



# Switching the Code: The complicity of female Twitter users in the preservation of rape culture

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# Background

## Research Question:

- How do registered Twitter users construct rape culture as a normalized discourse?

What primary age group is perpetuating normalized ideas about rape?

Do disparities between one's race/ethnicity correlate with frequency in participating in rape discourse?

# Theory

- Discourse Analysis

*Feminist Postculturalism and Discourse Analysis* (N. Gavey, 1989)

*Power as Knowledge* (M. Foucault, 1976)

# Literature Review

- The Link Between Sexuality & Violence
  - Herman (1984)
  - Kimmel (2013)
  - Hardit (2012)
- Media's Influence on Youth
  - Anderson, et al. (2003)
  - Jones (1999)
  - Flood and Pease (2009)
- Social Media's Presence in Today's Society
  - Opper (2013)
  - Carlson (2011)
  - Pavlik (2013)

# Methodology

- Data collected here includes information contained on the user profile page combined with the messages of tweets
- Data was collected on 27 October 2014 and continuously updated for the following two weeks from 10pm-12am EST.
- 4 phrases were searched (*Raped Me, Asking for it, You can't rape the Willing, No means yes*)
- 150 tweets were collected per phrase, resulting in a total sample of 600 tweets

# Findings

The data from this study shows that overall, women are equally as likely to engage in rape discourse as men

# Gender and Race

Twitter Phrase		White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Middle Eastern	TOTAL
you can't rape the willing	Female	56	14	7	1	1	79 (13%)
	Male	42	19	10	0	0	71 (12%)
no means yes	Female	35	10	5	1	2	53 (9%)
	Male	66	14	13	3	1	97 (16%)
asking for it	Female	43	21	2	1	0	67 (11%)
	Male	44	23	12	3	1	83 (14%)
raped me	Female	60	17	3	3	0	83 (14%)
	Male	47	12	4	2	2	67 (11%)
TOTAL		393 (66%)	130 (22%)	56 (9%)	14 (2%)	7 (1%)	600 (100%)

*When my girls get drunk they turn  
into horny freaks...But you can't rape  
the willing*

Female, White, 18 years-old

*You can't rape the willing..If he blows  
some smoke, I'm sure she'll be ready  
to go!*

Female, White, 18

*I'm hearing you can't rape the willing.  
I'm gonna need more chloroform to  
make this legal*

Male, White, Mid 20s

# Gender and Age

Twitter Phrase		18-24	25-29	Below 18	30-34	35 and above	TOTAL
you can't rape the willing	Female	51	19	7	1	1	79 (13%)
	Male	38	22	2	5	4	71 (12%)
no means yes	Female	41	4	8	0	0	53 (9%)
	Male	70	14	12	1	0	97 (16%)
asking for it	Female	48	4	15	0	0	67 (11%)
	Male	48	20	12	1	2	83 (14%)
raped me	Female	58	5	20	0	0	83 (14%)
	Male	44	9	14	0	0	67 (11%)
TOTAL		398 (66%)	97 (16%)	90 (15%)	8 (2%)	7 (1%)	600 (100%)

*I'm reporting that exam to campus  
police for sexual assault because it  
raped me*

**Female, White, 18**

*Imagine this, the exam I just took  
was a large black angry man who  
just brutally raped me*

**Female, White, 18**

*I found a new sushi spot. Just raped  
me out of \$30*

**Female, Black, Mid 20s**

# Gender and Geographic Region

Twitter Phrase		South	West	Northeast	Midwest	N/A*	TOTAL
you can't rape the willing	Female	13	17	8	6	36	80 (13%)
	Male	21	13	9	7	20	70 (12%)
no means yes	Female	9	3	6	4	31	53 (9%)
	Male	22	13	11	10	41	97 (16%)
asking for it	Female	15	2	8	7	35	67 (11%)
	Male	18	10	10	16	29	83 (14%)
raped me	Female	14	3	9	12	45	83 (14%)
	Male	9	10	13	10	25	67 (11%)
TOTAL		121 (20%)	71 (12%)	74 (12%)	72 (12%)	262 (44%)	600 (100%)

\*N/A refers to Twitter users who were from the U.S., but did not specify which state

*No means yes, and yes means anal*

Male, Hispanic, 18

*Half the time a girl's 'no' means 'yes'*

Male, White, Early 20s

*Let me get off here. these hoes really  
asking for it and they gonna get just  
what they asking for*

Female, Black, Early 20s

# Discussion

1. Not legitimizing rape due to socialization process enforced by the media
  - Blaming the victim
2. Fear of being disliked by male peers
3. Code Switch
  - Mechanism of protection