



**GHENT  
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# SEXUAL OFFENDING VICTIMIZATION: AN (INTER)NATIONAL OVERVIEW

8 march 2018 – Joke Depraetere & Christophe Vandeviver

# METHODS: SR + CIS

4 scholarly databases: Google Scholar, PubMed, Web of Science, and psychINFO

## Systematic review

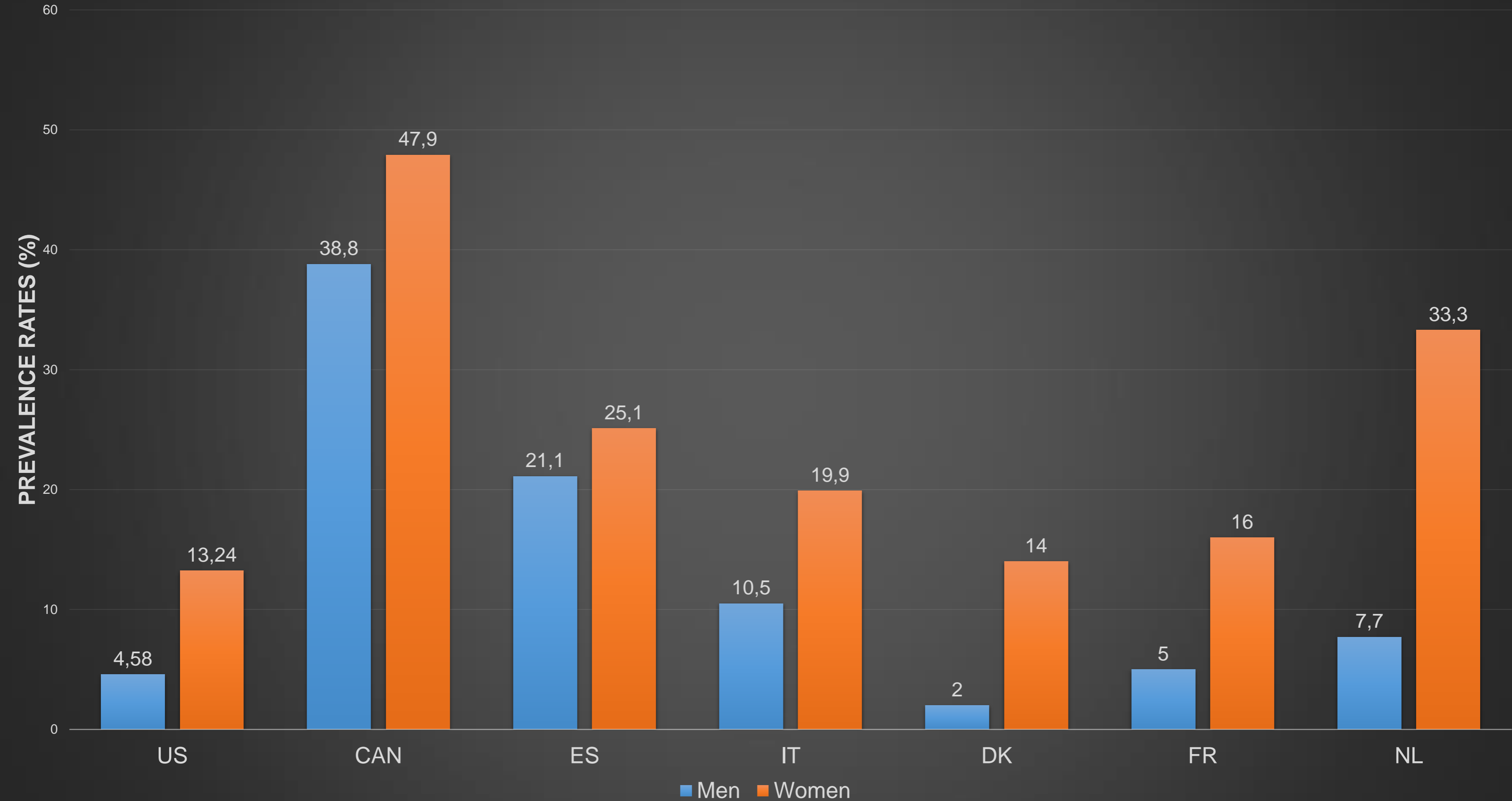
- Inclusion criteria (8)
- N = 33 articles

## Critical Interpretive Synthesis (CIS)

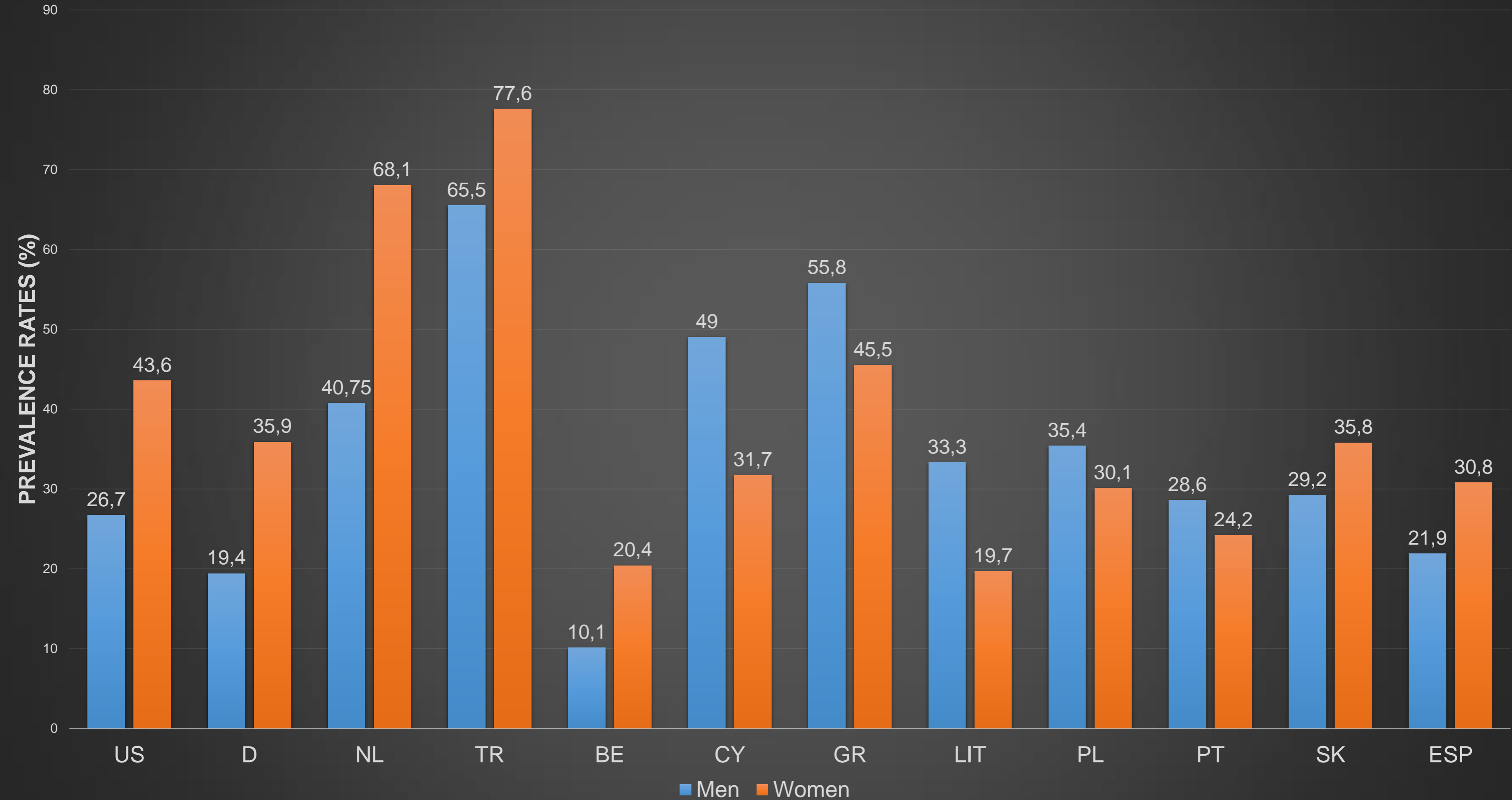
- Theoretical saturation
- N = 38 academic & grey literature sources

Combined: insights in the gender-gap of sexual violence victimization

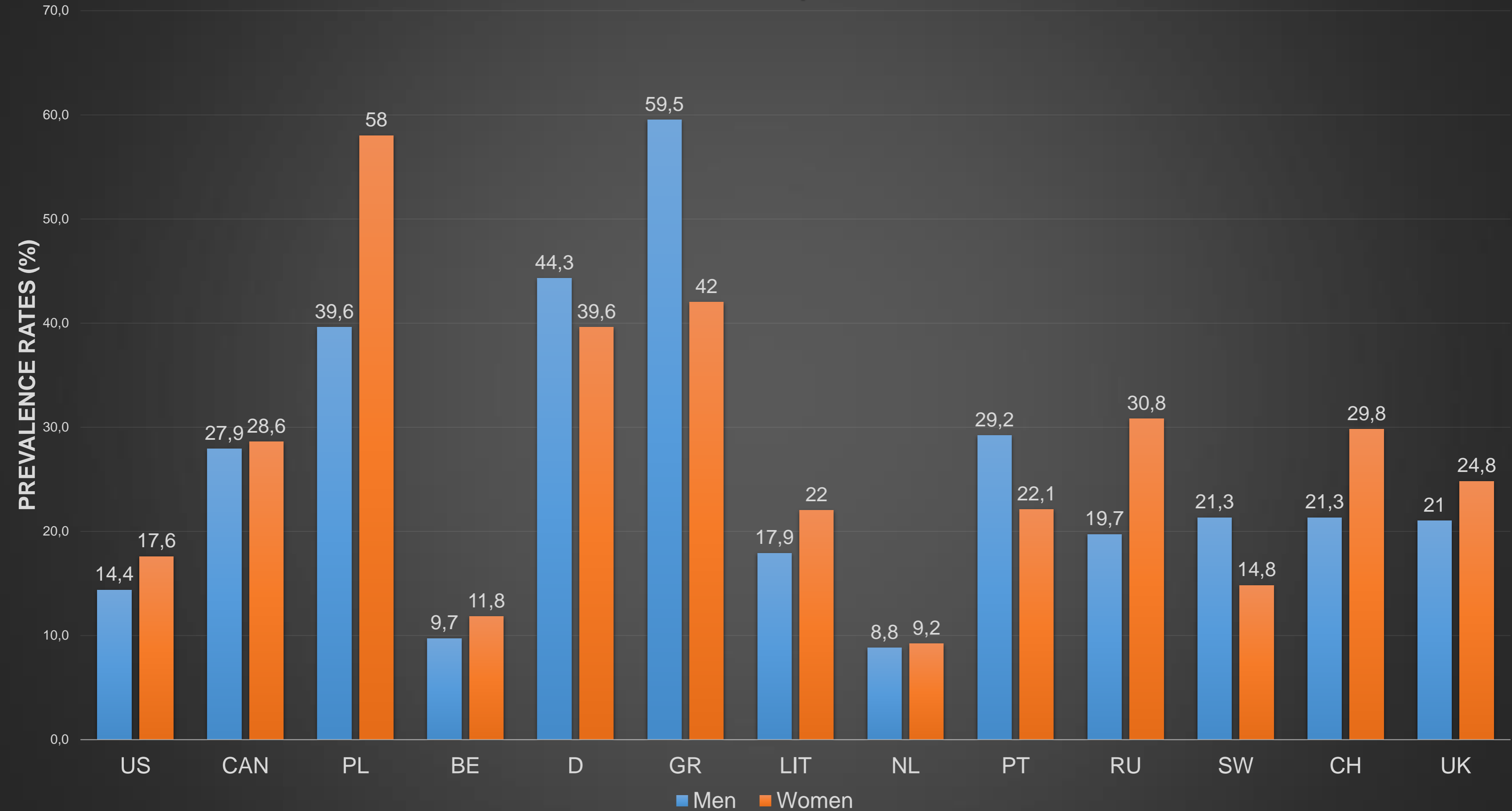
# Life time prevalence SV



# Prevalence SV since age of consent



# Prevalence SV in past 12 months or less



# HIGH(ER) RATES FOR MALE VICTIMS

Do overall low(er) rates of male SV victimization represent reality?

OR

Is **gender-gap** enhanced by

1. Inconsistencies in studying SV
2. Current societal perspectives of male and female gender roles and perceptions of SV?

# 1) INCONSISTENCIES IN RESEARCH APPROACHES

Studies including **high(er) rates** of male victimization included:

- Behaviourally specific questions
- Verbal pressure as coercion type
- Taking advantage of the incapacitated state of the victim



## 2) SOCIETAL PERSPECTIVES & SV PERCEPTIONS



### **Women**

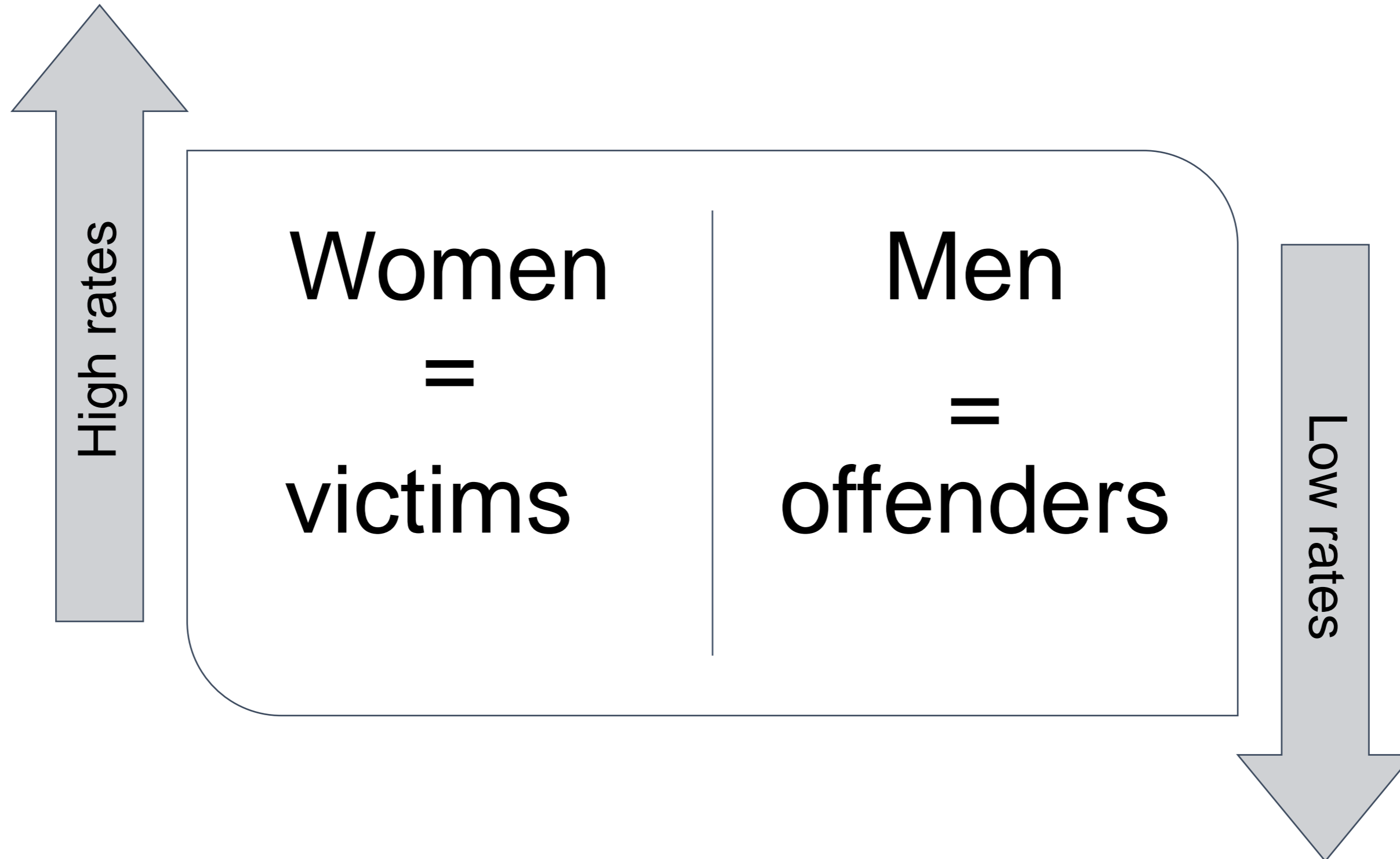
- Sexually passive
- Unexperienced
- *'gatekeepers of intimacy'*

### **Men**

- Strong
- Dominant
- Sexual opportunist
- Sexually active, experienced
- Seduce women



# STEREOTYPICAL RAPE SCRIPTS



# COMMON PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

## **Female rape myths**

- *“The victim is lying, deserved the sexual assault or asked for it because of how she was acting or what the victim was wearing”*

## **Male rape myths**

- *“Real men can defend themselves”,*
- *“Men cannot be forced to have sex against their will”,*
- *“Men are less affected by sexual assault than women”, ...*

# CONCLUSIONS

Current perspectives in society shape the way we look at sexual violence and its victims

- Excluding male victims

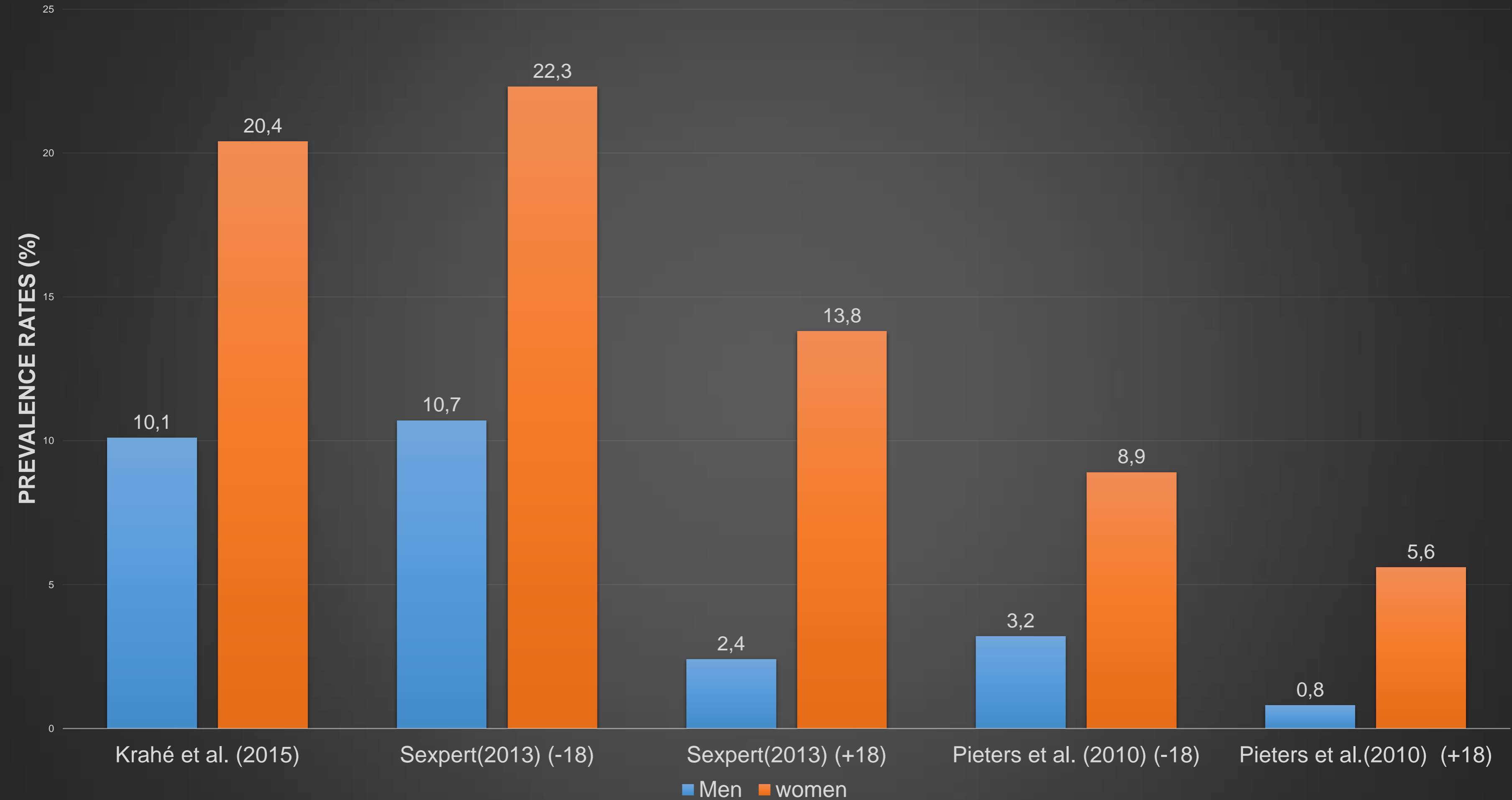
Influences the way victims look at their own SV experiences

- leading to lower rates of male victims of SV

Along with inconsistencies in studying the prevalence of SV this influences reporting of male SV victimization and its consequences

# A NATIONAL POINT OF VIEW: SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN BELGIUM

# National prevalence rates



# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDIES

## Methods

- Self-report online/telephone/PAPI, face-to-face interviews
- Voluntary sampling design or random sample

## Definition

- Narrow or broad
- BSQ or non-BSQ

## Assessment period

- Since age of consent or life time

## Scope of study

- Focus on sexual interactions / sexual health / psychological, physical and sexual violence

# CONCLUSION

- Variability in national studies
- Overall lack of nationally representative studies
  - Specifically for male sexual violence
    - 8 representative community samples worldwide
    - From which three at national level (Basile et al., 2007; Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000; Elliott et al., 2004)
- Representative research is needed on a national level taking variability into account



# UN-MENAMAIS: UNDERSTANDING MECHANISMS, NATURE, MAGNITUDE AND IMPACT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN BELGIUM

# GENERAL AIM OF UN-MENAMAIS

**UN**derstanding the **ME**chanisms, **NA**ture, **MA**gnitude and **I**mpact of **S**exual violence on female, male and transgender victims, their peers, offspring, professionals and society in Belgium

# HIGHLIGHTED CORE OBJECTIVES

- To map how Belgian **citizens and migrant residents in Belgium** aged 16 -100 years, with different sexual orientations, frame sexual violence. (what they consider SV, causal mechanisms, acceptance of rape myths)
- To explore to what extent the Belgian population has been **(in)directly** exposed to sexual **victimisation and perpetration since childhood**. Intergenerational transmission included
- Establish indicatory pathways of how this exposure **impacted the victims' lives**, as well as that of their **family and peers and professionals** they contacted for assistance

# UN-MENAMAIS METHODOLOGY

Mixed-methods methodology:

1) National representative victimization & perpetration self-report study

- Online questionnaire + face-to-face interviews for hard-to-reach population
- N = 10,000 + N = 1,200
- 4 different age groups (16-24; 25-49; 50-69; 70-100)

2) Qualitative study

- 110 follow-up victim interviews across age groups, sexual orientations and trans/intersex

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