stereotyping involved in the ways men and women are represented in these reports from different nationalities. The results also identify a national-foreign dichotomy in how the nations abroad are represented. Finally, the results analyze New York Times’ use of rape myths as ideologies to maintain the solidarity of American and non-Western societies. In doing so, this research identifies through a critical discourse analysis how The New York Times uses the elements of nationalism and nation-ness within rape reports from America and non-Western nations.
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction  
   1.1 Rape as a global problem  
   1.2 Addressing and defining rape  
   1.3 Understanding rape across cultures  

2. Literature Review  
   2.1 Ideologies we consent to  
   2.2 Rape myths: the *gendered* frames within news  
   2.3 Stereotyping *them*  
   2.4 The research gap  
   2.5 Research Question  

3. Methodology  
   3.1 Researching language  
   3.2 Researching rape reports  
   3.3 The case studies  
   3.4 Limitations  

4. Results and Analysis  
   4.1 Human vs. inhuman  
   4.2 Day to day flagging  
   4.3 Siding with the rapists  
   4.4 America vs. non-Western communities  
   4.5 The Victim-community divide  

5. Conclusion  

Bibliography  
   Primary Literature  
   Secondary Literature
1. Introduction

Movements in the late 20th Century contributed heavily in changing the quality of reporting rape, including the legal punishment of the offenders involved and the overall categorization of rape - date rape, attack by stranger, marital, single or gang rape. The justice system in the west can now provide a detailed outline of the crime and its consequences [Byerly 1994].

However, in the early part of 2013, the President of the United States, Barack Obama signed the “Violence Against Women Act” updating protection against sexual violence for the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) and Native Americans also. That gender violence remains a significant American issue is obvious from this revision in America’s protection act, where the bigger focus over the past years has targeted the prevention of college rapes by providing methods that these institutions would need to follow in handling sexual incidents [Congressional Record 2013: 533]. This comes at a time where even though the overall rates of sexual assault in the United States declined over the past two decades, the chances of rape remains extremely high even today for women between ages 16 and 24. This group is four times more likely to be raped as compared with the rate for all women [Weigel 2013]. The cases of campus rape have been seen often going unreported, where only 12% of all college rapes of women were reported [Gray 2014] and the offenders also run free, where only 10-25% of male college rapists were found expelled in a research across American colleges and the cases of rape incidents [Gustafson 2014].

The US Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics provided a cross-section research throughout America through demographics of both victims and offenders involved in this crime. In detailing the characteristics - location, victim-offender relationship, law enforcement, use of weapon and social service organizations - they found that from 1995 to 2010 assaults on women aged 18-34 declined from 7.0 per 1,000 to 3.7. The percentage of rape or sexual assault victimizations reported to police, however, increased to an estimated high of 56% in 2003 before declining again to an estimated 35% in 2010. The decline in reporting rape echoes the underrated college rape reports.
The report also showed that 29% of the sexual violence occurred while the victim was in mobility or “engaged in leisure activities away from the home.” Astonishingly, nationwide, “769,000 adolescent girls, 625,000 college women, and 13.4 million women in US households reported sexual re-victimization - 154,000 were sexually re-victimized adolescents and 250,000 sexually re-victimized college women [Planty et al. 2013: 3]. This high number of victims provides the primary interest of this research in looking at rape reports in America. The statistics of rape and its increase is however not limited to the United States alone. Rape is neither an isolated American issue nor one that has been resolved anywhere else in the world. I, therefore, take an interest in looking at the issue of rape on a global scale.

1.1 Rape as a global problem

As rape has been an alarming discourse of violence against women worldwide, research of it from parts of the world show striking numbers of this violence. One of UN’s largest research on rape incidents interviewing over 10,000 men from six countries - Bangladesh, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Sri Lanka - indicated that one in four men had raped someone in their lives where one in ten had raped someone they did not know [Jewkes 2013: 212]. The rape of an Indian 23 year old that led to national outburst and mobilization in 2012 also provoked many South Asians to surface the issue on a national debate [Burke 2013]. This, however, raised questions even by scholars in America and UK as to why media reports on rape from India had been suddenly treated any differently than those taking place in America [Tenore 2013]. The consequences of these debates also allowed Indian scholars to come forward and explain that the rape culture was not solely an Indian problem.

“When we look at this it is impossible to talk of ‘India’s rape culture’ as if more ‘forward-looking’ countries don’t have such a problem. Rape culture – that is, a system of beliefs that tolerate and excuse violence against women – is global. Rape is not confined to certain places and situations. Worldwide, societies find ways to blame victims and let perpetrators get away with it.” [Mudge 2013]
That rape has become a rising global concern over the past years is also shown through other
research. In a separate report, study showed that 24% of all men in India and 9% in Chile and
Rwanda disclosed in being sexually violent [Barker G., Contreras J.M. et al. 2011]. The report
also pointed that in Bangladesh 10% of urban men, interviewed in Dhaka, and 15% of rural men
had forced their partners into sex [Naved R.T., Huque H. et al. 2011]. In this setting, as in India,
almost all sexual violence occurred within marriages [Barker G., Contreras J.M. et al. 2011].

The common reason behind increased rape crimes is because of its underreporting and the ways
various communities ignore a crime that is often seen either as a taboo or shame to the victim or
the community. It is estimated that between 64% and 96% percent of all rapes are never reported
to criminal justice authorities [Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; National Victims Center, 1992;
Perkins & Klaus, 1996; Russell, 1982]. In addition other studies show that the actual number of
sexual crimes committed is seen to exceed the number of charges filed against these men
[Jewkes 2012: 6]. As globally the issue of rape is increasing in an alarm rate, I therefore, find it
most significant to research on the topic not solely looking at rape in one nation but trying to
analyze the news reports on rape taking place across borders. In looking at how one significant
newspaper identifies and represents rape taking place in different communities, my interest lies
in whether rape is seen any differently based on its geographic setting. In venturing into this
curiosity I may be able to see the fundamental problem of rape: a lack of coherent outlook of
violence against women as a global issue. In isolating violence against women based on where it
takes place, solving the issue globally becomes difficult.

1.2 Addressing and defining rape

If we look at the history of reporting rape, the first concern for research had been in defining rape
to state, but in essence it is the “forced vaginal, oral or anal sex by one (or more) person(s)
against another” [Byerly 1994:60]. This also includes the sexual assaults when the victim is
incapacitated by unconsciousness induced by drugs or alcohol [Russell 1984, Benedict 1985,
Byerly 1994]. This definition is included as the victim is driven to a bodily and mental stage
where s/he cannot give any consent. For this research, looking at rape reports I take this
definition of sexual assault. It is the most commonly agreed definition of rape under the globally
recognized laws and therefore works for this research where I analyze rape reports placed in eight non-Western countries other than America.

In the American historical context, the very element of gender politics and movement beginning in the late 1960s was what abled American media and thus the community to come forward in the debate surrounding rape. “Consciousness-raising meetings: weekly gatherings of women in each other’s homes, where women share their problems” allowed American women to realize the impact of their private domestic violence and battering that needed much public attention, it called for a more “political interpretation of rape and a response to it” [Byerly 1994: 61].

> “Every woman has similar stories to tell – the first man who attached her may have been a neighbor, a family friend, an uncle, her doctor, or perhaps her own father. And women who grow up in New York City always have tales about the Subway.” [Griffin 1971:26]

Through a scholarly lens, academicians also came forward in their articles and works addressing the persisting problem of rape across American communities. Griffins’s “Rape: The All-American Crime” and studies such as *The Politics of Rape, Against Rape* and Brownmiller’s *Against Our Will*, took a look at western history of rape in the political, racial and class-based conflicts related to these crimes. “This diverse literature helped to reformulate the definition of rape from the victim’s perspective” [Byerly 1994: 61]. And in being able to redefine the term rape under these lenses, the question of rape in our everyday consciousness took place regarding the causes and impacts of rape. “But though rape and the fear of rape are a daily part of every woman’s consciousness, the subject is so rarely discussed […] that one begins to suspect a conspiracy of silence” [Griffin, 1971:27].

The excuse that men simply have an aggressive nature and are driven by uncontrollable sexual impulse was no longer a legitimate outlook, among many other backings behind the reasons behind the causes of rape incidents. As Brownmiller noted: “Rape is an historical condition that underlies all aspects of male-female relationships” and that “It is a crime not of lust but of violence and power. The threat, use and cultural acceptance of sexual force are a pervasive
process of intimidation that affects all women” [Brownmiller 1975]. Eventually with more and more stories coming out in the open, in the beginning of 1972, the national organization for Women (NOW) along with other women’s groups lobbied rape bills into laws from state to state fighting towards higher levels of arrest and prosecution rates – allowing the taboo against rape victims to slowly break [Ibid].

In the process, the tradition of media coverage and sensational reporting of rape also changed. *The New York Times* was notable for creating the new category – sex crimes – in 1937 where it first published almost 150 in one year alone having added another 100 as women in New York pushed further for further reforms. “Many reports since have written lucidly and with understanding about sexual assault, and have incorporated feminist language, such as “rape is violence not sex,” “acquaintance rape,” “sexual harassment,” “martial rape,”” [Byerly 1994: 63].

For this reason, *New York Times* is the choice of newspaper for this research as it is grounds itself in the foundations of change in reporting rape.

### 1.3 Understanding rape across cultures

When I turn to a non-Western outlook of rape, research shows a complexity in the defining rape. In understanding the social and cultural backings of rape, a UN’s in-depth report in its findings of rape across six countries explored the differences in defining rape. Their studies showed that the rape excuses that have been terminated in America over the decades still persist in these other nations, in this case in non-Western nations. The report explains that “Many people have the wrong idea about what “rape” actually is” [Jewkas et al. 2013:208]. In their research, they did not ask men if they raped women but instead asked them whether they had ever “forced a woman who was not your wife or girlfriend at the time to have sex,” or if they had ever “had sex with a woman who was too drunk or drugged to indicate whether she wanted it” [Ibid]. The study concluded that in not understanding the necessities of consenting during sex, many men may not understand when they are violating someone else - and they may not believe they have actually raped someone. The culture of rape is also identified in these communities as men’s rights over women’s bodies. The idea that “men can’t help themselves, and women must therefore work to protect themselves against it” goes back to Griffin and Brownmiller’s fight
against how rape is not a psychological or biological need but a crime committed in violence. In the UN report, researchers found that this attitude is pervasive among the rapists they surveyed. “Among the men who acknowledged they had sexually assaulted someone else, more than 70% of them said they did it because of “sexual entitlement” [Ibid: 210]. Forty percent said they were angry or wanted to punish the woman. About half of the men said they did not feel guilty” [Ibid].

Rooted cultural and religious beliefs also act as a means of justifying rape in many non-Western societies. Islam in its essence states rape as haram, or forbidden, which consequences in extreme form of punishment. Sheikh Ahmad Kutty states that “A raped woman is a victim that must be treated with honor and kindness. She is not required to produce four witnesses to prove the crime done against her, nor is she punished for the crime done against her” [Veena and Mirza 2007: 192]. Yet in most societies of the Muslim world, women are still seen responsible for their attack and are part of the stigmatized violence against them; having to also participate in the punishment against rape through the laws of committing adultery or fornication. “Rape continues to remain a taboo subject and in some cases women will face discrimination instead of the recognition and vital assistance they need after being abused” [Ibid 195].

Many of the stories on rape in Afghanistan and Pakistan end with rape victims being murdered by relatives because of the “violation of a woman’s chastity” being viewed as an attack to their family’s honor. Research showed that almost 50% of women in a study of female deaths in Alexandria, Egypt were killed by a relative after being raped. Similar research found almost 5,000 women die every year due to honor killings across the world. “According to a 2002 report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, honor killings take place in Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen, Morocco and other Mediterranean and Gulf countries” [Mayell 2002: 2]. In some countries a rapist can also go free under the penal code if he proposes to marry the victim.

The two things that remain clear through the various researches is that much of the blame is still inclined towards the rape victims, where they still fail to report the crime due to shame, lack of social support or because the offenders go unpunished. The one fact that remains clear is that the fight towards rape and against rape culture is still a global phenomenon. Although American
Constitution has attempted to combat the ideologies of victim blaming, many of the reports even today are critiqued to be taking the sides of the offender. Although American laws have countered the need for gender rights and severe law and justice addressing the rape crimes, critics still find the state and the media taking sides with the rapists over the victims. Though the places, economic and social settings may be different – in colleges versus in a transport system, versus within a religious environment – the fact that much of rape reports in media don’t have a global journalistic standard means this area needs further research.

Therefore it is necessary to understand where and how media is reporting rape within America and even so how they are reporting rape stories that take place across the world and in non-Western nations. Providing the cultural and social differences, the crime is still a crime. This research aims to look into if the same crime may be represented differently based on where the incidents take place.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Ideologies we consent to

Reform movements surrounding the issue of rape began in the 1970s in the West with a fight against the double victimization of rape victims; first by perpetrators, then by the society and law [Ardovini Brooker and Caringella-MacDonald 2002, 4]. This once closet-issue to be solved within the domestic domains of peoples’ lives made a transition through social pressure and mobilization; demanding media to make serious effort to address the matter of abuse against women by changing the existing social ideas and perceptions on rape [McCarthy 1995, 1295]. Yet four decades later, a UN report from 2013 showed that even in modern times 83% of girls in America alone from grades 8 to 11 fell victim to some form of sexual harassment in public schools. Every two minutes a woman is sexually assaulted across America, where 97% of the assaulteders go free or are never even convicted. Looking at the western and developed nations, statistics showed that almost half the women from EU nations had also experienced sexual violence at certain points in their lives.

If we look to non-Western nations, Ajit Jain’s book on “violence against women” claims that over 25% of South African men take pride in admitting they raped someone, a country where over 1 million rapes occur every year. Other news reports indicate that in Asia-Pacific a quarter of the men admit to raping someone but 70% go free with no charges. And with the rape of a 23-year-old in December of 2012 in India, intense debates on the rise of rape across South Asia sparked massive protests in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. As research digs deeper, there is an ever growing proof that rape is not a country-specific violence but a global phenomenon.

Yet the rape stories that make it to world headline, or western media, as “newsworthy” often reflect the cases which were more “unusual” and “sensational” in manner [Chandler 2013]. And even through these major rape cases making global headlines, there is still a set of underlying ideologies, gender stereotypes and rape myths that support those reports [Meyers, Brownmiller]. These notions highlight existing discriminatory attitude towards rape victims even today [Ibid]. It is therefore important then to look at those discriminatory attitude as media attempts to “classify out the world” within the discourse of a dominant ideology [Hall 1977, 346]. The dominant ideology is often set by those economically powerful. For my research, in specific, I will
attempt to look at how ideologies are represented within different rape cases across the world through one prominent newspaper. The ideologies will also help understand if reports by this newspaper set nations apart from each other especially in setting a western and non-western binary.

Most nations address the issue of rape as a criminal act, but every community is also governed by a set of ideologies that guide their understanding of certain social issues [Hall 1998]. For this research I find it important to understand the ideologies that set up how American media, and therefore American society, recognize rape as a local issue versus as a foreign one taking place in non-Western countries. With a backdrop of maintaining political and social unity, and presupposing cultural and social nature of defining ‘truth’ and ‘falsity’, ideologies in its basic skeleton is usually defined as a “political or social system of ideas, values or prescriptions of groups […] and have the function of organizing or legitimating the actions of groups” [Selizer 1979: 119-120]. It becomes a “mechanism” through which a society remains cohesive [Shoemaker and Reese 1996: 212]. The term ‘ideology,’ Becker notes sits as the element that “governs the way we perceive our world and ourselves. It controls what we see as ‘natural’ or ‘obvious’” [Becker 1984: 69]. This is important to keep in mind that much of what the media dictates and its readers understand reflect how certain communities make sense of the ‘reality’ around them. Those social issues are highly motivated by the ideologies that shape their status quo.

Becker also adds, that “An ideology is an integrated set of frames of reference through which each of us see the world and to which all of us adjust our actions” [Ibid]. Therefore every culture and community is designed to adapt different ideologies that represent the concepts of rape. How and why African men take pride in being able to rape women, how South Asian men are able to remain free even after committing the crime and how America reflects itself of having gender equality even with so much sexual abuse are all a part and parcel of the “commonsense” internalized within those societal ideologies that govern them. For this research, I would address how American media makes sense of rape abroad versus rapes taking place within its own nation governed by the ideologies that the reports reflect. The making-sense of each rape case would allow me to find how each rape story is naturalized to the American and global readers at large.
Hall refers to ideologies exchanged between members of a community as “coded messages” [Hall 1997: 331] that help naturalize social issues so as there is a validity of these accounts; and thus ideas of rape and its causes and consequences just like any other socially coded messages are taken for granted. As Hall puts it, ideology becomes a movement in winning “a universal validity and legitimacy for accounts of the world which are partial and particular and towards the grounding of these particular constructions in the taken-for-grantedness of ‘the real’” [Hall 1982: 65]. Once these commonsense has been so profoundly internalized and injected into the unconscious minds of individuals, they are hardly disputed. “These underlying presumptions are rarely made explicit and remain largely unconscious both to their authors and to those required to make sense of them.”[Makus, 1990: 498] This equation of giving consent to dominant ideologies was what Gramsci noted as hegemony. He pointed out that the mass submit to the values dictated to them by powerful dominant groups ruling them. The former does so with consent since much of those values are encoded as commonsense.

“Subordinate groups are encouraged by the ruling group to negotiate reality within what are ostensibly the limits of common sense when, in actuality, this common sense is consistent with dominant norms, values and beliefs.” [Allan 2010: 96]

As hegemony sets the relationship between individuals and groups within a community, it is logical to assume that news representations based on those consensuses shape that continuing social order. As a result, the readers submit themselves to the information news provide about and hows and whys of rape stories. The notion of hegemony has had immense power in social, political and colonial history. Hegemony, Gramsci defines, is very much a part of “a lived system of meanings and values” [Gramsci 1971 in Allan 2010: 57]. It is the “material existence” in the ‘cultural practices, activities and rituals’ which allow communities and individuals to make sense of their world. This is important to note because news narrative use every day normative to both shape the news reports and justify a social dysfunction, which is this case would be the increase of rapes that occur both nationally or internationally.

Secondly, hegemony goes hand-in-hand with matters related to ‘commonsense’ – “it organizes habitual daily experiences” [Allan 2010: 97] and sets and unquestioned patterns of everyday life.
Gramsci notes common sense as “the residue of absolutely basic and commonly-agreed, consensual wisdoms” [Gramsci 1971: 422]. From Van Dijk taking of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony - giving consent to an ideology often set and controlled by a dominant force - “common sense” is defined by what a social group takes for granted backboned with their everyday activities and practical reasoning and their “lived experiences” [Billig 1991, Billig and Sabucedo 1994, Purkhadt 1993]. This I take because most readers are unconsciously mapping a mental image that suits their pre-existing ideas about rape and violence against women (rape myths) and so ‘commonsense’ is often the first reaction to a piece of news and it readers respond to understanding it. At the same time, many of the ideologies about rape are given consent to because of the ideologies sustaining them through various means including the media.

It is through the structure, the language and the means through which the message of a social issue such as rape is represented in news that develop the peoples’ perspective of that concern and action. “The media are continually coping with news ideas, reaffirming social norms, and redrawing or defining boundaries” [Shoemaker and Reese 1996: 214]. And so media contents reinforce the dominant ideology working within a group, thereby legitimatizing the social order and maintaining the social status quo [Gitlin 1979, Murdock 1973, Hall 1977]. According to Hall, media play the powerful role of shaping the perceptions of the order of existence as to make it appear natural where any alternative would be difficult to contest.

“From the viewpoint of the media, what was at issues was no longer specific messages-injunctions, by A to B, to do this or that but a shaping of the whole ideological environment: a way of representing the order of things which endowed its limiting perception with that natural or divine inevitability which makes them appear universal, natural and coterminous with reality itself.” [Shoemaker and Reese 1996: 220]

It is through daily routines, through the logics and codes shared by the mass that are then characterized within news texts to shape the mode of a story in a way that allows the readers to depend on the media for those very stories believing every word of it. It becomes important to
investigate these “mode of address” formats within how news is delivered to understand how “raw materials” in our everyday existence is transformed into news account [Allan 2010: 99].

Gitlin further explains that within the routines of journalism, set within the economic and political interests of news organizations, certain versions of reality are selected over others. Day by day normal organizational procedures define “the story”, identify the protagonists and the issues, and suggest appropriate attitudes toward them [Ibid: 93]. In this sense, it is possible to note that powerful American media is able to adjust national and non-national news on rape through those journalistic routines. And although we must also remember that news media or newspapers are not necessarily propaganda organs aiming to manipulate public mind, it is also in “the ways social members subjectively represent, understand or interpret” social issues that defend those social issues into social realities [Dijk 1998:137].

2.2 Rape myths: the gendered ideologies and frames within news

To understand how news reports have both made commonsense of and naturalized rape stories over the decades, feminists and scholars of gender discourse turned to rape myths as ideologies that explain why rapes occur [Meyers 1954, Burt 1980, Brownmiller 1975]. They claimed that the media tries to make sense of a troubling situation to the readers unfamiliar with why rapes occur through various situational explanations. Feminists explain that these “making sense” of rape, often through media, reaffirms the patriarchal hierarchy so as to maintain a submissive view of women. This is often done through what is referred to as “rape myths.”

It is in keeping “the heritage of a patriarchal society” alive [Fortune, 1990: 1] that feminists believe that much of how media cover news on violence against women submit to victimizing the victims further through these myths. And although I am using the term myth here, those myths are grounded by the very ideologies – shared and coded norms – as was explained previously and these have reached a stage of consensus through a hegemonic grip within the patriarchal communities around the world. As Marian Meyers notes, “Feminists scholars also have found [a] lack of analysis within the news, which they claim is the product of a male perspective that perpetuates stereotypes and myths while ridiculing or minimizing women’s concerns [Mayers, 1954: 50].
Heath, Gordon & Le Bailly (1981) note that news of rape often have fewer details than stories about murder or assault, which indicate the importance of how rape stories promote a certain perspective on the social issue aside from the crime itself. These stories often blame the victims for their account. “Over and over comes the message: men can’t help it, and even if they could, women deserve it anyway” [Peck, 1987: 103 in Meyers 1954: 51] [Meyers 1997: 24]. And so instead of addressing either the individual story of the victim or the overall social problem related to either social, economic or cultural reasoning behind rape, rape coverage end up enhancing “women’s fears and leaves misleading impressions of both the crime and how it might be dealt with” [Heath et al. 1981:132].

Brownmiller (1975) was one of the first to bring out the history of myths related to sexual assault. But for this paper I use Martha Burt’s (1980) outline of rape myths that “highlight the distinction between sexual assaults that actually occur and ones that we believe occur” [Franiuk et al. 2008: 288]. It is threatening to accept that a sexual assault could happen in a fair society, and so various explanations are offered. Franiuk et al. points out that the thinking goes along the line that “if this woman who is not promiscuous, who was not dressed provocatively, who clearly did say ‘no’ and was with her boyfriend was sexually assaulted, what’s to prevent me from getting sexually assaulted too?” [Franiuk et al. 2008: 289] And so these myths become social prescriptions of what not to do to avoid being a rape victim.

As Mildred Pagelow points out, “There is an interest in looking for the ‘reasons’ a woman was beaten that is similar to asking why a woman was raped, unlike in other crimes – for example, few people ask why a person was robbed” [Meyers 1954: 63]. Berrington explains that more often than not it is when the rape victims have stepped against the patriarchal norm and values of a society would they be blamed even through the news reports. “By stepping outside their prescribed role, they place themselves at risk” [Berrington 2002: 309]. By placing the blame on the victim, there is a form of naturalizing the event in that it does not happen to every woman and that the society is still a just system of solidarity unless an individual embarks the problems onto herself through character flaws. “Sometime the concluding statement by the reporter or anchor casts doubt on the victim’s innocence, which suggests that something she had done was ultimately responsible for the attack” [Meyers 1954: 62] [Young et al.].
If this is the case, then reporters would be trying to “construct accurate and…sound articles but still miss the point of the event, thereby reinforcing stereotypes and public misunderstanding” [Byerly 1994] The question for this research poses how far these myths as ideologies are applied in New York Times reporting stories of rape within America and how far those myths exist when reporting rape stories in non-Western nations and which myths are represented in stories where an American is involved as the criminal versus where she is a victim. I ask this to locate the different outlook The New York Times would represent in constructing the “commonsense” behind rape based on where it takes place.

Rape myths, however, cannot be rendered without framing the news. Much of the linguistic and other reporting structure journalists use to naturalize stories so as the readers can relate to them are shaped through frames [Entman 1993, 2004, 2007, Scheufele 1999, 2000 and Reese 2001, 2007]. As Entman points out, framing a story is “to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating test,” This means that news on rape is told in a particular way in order to inject a “moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” [Entman 1993:52] Through this frames on rape stories, on victims as well as the offenders can be managed though a certain perspective to suit the very rape myths discussed. As Norris notes, “News frames bundle key concepts, stock phrases, and stereotyped images to reinforce certain common ways of interpreting developments” [Norris 1997: 275]. And through selecting some aspects of the story and leaving out others, the reports sustain rape myths, placing victims in a negative position can in turn result with readers “misplacing blame” and “fault in the situation” [Fountain 2008: 33]. As Berrington points out that these very negative representations of women and sexual violence have larger impact on how images of women are constructed and reinforced [Berrington 2002].

Since the majority of who read rape stories would fail to relate to these incidents through personal experiences, framing these stories help guide and develop the report for a better understanding. “What makes the world beyond direct experience look natural is a media frame” [Gitlin 1980:96]. Through frames, the ideologies and socially guided notions of rape are therefore emphasized further. As Gitlin puts it “frames are principles of selection, emphasis and
presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” [Gitlin 1980: 6]. This means that reports covering incidents of rape are organizing the thought pattern on rape, reestablishing what is socially prescribed on such imperatives and therefore validating the very rape myths that underpin social norms. “[T]he type of framework we employ provides a way of describing the event to which it is applied” [Goffman in Scheufele 2000: 301]. Through media frames, and frames within news stories covering rape, much of the reports then reinforce the ‘meaning’ of a situation, and the meaning behind the behavior of the crime. Mass media “sometimes generate, sometimes amplify,” a field of legitimate discourse that shapes the public’s “definitions of its situations,” working through “selections and omissions,” “emphases and tones” [Gitlin 1980: 98]. In doing so, how a report renders the “reality” of a rape story in America versus that in a non-Western country would solely depend on the framing of their stories which are supported by the organizations rooted set of ideologies.

In setting a reality through frames, there is the decision of selecting some parts of the story over others. Norris, Kern and Just argue that in essence framing allows a selection or prioritizing of “some facts, images, or developments over others,” thereby going back to Meyer’s selection of myths around rape that circulate and are strengthened through media further.

Therefore in understanding what the reports have enhanced as salience or “present” in the story, it is equally vital to ask what is “absent.” In doing a comparative study on rape stories covered within America and in non-western countries, the ‘missing’ parts of stories based on similar incidents worldwide would then be necessary. As Entman argues, “frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects” […] “the omissions of potential problem definitions, explanations, evaluations and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusion in guiding the audience” [Entman 1993:54]. If that is the case, parts of the story on rape provided to the American audience would then generate a different “reality” of similar stories taking place non-Western nations. This reality would be manipulated by the rape myths involved. How those realities are governed by rape myths based on their social and cultural representation through news reports would be important to note.
By isolating some of the information, Goffman argued, as individuals cannot fully understand the mass world, they need to actively refer to their life experience to make sense of the world around, meanwhile they analyze “the special vulnerabilities to which these frames (e.g. what they receive from news) of reference are subject” [Goffman 1974:10].

Walter Lippmann, progenitor of framing theory (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009), similarly points out that “the world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind” [1922: 32] and so the audience framework as “mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals’ processing of information” [53] which are as previously discussed governed by the ways media format them.

Through the many discourse addressing the complexity of gendered politics in news, Meyers mentions the biased nature within American news of rape based on race and class. Both the victim and offender of non-Western or the African-American race either have partial coverage or biased attitude while representing them. The coverage of these stories was found to be more racist and demeaning in nature [Meyers 1954]. If this is the scenario within America alone, rape narratives would then differ based on its placement under national-foreign news dichotomy, which would in place of race frame the news differently based on the nationalities and cultural ideologies of the rapists.

2.3 Stereotyping them

As distance creates a problem in understanding news neither familiar nor culturally, politically or socially similar to home, Walter Lippmann points out that misconduct in constructing an opinion relies heavily on the imagination and what others narrate to us. Stereotyping news, their background and their community paves an easier way to understand news distant from readers. “The pattern of stereotypes in the center of our codes determines what group of facts we shall see, and in what light we shall see them” [Lippmann 1922, online]. News stereotyping information affect then have greater impact on how the public uses these reports to make sense of the world that is not within its reach. The mass, Lippmann justifies “constantly exposed to suggestion […] reads not the news, but the news with an aura of suggestion about it […] It hears reports, not objective as the facts are, but already stereotyped to
a certain pattern of behaviour” [Ibid]. Newspapers provide us a second-hand reality in that without physically observing an incident we rely on the coverage represented to us. Therefore ideologies fed by the news persist. “We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception” [Ibid].

Distance and dependency on news also allows media managers to convey a story in the way well-understood by the mass. This is able to simplify the story to its basic skeleton adhering to normative journalism structures. “They [scholars] also find that the more distant a nation is culturally, the greater the tendency to stereotype and reduce complexity, presenting events and people in ‘ideal types’” [Galtung and Ruge, 1965, as cited in Evans, M., 2010: 225]. With the stories involving individuals from our own community and others stereotypes help maintain the explanation of the reasons behind the crimes and actions. In describing stereotypes as the ‘picture in our heads’ Lippmann explains that readers are able to “categorize individuals, groups and events. […] Stereotypes are similar categorizing tools to ideal types; we abstract from reality, seeking out key characteristics of a group or nation and invest the pictures with meaning in our mind’s eye” [Grix, 2004, as cited in Grix, J., Lacroix, C., 2006: 376].

In terms of global stories, stereotypes can therefore help ‘localize’ the rape stories to make better sense of it. It can also help differentiate the rape stories taking place elsewhere so as to letting the nation divide let the readers cope with understand rape stories taking place around the world. As Qing argues, various patterns representing the us-them dichotomy “provide a set of criteria against which other societies are rated and judged applying a whole range of dichotomous discursive clusters such as ‘rational/irrational’, ‘developed/ undeveloped’, ‘modern/ primitive’ or ‘metropolitan/ tribal’.

2.4 The Research Gap

Previous research has addressed rape myths used in media to explain rape crimes. Meyer’s research also looked at racial stereotyping when reporting rape crimes in America. What remains missing from the research however is the possible use of the elements of nationalism and community-based binaries and stereotypes in news reports of rape stories within America and
rape incidents in non-Western communities. While scholars have pointed out the West-East dichotomy in the aspects of political outlook, no research discusses a national stereotyping of individuals involved in rape incidents taking place in a non-western nation versus that taking place in the West so as to set them apart nationally and culturally. By this I mean that no research has been found looking into how far rape incidents taking place in non-western nations stereotype the individuals involved in the crime in order to set a culturally and nationally different outlook of an otherwise globally frightening issue.

For this reason, I take an interest in analyzing how gender violence is nationalized rather than globalized through western reports. The question to ask would be that though issues surrounding rape is a worldwide phenomenon, is it reported differently in America when it comes to their men and women versus non-Western men and women? I look at American newspapers in particular as they have played a historical role in the development of journalism and transformed the methods of reporting rape as was discussed in my introduction chapter.

To begin with, by nationalism and national lens, I look at Anthony Smith’s concept of nationalism; mainly that it is a sentiment or consciousness of belonging to the nation [Smith 2010: 5]. The connection made between individuals, he discusses, works on a conscious and emotional level where in breaking social harmony – through for instance gender violence – there is a distresses in that community solidarity and a feeling of national failure. As Smith states, nationalism is an “ideological movement for attaining and maintaining ‘unity an identity’” [Smith 2010: 9]. If violence between its members forgoes that collective moral, using national frames and sentiments, can support regain trust in that unity. As Smith further adds, “Nationalist ideologies have well-defined goals of collective self-rule, territorial unification and cultural identity, and often a clear political and cultural program for achieving these ends” [Smith 2010: 20]. In promoting that imaginary thread of union, anything deviant to cultural coherency such as violence against women is treated through political and cultural means. In nationalizing news, newspapers are able to diminish such threats to the society. In the case of rape stories, rape myths played an important role in neutralizing the fear by explaining the “why” behind the incident as was discussed in my earlier chapter on rape myths.
In reference to ‘identity’ in particular, I bring up Buckingham’s definition in that our identities are ruled by the shared realities we have with other people of the same community. As he states, “When we talk about national identity, cultural identity, or gender identity, for example, we imply that our identity is partly a matter of what we share with other people” [Buckingham 2008: 3]. It is again grounding ‘identification’ in our relation with others. Here, rape stories reflect incidents that bring concern to that shared community. So then, rape stories from another society with a different socio-cultural setting, would not generate the same level of representation and concern to the American community. My interest lies in analyzing such nation-based dichotomy. Therefore, the question is if there is a national-international binary in rape reports based on the nations and nationalities of the individuals involved in rape.

Media is said to represent/report stories in a way through which readers can understand the concept based on their experiences. This in turn creates a stronger home-grown narrative of an incident then one which is global. By that it means that the social issues are defined through what the readers know and understand from their own experiences and surroundings. Hafez notes, “Mainstream mass media around the world sometimes construct an identical media agenda, in this case of violence against women, but they frame events according to their own ‘home-grown narratives.” [Hafez 2011: 486] This means violence against women in a foreign land is also explained in a way that people understand the concept in their own homeland. There may lay a manipulation in the narrative. The way the narrative of foreign news unfolds is therefore domesticated in that the reports follow a shared-experience of the community reading the news rather than the shared-experience and understanding of the reports taking place in that particular foreign nation. Though scholars like Reese point out that journalism with the vast growth of technology has become globalized [Berglez 2008: 847] I agree with Berglez’s perspective in that there has become a further domestication and nationalizing of news to clearly mark what is International news and what is national. Berglez states, “The national outlook puts the nation-state at the centre of things when framing social reality”. [Ibid] After all, “modern journalism is said to create fragmented media agendas about the world, especially outside its native geocultural spheres” [Ibid].
Nationalism as an ideology combines a number of factors of common history, religion, geography in establishing a nationhood or ethnic group of people with a shared political and cultural root [Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd, Erin K Jenne]. Scholars also define nation as modern constructs set within the mind of individuals allowing them to feel they are part of a shared reality [Gellner, Kedourie, Anderson]. Whether in relation to ethnic origins of nationalism or an idea in the minds of the community, there is the need for constructing a symbolic or real “other” in shaping that national identity [Smith 1991:75]. Smith argues that while formulating the idea of nationalism in 7th and 8th century Europe, much of the identity was rooted in the “sameness” through language, dress code etc. In doing so, language and culture in another country was represented strongly different to ours.

And in strengthening the “us” of nationalism to work against the opposing “others” it is in narrating the everyday life that the image of banal nationalism revives a strong sense of nationhood. Michael Billig explains that newspapers play a critical role in reproducing “nation-ness” in an invisible manner through reviewing the daily routines of peoples’ lives [Billig 1995]. It is in narrating the everyday life that the image of banal nationalism revives a strong sense of nationhood. Therefore when rape stories occur within a community that is grounded on national value, the sentiments are expected to remain more and the explanations are expected to suit the readers’ own common-sense of his/her daily life. Billig further notes that “the study of national identity should search for the common sense assumptions and ways of talking about nationhood” [Billig 1995:250]. His book Banal Nationalism defines “the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced. He further says that “Daily the nation is indicated, or ‘flagged’, in the lives of its citizenry” [Ibid: 6]. This is a reminder to the audience to grasp harder onto their sense of belonging and unity. “‘[W]e are constantly reminded that ‘we’ live in nations: ‘our’ identity is continually being flagged [Ibid: 93].

Nationalism within news reports is further strengthened through the’ jingling in the ears of the citizens’ “routinely familiar habits of the language will be continually acting as reminders of nationhood.” [Ibid] Words such as ‘people’, ‘society’, or establishing a current physical presence of the community by using words like ‘here’ and the ‘now’ glues the imaginary string of
togetherness among the readers. Newspapers turn themselves into the voice for the people designing and maintaining that “horizontal comradeship” As Billig notes:

“Routinely, newspapers, like politicians, claim to stand in the eye of the country. Particularly in their opinion and editorial columns, they use the nationalized syntax of hegemony, simultaneously speaking to and for the nation, and representing the nation in both sense of ‘representation’. They evoke a national ‘we’, which includes the ‘we’ of reader and writer, as well as the ‘we’ of the universal audience.” [Ibid: 115]

Nationalism then as an ideology is united through a routine function of solidarity and “in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” As Anderson points out the characteristics that make nation as such is also that “the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.” As the newspapers mirror social issues such as rape, placing it in the context of the readers’ daily life realities, not only is of the issue nationalized within the communities own social reality but it can also then be differentiated based on other social realities in foreign domains. Newspapers bind the community in that “the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbors, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life.” [Anderson, 1983: 39 - 40].

2.5 Research question:
It is in the lights of nationalism within news reports that I take an interest in researching on rape reports and how nationalism – as an ideology, is represented through them. Although there has been research on race and rape, there are no researches on the representation of community solidarity and of nation-based binaries when addressing rape. My interest rises because even though rape, as a crime, is a global phenomenon, I want to analyze how the rapes are reported differently based on the “nations” where they occur. I would like to analyze any stereotyping involved when reporting rape involving individuals of different nationalities. As mentioned earlier, I take the American-based newspaper The New York Times (NY Times) as the newspaper of choice for its contribution in reforming rape reporting. For this reason, too, I first would want
to look at how *The New York Times* reports on rape taking place in its own nation, America, where the reforms took place.

In order to explore any national-foreign binary I will look at rape incidents in non-Western communities because their fundamental cultural and social outlook is expected to be different from America. It is in this difference I want to explore how the common issue of “rape” is represented differently. I want to explore the elements of rape myths involved to see how *The New York Times* uses these ideologies of rape to represent different nation/community’s notion on violence against women. The use of rape myths and ideologies would further allow me to distinguish the ways NY Times sets apart America and non-Western communities. Within this I will look into the elements of stereotyping to see if and how NY Times stereotypes non-Western communities within the context of rape.

Since there is this gap in studying nationalism within rape reports, I will explore how the community solidarity is represented within the context of rape and its reports. I do the above by asking the following research question:

**RQ:** What are the characteristics of nationalism seen within *The New York Times* (NY Times) reports based within America and in non-Western nations?

I look at America versus non-Western communities to identify the cultural and social contrasts that may be represented in order to lay the foundations of national versus other communities.

As sub-questions I ask:

What rape myths act as social ideologies that govern rape reports covered by *The New York Times* from different nations?

How does *The New York Times* represent men and women from American versus non-Western nations involved in rape?
How does *The New York Times* represent community solidarity within the rape reports?

In answering these research questions, I hope to locate the characterization of nationalism within rape reports by *The New York Times* within America. To look at the nationalism-based elements, I set the analysis against non-Western communities.
3. Methodology

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

Every two minutes a woman in America is subjected to sexual assault and every one in six women in the States are victims to either attempted or complete rape. Yet much of the incidents go unreported and even fewer make it to the news. The rape stories that make headlines, however, are those grotesquely violent. Thus, the very few rape reports that do make headlines contain a sense of alarm in its linguistic structure that defines the crime. The style, tone and emphasizes of how this rape incident marks national or international attention and assist the way the rape narrative impacts the readers. One key element is the way a text is designed to draw that attention. As Fairclough explains, “texts are social spaces in which two fundamental social processes simultaneously occur: cognition and representation of the world, and social interaction” [Fairclough 1995: 6]. How the language and text is designed in portraying the reality of rape stories story then requires deep analysis of the media texts.

Therefore, in order to critically examine the textual description of rape reports - how the ideologies of rape myth is exemplified and the nationalistic narratives that disassociate American rapes and rapists occurring in other nationalities - a deeper look beyond the texts plays a critical role here. To take that closer look, I will apply a critical discourse analysis with respect to the texts associated with each of the rape stories. “Such analysis requires attention to textual form, structure and organization at all levels; phonological, grammatical, lexical […] and higher levels of textual organization [Fairclough 1995: 7]. As texts are also not divorced from a network of historical, political and social values attached to the construction of that discourse, they function with a purpose of representing and delivering a social message. These messages, that are seen as the communicative spaces between the readers and the reporter are the discourse within which the reality of the rape story is represented. A discourse, as Fairclough indicates, is seen as a type of language “associated with a particular representation from a specific point of view of a social practice” [1995: 41].

Texts are also ideational in that they attach meanings to those messages which coordinate with normative social norms and values [Hallidy 1978, Bakhtin 1981, 1986]. When it comes to issues that contradict an understanding of a social situation, which in this case is the act of rape – an
ambiguously understood social crime, media texts often play a crucial role in drawing an acceptable “meaning” to clarify the circumstance. Kress points out that the ideational function of texts allow “people [to] textually deal with contradictions or differences in beliefs, knowledges and representations [Fairclough 1995: 7]. Therefore, looking at rape stories within its ideational function - the cause and reasons of the rape stories beyond just the text - is vital to this research.

In understanding how media texts can uncover or transform different discourse would then provide me in this research an insight into the “processes of ideological and ‘reality’ construction in the media” [Li 2009: 91]. I do this by looking at how NY Times reasons with “why” the rape took place. I look into the cultural and social context the reports discuss and I look at the details of “how” the crime took place. I examine the language used to describe the crime, in order to find how The New York Times is representing the socio-cultural reality of the nation where the rape takes place. I look at the socio-cultural background to see how the reports “clarify” the causes and reasons behind rape in that community.

We must remember that “Textual analysis should mean analysis of the texture of texts, their form and organization, and not just commentaries on the ‘content’ of texts which ignore texture” [Ibid 4]. In addition, news content itself represents the ideological backbone of the taken for granted hegemonic relations between the media and the society. This is done through the ideological characterization within the discourses of rape. I would examine this characterization by evaluating the cultural assumptions behind the rape involved. I would examine the texts by looking at the rape myths involved and what are the underlying cultural and social lenses supporting those myths. The rape myths would allow a clear distinction of how the American reports of rape incidents within America determine their social reality towards women versus the realities they place about rape victims and women in non-Western communities.

Seeing as to how texts have their associations with meanings and various social associations, Fairclough explains that intertextuality as the “property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarches or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, or so forth” [Fairclough 1992:84]. It is the connection the texts have with specific social and discursive practices within certain contexts that derive the way those texts, meanings and in turn ideas are channeled and understood. He brings in the elements of
‘genre’, ‘discourse’ and ‘style’ that interplay the different interrelated ways in which the discourse conceptualizes a particular social drill. In the case of the rape stories I will focus on, it is the style of and discourse that will evaluate the rape narratives that represent the reality. To examine the ‘discourse’ and ‘style’ within each rape story, I look at narratives provided by either by the victim or the locals so as to find how they define the rapist or victim. Here I examine how the representation of the rapists is set against the representation of the victims through a linguistic lens. This allows me to again concentrate on the ideologies behind men and women in various communities as reported by *The New York Times* when dealing with rape reports. This will guide me in analyzing the stereotyping involved in the ways the victim and attacker is defined. Through these definitions, the cultural and social outlook of the people involved will also be represented.

Analyzing this discourse plays a critical role on the “ways of representing aspects of the world…associated with the different relations people have to the world…” [Fairclough 2003: 124] and so the analysis of the various quotes and thus the people speaking within those rape stories would represent how “people identify themselves and are identified by others” for instance how the lawyer/ policeman/ human rights activist associates the countries problem with rape versus how those very personals quoted from a non-western nation are representing the state of their national rape problem would project the helplessness of that social actor’s agency or their social groups’ problem in rectifying a homogenous social order. To clarify, the voices of activists or of other concerned citizens would determine a further cripple in the law and order system within a community. Not having those additional voices within rape story coverage would mean that the incident is an individual one and not a national problem. This will allow me to answer whether rape is identified as a national problem within America or whether it is a national problem in the non-Western communities I will be researching.

### 3.1 Researching language

Language, as it is invested in ideology, would turn my research to locate the ideologies mediating the social construction of reality through text. When it comes to gender categories and discourse, feminists predict an immediate institutionalization of cultural and social statuses that approve male dominance over female; making it appears natural [Stolcke 1993:19]. Wodak has
done an extensive discourse analysis of the portrayal of women in media text, their images in magazines and the suppression of female narrative within media texts. My research wants to see if the outlook of men and women is any different when it comes to rape stories of them being from different nationalities for which language plays a critical role.

By language it is the text seen as a unit which is a product of historical and sociopolitical outcomes and process thereby “a product of the process of texts production” [Fairclough 1989: 24, Halliday and Hasan 1976]. Language sets the foundations of the ideas that govern societies and the societies in turn can manipulate or set the way a story is narrated or represented through language itself. As Fowler notes, “there is no neutral representation of reality,” [Fowler 1897: 67 in Ekitis et al 562] language is a symbolic construction of our reality. How media generates meaning of a social issue through its printed news then solely depends on their structure and layout of that information.

“The language employed will thus be the newspaper’s own version of the language of the public whom it is principally addressed: its version of the rhetoric, imagery and underlying common stock of knowledge which it assumes its audience shares and which thus forms the basis of the reciprocity of producer/reader.” [Hall et al. 1978 in Allan 2010: 61]

In naturalizing a story, the news is said to then structure the stories they narrate through a certain formula to embed the ideological codes with newspaper discourse. In this research, I would locate the “ideological codes” that govern the reasons behind rape [rape myths] in different reports in different nations. Since it is the “languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought and the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works,”[Hall, 1986:29] I will analyze the language that set the reality of violence against women in various communities. That in turn aid to construct “mental frameworks of reality.” According to Allan the linguistic structure in news involves headlines, news lead, narrative order and sequence, vocabulary, forms of address, transitivity and modality, relations of time, relations of space,
implied reader and a closure. In my research, a look at all these elements would play a vital role in deep analysis of the reports. I will examine all these elements in the rape cases for this research from different nations.

When it comes to nationalizing a report, there lies a de-linking or exclusion of the other community, the other race and in this case, I would like to explore the exclusion of the other nation undergoing similar gender violations. As Wodak points out, “the construction of identity is a process of differentiation, a description of one’s own group and simultaneously a separation from the “others” [Wodak 1995: 126]. When Wetherill and Potter (1992) conducted a research, they had looked into the discourse of racism which examined the language behind the construction of the “racial” and “identity” reality in New Zealand. They explored the racist discourse devalue the “other” and yet is able to justify “his/her [own] exploitation.” Therefore for this research I go back to looking at the construction of other nationalities within various rape reports taking place across the globe. I would like to examine how American offenders/rapists are positioned within a rape report versus non-western offenders? I would like to therefore examine how American rape victims are also positioned within a rape report versus non-western rape victims? And in doing so, I would be setting apart a national-binary of rape stories within and outside America and through it find the stereotyping and ideologies involved in setting that binary.

3.2. Researching rape reports

For my research, I would look at the key features that structure the very nationalistic discourse that Billig mentions in flagging the everyday occurrences through the reports. This analysis would stand in contrast to how far a local national newspaper “other” the rapes occurring in non-western nations. Rape stories narrated through an ‘us-them’ binary would add ideational representation of the other enclosed within cultural and social understandings of those nations who do not poses western values. National stories in turn would try to neutralize or naturalize the local rape stories in order to avoid public panic as well as maintain social solidarity.

I combine the nationalistic narrative with the rape myths involved as the reasons for the women being raped play a critical role in how the society is viewed, the interrelations between gender
and the sociocultural reality is therefore set. The ideas that govern the why this crime was committed help strengthen both the cultural lens through which that community is seen as well as how the community is “othered” because of the way they are viewed.

The newspaper I would like to look at for my research paper is the *New York Times*. I chose America and a prominent American newspaper because much of the objective of representing a “real” and “balanced” report was pioneered by American journalism. I choose the *New York Times*, as it has significant national and international popularity and prides itself in maintaining a standardized form of journalist values and reporting skills. It is also a widely read international newspaper and therefore reports by *The New York Times* would have a wider impact on how the rest of the world would understand rape and the rape myths and ideologies that are defined through one of America’s prominent media.

The topic of rape reports is vast in number and in trying to examine rape stories in various parts of the world is a highly complex matter. In order to narrow down the research, I look at rape reports from the years 2010 to 2012 only. I also avoid rape cases occurring during national conflict, through political changes and any rape stories which are related to war. I do this so as to look at rape cases that are crimes taking place within communities irrespective of political influences. I do this specifically to identify the ideologies that look at rape incidents divorced from external impacts on local communities. This allows me to look at rape as a social and every day crime. Although the incidents are spread out and different in context, narrowing it down to rape reports as part of a daily crime allows me to explore the social reality represented in each story.

For my research, I also look the following rape incidents; where rape is defined as a forceful act of perpetrators, offenders unrelated to the victim or the victims define their attacker as someone they had no previous relationships, affections with. This also helps further narrow down the cases so as to not confuse these rape cases with ones of date rapes. I strictly look at male perpetrators and female victims of each independent rape case so as to identify the possible rape myths used against each victim that would explain the ideologies that govern how that nation
looks at gender issues or how an American media represents the outlook of gender attitudes towards women on various nations.

In order to examine rape incidents occurring within and outside America and their reports in *The New York Times*, I will use lexisnexis to locate the rape reports between 2010 till end of 2013 so as to bring in as current relevancy into the research as possible. I will search each report through the key words associated with the case, for example for the Indian rape case, I will search through lexisnexis using the words “Delhi” “23-year-old” and “rape” to search all the rape reports of the 23-year-old rape victim based in Delhi. I will also look at news reports only and not editorials or opinion pieces so as to see how the “news” of rape is reported based on the locations. Additional editorial and opinion pieces would reflect more personalized viewpoint on the issue of rape by the author. Through news, there should not be any subjective outlook of rape as it is required to be a balanced form of information. My interest is in locating use of stereotypes and rape myths through these otherwise balanced reports.

**3.3 The case studies**

Rape incidents within American colleges have had more coverage recently due to it being identified as a national problem. So I will examine the first 3 reports and the last 3 only to see the immediate development of representation of the rapists and victims in each story and any possible changes towards the end of the rape report when the prosecutors are sentenced in court. The timeframe of each rape report from when the rape occurred to when the rapist is sentenced marks a clear development and end of each report.

Similarly, the rape incident that took place in India stirred mobilization across India and made prominence in world headlines and therefore, I will again look at only the first three and last three of the reports based on the Delhi Case rape.

I look at the time frame 2010 to 2013 and single incidents only as this time frame surrounds the time President Obama felt the necessity to make a public remark on the rape problem as well as develop new policies. I will look at the rape reports within this time frame brought into light
irrespective of when the court sentences the attackers. This means that the rape incident may have occurred within this time frame but the sentence could go beyond 2013.

Rape incidents in America

**Florida Rape Case (6 reports)**
On December 7, 2012, Jamies Winston, a quarterback for Florida State, was convicted of raping a girl at an off campus apartment. This case was highly controversial as the Defence Lawyer at first suggested that the sex was consensual but later the prosecutor was charged with rape. For this case, many found the news to have framed angles supporting the boy who took the team to national levels and siding with him under the light of national pride. I would therefore like to look at the initial 3 reports and the last three to see how the news coverage reported this rape case.

**The Ohio Rape Case (6 reports)**
Another wide spread controversial rape case was placed in Ohio on August 11, 2012. Naming the convicted as star football players, this case came to the limelight when a photo of two boys dragging a seemingly drunk girl was shared around campus. Blogger’s reactions again pointed how much the community and media had biases towards the boys; further victimizing the victim. For this story I would like to look at 3 of the first news reports and the last three when the offenders are in trial.

**The Texas Rape Case (2 reports)**
On November 29, 2012, the gang rape of an 11-year-old in Texas had *New York Times* covering only two reports on an otherwise brutally shocking case. I want to analyze this story for its limitation to find the key features the report focused on only and how that caused an abrupt reaction. This of course means analyzing only two of the reports provided.

**New Jersey Rape Case (1 report)**
On March 23, 2011, the rape of a 7 year old by six men had the prosecutors convicted and sentenced to jail. I look at this story as it is again an attack on a minor and rape myths often
cannot be justified when the victim is underage and is definitely unable to consent to sex. The lack of reports for one story on a rape case involving a minor victim would be brought to balance by analyzing this additional similar incident reported by the *New York Times*.

**Rape Cases involving different nationalities**

I look at rape cases with American and non-American involved to specifically analyze if based on national identity the representation of the individuals, the rape myths and the ideologies governing the rape reports are any different. I chose the following four reports for those findings. In choosing two American and two non-American rapists, I will be able to look at a balanced set of data in analyzing this section.

**Brazil Rape Case (2 reports)**

Three Brazilians had been convicted of raping an American student in Brazil. The 21 year old was first violently bruised and then raped front of her French male friend who was tied up. The atrocity of the violence addressed a national shock in both Brazil and in America. Therefore I would like to see how the offenders and victims are portrayed in this report based on their national background.

**Saudi Arabia (2 reports)**

A report from February 2012, reports of a Saudi Prince aged 60 was convicted of raping a 26 year old as she accepted his request to enter his hotel room. Although this incident took place in America, it involves individuals who otherwise had no connection to each other and therefore bases the report to solely focus on a supposed cultural misunderstanding.

**South Korea Rape Case (2 reports)**

An American diplomat on September 24, 2011, was prosecuted in South Korea for having raped an 18-year-old girl in her home at late hours, where a surveillance camera alleged the incident leaving South Korean angered over the American military stationed in the capital Seoul. An apology was made by the offender reaching headlines after many protests took place in Seoul. I analyze this report based on how because the offender had been American diplomat, an official
apology was demanded therefore reinforcing the importance of the “nationality” of the individuals involved in a crime.

**Japan Rape Case (2 reports)**

Another similar story took the headlines when American sailors were convicted of raping a woman in Okinawa, Japan. I use this case study analyze any similarities or differences there may exist again when the offenders are American and a cause of social mobility on a foreign land for a crime that is otherwise global.

**Reports of Non-Western rape cases**

**Morocco Rape Case (1 report)**

On March 10, 2012, 16 year old Amina Filali died after suffering the wounds left to her by the prosecutor, ten years older than her, who raped her.

**Indian Rape Case (6 reports)**

The Delhi rape case is the incident of a 23 year old who was raped by six people on a moving bus on December 7, 2012. The story sparked a nationwide protest within India and took major headlines on bigger western Media as well. There is more coverage of this rape incident as so just as the Ohio and Florida rape cases, I will select the first three and the last three to look at the immediate representation of the rape and its context until the convicts are sentenced.

**Pakistan (2 reports)**

The story of gang-rape survivor Mukhtar Mai, that took place in June 2002, does not fall into the time frame set for this research. However, the court sentence of the rapists took place within this time frame. Five of the six rapists had been acquitted by the Supreme Court of Pakistan on April 21, 2011, while the sixth suspect had his life sentence upheld. Her rape story adds value to this research in that it will allow me to analyze how *The New York Times* represents the cultural and religious practice of honor revenge within their reporting.
In total there would be 32 reports to analyze within which 9 reports covering non-western rape stories, 15 reports are from incidents in America and 8 are rape reports where American and non-Western individuals are part of the crime either as attackers or victims. In analyzing each report with the questions regarding the ideology, the rape myths and the culturally different outlook of how *The New York Times* reports report rape given the nationalities of the individuals involved, I would be able to answer my research question on how nationalism is represented in rape stories within America versus in non-western countries.

### 3.4 Limitations

The limited number of reports, especially on non-American rape reports would play as a limitation to this research. However it also represents the condensed and concise outlook of *The New York Times* reporting of foreign rape stories. It also allows me to examine how within that short representation of rape stories abroad, *The New York Times* make commonsense of those cases to American and worldwide readers. The rape myths used to possibly differentiate local and foreign rape stories would then be represented instantly.

Since there are many case studies being used from different nationalities backed by different social, political and cultural histories, trying to identify the “reality” behind the rape stories in different communities would be highly generalized. There would be religious and other influences that would need analytical insight which *The New York Times* may or may not provide. But it is this missing or limited insight that allows me to see how those rape reports generalize other communities in a partial and quick manner.

As seen from my literature review, rape is seen differently in different culture and community. I cannot therefore generalize how those communities perceive rape, I can only analyze how *The New York Times* explain rape in those localities. Therefore, I can only analyze how *The New York Times* represent rape incidents based in different nationalities and how these reports analyze rape through those cultural contexts.

Since there is multiplicity of culture and social settings involved, the research risks a high level of generalizing in the findings based on only these few reports and therefore cannot and will not
conclude the research question as applicable for all NY Times reports on all American-based or non-Western based rapes incidents.
4. Results and Analysis
Through the discourse analysis, my research found a few themes through the twelve case studies in which there were clear distinctions in the ways The New York Times reported on rape differently based on geographic location: America vs. non-western nations of the crime. For this research I have listed the results reflecting nationalism narratives under three broad themes: Human versus inhuman, America versus the rest and the Victim-Society divide. This chapter will look into the results and analysis of my findings drawing emphasis on the various ways nationalism is “flagged” and characterized through an otherwise globally alarming crime.

4.1 Human vs. inhuman
I found that the rape reports that take place in America versus those in non-American communities have profound distinctions in the way they represent the men and women involved within the crime. To start with, there are more details provided about how the rape took place when reporting on rapes in non-American countries. These details reflect the criminals’ behavior more animalistic and inhuman in nature. In contrast, I found that by removing the details of the rape itself, or the rapist’s behavior, the NY Times rape reports based in America not only minimize the intensity of the crime but also makes the accused rapists appear more human in nature. This, as a result, changes how readers paint the “picture in [their] heads” and how stereotypes of men and women abroad can be manipulated through placing social and cultural context behind each rape story.

To start with, reports of the Brazilian, Moroccan and Indian rape cases focus on the details of the crime. The repetition of these details in every report covering that particular incident injects the ‘image’ multiple times into the readers mind; who often remain distant from the crime scene. For instance, the rape story in Brazil details the attackers as those who “pummeled the woman’s face” and beat the other French friend of the victim with “a metal bar” as they continued the “harrowing assault.” The report also uses the word “force” and “rape” more often throughout the narrative. The same has been found within the reports on India’s Delhi rape case, the incident of the male friend “beaten by a rod,” the rape victim raped “several times” on a moving bus and then both stripped and left “bloody” on the streets. The word “attack” is used extensively throughout the reports based in non-American grounds not involving Americans.
attack is synonymous to the “violent” nature of the crime. The repetition of these words, replaying the incident in detail in every report therefore allows the image to panic the readers’ mind. As Lippmann explains, “We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them.” Therefore, readers have an idea of these brutal rapes without experiencing it. The magnitude of the violence echo a grotesque representation of the male rapists involved. The detail of rape pins a mental image of disgust, reminding the reader of the danger and malice of the criminals in foreign land. It becomes the “picture” that the readers are creating of these non-Western men.

In contrast, this research found that all NY Times rape reports from America, including reports involving an American accused of rape, except the Ohio rape case, had no repetition of the details of the rape itself. By this I mean that although the first report outlined the attack by the rapists, for instance the ones involving minors [Texas and New Jersey rape cases], the follow-up of the reports did not repeat the particulars of the crime scene. They instead focused on the court sentences of the rapists. “The attack’s details remained unclear.” [Texas Rape Case] Heath, Gordon & Le Bailly (1981) noted that news of rape often had fewer details compared to other crime stories. They mention how rape stories promote a certain perspective on the social issue aside from the crime itself. This is clear through my research especially when analyzing the Texas rape case. Even though the headline of the rape of an 11-year-old had the word “vicious” in it, the main report echoed a sense of concern about the rapists’ future. This humane concern of the rapists overshadowed the viciousness of the crime. I take two paragraphs of the first report on the Texas rape case’s first report to show this as an example:

“It’s just destroyed our community,” said Sheila Harrison, 48, a hospital worker who says she knows several of the defendants. (the breaking of a community solidarity) “These boys have to live with this the rest of their lives.” (concerns over the boys/men and their future, the breaking away of the boys from the community) [Italics and bold my own]

“The arrests have left many wondering who will be taken into custody next. [Should this be the bigger question/concern?] […] The students [alleged
The state of concern for these rapists comes because of their poverty-striven lifestyle and poor economic options available in their community. “[T]here are pockets of poverty, and in the neighborhood where the assault occurred, well-kept homes sit beside boarded-up houses and others with deteriorating facades.” The compassion over the deprived state of where the rapists live promotes sympathy over them. The lack of repetition of their crime [18 young men and teenage boys on charges of participating in the gang rape of an 11-year-old girl] silences the level of brutality of it. It then only seems natural for them to turn towards criminal activities, it is only human.

*The New York Times* rape reports on incidents in Japan and in South Korea, that left the local communities outraged, avoided the details of rape as well. The South Korean case explained that the American soldier “was drunk and used scissors, a knife, a ballpoint pen and a cigarette lighter in the attack.” This appeared detailed enough at first, but on a closer look the report provides only the information of the rapist’s possession, not on how they were used. In not answering the *how* of the crime, the report removes the visual savagery of it. “This contrasts both the Indian and Brazilian rape cases, where the specifics of “beating”, “force” and abuse were clarified. Even the mention of how “bloody” the scene was and the state of the victim’s physical aftermath is narrated. In the case of Japan and South Korea, the only follow-up of the victim’s physical state was minimized to her “being treated” in a hospital.

What happens with the details of a gruesome rape versus the removal of it is then is the image of the rapist the reader is left with. The “second-hand reality” that lingers in the mind then becomes one where there is abuse, violence, inhuman and animalistic behavior versus one where a crime had taken place because of economic [Texas and Ohio rape case] or alcoholic influences [South Korea, Japan and Florida rape case]. This sets apart the men who are naturally abusive versus those whose economic/alcoholic manipulated them towards the crime. The perceptions and
ideologies of the cruel and ferocious other men abroad stand in stark contrast to the American rapists.

**4.2 Day to day flagging**

To further reflect the level of inhumanity behind rape within non-Western cultures, my research found that the intensity of the social and cultural backwardness highlighted by *The New York Times* were profound. By “flagging” the everyday scene that shape the social and cultural reality of rapes abroad, the NY Times is able to represent the shared-experiences and ideologies in foreign communities. In reflecting the backwardness and suppression faced by those nations, the NY Times shows conservatism as the fundamental workings behind high rape rates and savageries.

One of the main findings shows that suppression and a traditionalist culture manipulated by poor laws and judiciary systems play a big role in relation to rape. In all the cases of India, Pakistan, Brazil and Morocco, the recurring explanation of cultural and social conservatism sets the reality where rape has accelerated. For the case of India, “[t]he roots of the problem run deep in a conservative society that is having trouble adjusting to educational and economic advances by women, long confined to the home.” In a country “riddled with incompetence, corruption and political meddling,” addressing the issues of rape faces multiple obstacles. The suppression of women is explained throughout the reports as well where “Many victims, shamed into silence and callously disregarded by a male dominated power structure, never go to the authorities to seek justice” […] “India must work on changing a culture in which women are routinely devalued.” By constantly mentioning the plurality of women facing sexual harassment, the aggressive nature of men along with the incompetency of national laws, reports of the Indian rape case paints the overall cultural and social atmosphere that helps explain the “reasons” of crime. In the case of Pakistan, explaining that “Ms. Mukhtar was raped on the orders of the village council” and using the victim’s quote on Pakistan’s shallow laws point to both a cultural inhumanity as well as the flawed judiciary system governing Pakistan. This mapping of poor laws and cultural suppression is found in both the Brazil and Morocco’s rape reports as well.
I found that by focusing on one single report of the Moroccan rape case, I was able to branch out similar cultural and social explanations for rape incidents taking place in Pakistan, India and Brazil as well. This is relevant to my research as by cluttering the non-Western states’ background through a similar lens of patriarchy and lawfully regressive nation, NY Times is able to determine the high level of inhumaneness under these common characterization of those nations which are neither American nor Western. In the Moroccan report, the law allows the rapist to “marry [the victim] to dodge punishment,” and even if her family doesn’t want it, “the judge can impose it. The victim isn’t taken into account.” This sentence imitates the “flawed criminal justice system” in Pakistan where even after much “campaigning,” the victim “cannot get justice,” which again echoes the example above on India’s poor judiciary system. Morocco is defined as the “country where violence against women has long been a taboo subject”, which in turn is echoed in India’s suppressed women who are “betrothed against their will as child brides, and many suffer cruelly, including acid attacks and burning, at the hands.” In Morocco “If a woman reports a rape, and she doesn’t prove her case,” […]“she is then admitting to sex outside of marriage, and the prosecutor can then turn the case around on her.” This is the only way women can “protect themselves from the law,” because the “law is not responsive to social realities,” which again mimics both India’s cry of having to “Save Women Save India,” as well as Brazil’s urgent need for victims to “step out” and speak of the crimes against them. The level of ruthlessness and sadism defined through these NY Times reports then reflect the animalistic viciousness of those communities.

The underlying ideology of patriarchy and suppression of women as well as it being maintained through social laws points to the shared everyday “codes” of the people in non-Western communities. It is the everyday reality and experiences of the women there, “Women being victims of horrendous violence like this, women killing themselves to escape from violent situations, is nothing new in Morocco.” All rape reports maintain that in these nations, change is necessary. “India must work on changing a culture in which women are routinely devalued.”

My results also show that NY Times uses rape statistics when reporting on rape in non-Western nations which reflect the magnitude of vulgarity of other men and the voiceless marginalization of their women. This then mirrors the common shared-reality of non-Western communities and
represents the cultural and social settings across those nations. *Their* conservatism then drives the “commonsense” as to why the crime rates are high there. This is able to naturalize the reasons behind such critical crimes. The “codes” between the individuals within and outside the communities learning of these rape incidents would be ‘patriarchy’ and a culturally ‘backward society’. Those codes set as key reasons help maintain the ideologies represented within these stories.

### 4.3 Siding with the rapists

My result shows that another way NY Times makes the rapists within America appear more human is by siding with them. *The New York Times* initial treatment of the football players in both the Florida and the Ohio rape case left behind a lot of criticism in the ways scholars felt it inclined in favor of the rapists even before court hearing; siding with the sport heroes rather than condemning them for their crimes. As Gail Dines said, “It’s been all about the boys,” […] “There has been very little empathy for the girl,” and that the bigger concern also lay in the “future” of these boys and their stardom coming to an end [Jean MacKenzie 2013].

As was the case with the Texas rape story of the minor, the long-term effect on the sex offenders takes a bigger focus than the crime itself. Dines further notes that “There is a real reluctance to take on issues of misogyny and violence against women in our own country,” where such concerns only come into play when the issues are “outside the borders of the ‘civilized’ world.”

> “People in the West prefer to think that these problems are more prevalent with the ‘savages’ out there,” she said. “The truth is, rape and other issues of violence happen at exactly the same rate in this country as elsewhere.” [Ibid]

This coincides with Qing arguments that various patterns representing the US-them dichotomy “provide a set of criteria against which other societies are rated and judged applying a whole range of dichotomous discursive clusters such as ‘rational/irrational’, ‘developed/ undeveloped’, ‘modern/primitive’ or ‘metropolitan/tribal’ [Grix, 2004, as cited in Grix, J., Lacroix, C., 2006:
For this research, I have therefore added a human/inhuman cluster in the differentiation of societies, America versus non-Western in this case.

By dumbing down the danger of the rapists in focusing on long-term damages on the football players’ reputation, readers are drifted away from seeing them as criminals. They are human beings with future plans, dreams and ambitions. This stands in strong contrast against the brutality of rapists in non-Western communities, where there are no future concerns for those rapists future.

Katie J.M. Baker points out that had the bloggers not intervened in the Ohio rape case and had there not been screenshots of all the videos and photos of how the players attacked their victim, not only would the Ohio rape case pass by as “another rape incident no one hears about” but it would have been one that even the New York Times would not have felt the need to heavily analyze.

“Without the social media angle, it would just be another story about a young woman raped by athletes while she was blacked out from drinking too much alcohol in a hardcore football town.” [Katie J.M. Baker 2012]

The New York Times analysis, she refers to, was reported in 2014 and therefore was not used as part of my research because it does not fall under the initial NY Times reports of the rape incident.

My findings in both these rape cases [Ohio and Florida] showed victorious representation of the boys accused of rape. Placed next to words such as “winner,” “upcoming,” “star player,” “national championship,” and “award”, the reports on the football players accused of rape cast a tone of loss for the community if the rapists are convicted. Holding them in winning platforms and a victory to the state creates positive impressions in the readers mind. The humane qualities of active, hard-working and determined are again seen in contrast to the rapists in non-Western nations where the details of their active participation in the community are not mentioned.
Further siding with the rapist is seen in reference to the Texas rape case, involving a minor, where 18 men attacked her. Mac McClelland points out that reporters may find themselves in a position to side with the rapist because of the sympathy the community may place on him but that does not mean that as a reporter you do not account for the other side.

“You can’t blame a reporter for reporting uncomfortable facts, like this evidence of a culture that places more responsibility on victims and has more sympathy for rapists. You can blame a reporter, though, for not using the tools available to him to provide a basic balance of information and opinions.”

The only aggressive tone associated with the Florida State football player was towards the last report, right before he was convict, where the report stated that the player was found shouting “crude sexual phrase in the student union.” There is no other mention of any aggressive behavior other than the victim’s narrative. There is also economic explanations to the Ohio rape incident where the boys coming from a struggling family. The only “hope” for their community was football and therefore by focusing on the brilliance of these football players, the report places the rapist as a victim of circumstance who needs a second chance. They players are struggling “human beings.”

4.4 America vs. non-Western communities

One to represent all

One main result found through this research is the use of one rape case to represent the community at large. Earlier I show how non-Western communities have been clustered together through their cultural backwardness that produces disturbing rape incidents. For this chapter, I focus on the results that reflect how one rape stories from the non-Western nations that I have analyzed is used to represent those communities as a whole.

In explaining that a 10-year-old in Morocco was raped “at knife point” by ‘one’ older man provided the intensity of the crime scene. But by further detailing how the Moroccan law allowed him to be forgiven if he marries the girl, thereby saving her damaged social reputation,
the barbarity of the Moroccan law as a whole is represented. The additional explanation outlines the pervasive culture in which the rapist is placed. So then, the rapist becomes a byproduct of his community. This, in large, set the ways global readers view Moroccan men and its community altogether.

As Brendon O’Neill explains, “The rapists are seen, not as wicked individuals who must be punished, but as the products of a strange and perverted foreign culture which, for all its modernist pretensions, still falls far short of our Western standards of behavior and linguistic interaction.” [Brendon O’Neill 2013] O’Neill criticizes in particular the generalization Libby Purves places in her NY Time opinion piece on the Delhi Rape Case and how through it she clusters all Indian men under one frame as soon as the Delhi rape case made world headlines. “Almost as soon as it was announced that the still unnamed rape victim had died, Western observers rushed to condemn all of India.” O’Neill further explains that the western media, like Purves, had started seeing the rapist’s behavior as a daily life in India:

”[M]urderous, hyena-like male contempt is a norm [in India]” the report by Purves claimed that in particular to Delhi ‘sexual harassment and assault’ are looked upon as a ‘male birthright’ by the ‘tens of thousands of newly urbanised [men], from villages still almost medieval’. [O’Neill 2013]

I specifically zoom into O’Neill’s criticism on India because The New York Times report on the Brazilian rape case connects both the Brazil and Delhi rape reports under one umbrella although they are culturally and economically very different. This also highlights how NY Times subtly promotes the US-other dichotomy by not looking at these two rape incidents as isolated cases but as a similar gendered discourse taking places elsewhere. And so as O’Neill observes the stereotypes set about Indian community and its men, the same can be analysed for Brazilian men and how detailed and a dangerous images of their rape incidents can also impact an overall outlook on Brazilian men. This reflects back Galtun and Ruge’s statement on how “the more distant a nation is culturally, the greater the tendency to stereotype and reduce complexity.” as to present the people and the events there in “ideal types” [Galtung and Ruge, 1965, as cited in Evans, M., 2010: 225]. By clustering Brazil and India together and by reducing the complexity
of the matter previously seen through cultural and social conservative lenses, NY Times is also able to characterize those communities into simple “ideal” types of societies where high and grotesque rapes occur.

In fact, rape reports both on India, Brazil as well as Morocco also included a vast number of rape statistics supporting each report. The incidents were not taken into isolation. This exemplified the magnitude of the crime, the vast number of male rapists infested in these nations and thereby making almost every other man appear as a rapist. It also fell back on the theme of “repetition” and the alarming widespread of rape which further injects the image of all men in these countries as potential rapists. It also manipulates an everyday reality in those communities. Because they occur is alarming statistics, it must be “everywhere” in the non-Western communities. As O’Neill pointed out in the case of India, “What is happening here is that guilt for one unspeakably awful crime is being shifted on to an entire nation, on to all Indian men, on to the temerity of India to grow and expand and change.”

In contrast I find that The New York Times reports on rape incidents in America do not include any statistics or background on rape crimes at all. The rapes are treated in isolation, therefore not representing the overall rape crimes across either the state or the nation. This also stands starkly in contrast to the high number of rapes especially in colleges taking place across America as was reflected in the Introduction and Literature Review part of this research. By treating each rape incident as one of its own, the report makes it less intense for the readers and therefore neutralizing it.

**Our women vs. theirs**

My research on rape victims within these rape reports also found that victims who were American had particular rape myths attached to them. My results show that some of those who were non-Western victims were, in contrast, seen as powerful icons that helped their communities address the issue of rape as a national problem [India, Pakistan and Morocco rape case].
While examining the reports of both the Florida and Ohio rape cases involving star football athletes, both victims are placed within the context of doubt. They had been drinking, their memories “blurry” and in question therefore complicating the case of rape further. The drinking subtly act as rape myths, where it is the fault of the women to place themselves under influence and therefore in danger. Placing them also side by side to the national “heroes” accused of rape, positioned both victims under another layer of doubt of tarnishing the image of celebrated icons. In the case with the Florida rape case, the report titled, “In Florida State Case, A Tangle of Questions” reflected a tone of mockery and indifference behind the rape accusation. It ridiculed the postures of the victim’s Defense Lawyer Patricia Carroll; placing both the victims and her lawyer’s images under derision. The reporter suggested that while the lawyer was making a public case about the poor judiciary process regarding the victim for “more than 90 minutes,” “it was unclear if anyone outside the park was listening.” In quoting the lawyer, the NY Times reporter states that “the case was not handled as other cases might have been and that might be all that it takes to deter other victims from reporting sexual assaults […].” Therefore, the NY Times report clearly suggests victimization of victims through social mockery. As Meyers pointed out, further victimization of victims minimize the concerns over rape as a national issue and by claiming that the Ohio case would stop other college rape victims from coming forward, there is a mirroring of that statement through the report.

In both the Ohio and Florida rape cases, the rape myths are those that question the behavior of the girls under influence of alcohol. It is, however, in the rape cases involving minors [Texas and New Jersey], that I find a striking use of rape myths which question the morals of children. In contrast to the Morocco rape case, where the victim was placed in a helpless and forced situation, both the New Jersey and Texas rape cases indicated that the minors had stepped away from the socially-prescribed rules and therefore invited themselves to danger.

Texas Rape Case

“They said she [victim] dressed older than her age, wearing makeup and fashions more appropriate to a woman in her 20s. She would hang out with teenage boys at a playground, some said.” [Victim-blaming, her exposure and sexuality – dressing not her age, Texas Rape Case] [Italics my own]
New Jersey Rape Case

“Trenton officials said that the 15-year-old is accused of first having sex for money herself, then accepting cash to let men touch the 7-year-old. That touching then led to rape by multiple men, according to the investigation, which is continuing, officials said. [Problem with the victim in allowing older men to assault her younger sister, why expose herself to such a situation] [Italics my own]

“The 7-year-old girl told the police she knew the party was trouble, but she went because she wanted to protect her sister, [the girls were aware of the danger and still stepped into it] [Italics my own]”

In both cases, it is shocking to have minors of a rape situation represented as individuals who needed to understand their boundaries and conform to societal norms and values. As Meyers had noted, “Sometime the concluding statement by the reporter or anchor casts doubt on the victim’s innocence, which suggests that something she had done was ultimately responsible for the attack.” [Meyers 1954: 62] [Young et al.] This statement fit perfectly for both the cases as the report would leave the readers wondering why the victims oversstepped their boundaries as opposed to questioning the morality of the men involved. It becomes their nature of promiscuousness that in turn allows those very rape myths to become “social prescriptions” against rape. For my research this was particularly important to note because these myths represents the very ideologies that are still internalized by the American communities at large. Berrington explains that when the rape victims step against the patriarchal norm they are blamed even through the news reports. “By stepping outside their prescribed role, they place themselves at risk.” [Berrington 2002: 309] These girls have stepped out of their secured lives and therefore risked themselves. As was reviewed in my literature section, in placing the blame on the victim the ideologies that govern the commonsense of each community is then able to naturalize the rape cases taken place within America. The community in large is recognizing the “ideological codes” in the form of rape myths that allows these stories to become dangerous only when the situation defies the “everyday” norm of the community.
This remains evident especially since the rape reports of victim in non-Western communities, attacked by their own nationality men, mark a contrasting image of the victims. All rape victims in India, Pakistan and Morocco are celebrated symbols that are addressing rape crimes across their nations. In Pakistan, Mukhtar is a “célèbre among human rights advocates” because she “spoke out against the crime.” Her single “legal struggle” has become a “source of strength and inspiration for rape victims.” She is seen as fighting a social stigma and breaking the very boundaries in her community which makes her a hero.

“The New York-based advocacy group Human Rights Watch expressed dismay at the decision, saying in a statement that it was “a setback for Mukhtar Mai, the broader struggle to end violence against women and the cause of an independent rights-respecting judiciary in Pakistan.”

[Showing concern and solidarity to a rape victim abroad, setting the report to an internationally-based crime]

Similarly the story of the 23-year-old rape Indian rape victim who was a Physiotherapy student, was out at late hours with a male friend to watch a movie, has been represented as the emancipated young Indian woman who wanted to step out of her poor economic status for a brighter future. In addressing her case leading to the outburst of Indian activists mobilized across the nation, The New York Times on the outrage Indians feel about violence against women which had been a hidden culture of what The New York Times termed Delhi as “rape capital” of India.

Ironically, however, one of the reports also addresses the matter of societal backwardness as India itself engages in victim-blaming of woman trying to cross cultural norms. “In northern India, reports of rape are often followed by questions about the victim's behavior, and even accusations that she provoked the assault.” The irony also stands that in maintaining the backwardness representation of India the NY Times is still following the same methods to naturalize the setting and reasoning behind rape within its own country.
It is, however, in these stereotypes that categorizing takes places placing US men and women versus non-Western men and women again into “ideal types;” (Grix, 2004, as cited in Grix, J., Lacroix, C., 2006: 376). By being able to set the pattern in placing them under different pattern frames of vicious versus under influence, celebrated versus a threat, promiscuous versus repressed by society, stereotypes in the “center of our codes” as Lippmann noted “determines what group of facts we shall see, and in what light we shall see them”. [Lippmann 1922, online] while helping maintain the explanation of the reasons behind the crimes and actions.

4.5 The Victim-community divide

One of the recurring themes I found in researching these rape reports is the particular divide between the community and the rape victim. This happens either vocally, where her voice is silenced and her narrative is either minimalized or not present at all within the rape reports. The other form is physically, where the victim is removed from the society altogether.

When analyzing the rape reports, very often I found that the reports provided only the basic statement from the victim’s side and often always when she is either narrating the rape incident or testifying the crime. Her role becomes that of a witness. Her actions and contribution to the community, however, is hardly detailed. She is either a “student,” a “woman,” a “victim” or someone who accused the attacker of his crime. Her behavior, her background is often not revealed unless the victim wants to go public. This is of course due to the ethics of reporting rape crimes in most places across the world. It is the societal stigma and humiliation attached to the victim that she suffers for the rest of her life. As Helen Benedict writes in her book *Virgin or Vamp: How the Press Covers Sex Crimes*:

“To name a rape victim is to guarantee that whenever somebody hears her name, that somebody will picture her in the act of being sexually tortured. To expose a rape victim to this without her consent is nothing short of punitive.”

However for my research in particular to the Ohio and Florida rape cases, as well as in the Japan, South Korea and the Saudi envoy related rape incidents, there is a distinct contrast when placing the few words and lines in recognition of the victims next to the attackers who get more
coverage. In explaining the effective role the football players are contributing, in explaining the activities and significance of the American servicemen needed in foreign lands and in narrating the intelligence and high-powered demand of the Saudi envoy in America placed next to the silenced, in “recovery” and in distant “trauma” of their victims, the latters’ narrative is often overshadowed by the significance of the rapists. Her lack of social contribution is also thereof a representative of her “insignificance” to the community. The following two examples on rape reports covering Japan and South Korea announce the designation and background of the American servicemen involved while only addressing the victim by age or her gender.

Japanese rape case
The Japanese police say the two sailors in the latest case had been out drinking [the alcohol excuse] when they attacked the woman, who is in her 20s, [only detail provided about the victim] as she walked home before dawn on Tuesday. The sailors, Seaman Christopher Browning and Petty Officer Third Class Skyler Dozierwalker, [Significance of attacker’s social status] were arrested soon after by Japanese police officers. [Underlines and italics my own]

Korean rape case
The 21-year-old soldier, a private first class whose name has not been released, [No identity but first class designation echoes his significance] is said to have entered the victim’s home, a small room in a low-budget motel in Dongducheon, north of Seoul, on Sept. 24 and raped her, according to the South Korean police. [Victim’s identity not provided, her economic status of poverty revealed through description, she is not as significant socially][underline, italics and bold my own]

A repetition of such contradiction is most obvious in both the Ohio and Florida rape cases but the relevance of this to my research is that it points out the diminishing or non-existent social status of the victim versus the celebrating, high-profiled football players who in their backgrounds of fame and talent contribute much to the community. In doing so, they are merged within what
strengthens the community would need for its solidarity and the imagined togetherness. Both these football players related rape cases fall accurately under Benedict’s notion of the “imagined” community as both these cases unify the solidarity of the community by having their “fans” believe in the community excellence through sports over the disunity through the crimes; the latter being a “fall” back in the rapists’ future and therefore the future of the State. In particular to the Florida rape case, the victim had been warned beforehand that her coming public with the case would subject her to “public scorn.” In a different report the accused rapist is quoted to thanking his “family, friends, coaches and teammates” for standing by him “during a difficult time” followed by his enthusiasm for being able to go back and help his team in achieving the team’s “goals.” His active, positive and determined role embeds him with the solidarity of the community [friends and family] and keeps the 19 year-old-student victim marginalized and invisible within the reports. In celebrating sports, Anderson in an interview states:

“The whole idea of the nation is that it survives with other nations. It’s impossible to have only one nation in the world, so that the idea of only one nation is something odd. I think there are better things like sport contests, cultural exhibitions, which on the one hand, one could say, “Look what we can do,” and at the same time say, “Well, we’re going to show it to the world and we expect to see what the world has to say,” but on the condition that it means we also accept visits.” [Anderson, Interview]

In my results a lot of the space and narrative reflected the success of football in Ohio and Florida. By doing so The New York Times not only places the football players primarily as the representatives of state glory, signifying the community’s strength of “look what we can do,” but in turn pushes away the victim’s state of justice further away.

The contrast is clearly striking when she is physically also removed from the community as she “had had to leave Florida State for her safety and the safety of her sorority sisters” who were also suffering their social images because of the accuser’s coming out to public with the rape. Therefore she had to leave the community altogether as her presence causes a loss of reputation
and positive image for those linked with her. In the case of the Ohio rape case, there is a community divided with some supporting the rape victim but she is also silenced and removed physically from the community space and therefore these two cases mirror each other under this theme.

Along this light, I found a deeper insight into the community-victim divide when examining the Texas rape case. Here the victim is a minor and therefore an expectation of her social roles should also be minor. Yet what is striking in this particular report is the sense of “abandonment” that overarches the entire report. The word “abandon” and the phrase “abandoned trailer” to refer to the location where the rape took place is used throughout the report establishing that the rape crime scene to be removed from the daily lives and solidarity of the community. “The security department determined that a rape had taken place, but not on school property.” The crime not taking place within “school property” distances the action away from the community and therefore the crime is distant as well. Setting this distance falls very much into the victim-community divide as such crimes does not occur here, it is because the girl moved there she faced rape. “The victim had been visiting various friends there [the abandoned town] for months.” The stepping away from her community invites her to the crimes and leads to the very question, “Where was her mother? What was her mother thinking?” […] “How can you have an 11-year-old child missing down in the Quarters?”

The focus of disassociating the area of crime-scene and community is further placed within the report as there is more description about the home where the rape took place over how the rape took place.

“The abandoned trailer [not part of community] where the assault took place is full of trash and has a blue tarp hanging from the front. Inside there is a filthy sofa, a disconnected stove [not part of community] in the middle of the living room […]” [Italics my own]

Once the community is informed of this disturbing gang rape, the show of fear and concern aggravates but the visibility of the victim and her mother disappears. “The whereabouts of the victim and her mother were not made public.” The victim remains out of public view/space in
contrast to the perpetrators who have to live with this for the rest of their lives within the community. And later on “the girl had been transferred to another district”, and thereby removing her from the community entirely.

The recurring theme of the victim removed from the community or not seen there is seen in all the Pakistan, India, Brazil, South Korea, Japan, Ohio, Florida and Texas rape cases. In the case of Brazil, the victim returns to America for a better medical treatment, and in the Indian rape case, the victim is taken to Singapore for the same reason. The constant removing of the victim, both physically and verbally from the reports is a clear indication of the community solidary versus her “alone” state of affairs. As is stated in the Texas rape case:

“It’s devastating, and it’s really tearing our community apart,” she said. “I really wish that this could end in a better light.” [The impact the crime has on the community seem larger than its impact on the victim, nationalizing the pain, making it within boundaries] [Italics my own]
5. Conclusion

From this research what I find is a reflection of various social realities which define the nations where the rape incidents take place. The reports on rape from non-Western nations provide a wider explanation of social and cultural foundations where the crime occurs. This brings into focus Fairclough’s statement where the language in discourse is “associated with a particular representation from a specific point of view of a social practice”. [Fairclough 1995: 41] In the case of India, Pakistan, Morocco and Brazil, the specific point of view is the patriarchy hindered within social norms, where there are high rates of violence against women and these women are voiceless against it. The cultural assumptions of “backwardness,” “patriarchy,” long suppression against women plays key role is setting the tone in the why rapes occur in non-Western nations by non-Western men. The findings of this research showed no social or cultural explanation when the rape reports were of American men involved in rape in non-Western communities [Japan and South Korea rape case]. The missing cultural explanations for those cases therefore removes any negative outlook in both the American men involved as well as the cultural and social realities of those nations. By not addressing any socio-cultural background, the reports immediately remove reality-construction of those communities based on either patriarchy or cultural conservatism towards women. In this case, the issue of rape is seen solely as a crime, like any other crime such as a robbery, without a wider social explanation behind it. This again minimizes the intensity of the crime, as was discussed in my previous chapter.

The process of “managing the reality” through ideology [Hall, Baker, Reese], where there are explanations behind rape [Mayer], in the case of American-based rape reports is done however through rape myths [Mayer, Brownmiller, Fowler]. I discuss this in details in my previous chapter on “Our women vs. theirs” but the reality constructed here is one that reflects the core American patriarchal value which is otherwise not directly stated by The New York Times. What I mean by this is that by looking deeper at the “social messages” hidden within the text, I find that the rape myths are prominent and therefore the hierarchy of patriarchal order is subtly maintained. A mirror of the statement “Over and over comes the message: men can’t help it, and even if they could, women deserve it anyway” [Peck, 1987: 103 in Meyers 1994: 51] [Meyers 1997: 24] is reflected in these rape reports. And so instead of addressing rape as any other crime [Fowler] the coverage ends up enhancing “women’s fears and leaves misleading impressions of
both the crime and how it might be dealt with” [Heath et al. 1981:132]. The messages that The New York Times report leave behind when addressing the alcoholic and promiscuous behavior of the victims’ then mirror the following statement I used in my literature review:

“if this woman who is not promiscuous, who was not dressed provocatively, who clearly did say ‘no’ and was with her boyfriend was sexually assaulted, what’s to prevent me from getting sexually assaulted too?” [Franiuk et al. 2008: 289]

The New York Times report is then normalizing the social context behind rape in America by providing those wider myths, ideologies and therefore social-realities in those communities under which a woman would or would not be attacked. In constructing realities through patriarchic lens in non-Western nations and through rape myths within America, however, the social and cultural roots behind rape are still under the same socio-cultural conditions – male supremacy. However, the rape reports based on American reports by The New York Times does not indicate this fact on the surface of the text. It takes a closer analytical study of the rape reports to uncover the rape myths that govern American communities. As Fairclough pointed out, there are “ideational functions behind every text” [Fairclough 1995: 7]. Within The New York Times reports, this revelation of male supremacy used in all rape incidents from all nationalities is therefore what makes rape a globally unified problem even though represented under different contexts.

I had previously mentioned that in the “processes of ideological and ‘reality’ construction in the media,” [Li 2009: 91] “there is no neutral representation of reality,” [Fowler 1897: 67 in Ekitis et al 562] and as Wodak points out, “the construction of identity is a process of differentiation, a description of one’s own group and simultaneously a separation from the “others”” [Wodak 1995: 126]. Under this light, I find that instead of The New York Times looking at rape as a wider global problem, it nationalizes it in how American offenders/rapists are positioned within a rape report versus non-western offenders. A further examination on how American rape victims are also positioned within a rape report versus non-western rape victims also showed this
differentiation bounded by nationalities as well. Therefore the research question based on “stereotyping” and “ideologies” involved in setting that nation-foreign binary is highlighted.

The results showed an inhuman representation of rapists and the culture they come from through the descriptions of their behavior. This is what set apart rapists in America from those in non-Western nations. My results showed a more sympathetic and humane concern over some of the American rapists where The New York Times sided with them. This distinction based on nation-foreign binary emphasis a great sense of stereotyping of men in non-Western communities who, based on the brutality of their crime, are represented as inhuman. As Smith argues that while formulating the idea of nationalism much of the identity is rooted in the “sameness” of each culture. In doing so, language and culture in other countries is represented differently to ours. In the case of this research the shared-experience by women in non-Western communities, stood at stark contrast to where American-based rape reports isolated each rape incident on its own within American states. Thereby in not portraying rape as a shared-experience by American women, the “sameness” of non-Western communities, who are part of highly risked rape zones, sets a nation-bound problem. The message being that rape is a high concern in their communities versus ours. This I reflect in my previous chapter under the theme “Our women versus theirs.”

Smith also states that nationalism is an “ideological movement for attaining and maintaining ‘unity an identity’”. [Smith 2010: 9] If violence between its members forgoes that collective moral, using national frames and sentiments, can support regain trust in that unity. If I apply the same equation in light of rape incidents, in the flagging of American everyday reality through celebrating the football players, despite their crime, through being apologetic on behalf of American soldiers, despite their crimes and through showing concerns of rapists’ future, despite their brutal behavior, the invisible string of unity is represented strongly through such community emotions. As Smith identified, nationalism comes at an emotional and subconscious level. It is in the fear of breaking up that solidarity – these reports – by quoting members of the community, indicate the sense of nationalism or solidarity that plays a bigger role than the rape incidents. Through the siding of these American rapists there is a supportive invisible string of unity with them. Billig states that “Daily the nation is indicated, or ‘flagged’, in the lives of its citizenry” through news reports [Billig 1995: 6]. This is a reminder to the audience to grasp
harder onto their sense of belonging and unity. “‘[W]e are constantly reminded that ‘we’ live in
nations: ‘our’ identity is continually being flagged [93]. It is in this invisible unity of nation-ness
and community support that The New York Times addresses the communities need and sense of
being one unit.

In all rape cases, however, I found that in isolating and removing rape victims either vocally
[fewer quotes from victims in news reports] or physically [detached from society or dead] there
is further subconscious unity between the people. By displacing the “problem” in the society, the
rape victim, there is a further silencing of the rape issue and thereby normalizing the solidarity of
the community. This I discuss under the Victim-Society Divide within the previous chapter. In
sharing the solidarity with the rapist and in isolating the victim from that solidarity, there is then
the establishment of what they “share” with others – unity – and what they do not share with
others – violence against women which only arise when voiced by the victims.

Michael Billig explains that newspapers play a critical role in reproducing “nation-ness” in an
invisible manner through reviewing the daily routines. He adds that in narrating the everyday
life, the image of banal nationalism revives a strong sense of nationhood. This element has been
found in the rape reports of India, Brazil and Morocco. In the high rape statistics to reflect the
lives of the women and their shared-reality, there is a sense of the common understanding of
violence against women and the daily harassment faced by them. Therefore, the sentimental
emotions and outrage in those communities are expressed with more aggression by the activists
there. The activists taking to the streets in India, Morocco and Brazil show that strength of unity
and nationhood as they address the matter of rape together. Using words such as ‘people’ and
‘society’ establish what Billig claims as the “physical presence of the community” that glues the
imaginary string of togetherness, “in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”
[Billig].

While looking at the rape reports, the recurring theme of “people” and “society” is mainly seen
within the India, Morocco and Brazil and Japan rape cases as the people come together in their
fight against violence against women. This level of solidarity, however, is not seen through any
activism within the American-based rape reports. The latter is unified in its concern over the
“divide” the rape has created [Texas and Ohio rape case]. This contrast still reflects the state of “attachment” the individuals feel within their community where the concern in “breaking” apart that solidarity [Ohio, Texas and Florida rape cases] shows an underlying emotional and subconscious attachment people feel of unity [Smith 2010].

It is in this unity and differences that I have found the various elements of community solidarity and elements of nationalism that answers the research questions of this paper. It is in the stereotyping of men and women living in non-Western communities that I find how *The New York Times* differentiates American culture and the cultures foreign to them ideologically. And finally, it is in the rape myths that *The New York Times* is able to maintain commonsense of the reasons behind rape within America. In contrast the reports identify the conservative ideological and cultural outlook that where *The New York Times* stereotypes and makes sense of rape in non-Western nations. Through these contrasts *The New York Times* is able to set apart the nations and the cultures of various communities when reporting on rape incidents in those settings.
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