

## McGregor faculty proposals #105

<b>Faculty Name</b>	Venema, Rachel
<b>Dept.</b>	Social Work
<b>Project Title</b>	Reporting to the Police: Analyzing Sexual Assault Case Data
<b>Project Abstract</b>	<p>A large body of research discusses the challenges within law enforcement response to sexual assault. Of the sexual assaults that are reported to the police, the vast majority do not result in prosecution (Alderden &amp; Ullman, 2012; Campbell et al., 2014; FBI, 2006; Frazier &amp; Haney, 1996; Martin &amp; Powell). According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 2006), only 39% of reported forcible rapes were categorized as cleared by arrest or by exceptional means. Although another study found an increase in cases referred by police to the prosecutor's office due to a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program, the rates of non-referral remained high (86% on average) (Campbell et al., 2014). Even when sexual assault cases are referred, Alderden and Ullman's (2012) study found that only 9.7% of cases resulted in charges. Frazier and Haney (1996) found that even suspect identification happens in less than half of sexual assault cases.</p> <p>The proposed project aims to better understand the factors that influence sexual assault case progression within the criminal justice system through analysis of a large dataset from police files. Data from police records has been extracted for cases involving sexual assault that occurred between 1999 and 2012 in one large municipal police department. This includes four categories of data from redacted case files: (a) victim characteristics, (b) suspect characteristics, (c) case-specific characteristics, and (d) investigation characteristics. Victim and suspect characteristics include variables such as the race, sex, age, arrest history, and alcohol and/or drug use prior to the incident. Case-specific characteristics include the victim-suspect relationship, weapon presence and type, victim injury, reporting delays, location of incident, witness presence and type, and the presence of physical and forensic evidence.</p> <p>Although it is anticipated that research related to the police records will take up the majority of the McGregor fellow's time, the student may have the opportunity to analyze additional data collected through investigator and victim-survivor surveys. The case file analysis is part of a larger study that aims to explore sexual assault case progression with data collected from investigator surveys and victim-survivor surveys.</p>
<b>Project Outcome</b>	<p>Detail oriented; committed to recording data cleaning and analysis activities Interest in sociology, social work, or criminal justice</p> <p><b>Project Outcome and Benefit</b> The work of the McGregor fellow is part of a larger project that I will focus on during my sabbatical in the fall of 2018. The data extraction from CPD resulted in an Excel file that needs extensive data cleaning in order to prepare it for data analysis. The work of the fellow will clarify research questions, set up a plan for data analysis, and begin the work of developing findings from the police records data. The fellow will help to develop a short-term and long-term data analysis plan and conduct quantitative data analysis. Additionally, the fellow will with faculty mentor to prepare at least one manuscript for publication in a peer-reviewed journal and a conference proposal for submission at the American Society of Criminology meeting or related conference.</p>