Can Adverse Selection Cause Social Punishment for Rape Victims?

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This paper sets up a game-theoretic model to analyze crime that is hard to prove/disprove. We specifically have crimes against women in mind where it is often very hard to prove the occurrence of the crime and thus false reporting becomes pertinent. We model this setting as an extensive-form game of incomplete and imperfect information. We analyze how, in a Perfect Bayesian equilibrium, the proportion of false reporting is determined, and how this impacts the incentives for true complaints, the social punishment of true victims, and the incidence of crime.

We set up a model with two groups, Men and Women, and two periods. In the first period, men and women are randomly matched for legitimate economic reasons and such meetings are beneficial for both sides. Men have the option of turning a legitimate meeting into a criminal meeting, where the man gets value depending on his criminal type while the woman suffers a loss. The man's choice of criminal/legitimate activity is publicly unobservable. At the end of the meeting, the woman can choose to _le/not-_le a public complaint which may be false. The complaint is public, i.e., the identities of the complainant and accused are known to everyone.[2] In case of a complaint, we assume that a social planner has no other means of judging the veracity of the complaint and decides to punish the man (compensate the woman) according to an exogenous probability p, which is common knowledge.[3] In one section, we assume that the social planner is correctly able to estimate this probability based on equilibrium play by all members. If a complaint is decided to be true, a _ne F is imposed on the accused and transferred to the complainant. Hence, a woman making a false complaint can lead to a loss for the man.