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## Police Treatment of Women

- ❖ Public servants such as police officers have long been seen as helpful individuals in a time of need
- ❖ However, recent studies have indicated that police attitudes toward women can be biased in sexual assault cases (Greeson et al., 2016)
- ❖ Situational factors such as the type of dress worn and the time of night has been found to illicit disbelief and other negative responses toward victims (Best et al., 2016)

## MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE U.S.

- ❖ A second population that often faces prejudice in the U.S. are Muslim Americans (Pena, 2007)
- ❖ After the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, Muslim women reported that they faced increased prejudice from the public (Hallak et al., 2004)
- ❖ Muslim women reported feeling increased prejudice when wearing the hijab (Halak et al., 2004)
- ❖ Research showed when women wore religious garments such as the hijab and were also part of the outgroup, they received less help and friendliness from the public (Rozycka-Tran et al., 2017)
- ❖ Muslim women have also received reserved treatment from police officers when reporting abuse (Amar, 2013)
- ❖ Similarities were noted between battered Muslim women and non-Muslim women in their interactions with the police (Amar, 2013)

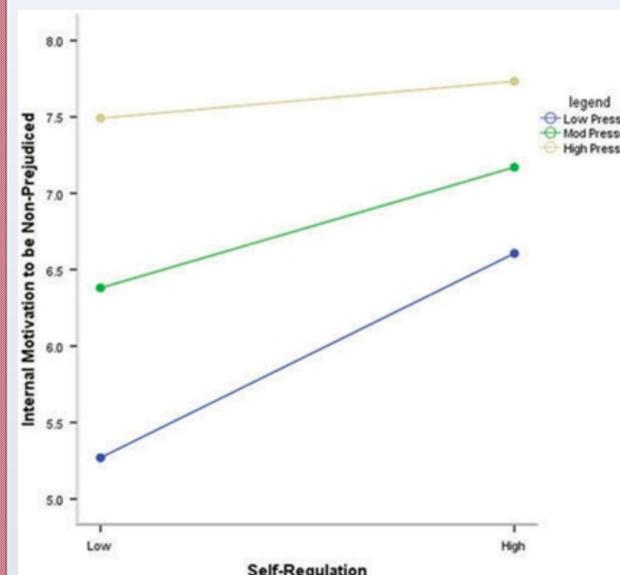
## REALITY OF POLICE TREATMENT

- ❖ The reported cause for non-Muslim women to receive negative remarks and attitudes from police in sexual assault cases has been the women's dress and outward appearance
- ❖ Police officers would blame the victims for enticing their offenders
- ❖ However, an outward increase in religiosity such as wearing the hijab has been shown to reduce perceptions of attractiveness (Swank, 2016)
- ❖ Police officers should not have, in theory, treated the Muslim women differently if they did not believe the women were attractive and being provocative
- ❖ This suggests that Muslim women may be treated negatively by police officers due to both gender and religion bias

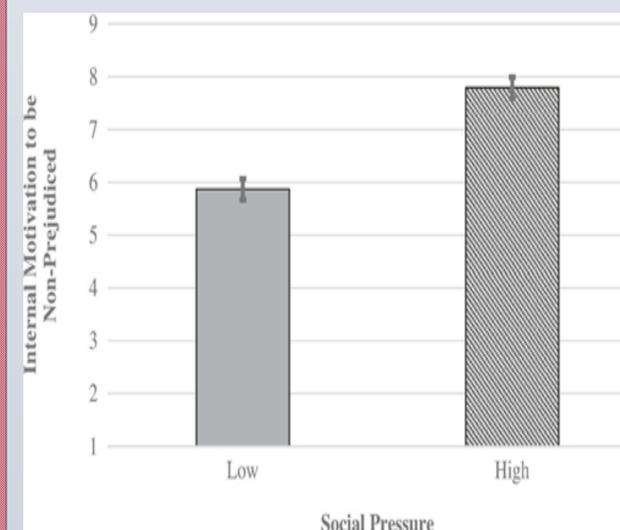
## FORENSIC IMPLICATIONS

- ❖ Unequal treatment from police officers toward Muslim women can have a huge impact across the forensic community
- ❖ This is because police officers often provide the first contact people have with the legal justice system
- ❖ Continued bias from the police could ultimately lead to mistrust and allegations of unprofessionalism

## RELEVANT RESEARCH



(Buzinski & Kitchens, 2017)



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## MOVING FORWARD

- ❖ A study conducted by Buzinski & Kitchens (2017) indicated being conscious of one's prejudicial behavior can aid in preventing discriminatory actions
- ❖ An educational platform that can show how to be conscious and prevent prejudicial behaviors may tremendously improve the legal justice system
- ❖ Such a model should be implemented within law enforcement agencies
- ❖ Mistrust and allegations of unprofessionalism toward police could be minimized
- ❖ Further research should be conducted to perfect the teaching model

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