Perceptions & Stereotypes of Female Sex Offenders

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### Background

- In 2018, the NCVS estimates there were 734,640 incidents of sexual assault in the U.S. but only 24.9% of those were reported to police.

- Official statistics indicate that most sex offenders are male, but these statistics include only offenses reported to the officials.

- Research indicates that sexual offenses committed by females do occur though they are rarely reported to authorities because of gender stereotypes and other factors.

### Research Question

How do gender stereotypes impact attitudes towards sexual violence?

### Framework

**Sexual Offense:** includes a variety of forms of illegal sexual contact  
**Sexual Offender:** a person who perpetrates a sexual offense  
**Gender Stereotypes:** social perceptions about the expected behavior of males and females

**“The Medicalization of Female Deviance”**

- Female offenders as “mentally ill” or “mad”  
- Label male offenders as “rational”

### Methodology

- Project will take place at Boise State University  
- Surveys will be distributed with questions assessing the perceptions and attitudes of students on gender stereotypes, sexual offenses, female sex offenders  
- Participation will be voluntary and anonymous  
- Survey data will be coded to analyze this study’s research question and hypotheses

### Potential Outcomes

Determine how gender stereotypes impact attitudes about sexual violence among university students.  
Examine perceptions about female sex offenders and how gender stereotypes impact those opinions.

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