

# **Serial rape in France: Blueprint of the victims**

Margot Avella, PhD student, Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom

Research directed by Dr Jackie de Wet and Dr Tom Cockcroft

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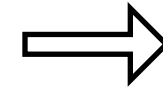
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- Theoretical background
- Methodology
- Presentation of corpus & data
- Victims demographics
- Initial findings
- Limitations of the research
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# Introduction

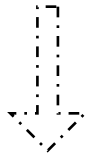
Simple statement



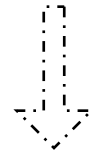
Research question



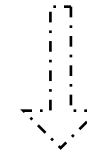
Objective



No prior research of  
behavioural analysis of  
serial rapists in France



Exploratory research to  
uncover the central  
behavioural features



First empirical base of  
serial rape offenders  
in France

# Introduction

- Legal context

In France, **rape** is understood as “Any act of sexual penetration, whatever its nature, committed against another person by violence, constraint, threat or surprise, is rape.” (article 222-23 of the Penal Code).

- **Serial rape** appeared in the French Penal Code in August 2018, as an aggravating circumstance of rape.

# Theoretical background

Theories of serial rape & linkage analysis

# Definition of key concepts

## ➤ Serial rapist

Someone who has engaged in sexual assault in at least two separate incidents with two or more different victims (Graney & Arrigo, 2002)

## ➤ Modus operandi

The MO is dynamic and malleable and evolves as the offender gains both experience and confidence in their pattern of criminal offending (Douglas & Munn, 1992)

## ➤ Ritual

The symbolic aspect (as opposed to the MO who is the practical aspect), important to express the primary motivation (Hazelwood & Warren, 2003)

## ➤ Signature

The calling card of the offender (Douglas & Munn, 1992)

## ➤ Linkage analysis

Linkage analysis integrates information from 3 distinct elements: MO, ritual and signature in order to identify if it's perpetrated by a single offender (Hazelwood & Warren, 2004)

# Theoretical framework

Cohen and Al.  
**Aggressive, sexual and sadistic**

1971

1977

Groth, Burgess and Holmstrom.  
**Anger, Power, Sexuality**

— Profiles



# Theoretical framework

Cohen et al. 1971

Aggressive → *to humiliate*

Sadistic → *pleasure from pain*

Sexual → *to service their sexual wishes*



# Theoretical framework

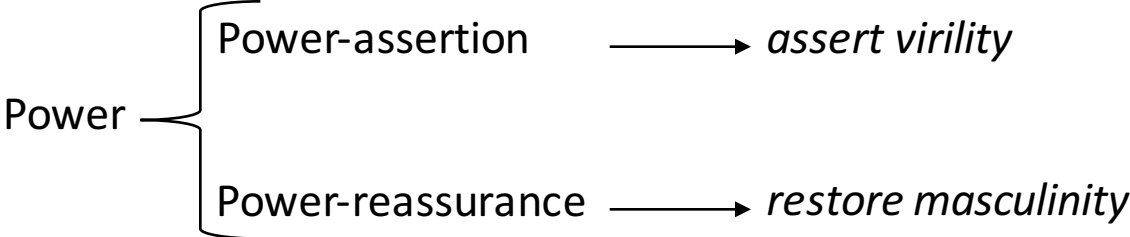
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Power-assertion → *assert virility*  
Power-reassurance → *restore masculinity*

Anger {  
Anger-retaliation → *express hostility*  
Anger-excitation → *excitation from suffering*

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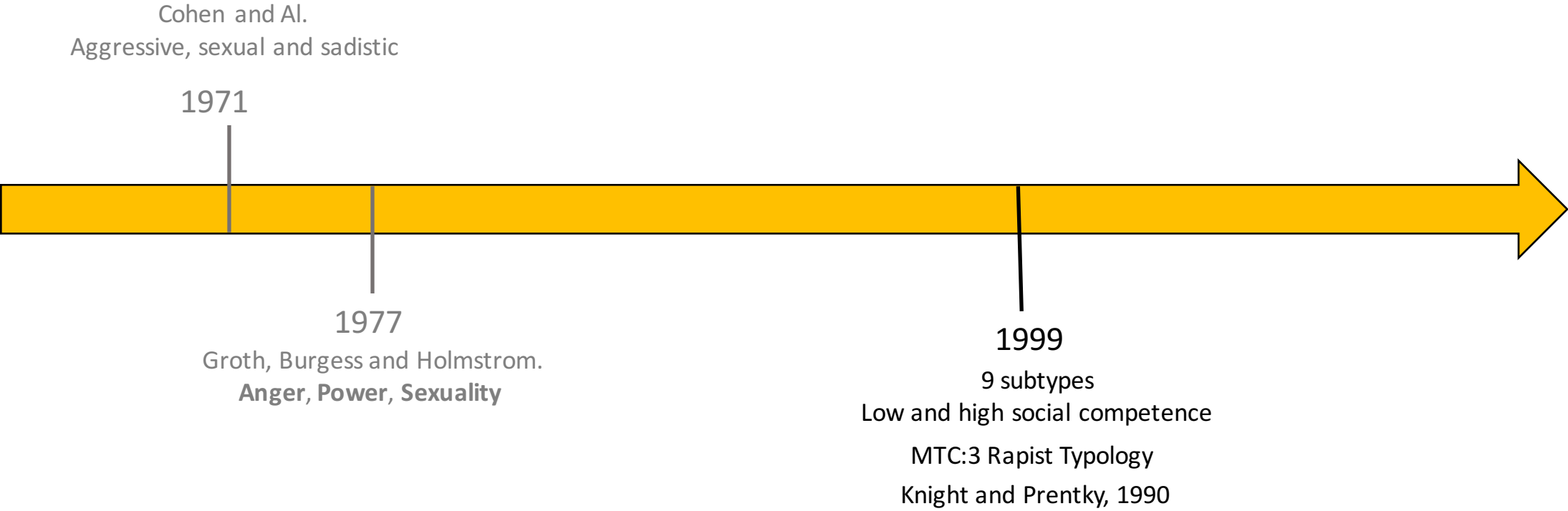
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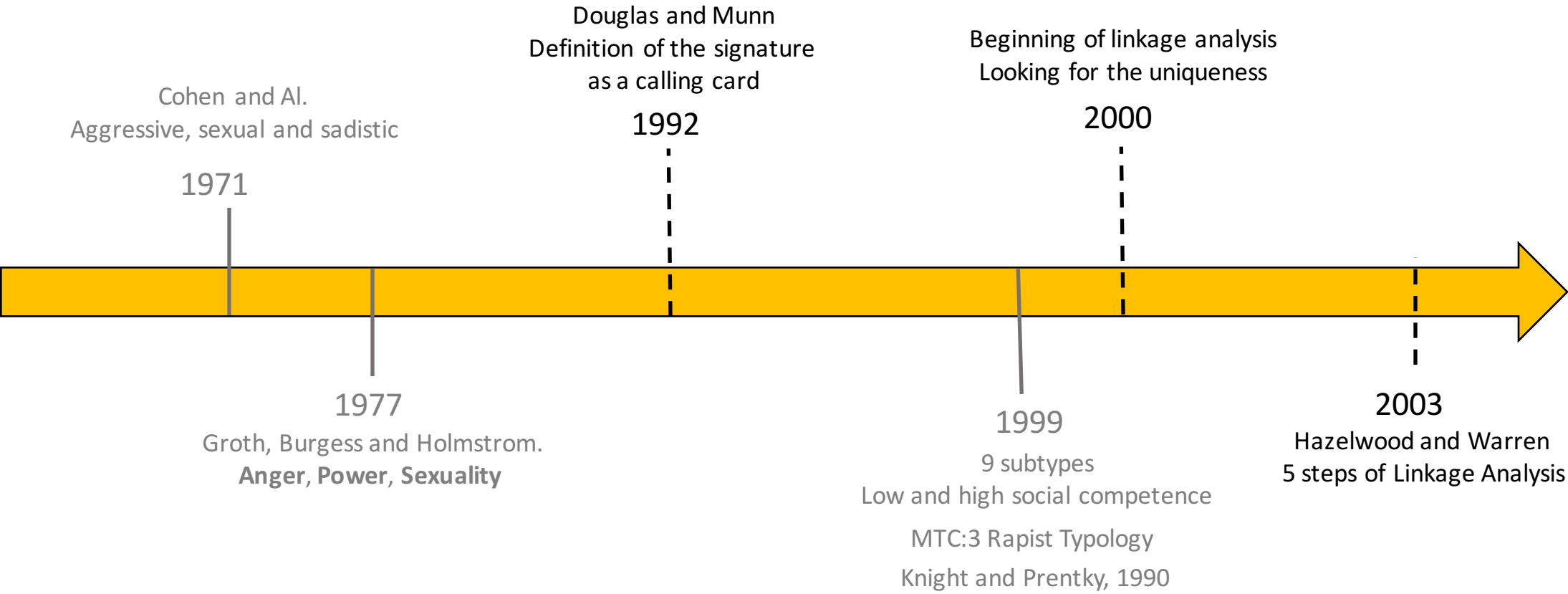
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# Theoretical framework



--- Linkage analysis  
— Profiles

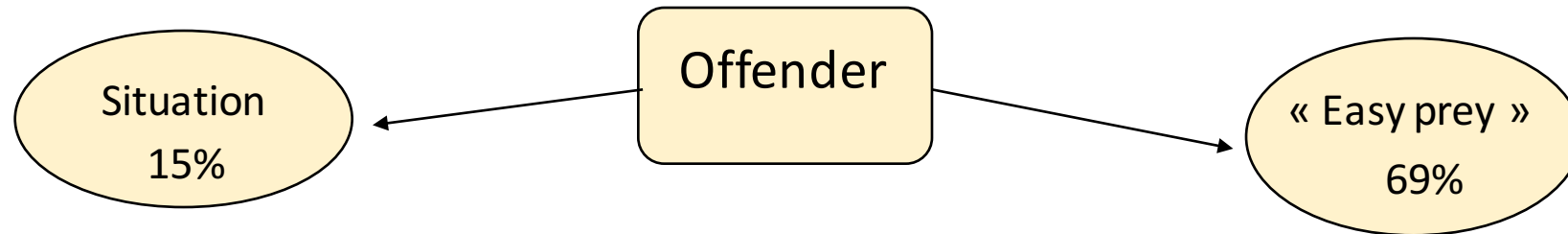
# Linkage analysis

5 steps process of linkage analysis (Hazelwood & Warren, 2003):

1. Gathering details
2. Identifying the significant features of a crime
3. Classify them into section (MO, ritual, signature)
4. Comparison of these elements across the series
5. Written analysis

# Selection technique of the victims

« Females whom the offenders perceived as being vulnerable »  
Stevens, 2000, p56



11% random victims, 5% unsure of their selection techniques (Stevens, 2000).

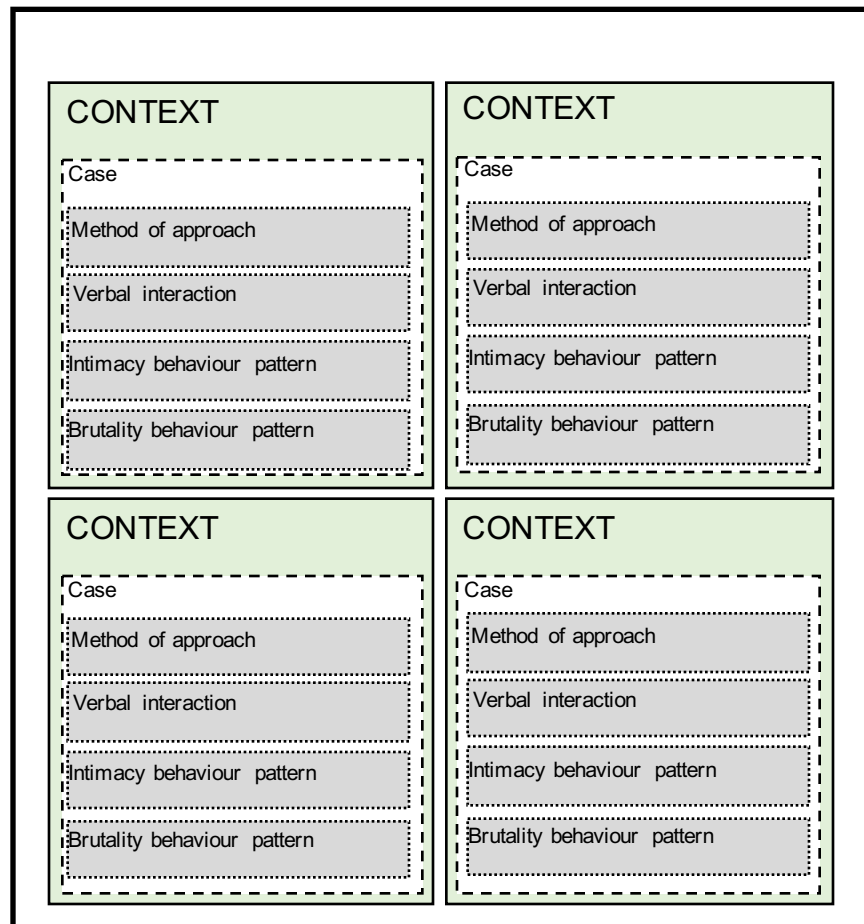
The study had a total of 61 offenders.

# Methodology



# The methodology

Multiple Embedded Case Study  
(Robert Yin, 2003)



Corpus analysis

- Data driven thematic analysis
- At a later stage: multidimensional scale analysis

# Corpus & Data

# Corpus & Data collection

- All offenders have been judged guilty within French law
- The case files are made of diverse documents such as
  - Victim and offender depositions
  - Pictures of victim and crime scene
  - Medical expertise
  - Documents used in court etc.
- All documents were consulted under supervision and it was not possible to make any reproductions

# First results

- The victim's demographics
- Information on what they were doing at the time of the offense
- When it happened during the day
- If they were alone

# First results – blueprint of victims

Offenders	Youngest victim	Oldest victim	Average age of victims	Nb victims	Gender of victims	Nb rapes	Nb SA	Nb attempt	Nb indecent exposure	Nb murder	Known by offender
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<b>Total</b>				<b>166</b>		<b>68</b>					

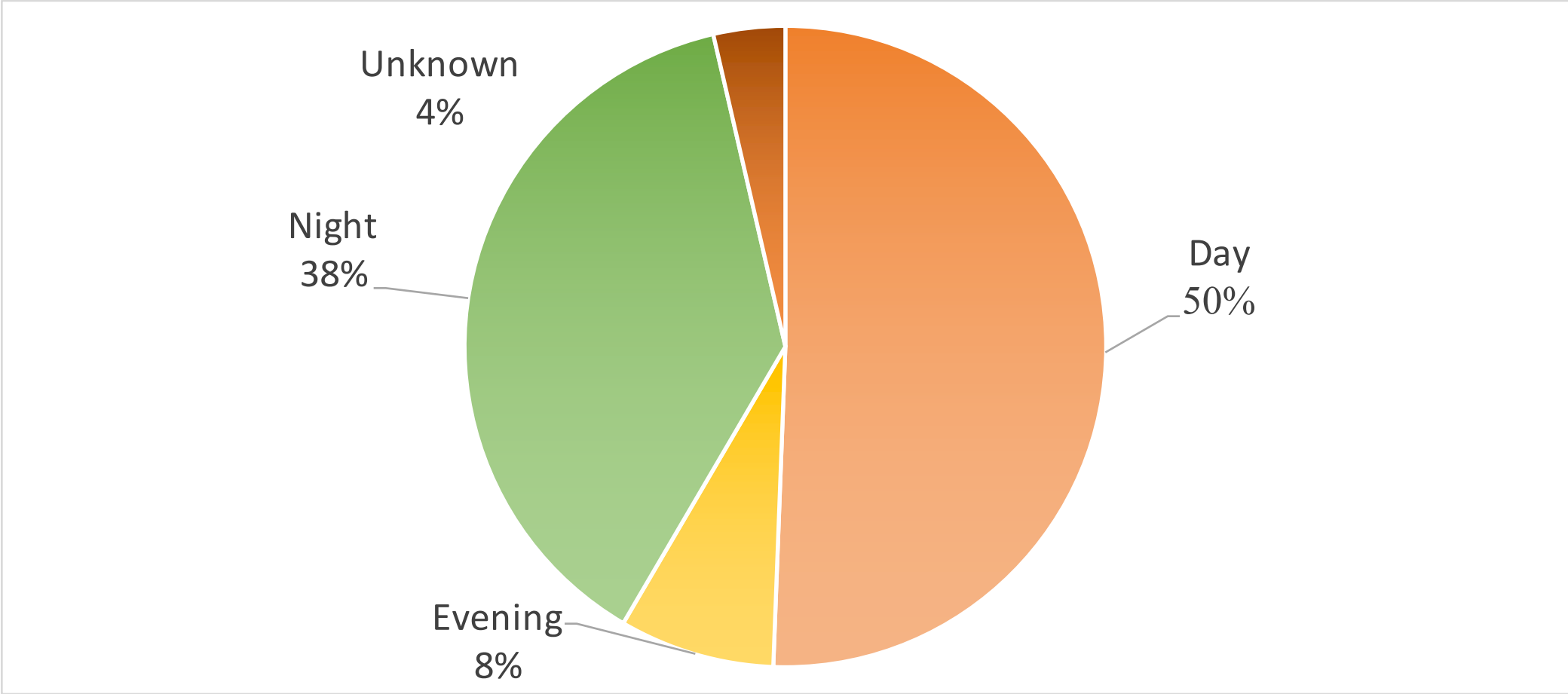
# First results – blueprint of victims

Offenders	Youngest victim	Oldest victim	Average age of victims	Nb victims	Gender of victims	Nb rapes	Nb SA	Nb attempt	Nb indecent exposure	Nb murder	Known by offender
E	19	57	29,6	12	Women	9	2	2	0	0	No
F	9	38	23,5	11	Women	9	2	0	0	1 attempt	Both
G	10	65	22	26	Women	8	3	15	0	0	No
H	18	78	37,3	41	Women	14	8	19	0	0	No
K	11	23	15,6	9	Women	6	1	1	1	0	No
L	4	10	7,2	6	Both	6	0	0	0	3	No
M	6	9	6,3	40	Both	3	31	6	0	0	Yes
<b>N</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>35,8</b>	<b>7</b>	Women	4	2	1	0	<b>2</b>	No
O	14	44	27,7	13	Women	9	1	1	3	0	No
<b>Average</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>35,4</b>	<b>22,8</b>	<b>18,4</b>		<b>7,6</b>				<b>2/9</b>	<b>2/9</b>
<b>Total</b>				<b>166</b>		<b>68</b>					

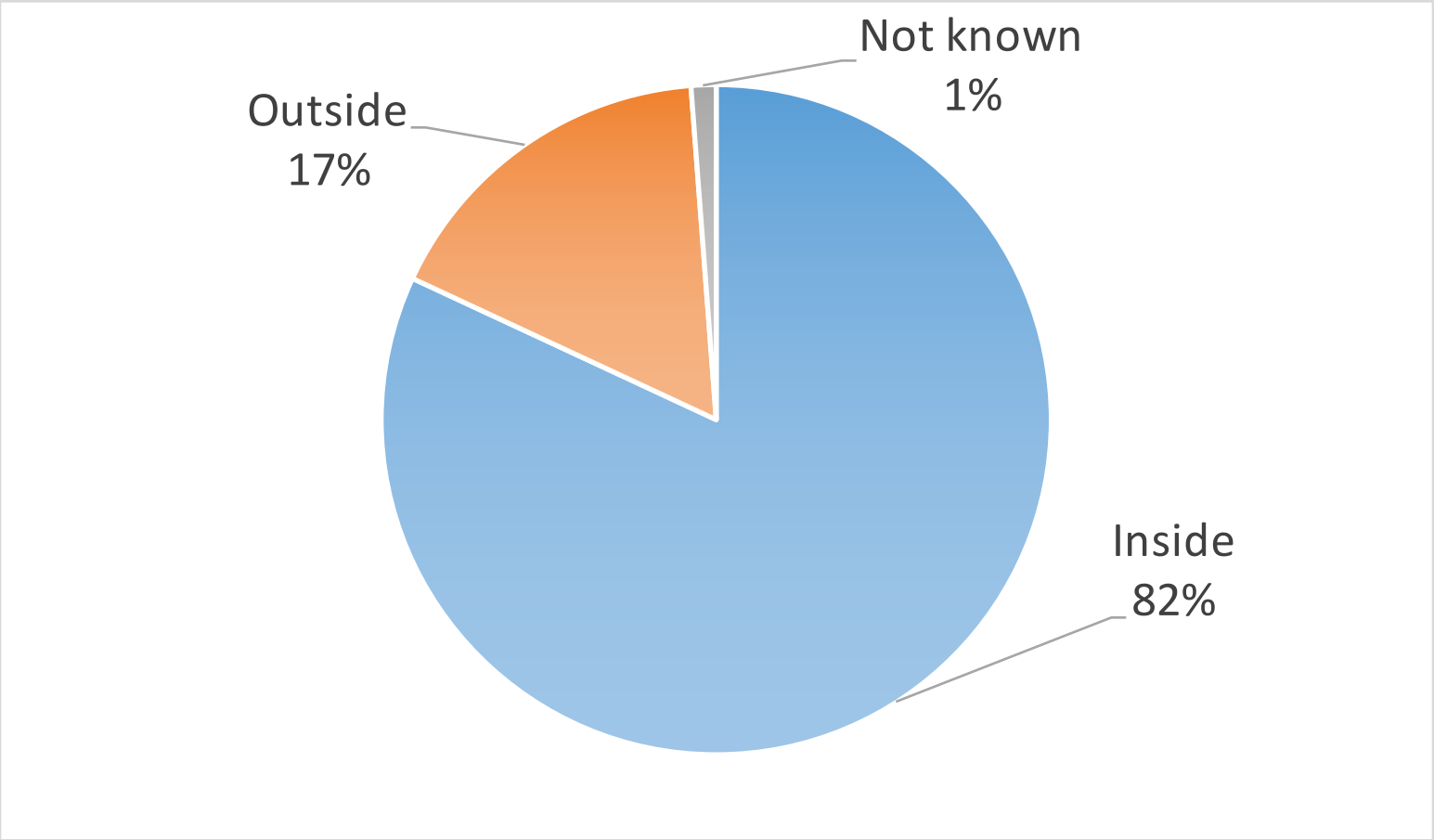
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<b>Total</b>				<b>166</b>		<b>68</b>					

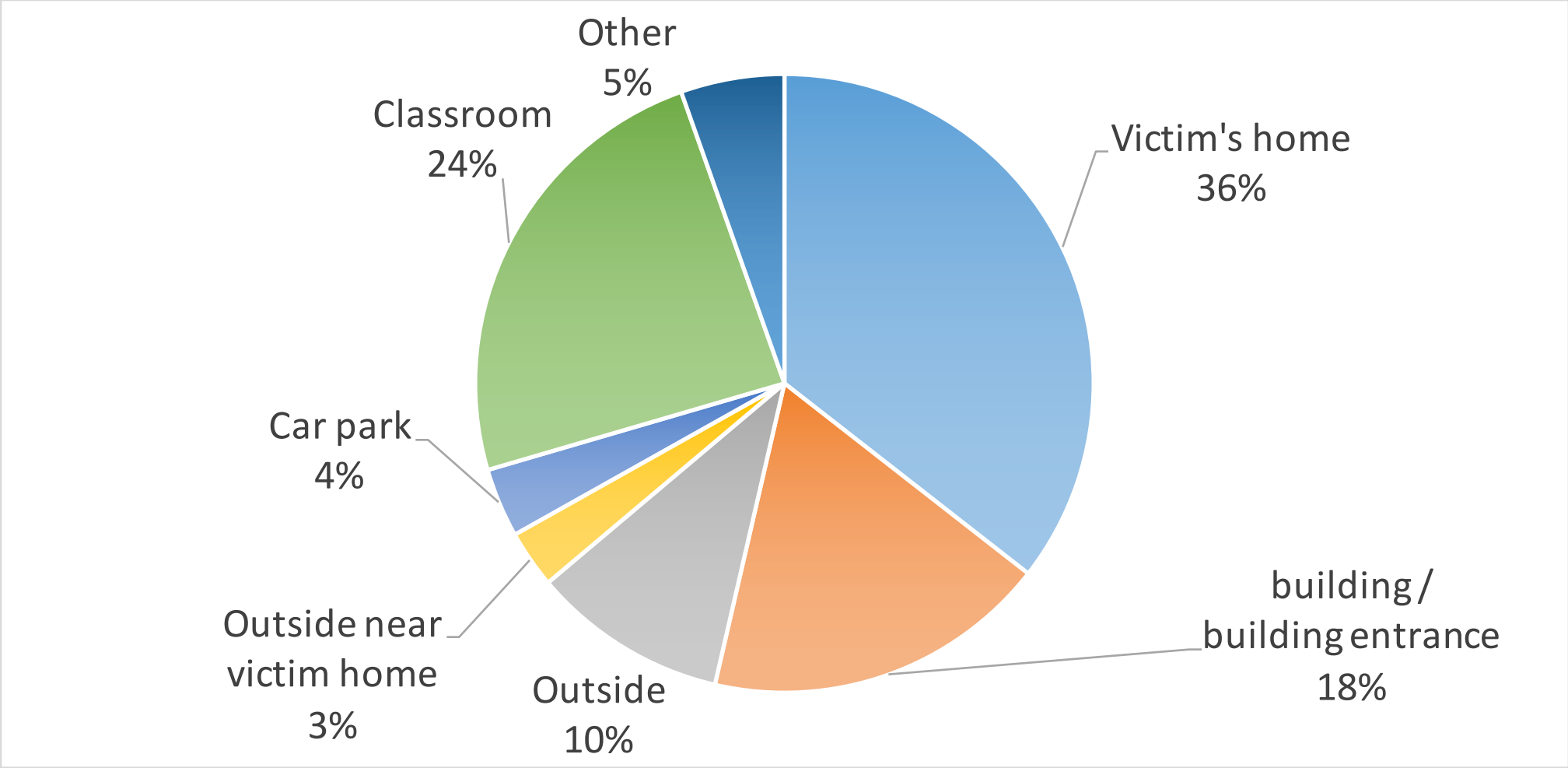
# Time of day at the beginning of assault



# Location of the approach - generic

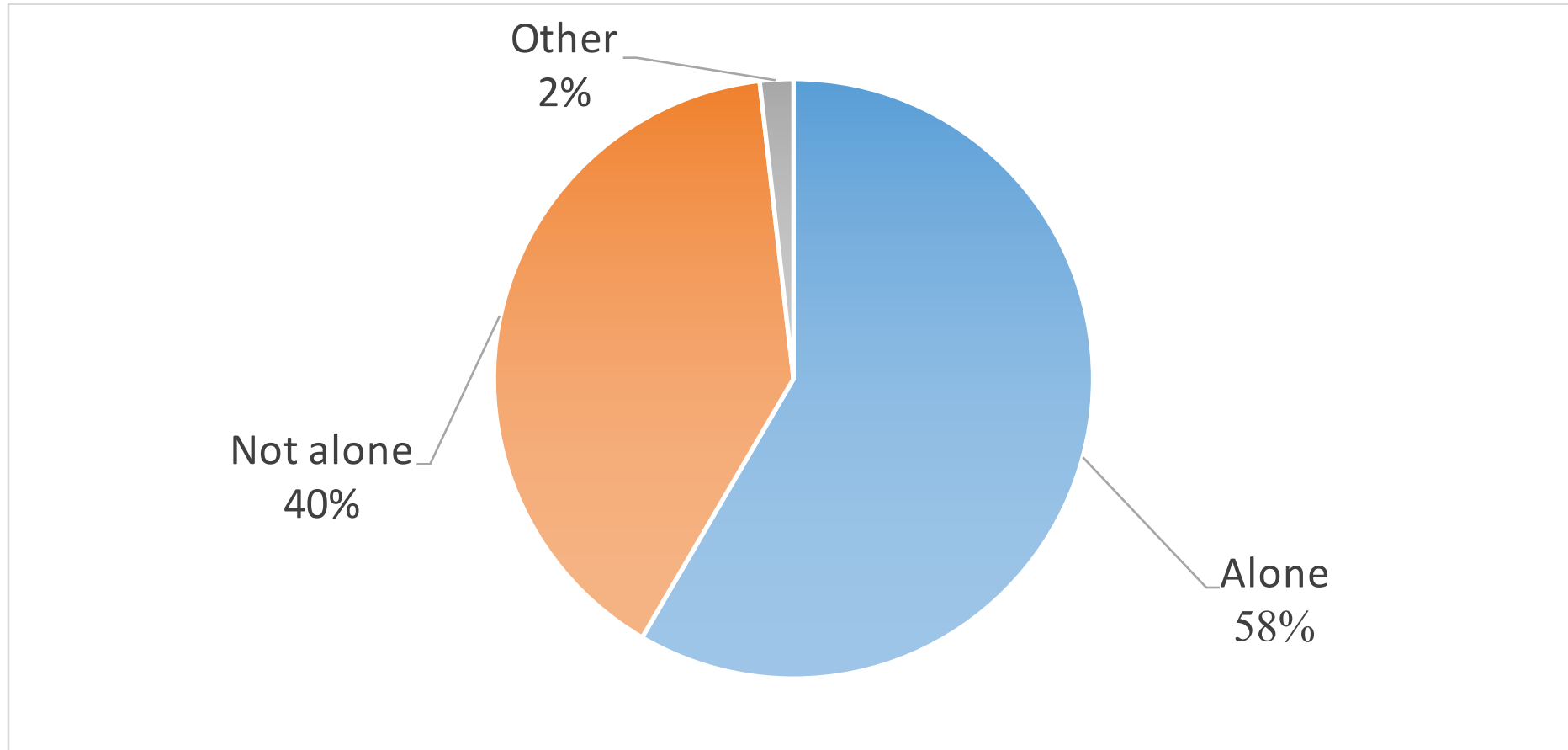


# Location of the approach - specific

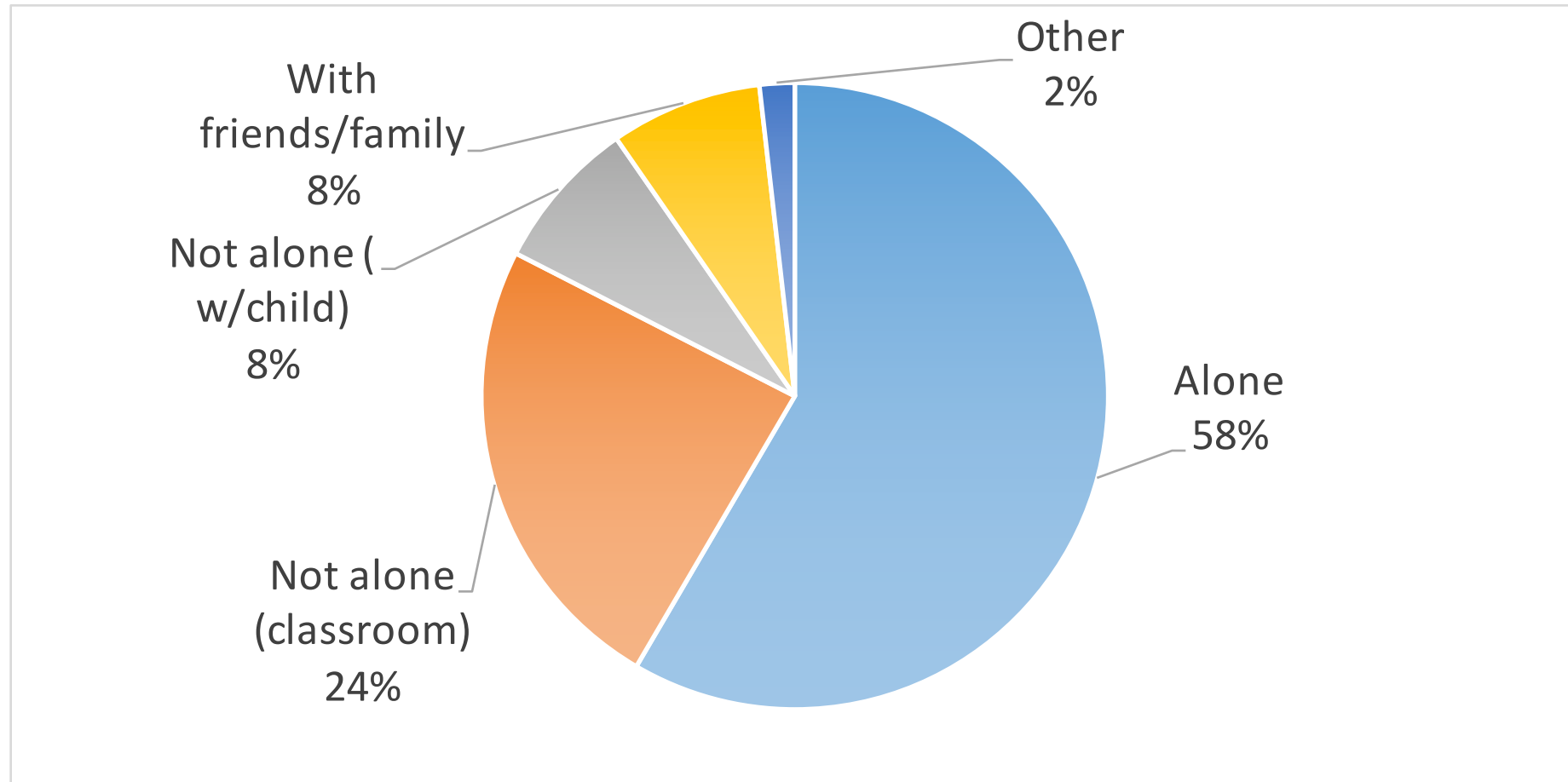




# Victim being alone or not alone - generic



# Victim being alone or not alone - specific



**Blueprint  
of the  
average  
victim  
of serial  
rape  
in France**



**Blueprint  
of the  
average  
victim  
of serial  
rape  
in France**

French white woman



**Blueprint  
of the  
average  
victim  
of serial  
rape  
in France**

French white woman  
Early 20'



# Blueprint of the average victim of serial rape in France

French white woman  
Early 20'

She will be commuting or at home



# Blueprint of the average victim of serial rape in France

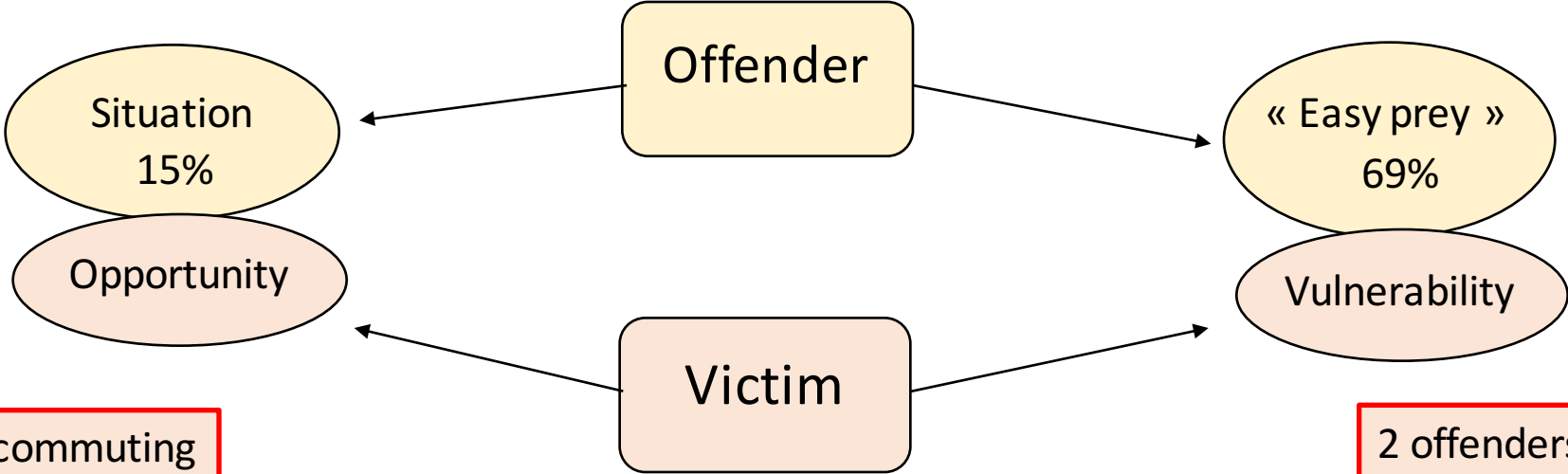
French white woman  
Early 20'

She will be commuting or at home  
She will be alone



# Perspective on selection technique

Stevens, 2000, 61 offenders interviewed



32% were commuting alone

2 offenders only targeted children

66% alone or with young children

Present research, 2022, 9 offenders and 166 victims



# Limitations of the research

- About the number of cases studied in this study
- The cases are relatively old, it would be interesting to conduct the same kind of analysis on more recent criminals (and the influence of the new information and communication technologies might have on the method of approach)

# To conclude

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According to a survey conducted by IPSOS in 2019:

- Only 8% of the rapes that happened are being reported to the police
- 74% will not be prosecuted nor investigated

Only **10%** will be judged in court,  
which is **1%** of all the estimated rapes.

# How can this research help?

- Bringing knowledge and expertise on serial crime
- Being quicker to explore other options and make connections

The average length of the activity period of a serial rapist in France is more than 8 years (1 to 20 years)

- Having a better understanding of the victim

Several victims were not believed by the police for different reasons

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**Thank you for your time.**

If you have questions do not hesitate & any feedback will be greatly appreciated.

[m.avella3538@student.leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:m.avella3538@student.leedsbeckett.ac.uk)