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Assessing Victim Blame:  
Intersections of Rape Victim Race, Gender, and Ethnicity

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A thesis  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts in Criminal Justice and Criminology

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by  
Kirsten A. Piatak

May 2015

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Dr. Courtney Crittenden, Chair

Dr. Nicole Prior

Dr. Gregory Rocheleau

Keywords: victim blaming, alcohol-facilitated acquaintance rape, attitudes toward rape

## ABSTRACT

### Assessing Victim Blame:

#### Intersections of Rape Victim Race, Gender, and Ethnicity

by

Kirsten Ann Piatak

The current study sought to assess the impact of the race, gender, and ethnicity of rape victims on college students' propensity to assign culpability to victims. Using a sample of college students (n=279) from a mid-sized Southeastern university, respondents were given a set of six different vignettes, varying only by victim characteristics. These vignettes featured alcohol-facilitated sexual assault between acquaintances, a common occurrence in college environments. Respondents were asked to evaluate the culpability of the victim through a blameworthiness scale. Through the incorporation of the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, this study also measured the respondents' propensity to assign blame to female rape victims and to alleviate male perpetrators of any responsibility. Results indicated that adherence to rape myth acceptance was a more significant predictor of blameworthiness than victim or respondent characteristics. This exploratory study was designed to add to the growing body of literature examining attitudes toward acquaintance rape.

## DEDICATION

For my father who has always served as my greatest source of inspiration and who has left the world a better place.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

If it were not for the constant encouragement, understanding, and comfort provided by family, I would not have made it this far in my educational career. Above all, I would like to thank my mother and father for believing in me and for instilling in me a sense of education and curiosity. I would also like to thank my sister, Louesa, for always sharing her laughter and late night conversations with me. My brother, Micky, also deserves special recognition for his ability to make me smile throughout anything. My family has had the unique ability of making even the darkest situations light. I love you all.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Contrary to the idealistic picture painted by television dramas such as *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, rape victims remain largely unprotected in the United States criminal justice system (Anderson, 2002). Silenced by the fear of societal repercussions and victim blaming, American women, and a growing number of men, have been hesitant to report their rape experiences (Allen, 2007). Victim blaming, a social phenomenon that is characterized by individuals who attribute blame to victims of sexual assault, traumatizes rape victims and exposes them to secondary victimization (Ståhl, Eek, & Kazemi, 2010), along with maintaining victim silence. The massive underreporting is mainly due to the large amount of attention and disbelief that victims receive in the wake of allegations. Take for example the highly publicized case of the sixteen-year-old rape victim in Steubenville, Ohio, who was assaulted by two members of the high school football team. This young woman was subjected to death threats from her classmates through the use of popular media sites (Reese, 2013). Despite the traumatic accusations she encountered, the young teenager received justice in the court systems, a rarity for rape cases (Jordan, 2011). However, she was still subjected to harassment and was accused of lying, even though there were pictures and videos that corroborated her story (Bello, 2013).

Alcohol influenced rapes are especially prevalent on college campuses. On average, one in four college women will be sexually victimized during their educational careers (Tjaden & Theonnes, 2000) and most of their sexual assaults will be accompanied by the use of alcohol. In fact, alcohol has often been considered the most influential date rape drug and its consumption has been present in at least half of the reported sexual assaults that occur on campuses (Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994). Not only does the consumption of alcohol often render the

victims incapable of properly defending themselves (Steele & Josephs, 1990), it also means that police officers will question their credibility should they report their victimization (Schuller & Stewart, 2000). The high frequency of alcohol consumption in acquaintance rapes poses a significant threat to the safety of college students and may even contribute to the phenomenon known as the fear of crime paradox, which posits that female fear of rape contributes to their overall fear of crime (Fox, Nobles, & Piquero, 2009; Pryor & Hughes, 2013). As such, female fear of crime on college campuses typically is reserved for stranger rape (Fox et al., 2009), but the majority of sexual assaults occur in the form of acquaintance rape (Tjaden & Theonnes, 2000).

While approximately 85% of rapes are perpetrated by someone known to the victim (Tjaden & Theonnes, 2000), our society offers preferential sympathy to victims of stranger rape. Stranger rape is epitomized by virginal or pure victims that are blitz attacked by deranged strangers lurking in the shadows before physically attacking their victim (Coller & Resick, 1987). In addition, Coller and Resick (1987) have posited that these victims are presumed to fight off their attackers, who possess a weapon, with sheer force and report the details of their rape immediately to the police.

In stark contrast to these idealized rape scenarios, the large majority of rapes, both attempted and completed, are perpetrated by someone known to the victim (Jordan, 2011). Subsequently, this contradiction between the common type of rape and idealized rape scenarios has created a disastrous effect on the persistence of victim blaming. In fact, Coller and Resick (1987) have confirmed that the more an incident deviates from the classic rape scenario (i.e., stranger rape), the more likely it is that the victim and his or her victimization will be minimized and not taken as seriously by law enforcement agencies (Galton, 1975). Furthermore, studies

have confirmed that victims of acquaintance rape are held more accountable for their victimizations than victims of either marital or stranger rape (Bridges & McGrail, 1989; Frese, Moya, & Megias, 2004; Pollard, 1992; Quackenbush, 1989; Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2004). These results are problematic and troubling because the blame assigned to rape victims often alleviates rapists of their responsibility, which inhibits victims from reporting their victimization for fear of public humiliation and degradation. Fear of victim blaming is effective in silencing victims as less than half of all rape victims report their rape experiences to law enforcement agencies, which contributes to the fact that only 2.2% of all rapists are convicted (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Though victim blaming seems to be controversial and problematic, it often serves as a protective mechanism for individuals who have not yet been victimized (Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Regardless of the type of violent victimization encountered, individuals often employ the use of the Just-World Hypothesis to distance themselves from the victim (Creel, 1997; Lerner & Simmons, 1966; Rubin & Peplau, 1975; Walster, 1966). Lerner and Simmons (1966) explained the general premise of the Just-World Hypothesis by acknowledging that individuals believe that their behaviors control their fate and if they act positively, they receive the benefit of achieving what they deserve in life. Subsequently, this causes individuals to assume that bad things, such as victimizations, only occur to bad people who deserve to be punished for their actions (Creel, 1997; Lerner & Simmons, 1966; Rubin & Peplau, 1975; Walster, 1966). However, this theory also contains adverse, personal consequences for victims of sexual assault. Stipulated by Creel (1997), the Just-World Hypothesis limits the responses of victims who adhere to these beliefs and provides them with two explanatory outcomes of their victimization. If the victim truly believes that good things happen to good people and that bad things never occur to good people,

the victim is likely to explain their sexual victimization by conforming to notions that they are bad individuals or that the victimization was not truly a bad experience (Creel, 1997). Madriz (1997) applies this theory to rape and sexual assaults by surmising that young females, in particular, are taught to act in accordance with traditional gender roles and to behave appropriately. Appropriate behavior, in accordance with gender norms, would ensure that females are submissive, respectful, sexually pure and dependent on men (Batemen, 1991; Glick & Friske, 1996; Viki et al., 2004). These young females are instructed that if they do not behave as such, they assume the risk of being sexually assaulted (Madriz, 1997).

Victim blaming is a social phenomenon that contributes to negative stereotypes associated with victims and consequently, compounds the suffering that rape victims endure. Furthermore, the opposing definitions and expectations of stranger rape and acquaintance rape serve to enhance the pervasiveness of victim blaming, especially for victims of acquaintance rape. As colleges serve as breeding grounds for acquaintance rapes and contribute to the prevalence of alcohol in these sexual victimizations, noteworthy investigations need to be conducted to address alcohol influenced acquaintance rapes on college campuses. The Just-World Hypothesis offers additional insight into the beliefs and attitudes that shape victim blaming, but intersectional aspects of gender, race, and ethnicity may also influence the phenomenon of assigning blame attribution to rape victims.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In a culture that is rife with diverse backgrounds, cultures, races, and ethnicities, it is crucial to acknowledge how intersecting experiences shape the ways in which victim blaming occurs in the United States. More importantly, it is necessary to uncover what, if any, differences are prevalent among individuals in accordance with their likelihood of being sexually assaulted, their reporting differences, and the stigmas placed upon them by the American society by taking these unique experiences of individuals into consideration. Additionally, it is equally imperative to address the characteristics most commonly associated with acquaintance rape scenarios on college campuses because individuals in college are more likely to be victimized by rape (Sloane Sawtell, 2008). Considering alcohol consumption has increasingly been associated with acquaintance rapes on college campuses (Abbey, 2008; Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994), attention needs to be directed to the facts that contribute to the prevalence of this phenomenon. Therefore, the entirety of this chapter will be dedicated to thoroughly investigating the importance of alcohol consumption by victims and perpetrators, the gendered differences of victims, and the ways that white, black, and Latino/a victims experience rape differently.

#### Alcohol Consumption

According to Pumphrey-Gordon and Gross (2007), alcohol consumption is the most salient and reliable factor in understanding sexual assaults. Research has found that between 42 – 55% of victims reported having consumed alcohol prior to their victimization (Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994; Ullman, Karabatsos, & Koss, 1999) and were somewhat intoxicated during their victimization. Similar results have consistently emerged from empirical evidence. Over half of the sexual assaults that occur on college campuses involve alcohol use by either or both the

perpetrator and the victim (Abbey, 2008; Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994). Among nonromantic acquaintance rapes, Harrington and Leitenberg (1994) found that 71 percent of victims had been at least somewhat intoxicated.

One reason that alcohol is such a major problem for women, and may lead to increased assaults, is that consumption may play a role in desensitizing women to external cues that would alert them to potential dangers. As posited by Steele and Josephs (1990), alcohol myopia is the term used to refer to the diminishing ability to distinguish environmental cues, which results from drinking alcohol. As a result, these authors have posited that victims of acquaintance rape may suffer from disinhibition due to their drinking. Though normally able to distinguish and process external cues from the environment, individuals may lose the ability to process less obvious cues and instead, can only process the most prevalent cues, thus possibly rendering them incapable of adequately resisting the sexual assault (Nurius, 2000; Steele & Josephs, 1990). For example, 56% of female victims reported that their alcohol consumption impaired their ability to physically resist the sexual assault (Pumphrey-Gordon & Gross, 2007). Researchers have confirmed that alcohol consumption delays cognitive abilities, which produces a slower reaction time that leaves victims physically unable to exert the strength necessary to defend themselves from an attacker (Abbey, 1991; Nurius, 2000; Testa & Parks, 1996).

Aside from physically impairing a victim's ability to respond to sexual violence, alcohol consumption among females has also been correlated with the endorsement of rape myths (Burt, 1980). According to traditional gender role expectations, women who drink alcohol are frequently viewed by benevolent sexists as being immoral, impure, and bad women (Briody, 2002; Masser, Lee, & McKimmie, 2010; Wenger & Bornstein, 2006). In response, men withdraw their affectionate attitudes towards these women (Glick & Friske, 1996; Viki et al.,

2004) and may even condone sexual violence against them (Goodchilds & Zellman, 1984; Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994). Some even go so far as to suggest that women who partake in alcohol consumption have purposely violated gender norms and deserve the sexual victimization they are subjected to (Goodchilds & Zellman, 1984). Others simply assume that these men perceive intoxicated women as being easier, weaker prey that can easily become entrapped into performing sexual activities with them (Pumphrey-Gordon & Gross, 2007).

Alcohol also affects perpetrators of rape. Gross and colleagues (2001) revealed that college men who engaged in drinking were slower to stop an audiotaped depiction of date or acquaintance rape than were males who did not participate in drinking as often. Therefore, it may be that perpetrators and victims alike suffer from impaired cognitive abilities as a result of consuming alcohol (Steele & Josephs, 1990). Steele and Josephs (1990) have been credited with developing a typology that examines the effects that alcohol has on individuals. Comprised of three categories, the effects of alcohol consumption have been labeled as drunken excess, drunken self-inflation, and drunken relief (Steele & Josephs, 1990). The drunken excess category is most applicable to this investigation and offers the most insight into occurrences of acquaintance rape, because it affirms that an excess of alcohol can severely alter the behavior of intoxicated individuals. In fact, alcohol can inhibit individuals and may allow for sexually reserved, innocent individuals to display sexually explicit behaviors with excessive touching (Steele & Josephs, 1990). Although this behavior could be demonstrated by both the victim and the rapist, it may play a detrimental role in the perpetrator's ability to perceive and interpret acts of kindness (Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, and McAuslan, 1996). Though entirely unacceptable as an excuse for enacting sexual violence on another human being, Abbey and colleagues (1996) have



noted that rapists who have been interacting with exceptionally friendly victims might have misinterpreted the victim's kindness for sexual attraction and consent.

While alcohol consumption certainly appears to play an integral role in desensitizing the victim to external cues, cues that could have alerted him or her to the danger of the situation (Nurius, Norris, Young, Graham, & Gaylord, 2000), it also impacts the ways in which police officers view the victim (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Schuller & Stewart, 2000). In general, it has been stipulated that a victim who had consumed alcohol was often held more responsible and was perceived in a more negative manner (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Richardson & Campbell, 1982), while perpetrators who have consumed alcohol may be seen as less blameworthy for their actions (Richardson & Campbell, 1982). Consequently, alcohol consumption on the part of the victim may also determine how police officers respond to the situation and may predict whether they deem the rape worthy of investigation or not. If a female was victimized and had been consuming alcohol, police may view women as being more likely to engage in sexual activities than females who had not been drinking (Schuller & Stewart, 2000). Once again, this assumption by the police supports both traditional gender roles and rape myths (Glick & Friske, 1996; Viki et al., 2004). When incorporated with benevolent sexism (Viki et al., 2004), this police behavior only fortifies the use of rape myths and perpetuates the existence of victim blaming. It also serves to prevent victims from reporting their victimization to law enforcement agencies for fear of judgment.

An extremely prevalent factor in the occurrence of acquaintance rapes on college campuses, alcohol consumption seems to produce negative effects among victims, perpetrators, and criminal justice agencies (Steele & Josephs, 1991). Though alcohol consumption on the part of the perpetrator may be a contributing factor in the performance of acquaintance rapes, its

biological components do not adequately explain the negative treatment that female victims receive in the wake of their victimizations, nor do they explain the increased blame attribution that intoxicated victims receive. However, alcohol consumption prior to sexual victimization produces more severe consequences for females than their male counterparts (Richardson & Campbell, 1982), a fact which largely contributes to victim blaming practices in the United States. To explain the differential treatment that male and female victims receive, research must be analyzed to assess the extent to which each sex is affected by sexual assault, rape myths, and victim blaming.

### Sex

Evidence has suggested that, in general, female respondents tend to be more sympathetic with victims and are more likely to understand the traumatic experiences of rape victimization than their male counterparts (Donovan, 2004; Kahn, et al., 2011). Time and again, research has shown that men are more likely to accept rape myths (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012) and are more likely to blame victims of rape (Donovan, 2004; Kahn et al., 2011). Donovan (2004) has confirmed that males, while recognizing that most rapists are men, are more likely to empathize with perpetrators because they acknowledge the similarities they share with these individuals due to their gender.

Research has also suggested that the sex of the victim has a significant impact on the amount of culpability that they receive for their victimization (Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012). Research has shown that female rape victims were held less accountable, viewed as more innocent, and their victimizations were more likely to be labeled as rape compared to that of male victims (Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre, & Morrison, 2005; Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012). Howard (1984) has hypothesized that due to traditional gender roles, males are assumed to be incapable

of being raped. While women are expected to be feminine, innocent, and virginal (Viki et al., 2004), men are expected to be independent, unemotional, and are to demonstrate sufficient strength, capable of warding off any physical threat of victimization (Davies, Walker, Archer, & Pollard, 2013). Despite the fact that people often believe that men cannot be raped, studies have shown that between 12 percent and 16 percent of male college students have been victims of sexual victimization (Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012).

Interestingly, White and Kurpius (2002) have cited Struckman-Johnson who confirmed that historically, men were raped at consistent rates in frequency as female victims, but their experiences were minimized and perhaps ignored due to the importance that society has placed on female rape. As the rape experiences of women gained notoriety and public attention, male victims silently remained defenseless without advocates of their own to voice their experiences (Struckman-Johnson, 2002). Jamel (2010) has even suggested that research on male rape is approximately twenty years behind the progress that researchers have made in regards to better understanding female rape. While both male and female rape victims are often reluctant to report their victimizations to police resources, Allen (2007) uncovered that male victims of rape were much less likely to report their victimization to authorities than were female victims who had experienced similar circumstances. Unfortunately, this only reinforces rape myths (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994) and prevents men, too, from achieving a sense of justice.

Though the reasons behind their reluctance remain unclear, it seems heterosexual males, in particular, may be weary that police officers would mislabel them as homosexual if their rapist were another male (Jamal, 2010; Scarce, 1997). This finding is especially problematic considering that most men will be raped by another male. Likewise, male victims also fear that police officers will not take their complaints seriously and will question the true likelihood of a

male rape victim (Kassing, Beesley, & Frey, 2005; Scarce, 1997; Washington, 1999). In a similar vein, men may fear that their masculinity is threatened or that they are violating societal expectations of traditional gender roles if they admit to being a victim (Howard, 1984; O'Neil, 1981; Scarce, 1997). As a result, men are aware of their expectations and fear that they would lose their masculinity or experiences powerlessness, a trait commonly reserved for females, if they were to report their victimization (O'Neil;1981).

Studies using college students as respondents have shown many interesting findings. For example, researchers have acknowledged that assumptions about gender differences were present among the sample of college students when studying rape myths and scenarios (Davies et al., 2013). Their findings suggest that respondents assumed that only females were capable of being physically subdued and raped by one individual, and the respondents believed that more physical force would be necessary to subdue a male victim. As such, the respondents described male rape as being conducted by more than one rapist (Davies et al., 2013). This holds true with research that has identified that multiple assailants are typically more common among male rapes (Davies, et al., 2010; Walker, Archer, & Davies, 2005), but this finding is only applicable to a small portion of cases. It was also discovered that female victims are substantially less likely than male victims to withstand serious injuries during the completion of their sexual assault (McMullen, 1990). While the sex of the victims and of the respondents certainly plays a role in the formation of blame attribution, race and ethnicity are other characteristics that contribute to victim blaming in the United States.

#### Race-Ethnicity

Race is also an important factor where there may be differences among the rates of victimization, reporting behaviors, and cultural differences that may inhibit victims from

reporting their sexual assaults. Sloane Sawtell (2008) discovered that white women (15%) were less likely than black women (17%) and women belonging to other racial categories (22%) to report being a victim of rape. However, she noted that non-Hispanic women reported sexual victimization at much higher frequencies than Hispanic women (Sloane Sawtell, 2008). This finding was most interesting, considering that Hispanic and black individuals are more likely to report violent victimizations to police than are non-Hispanic, white individuals (Rennison, 2007). According to Rennison (2007), this relationship was strengthened as the education level of the Hispanic victim increased. Other research contradicts the work of Rennison and has specifically postulated that Hispanic ancestries were not a significant factor for college-aged women who reported their sexual victimization to law enforcement agencies (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003).

Previous studies have also examined the role that race plays in the perceptions of college students and their likelihood to form blame attributions (Eddy & Sandor, 2011; Nagel et al., 2005). Eddy and Sandor (2011) conducted research on the perpetrator's skin tone, attire, and relationship to the victim in relation to perceptions of perpetrator culpability. Their results have shown that the skin tone of the perpetrator actually held no significance in the respondents' attribution and assignment of blame (Eddy & Sandor, 2011). They did, however, note that when the perpetrator had a lighter skin tone, the students were unsure if the claim of sexual assault was as reliable and were more likely to question whether the victim wanted to engage in sexual activities with the perpetrator. However, Eddy and Sandor did not account for race because they did not include white males among the perpetrators, thus they have recognized their limitation and acknowledged that they could not say with confidence that the students portrayed racist views.

George and Martinez (2002) noted that stereotypes have long existed against both black victims and black perpetrators of rape. Black men are typically associated with having a strong desire to rape women, especially white women, a stereotype which Hirsh (1981) postulated dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when slavery was flourishing in the United States. Furthermore, this stereotype may have been an instrumental tool in the methods used to control both black men and white women, a method used to prevent them from having consensual relations (Davis, 1983). This stereotype has lasting consequences as many individuals still prescribe to the outdated misconceptions that portray black men as rapists and white women as their victims (Cazares, 2002; Donovan, 2004; Hirsh, 1981). Notably, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) discovered that minorities are more likely to prescribe to rape myths.

However, other researchers have argued that African American women were somewhat less accepting of rape myths than white women (Carmody & Washington, 2001). Carmody and Washington (2001) have postulated that this could result from the fact that rape myths have been attached to black men throughout history, which ensures that these women are forced to choose between associating with their race or their gender. Though 60% of the respondents in their study were white, George and Martinez (2002) discovered that both white and black victims received more blame attribution if they were raped in an interracial setting. Similar research from Willis (1992) indicated that white victims were viewed as being more truthful, and therefore more believable, than black victims. Public perception of the truthfulness of white victims of acquaintance rape, however, was diminished if they had been raped by a black man, which has been linked to preexisting notions of racism (Willis, 1992). Conversely, others have ascertained that white victims with black rapists are the least likely to be attributed blame and are the most likely to be believed (Allison & Wrightsman, 1993).

George and Martinez (2002) have also posited that black women have often been assumed to be sexually promiscuous and incapable of being victimized by rape. According to an abundance of research (e.g., Cazares, 2002; Donovan, 2004; George & Martinez, 2002; Hirsh, 1981; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), black women, in particular, have long been subjected to stereotypical images and this may increase their reluctance to report their sexual victimizations to authorities. Of the stereotypes placed upon black women, the Jezebel myth and the image of the matriarch are the most prevalent and undeniably, the most troublesome (Barth, 2012; Collins, 2005; Donovan, 2004). Also originating with the attractiveness of slavery in the 1800s (Gutman, 1975), the idealization of African American exoticism was birthed and contributed to the supposition that white men desired sexual relations with women of color (Barth, 2012; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). The Jezebel myth relies heavily on the over-sexualization of African American women, who have been characterized as being dominant, exotic, and insatiable (Barth, 2012; Donovan, 2004; Koss & Harvey, 1991; St. Jean & Feagin, 1998). In accordance with the sexualized image of the African American women, the Jezebel myth holds that these sex-crazed women are never entirely satisfied with their sexual exploitations (Barth, 2012). Therefore, the Jezebel myth renders women of color incapable of experiencing sexual victimization because the assumption remains that they constantly desire and readily welcome any opportunity for sexual interactions (Barth, 2012; Donovan, 2004).

Collins (2005) has established that the Jezebel myth was primarily used to keep women of color ever reminded of their status in a society dominated by whites. To further distance black women from white women, evidence has suggested that these women were held at distinct ends of a continuum of sexuality (Barth, 2012; Collins, 2005). At one end, virtuous, innocent, and pure white women remained and at the other side, which was held in constant opposition,

African American women were depicted as sexual objects (Collins, 2005). This Jezebel stereotype still permeates through American streets and forms of popular culture. As highlighted by Collins (2005), even African American men now prescribe to the depiction of black women as mere objects intended for sexual domination and exploitation. Filled with images of scantily-clad, African American women who are prized for their appealing traits, hip-hop rap music evidences the inescapable presence of the Jezebel myth in current trends (Collins, 2005). While this stereotype degrades women of color, it also prevents them from adequately labeling their experiences as sexual victimization (Barth, 2012; Collins, 2005). Additionally, it may inhibit them from reporting their rape experiences to proper law enforcement authorities, which they already distrust (Sue & McKinney, 1975).

Also damaging to women of color, the image of the matriarch incorporates components of the lower socioeconomic status that many minorities are troubled with (Donovan, 2004). Donovan (2004) credited Moynihan for associating the matriarch image with black women from impoverished, barren neighborhoods. In these neighborhoods, which are often crime-ridden and stained with violence (Moynihan, 1965), the black woman is typically a single mother, charged with ensuring the safety, protection, and well-being of her children while simultaneously earning an income sufficient enough to support her children. It has been proposed that these women are expected to demonstrate insurmountable strength as they place the needs of their children and families above their own (Donovan, 2004; Wallace, 1991). In accordance with these expectations, these women are never expected to show emotion (Donovan, 2004).

The matriarch image not only ensures that African American female rape victims internalize their feelings; it also holds them to a standard that prevents them from disclosing their victimization to anyone in the public or private sphere of their lives (Donovan, 2004; McNair &



Neville, 1996; Neville & Pugh, 1997). In a society that already limits the opportunities afforded to African Americans and often casts them aside, West (1999) surmised that African American women may rely on members of their own community to assist in matters, because they typically are distrustful and suspicious of law enforcement agencies (Sue & McKinney, 1975). Despite their personal inclinations to seek help, African American women are often bound by the stereotypical ideals that have guided their lives (Donovan, 2004) and are unable to seek support for a sexual victimization in their respective communities. In fact, West (1999) stipulated that African American women are further alienated and cast aside by their community members should they report their sexual victimization. Clearly, these stereotypes are damaging to the recovery process for African American rape victims, and consequently secure that these individuals will typically not receive justice. Derived from faulty logic and misrepresentations, both stereotypes fortify the prevalence of victim blaming and silence victims into privately experiencing shame and guilt (Barth, 2012; Cazares, 2002; Collins, 2005; Donovan, 2004). More specifically, Donovan (2004) confirmed that the sexual promiscuity associated with the Jezebel myth may lead to an increased perception of guilt by the public, and that the matriarchal image simply prevents women of color from abandoning the strong, dominant personality they are assumed to have.

Regarding ethnicity, there is an interesting overlay of religion and ethnicity for Hispanic individuals. Latinas, who are often devout Catholics, are typically filled with expectations that their character is defined by being pure, patient and virginal (William & Holmes, 1981). This extreme devotion to religion is certainly not without its consequences. Hispanic females who value their Catholic upbringing are expected to defend their virginity at any cost; failing to do so would dishonor their entire family (Lira, Koss, & Russo, 1999; William & Holmes, 1981). As a

consequence, these women are often likely to find fault with victims (Lefley, Scott, Llabre, & Hicks, 1993; Lira et al., 1999; Williams, 1984). Indeed, Hispanic females are specifically more likely to blame victims for their attire and for leaving the safety of their homes to travel unaccompanied (Lira et al., 1999).

While Hispanic heritages cover a wide array of unique countries, and therefore unique cultures, many researchers have honed in on the specific experiences of Mexican-American women (Lira et al., 1999; Williams, 1985; Williams & Holmes, 1981). Mexican-Americans, both men and women, use of Marianismo and Machismo to derive cultural meanings about their place in the family (Lefley et al., 1993). Marianismo is a term used to signify behavior that closely mimics the Virgin Mary, a religious figure that holds special importance with Mexican-American families. In conjunction with the characteristics of the Virgin Mary, Mexican-American women are typically expected to portray qualities of patience, humility, and sacrifice (Cazares, 2002; Lefley et al., 1993; Lira et al., 1999). In contrast, Mexican-American males are expected to conform to components of Machismo, which values sexual aggression, egotism, and embellished masculinity (Lefley et al., 1993). Conformity to these virtues has instilled in Mexican-American women a deep sense of loyalty to their families, which has often prevented them from seeking help from community and law enforcement resources in the aftermath of a sexual assault (Williams & Holmes, 1981). These cultural values and expectations also influence the ideologies of other Hispanic, notably Mexican-American, individuals as well.

In an interesting twist, Williams (1985) reported that younger Mexican-American women were more likely to hold traditional views towards rape than older Mexican-American women, who tend to possess more accepting, feminist views of rape victims. When comparing Mexican females to white, American females, Arellano and colleagues (1997) found that Mexican females

were much less likely to report their sexual victimizations. Additionally, Fisher (1987) found that both white men and bilingual, Hispanic men possessed more favorable attitudes towards rape victims than Hispanic males who had assimilated into the American culture.

Cultural differences may further delineate the various ways in which Hispanic and black victims respond to sexual victimizations. Contrary to the matriarch image of black women, Hispanic households are typically headed by a strong, dominant man (Cazares, 2002; Lefley et al., 1993). Encouraged to be dependent on the head of their households (Cazares, 2002; Lira et al., 1999; Lefley et al., 1993), Hispanic women may not report their sexual victimization to proper law enforcement channels for fear of insulting the head of the household (Carter, 1983; Rennison, 2007). As many immigrants migrate to the United States from primarily Spanish-speaking countries, many of them are unable to communicate in English upon their arrival to a country with predominantly English-speakers (Rennison, 2007). Their inability to communicate the details of their victimization to law enforcement agencies who cannot understand their language only increases the burden placed upon Hispanic victims and encourages them to remain silent (Rennison, 2007; Walker, Spohn, & Delone, 2004). Many Hispanic individuals fear that contacting law enforcement agencies will only draw attention to their immigration status or the statuses of their friends, families, and neighbors (Rennison, 2007). Even though many individuals assume that this issue is only relevant for illegal immigrants (Rennison, 2007), this concern also impacts legal immigrants (Menjivar & Bejarano, 2004).

In summation, Latino/a and black victims may be further marginalized by the numerous stereotypes that limit their behaviors. As members of these races experience sexual victimization at higher rates than white victims, these stereotypes are especially damaging and may prevent these victims from seeking help from legal resources. While their findings suggest that Latinas

are sexually victimized at higher frequencies than white or black females (Like-Haislip & Warren, 2011), this conflicts with previous studies that have discovered that black women were at the greatest risk for sexual victimization (Lauritsen & Rennison, 2006; Lauritsen & White, 2001; Sloane Sawtell, 2008). Regardless of the mixed results, both Latino/a and black victims are silenced by stereotypes that outline the boundaries of acceptable behavior for each race. In addition, the prevalence of stereotypes may guarantee that others view these individuals as being less credible, less deserving, and less important victims. For example, Willis (1992) has surmised that black victims were perceived as being less truthful and therefore, less credible than white victims. Similarly, LaFree (1989) discovered that black offenders were sentenced more harshly when they had raped a white woman than they were if they had raped a black woman. In fact, the researcher found that prosecutors more aggressively processed cases where white victims were raped, which seems to suggest that victims of minority races may not been taken as seriously (LaFree, 1989). Though this fact hinders the progress of justice for all rape victims by contributing to victim blaming, it also obstructs the plight of both Latina and black victims in their efforts to obtain equality and justice alike.

### Intersectionality

To account for the complexities of differing backgrounds, intersectionality has emerged as a tool that recognizes that individuals who arise from dissimilar genders, races, ethnicities, religions, and social classes should be recognized for the manners in which their situations have multifarious layers (Burgess-Proctor, 2006). Essential for understanding intersectionality, one must first understand its origins, which are derived from feminism. Burgess-Proctor (2006) summarized that three waves of feminism exist and that the first wave appeared with individuals such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, who advocated for the women suffrage

movement. Feminist criminology appeared during the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s (Burgess-Proctor, 2006). This wave, however, mainly focused on white women as the norm, a significant limitation, which was finally acknowledged in the third wave of feminism (Burgess-Proctor, 2006; Carbin & Edenheim, 2013; Crenshaw, 1989).

The third wave of feminism occurred more recently in the 1990s, a time that birthed the separations and varieties in feminist theories (Burgess-Proctor, 2006). Three types of feminism that are noteworthy to intersectionality are socialist feminism, black feminism, and critical race feminism (Burgess-Proctor, 2006). Socialist feminism has faulted the patriarchal nature of American society and capitalism, which depends on patriarchy, for the inequalities and disadvantages that women have been subjected to for so long. The latter two, as their names suggest, have dedicated their attention specifically towards the uniqueness of the inequalities that African American women have been suppressed by. With the combination of these three feminist theories, the world of feminism witnessed the birth of multiracial feminism (Burgess-Proctor, 2006).

Burgess-Proctor (2006) has cited the work of Zinn and Dill (1996) to reinforce that this multiracial feminism “proposes that gender relations do not occur in a vacuum, but, instead, that men and women are also characterized by their race, sexuality, age, physical ability, and other locations of inequality” (p. 36). It has been proposed that these interlocking experiences of inequality are crucial to understanding the fundamental differences that occur between individuals of the same race, gender, and social class as not all members of one, individual group, such as race or gender, share commonalities among all other defining characteristics.

For example, if society portrays black women as being strong, promiscuous, and sexual (Barth, 2012; Cazares, 2002; Collins, 2005; Donovan, 2004), it is likely that she will encounter

more blame for her rape than a white, female victim who is typically associated with purity, virginity, and innocence (Barth, 2012; Collins, 2005). Similarly, Latino/a victims may experience entirely different reactions from the general public and from their families following a rape experience than white or black individuals (Lefley et al., 1993; Lira et al, 1999). Males are afforded no exception to the importance of victim blaming and the traditional gender norms assigned to victims. In fact, they are likely to receive more blame from other males and are fearful that police will question their sexuality (Howard, 1984; O'Neil, 1981; Scarce, 1997). If different victims are already presumed to have differing amounts of guilt on the basis of their gender, skin color, or heritage, it is especially important that these differences are uncovered and hopefully, erased. With the importance being directed towards intersectionality in the current focus of feminism and feminist criminology, it is crucial to uncover how these complexities play a factor in rape cases. Precisely, the use of multiple characteristics may assist in the formation of differing opinions on situational factors of rape. Although rape has historically received much attention from both the media and the world of criminology alike, relatively little attention has been dedicated to the intersectional, diverse factors of rape victims, nor has it been given to the complexities of the general public who interpret accounts of rape.

#### Current Study

The current study seeks to address victim blaming among alcohol-related acquaintance rape. It is important to acknowledge and include alcohol consumption in the vignette as it often accompanies acquaintance rapes (Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994), especially those that occur on college campuses (Abbey, 2008; Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994). Moreover, when rape victims consume alcohol, this tends to lessen his or her credibility with law enforcement (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Schuller & Stewart, 2000). Therefore, this

study will incorporate alcohol consumption in an effort to get a more realistic view of victim blaming for sexual assaults on college campuses.

As previously described, the importance of gender and racial differences are also relevant to victim blaming. As such, this study will incorporate vignettes that depict acquaintance rapes with white, black, and Latina/o victims of both sexes. As stated best by Cazares (2002), the “victimization of cultural minorities is deemed less serious than the victimization of more conventional individuals” (p. 17). It is, therefore, predicted that male victims of rape will be held more accountable for their victimization than female victims. Regarding race, it is predicted that black victims will be held more accountable than white and Hispanic victims. However, it is also predicted that Hispanic victims will be deemed more culpable than white victims. Finally, it is also predicted that male respondents and minority respondents will attribute more blame to the victims than both female and white respondents.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Questions

As victim blaming is a pervasive phenomenon that often accompanies the prevalence of sexual assaults on college campuses (Campbell & Johnson, 1997), the current study manipulated independent variables of race, ethnicity, and gender of rape victims in a vignette to measure the perceptions that students form about their culpability in the sexual victimization they endured. In addition, the current study sought to determine which students are most likely to blame victims. This study, while employing the use of vignettes that include scenarios of acquaintance rape and by measuring response with adaptations from the rape myth acceptance scale, attempted to address four research questions:

**Research Question 1:** Does the gender of the victim influence the perceived culpability of his/her victimization (i.e., are male or female victims seen as more culpable for their victimization)?

**Research Question 2:** Do the race and ethnicity of the victim influence the perceived culpability of the victimization (i.e., are black or Hispanic victims more likely than white victims to be regarded as more promiscuous or sexually aggressive)?

**Research Question 3:** Does the gender of the respondent influence their propensity to attribute blame to the victim (i.e., are male students more likely than female students to assign blame to rape victims)?

**Research Question 4:** Do the race and ethnicity of the respondents influence their tendency to attribute blame to the victim (i.e., are black and Hispanic students more likely than white students to assign blame to rape victims)?

#### Sample

To ensure a greater sample size, the sample was procured through the use of a cluster sample of professors. A list of 30 professors at a mid-sized, Southeastern university was generated through a systematic random sample. To obtain a representative sample of the students in the professors' courses, random sampling was used to select one class per professor. The professors were contacted via email with a response rate of 41.9% (n = 13). The surveys were



randomly distributed to the students who were present in each of the participating classes and this resulted in a total sample size of 279 respondents.

Before the surveys were administered, each participant was provided an informed consent document and their signatures denoted voluntary participation. The survey instruments included a vignette that depicted a common scenario of acquaintance rape in a college environment. As alcohol consumption is typical in sexual assaults on college campuses (Abbey, 2008; Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994), the scenario depicted an account of two students that engaged in alcohol consumption and sexual contact before the sexual assault occurred. There was one vignette per survey and each was followed with an 8-item scale of blameworthiness that was adapted from the works of Transgurd (2010). In addition, the survey instrument measured demographic characteristics of the respondents (i.e., gender, race-ethnicity, and age) and attitudes toward rape using the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

### Measures

Vignettes were used to judge the response of the survey participants and included a detailed scenario of acquaintance rape. These vignettes incorporated the use of alcohol by both the victim and the perpetrator in a campus setting. Attached in Appendix A are all six variations of the vignettes, along with the survey questions.

### Dependent Measures

*Blameworthiness*, the dependent variable, was measured through the use of an 8- item scale of victim blaming statements using a modified version of vignettes that were used by Transgurd (2010). In order to measure blameworthiness, six different vignettes were used describing acquaintance rape. These vignettes varied by race and gender of the victim. Students only received one vignette per survey. After reading the vignette, respondents were asked to

identify with items that measured the extent to which the respondents found fault with the victim in the scenario. These statements dealt with several aspects of blame and fault for each scenario such as: the victim had control over the events; the victim acted carelessly; the victim's character (i.e., personality) played a role in the events. Another statement indicated that the victim was responsible due to his or her behavior and that the victim's behavior leading up to the sexual assault made him or her more accountable. Three other statements were included in the blameworthiness scale and stated that the victim was at fault, to blame, or held the most responsibility for the event that occurred. Once again, the respondents would have to evaluate the actions described in the scenario to form a response. In another attempt to assess victim blaming, two additional statements were used to explore the victim's interest in sex with the perpetrator and his or her obligation to engage in sexual acts with the perpetrator. These statements encouraged the respondents to indicate whether or not they thought the victim had acted in a way that would demonstrate an interest in sexual activity with the perpetrator.

Each of these statements was measured on a Likert scale to account for the degree to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the statements being made. To sway respondents away from neutrality, there was not an option designated for "neither disagreeing nor agreeing." Those that indicated that they were least likely to agree were coded as one, in range to those who indicated that they completely agree, which were coded as four. Therefore, higher scores were equated with higher attributions of victim blame. The Cronbach alpha score of this scale was acceptable ( $\alpha = .834$ ). Additionally, the scale contained a range from 8 to 29 and produced a mean score of 15.89.

As shown in Table 1, the results indicated that a majority of students disagreed with many of the blameworthy statements, but one statement proved to be an exception. This

exception was: “the victim acted carelessly in the described scenario.” Approximately, 59 percent of respondents agreed with the statement. The majority of respondents (55.4%) indicated that they disagreed with the statement that “the victim had control over the events that occurred in the described scenario.” Similarly, respondents indicated that the victim’s behavior, which included alcohol consumption and previous sexual contact, was not of particular concern in the formation of blame attribution. In fact, most of respondents (61.1%) disagreed with the statement that “the victim’s behavior was responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.” The next statement attempted to assign the totality of blame to the victim by stating that the “victim was to blame for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario,” but the majority of respondents (82.7%) disagreed again.

*Table 1. Blameworthiness Scale*

<b>Scale Item</b>	<b>SD % (N)</b>	<b>D % (N)</b>	<b>A % (N)</b>	<b>SA % (N)</b>	<b>Mean (SD) Range: 1-4</b>
Victim had control over the events that occurred in the described scenario.	19.9% (55)	35.5% (98)	34.1% (94)	10.5% (29)	2.35 (0.916) Range: 1-4
Victim acted carelessly in the described scenario.	10.1% (28)	30.8% (85)	38.4% (106)	20.7% (57)	2.70 (0.911) Range: 1-4
Victim’s behavior was responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	26.2% (72)	34.5% (96)	30.2% (83)	8.7% (24)	2.21 (0.933) Range: 1-4
Victim was at fault for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	39.1% (108)	39.5% (109)	18.1% (50)	3.3% (9)	1.86 (0.827) Range: 1-4
Victim was to blame for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	42.4% (118)	40.3% (112)	14.4% (40)	2.9% (8)	1.78 (0.797) Range: 1-4
Overall, victim was responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	37.1% (103)	42.4% (118)	16.5% (46)	4.0% (11)	1.87 (0.825) Range: 1-4
Victim was obligated to have sex with the perpetrator.	79.0% (218)	14.1% (39)	5.1% (14)	1.8% (5)	1.30 (0.648) Range: 1-4
Victim was interested in having sex with the perpetrator.	37.8% (104)	40.7% (112)	16.4% (45)	5.1% (14)	1.89 (0.858) Range: 1-4

Most respondents (78.6%) also disagreed with the statement that “the victim was at fault for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.” The statement that stated that “overall, the victim was responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario” also received relatively little support as 79.5 percent of the respondents disagreed. While an abundance of respondents (78.5%) disagreed that “the victim was interested in having sex with the perpetrator,” the statement that received the most disagreement read: “the victim was obligated in having sex with the perpetrator” with 93 percent of respondents disagreeing.

### Independent Measures

The independent variables, *race-ethnicity*, and *gender* of the victim were measured by supplementing vignettes with six different types of victims: the white female, the white male, the black female, the black male, the Hispanic female, and the Hispanic male. In an effort to avoid complications, the relationships described in the scenarios only included heterosexual relationships. The race of the victims in the vignettes was White (32.6%), Black (35.1%), and Latino (32.3%). Similarly, descriptive frequencies indicated that female (52.3%) and male (47.7) victims were represented at fairly even rates.

Additionally, the *race-ethnicity* and *gender* of the respondents were measured. The race of respondents was primarily codified into five categories and included White, Black, Latino, Asian, Native American, and Other races. However, there were relatively few Latinos (0.7%) and Asians (7.5%) in the sample. Therefore, Latinos, Asians, and other race respondents were condensed into one category of “other race.” Race-ethnicity was recoded into White (81.9%), Black (7.2%) and Other races (10.8 %). Regarding gender, there were more female (58.3%) than male students (41.7%). These results are fairly representative of the student population at the university from which the sample was drawn. As reported by the Princeton Review (2014), the

overall gender composition of students is 56 percent female and 44 percent male. Likewise, the racial composition of this study is similar to the amount of White (83.3%), Black (6.28%), Hispanic (2.13%), and Asian (1.35%) students on campus. Table 2 illustrates these findings.

*Table 2. Descriptives Scale*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Percent (N)</b>	<b>Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Blameworthiness Scale		15.89 (4.60)	8-item scale, higher scores indicate more blameworthiness. Range= 8-29
Rape Myth Acceptance		43.51 (10.79)	22-item scale, higher scores indicate more acceptance. Range= 22-67
Respondent Gender			Gender of the respondents.
Male	41.7% (115)		
Female	58.3% (161)		
Respondent Race			Race of the respondents.
White	81.9% (227)		
Black	7.2% (20)		
Other	10.8% (30)		
Respondent Education			Educational levels of the respondents.
Freshman	23.0% (64)		
Sophomore	21.2% (59)		
Junior	23.7% (66)		
Senior	26.3% (73)		
Other	5.8% (16)		
Age		21.34 (3.78)	Age of the respondents. Range= 18-50
Victim Gender			Gender of the victims in the vignette.
Male	47.7% (133)		
Female	52.3 % (146)		
Offender Gender			Gender of the offenders in the vignette.
Male	52.3% (146)		
Female	47.3% (132)		
Victim Race			Race of the victims in the vignette.
White	32.6% (91)		
Black	35.1% (98)		
Latino	32.3% (90)		

The inclusion of the Illinois Rape Myth scale was used to identify whether or not students had pre-existing beliefs about rape victims that would enable them to place additional blame with these individuals. The scale contained 22 items, which sought to attribute blame to female rape victims, in general, and its statements were rooted in stereotypical gender norms. As such, they

typically reprimanded the victim for her behavior, dress, emotions, and her inability to physically resist her attacker. Though consistently used in research, the validity of this scale was again highlighted with a Cronbach alpha score of .911. The rape myth scale contained a range of 22 to 67 and generated a mean of 43.6 in this particular study, as shown in Table 2.

Overall, respondents disagreed with most statements, but tried to provide answers of neutrality. For example, the majority of respondents indicated that they either agreed or disagreed with the statement, rather than strongly agree or strongly disagree. More specifically, the respondents tended to disagree with the majority of statements. Even regarding the statements with the highest levels of agreement, the majority of respondents still did not agree with the attitudes. For instance, almost half (48%) of respondents agreed with the statements that asserted: “if a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble,” and “girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape.” Additionally, approximately 40 percent of respondents agreed with the claim that stated: “if a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex.” Attitudes of disagreement were strongest for the item that stated: “if the accused ‘rapist’ doesn’t have a weapon, you really can’t call it rape” with 98.6 percent of the respondents disagreeing. Around 96 percent of respondents disagreed with the following statements: “a rape probably doesn’t happen if a girl doesn’t have any bruises or marks,” and “it shouldn’t be considered rape if a guy is drunk and didn’t realize what he was doing.” A more specific breakdown of agreement and disagreement is shown in Table 3.

*Table 3.* Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

<b>Scale Item</b>	<b>SD % (N)</b>	<b>D % (N)</b>	<b>A % (N)</b>	<b>SA % (N)</b>	<b>Mean (SD)</b>
If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of hand.	40.2% (111)	30.4% (84)	25.0% (69)	4.3% (12)	4.10 (9.95)

Table 3 (continued)

When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble.	34.5% (96)	27.7% (77)	30.9% (86)	6.8% (19)	3.24 (5.83)
If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at a party, it is her own fault if she is raped.	45.7% (127)	43.5% (121)	9.0% (25)	1.8% (5)	3.67 (5.77)
If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble.	19.9% (55)	28.3% (78)	41.7% (115)	10.1% (28)	3.27 (8.22)
When girls get raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.	56.3% (156)	32.1% (89)	7.9% (22)	3.6% (10)	4.10 (8.12)
If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex.	15.9% (44)	24.5% (68)	44.8% (124)	14.8% (41)	3.11 (8.22)
When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.	23.6% (65)	29.1% (80)	36.0% (99)	11.3% (31)	4.03 (11.51)
Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.	15.3% (42)	36.1% (99)	39.8% (109)	8.8% (24)	3.97 (11.53)
Rape happens when a guy's sex drive goes out of control.	34.2% (94)	34.5% (95)	25.8% (71)	5.5% (15)	4.35 (11.47)
If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.	28.2% (77)	38.8% (106)	28.6% (78)	4.4% (12)	4.97 (13.99)
It shouldn't be considered rape if a guy is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.	63.9% (177)	32.1% (89)	3.6% (10)	0.4% (1)	4.28 (8.08)
If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.	48.0% (132)	37.1% (102)	11.3% (31)	3.6% (10)	4.33 (9.94)
If a girl doesn't physically resist sex – even if protesting verbally- it can't be considered rape.	54.5% (150)	32.7% (90)	10.5% (29)	2.2% (6)	4.77 (11.41)
If a girl doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape.	61.4% (170)	30.3% (84)	6.5% (18)	2.2% (5)	4.20 (8.10)
A rape probably doesn't happen if a girl doesn't have any bruises or marks.	75.5% (209)	21.3% (59)	2.9% (8)	0.4% (1)	4.40 (8.07)
If the accused "rapist" doesn't have a weapon, you can't really call it rape.	81.9% (227)	16.6% (46)	1.1% (3)	0.4% (1)	3.80 (.45)
If a girl doesn't say "no" she can't claim rape.	35.2% (96)	28.9% (79)	24.9 (68)	11.0% (30)	4.27 (11.53)
A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.	15.4% (42)	39.7% (108)	33.5% (91)	11.4% (31)	5.01 (15.13)
Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys.	15.0% (41)	39.7% (108)	33.5% (91)	11.4% (31)	4.73 (14.03)
A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often led the guy on and then had regrets.	21.0% (57)	34.3% (93)	35.4% (96)	9.2% (25)	5.10 (15.15)

Table 3 (continued)

A lot of times, girls who claim they were raped have emotional problems.	26.2% (71)	36.5% (99)	29.2% (79)	8.1% (22)	5.57 (16.11)
Girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape.	14.0% (38)	34.2% (93)	43.4% (118)	8.5% (23)	4.96 (15.14)

### Control Measures

To control for the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, the researcher controlled for the educational level and age of the respondents. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 50, but the average age of respondents was approximately 21 years old. Finally, the education level of the respondents was classified by rank: Freshmen (23.0%), Sophomores (21.2%), Juniors (23.7%), Seniors (26.3%) and Other (5.8%). Respondents who encompassed the last category of “other” were typically graduate students or students who were taking classes to fulfill requirements within their careers.

### Analytic Strategy

In addition to the descriptive frequencies that were generated, the analytic strategy incorporated the use of both ANOVA and multiple linear regression models. To determine whether or not the independent variables of victim gender, victim race, respondent gender, and respondent race were significant in relation to the dependent variable, blameworthiness, the use of ANOVA analyses were necessary. In order to measure the effect of each independent variable, a one-way ANOVA was used to determine the individual effects that victim gender, victim race, respondent gender, and respondent race had on the attributions of blame that were assigned to the victims in the vignette. To discover what, if any, interaction effect occurred with the emergence of victim gender and victim race, a two-way ANOVA was produced. The same was done for respondent race and respondent gender. Finally, a multiple linear regression analysis was generated to measure the effects of the independent variables on blameworthiness.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In order to examine the effects of race and gender on victim blaming, several statistical techniques were utilized. First, Analysis of Variance was used to examine the relationship between the gender and race of the victim and respondent on blameworthiness. Then multiple linear regression analysis was used to explore the relationship between the gender and race of the victim and respondents on blameworthiness while controlling for other important variables. The results are as follows.

#### ANOVA Results

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in order to measure the relationship between the discrete independent variables and the continuous dependent variable, as it is the appropriate analytic strategy to measure correlates between such variables (Szafran, 2012). Credited with the ability to measure correlates between nominal or ordinal independent variables and their effect on the dependent variable (Szafran, 2012) and to discover any variations in means among the independent variables, a one-way ANOVA test was utilized. Separate one-way between subjects ANOVAs were conducted to compare the victim's race and gender, as well as for the respondent race and gender on blameworthiness. The results indicated that the race of the victim ( $F(2)=1.45$ ,  $p=.24$ ) and gender of the victim ( $F(1)=.46$ ,  $p = .5$ .) were not significantly related to blameworthiness. Similarly, results revealed that the gender of the respondents ( $F(1)=1.92$ ,  $p=.17$ ) was also not significant in relation to blameworthiness. However, the race of the respondent was significant. The ANOVA showed that the mean score for white respondents ( $M=15.33$ ,  $SD =4.53$ ) was significantly different than the mean score for black respondents

( $M=17.95$ ,  $SD=3.89$ ) and other race respondents ( $M =19.04$ ,  $SD=4.09$ ) was significantly different from white respondents.

Two-way ANOVA tests have been likened to a progression of hypothesis tests (Szafran, 2012). These tests have the additional advantage of examining the effect of an additional variable. This interaction, which has been labeled the interaction effect, is of importance when investigating the combined impact of multiple variables (Szafran, 2012). The one-way ANOVA tests were executed for the victim race and victim gender, as well as the respondent race and respondent gender, but the two-way ANOVA allowed for further analyses of the combined interaction of these variables. Upon completion of the two-way ANOVA tests, the model for victim race and victim gender was not significant. This indicates that there was no interaction effect of victim gender and race on the attribution of blameworthiness. Additionally, neither the gender nor race of the victim portrayed in the vignette, individually, significantly impacted blameworthiness for the assault. Subsequently, the model examining the interaction effect between the respondent race and respondent sex was significant ( $p < 0.00$ ). However, the results indicated that only the respondent's race significantly impacted attributions of blameworthiness. Neither respondent gender nor the interaction of the respondent's gender and race were significant in differences for blameworthiness.

#### Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple linear regression models are also applicable measures used to examine the combined effect of multiple independent variables (Szafran, 2012). To analyze the effects of various interactions among independent variables, multiple linear regression modeling was conducted. Multiple linear regression modeling was appropriate because it allows for additional independent variables to be held constant. One multiple linear regression analysis was conducted

in the current study to measure the effects of all of the independent variables (i.e., victim gender and race, respondent gender and race, age, education and rape myth acceptance) on the dependent variable of blameworthiness. Results revealed that rape myth acceptance emerged as the greatest predictor of blameworthiness ( $B=.23$ ,  $p<.000$ ). A more specific breakdown of the significance of independent variables is shown in Table 4.

*Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression*

<b>Item</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>
Victim Gender	-.58	.49
Victim Race		
White (Reference)	-	-
Black	1.11	.59
Latino	.88	.61
Respondent Gender	.11	.51
Respondent Race		
White (Reference)	-	-
Black	1.50	.98
Other	.77	.92
Respondent Age	.04	.09
Respondent Education		
Freshman (Reference)	-	-
Sophomore	-.56	.76
Junior	.68	.76
Senior	-.75	.81
Other	-.23	1.30
Rape Myth Acceptance	.23***	.02
R <sup>2</sup>	.345***	

$p<.001$ \*\*\*  $p<.01$ \*\*  $p<.05$ \*

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The current study sought to add to the extant literature by investigating various characteristics of victims and respondents that might contribute to the prevalence of victim blaming for sexual assault, particularly on college campuses where incidents of acquaintance rape abound (Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000;). More specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine the intersection of victim and respondent characteristics, as well as their effects on blame attribution in scenarios of alcohol-perpetrated acquaintance rapes. It was predicted that the gender, race, and ethnicity of both the victims in the vignettes and the respondents would have an effect on blameworthiness, but the results did not support these predictions. Indeed, only one independent variable influenced blameworthiness: rape myth acceptance. Although the ANOVA analyses showed variation in means for the respondent race, this finding did not translate to the results obtained from the multiple linear regression models. Therefore, respondent race does not qualify as a significant predictor of blameworthiness. The results, however, indicated that the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994) was the strongest predictor of blameworthiness with individuals having higher scores in myth acceptance also having higher scores of victim blameworthiness.

Despite the lack of significance among many of the independent variables, there were several notable findings that emerged in this research. First, participants had low levels of victim blame in general. Even as the race and gender of the victims changed, the levels of blameworthiness remained steady. This finding contradicts the works of previous researchers, which have found correlation between victim characteristics and blameworthiness (George & Martinez, 2002; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Nagel et al., 2005; Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012). Victim race has often been associated with the amount of credibility that they receive. For

instance, George and Martinez (2002) noted that black victims were often seen as less trustworthy and, therefore, considered more culpable for their victimization. Even more, these researchers posited that many individuals believe that black victims are incapable of being raped (George & Martinez, 2002). The gender of the victim has also been paralleled with perceptions of blameworthiness in a multitude of studies (Davies et al., 2013; Howard, 1984; Nagel et al., 2005; Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012; Viki et al., 2004). Many previous studies have shown that respondents typically presume that males are incapable of experiencing sexual victimization (Davies et al., 2013; Howard, 1984). Male victims have frequently experienced victim blaming at higher rates than female victims (Nagel et al., 2005; Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012). Therefore, the lack of variation in blameworthiness due to the victim's race and gender for my study is particularly notable.

Respondents in the current study not only showed generally low levels of victim blaming, they also tended to have low support for statements attributing blame to the perpetrator in the rape myth acceptance scale. For example, many respondents provided low levels of agreement with the following statement: "an incident should not be considered rape if a guy did not realize what he was doing." There are several possible reasons why the respondents in this study might not subscribe to higher levels of perpetrator blame. For the male respondents in particular, previous researcher has noted that they may be more likely to empathize with perpetrators, who are typically male, because of their shared gender experiences (Donovan, 2004). Additionally, college campuses are where many incidents of alcohol-perpetrated acquaintance rapes occur (Abbey, 2008; Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994), therefore, this situation might be similar to experiences that both male and female students have encountered in their time in college. In response, they may be less likely to blame the perpetrator for fear of experiencing the same

confusion in situations that resemble the incident in the vignette (i.e. alcohol consumption at a college party).

The second salient theme that emerges from these findings rests with the respondent characteristics. In contrast to a substantial amount of research (Donovan, 2004; Kahn et al., 2011; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012), this study provided no support for the relationship between the respondents' gender and their tendency to assign blame to rape victims. Consistently, previous studies have shown that female respondents tend to have higher levels of empathy, understanding, and compassion for victims of sexual assaults (Donovan, 2004; Kahn et al., 2011). On the other hand, male respondents have demonstrated a greater propensity to blame rape victims (Donovan, 2004). However, findings of the current study did not support the previous literature. Again, it may be that due to the complexity and ambiguity of the sexual assault vignette, students may have been hesitant to blame victims. It may also be that both male and female respondents were unlikely to ascribe blame to the victim in this study because of the increased attention of sexual assaults on college campuses across the U.S. Thus, the finding that males and females are blaming victims at similar rates may be indicative in changes of attitudes towards sexual assault on college campuses.

Research has also repeatedly linked the race of respondents with perceptions of blameworthiness. To start, black individuals have long been the targets of multiple stereotypes, but one stereotype holds special significance with sexual assault and victim blaming: the Jezebel. The Jezebel myth holds black females to a higher standard of personal strength and resilience (Donovan, 2004), which may lead to less reporting of their sexual victimizations (Barth, 2012; Donovan, 2004). In addition, the Jim Crow era demarcated the beginning of stereotypes that portrayed black men as being sex-craved predators of white women (George & Martinez, 2002).

Therefore, it would seem as though black respondents would be more likely to assign blame to rape victims. However, black respondents were no more likely than white respondents to blame victims in the current study. Additionally, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) discovered that minorities typically prescribe to rape myths and are more likely than white respondents to blame victims.

In accordance with their strict adherence to the Catholic religion and traditional gender norms (Lira et al., 1999; Williams & Holmes, 1981), Latinas have been particularly supportive of blaming attitudes (Lefley et al., 1993; Lira et al., 1999; Williams, 1984). This assertion has been especially relevant when the age of Latina respondents was incorporated, such that younger Latinas possessed more adherence to gender norms and were more likely to blame victims than older Latinas (Williams, 1985). Latino respondents, on the other hand, have typically been more likely to blame rape victims once they had assimilated into the American culture (Fisher, 1987). The results in the current study are consistent with previous studies and provided support for the correlation between Latino respondents and blameworthiness. Respondent age and education were also accounted for in this study, but found to be insignificant. The descriptive results demonstrated a range in age from 18 to 50 years, but the mean age was approximately 21 years. Similarly, these results demonstrated that education levels of the respondents were represented at fairly even rates. Therefore, it might be that there was not enough difference in the age or education level of respondents to produce a substantial difference in attitudinal characteristics. Overall, it may be that college students are a younger subset of the general population that shares similar belief systems.

In this study, rape myth acceptance emerged as the strongest predictor of blameworthiness. Typically, a gender gap has been discovered with rape myth acceptance (Burt,

1980; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Tetreault & Barnett, 1987). To explain this gap, research has highlighted the importance of rape myth acceptance and has specifically surmised that males are most likely to subscribe to rape myths and females are more likely to demonstrate favorable attitudes towards victims (Donovan, 2004; Kahn et al., 2011; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Vandiver & Dupalo, 2012), and while subsequent analysis of the data in this study showed that females were less likely to accept rape myths, as seen in Appendix B, gender did not affect the major variable of concern, victim blameworthiness. When considering the previous findings on victim blaming, the results from the current study were unexpected and warrant further investigation.

In summation, the results implicated that victim and respondent characteristics were not predictive factors of blameworthiness in the vignette. However, the respondents' acceptance of rape myths did correspond with victim blaming, which is notable. Therefore, individuals were more likely to blame victims when they held more rape myths. However, neither gender nor race of the respondent significantly varied assumptions of blameworthiness for the victim. This is very interesting, given previous literature, and may be promising. These findings may be indicating a change in how students view sexual assaults on campus. Rather than race or gender being the defining variable for blame, attitudes towards rape was. This is a significant change from previous literature.

It is possible that another phenomenon is influencing the relationship between respondent race and gender and victim blaming. Further analysis of rape myth acceptance was conducted and as shown in Appendix B, gender was significant as was race with male respondents and those in the "other" race category being more likely to accept rape myths. Therefore, while gender was significant in accepting rape myths, which may have included a broader array of stereotypical rape assumptions, it was not significant for the sexual assault vignette, which



provided an example of a very specific situation. Thus, when faced with a detailed account of a specific incident with specific characters, the gender and race of the victim and offender and the respondent, was by and large not significant. This may indicate that while more abstract attitudes are easier to subscribe to, when given “real” account students may possess more empathy to the individuals portrayed. Again, this is seemingly a positive change from previous research.

Students may also be unable or unlikely to assign blame in alcohol-perpetrated acquaintance rape, which was described in the vignettes. Rather, the respondents may associate these scenarios with undesirable sexual experiences, where less blame is to be attributed to both parties. Described as unacknowledged rape victims, many victims who experience this more ambiguous sexual assault often mislabel their experience of sexual victimization (Bondurant, 2001; Koss, 1989; Littleton & Axsom, 2003; Littleton, Axsom, Radecki Breitkopf, & Berenson, 2006; Littleton, Rhatigan, Axsom, & Bondurant, 2007; Phillips, 2000). An abundance of research has linked unacknowledged rape with acquaintance rape (Bondurant, 2001; Botta & Pingree, 1997; Koss, 1985; Littleton et al., 2007), which is the most prevalent form of sexual assault on college campuses (Tjaden & Theonnes, 2000), and the type of sexual assault portrayed in this study’s vignette. The prevalence of unacknowledged rape among college rape victims is especially alarming. Therefore, while our findings may be indicative of a positive change, they may just as well be indicative of a problematic set of attitudes, where there was not blame given to the victim, because it was not seen as a bad situation where blame was needed. Specifically, researchers have discovered that 42% to 73% of these victims are unlikely to define their victimization as a true rape (Bondurant, 2001; Botta & Pingree, 1997; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2003; Littleton et al., 2007), and if students did not see it as a “real” rape, they may not have needed to blame anyone for the incident. This phenomenon might provide some explanation for

the findings in this study, which have demonstrated that the respondents were more likely to provide support for rape myth acceptance than for blameworthiness.

### Implications

The results from the current study carry a variety of implications for the issue of sexual assaults in educational programs and policies. College campuses have attempted to provide educational programs to their students, but have been unsuccessful when the classes centered solely on risk reduction and self-defense techniques (Katz & Moore, 2013). Rather, Katz and Moore (2013) have advocated for the implementation of bystander education programs on college campuses. Bystanders have been likened to interested third parties who are committed to sharing communal responsibility of sexual violence prevention (Katz & Moore, 2013). Analyses have provided hopeful results for the efficacy of bystander prevention programs, but the programs may be responsible for fostering additional positive behaviors. In addition to educating students, the bystander education programs have been credited with instilling in participants a greater tendency to intervene in high-risk situations (Banyard, 2008; Katz & Moore, 2013). High-risk situations often include parties on college campuses where alcohol consumption is occurring (Koelsch, Brown, & Boisen, 2012). Even more, the programs are said to reduce rape myth acceptance among participants (Katz & Moore, 2013). Koelsch and colleagues (2012) cautioned that female students already engage in protective behaviors when in attendance at college parties, which may inhibit bystanders from intervening. Still, bystander education programs have successful outcomes and should be implemented throughout college campuses to raise awareness of sexual violence prevention.

With the high number of rape victims on college campuses (Tjaden & Theonnes, 2000), it would also be beneficial to implement rape crisis centers for students in need of assistance.

These centers are well equipped to address the needs of rape victims and typically contain a slew of trained individuals who advocate for the victims (Obinna, 2001). In the process of supporting rape victims, Slaikou (1999) has stated that the crisis center workers and volunteers combine efforts to provide a source of safety and comfort where victims can freely express their needs and emotions. Findings have suggested that approximately only five percent of victims ever seek the assistance of rape crisis centers (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987), but the presence of a rape crisis center on college campuses may increase the number of victims who receive assistance.

### Limitations

While the current study provided many interesting and notable findings, it is not without its limitations. In particular, limitations arose with the sample size and the lack of diversity among the students at the mid-sized, Southeastern college campus. The sample contained 279 respondents, which was sufficient for the purpose of this particular study. However, it would have been beneficial to expand the survey to other locations to secure a larger sample size that is more representative of college students across the country. Along this ideology, another limitation was encountered with the demographics of the study. For example, the sample was comprised predominantly of white, females, which mimics the demographics of the entire campus. When measuring for the race, gender, and ethnicity of the respondents, it would be more appropriate to conduct this research in more diverse locations.

While not considered a direct limitation, there was a recent phenomenon on this particular campus that may have influenced the results. Specifically, there was a rise in the reporting of sexual assaults at this particular campus, which also increased media and public attention to this issue, and may have influenced the results. During the Fall 2014 semester, the campus directed attention to a number of alcohol-facilitated sexual assaults. In response to these

reports, the campus posted a variety of resources for students when officials issued mass emails in response to each allegation of sexual assault. Also, this attention motivated campus officials and counselors to provide additional education to students about sexual assaults, which included the public presentation of a highly regarded researcher in sexual violence and victimization (Hrenda, 2015). Overall, this may have heightened the respondents' sensitivity of sexual assaults on college campuses.

### Conclusion

Sexual assaults on college campuses warrant special consideration with the abundance of previous research and media attention that has already been dedicated to this subject (Bello, 2013; Reese, 2013; Tjaden & Theonnes, 2000). The findings from the current study have contradicted previous research, predominantly with victim and respondent characteristics having little to no effect on blameworthiness. Victim characteristics were insignificant in this study, but future research should still attempt to measure the effect of both victim gender and race on blame attribution. As previously mentioned, rape myth acceptance was a greater predictor of blameworthiness than respondent race and gender, which is a particularly interesting result. Female respondents have been linked with lower rates of rape myth acceptance (Donovan, 2004; Kahn et al., 2011), but the finding from the current study serves as an exception. Replications of studies that incorporate the effect of respondent race and gender on rape myth acceptance are necessary. To better explain the relationship between gender and rape myth acceptance, additional studies should incorporate similar survey items across more diverse populations.

Other factors have been associated with an increased proclivity to blame victims. For example, alcohol consumption, victim attire, and victim conformity to gender norms have been associated with an increased perception of blameworthiness (Campbell, 1982; Glick & Friske,

1996; Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Madriz, 1997; Richardson & Campbell, 1982; Vali & Rizzo, 1991; Viki et al., 2004). Each of these factors should be investigated in a more complete manner to grasp a broader, more accurate picture of the prevalence of victim blaming on college campuses and the victim characteristics that enhance the amount of blame they receive. Alcohol consumption was an important characteristic included in the vignettes of the current study, but future research should incorporate the alcohol consumption of both victims and offenders as an independent variable. Also, future research should consider the inclusion of additional independent variables of victim characteristics and situational factors that may enhance our understanding of victim blaming on college campuses. In conclusion, the findings from this particular study may be indicative of a positive shift in attitudinal perceptions of sexual assaults on college campuses. Therefore, this study should be replicated on other college campuses across the nation to see if this phenomenon is replicated, which would support the positive shift in ideology.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Survey Instruments: Vignettes

**Vignette 1: Lauren**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the scenario below and then answer each of the questions to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the scale given to you.*

*Finally, answer the questions provided at the end of the statements in Section 2 before exiting the survey.*

Lauren, a young college student, attended a party on Friday night. Sam, a friend of the host, also attended this party. They did not know each other previously, but met that night at the party and visited each other throughout the evening. Sam noticed Lauren had drunk quite a bit of alcohol, so he thought he would offer her a ride home. Besides, he thought she was quite attractive, especially with her big, blue eyes and blond hair.

Lauren accepted Sam’s offer to drive her home. When they got to Lauren’s apartment building, Sam walked Lauren up to her apartment and gave her a kiss goodnight. Lauren invited Sam into her apartment to “watch a movie.” Sam accepted, so Lauren put in a movie for them to watch. Neither of them was actually watching the movie; instead they were kissing, touching, and stroking each other. They undressed each other and continued making out. Lauren told Sam she did not want to have intercourse but was enjoying making out with him. Later Lauren felt Sam’s penis penetrate her vagina. She told him to stop, but he did not.

**Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your opinion: 1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly disagree**

Lauren had control over the events that occurred in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
Lauren acted carelessly in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
Lauren’s behavior was responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Lauren was at fault for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Lauren was to blame for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Overall, Lauren was most responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Lauren was obligated to have sex with Sam.	1	2	3	4
Lauren was interested in having sex with Sam.	1	2	3	4

**Vignette 2: James.**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the scenario below and then answer each of the questions to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the scale given to you. Finally, answer the questions provided at the end of the statements in Section 2 before exiting the survey.*

James, a young college student, attended a party on Friday night. Jenny, a friend of the host, also attended this party. They did not know each other previously, but met that night at the party and visited each other throughout the evening. Jenny noticed James had drunk quite a bit of alcohol, so she thought she would offer him a ride home. Besides, she thought he was quite attractive, especially with big, blue eyes and blond hair.

James accepted Jenny's offer to drive him home. When they got to James' apartment building, Jenny walked James up to his apartment and gave him a kiss goodnight. James invited Jenny into his apartment to "watch a movie." Jenny accepted, so James put in a movie for them to watch. Neither of them was actually watching the movie; instead they were kissing, touching, and stroking each other. They undressed each other and continued making out. James told Jenny he did not want to have intercourse but was enjoying making out with her. Later James felt his penis penetrate Jenny's vagina. He told her to stop, but she did not.

**Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your opinion: 1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly disagree**

James had control over the events that occurred in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
James acted carelessly in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
James' behavior was responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
James was at fault for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
James was to blame for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Overall, James was most responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
James was obligated to have sex with Jenny.	1	2	3	4
James was interested in having sex with Jenny.	1	2	3	4

**Vignette 3: Gabby.**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the scenario below and then answer each of the questions to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the scale given to you. Finally, answer the questions provided at the end of the statements in Section 2 before exiting the survey.*

Gabby, a young, African American college student, attended a party on Friday night. Sam, a friend of the host, also attended this party. They did not know each other previously, but met that night at the party and visited each other throughout the evening. Sam noticed Gabby had drunk quite a bit of alcohol, so he thought he would offer her a ride home. Besides, he thought she was quite attractive, especially with her big, brown eyes and curly hair.

Gabby accepted Sam’s offer to drive her home. When they got to Gabby’s apartment building, Sam walked Gabby up to her apartment and gave her a kiss goodnight. Gabby invited Sam into her apartment to “watch a movie.” Sam accepted, so Gabby put in a movie for them to watch. Neither of them was actually watching the movie; instead they were kissing, touching, and stroking each other. They undressed each other and continued making out. Gabby told Sam she did not want to have intercourse but was enjoying making out with him. Later Gabby felt Sam’s penis penetrate her vagina. She told him to stop, but he did not.

**Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your opinion: 1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly disagree**

Gabby had control over the events that occurred in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
Gabby acted carelessly in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
Gabby’s behavior was responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Gabby was at fault for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Gabby was to blame for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Overall, Gabby was most responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Gabby was obligated to have sex with Sam.	1	2	3	4
Gabby was interested in having sex with Sam.	1	2	3	4

**Vignette 4: Carter.**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the scenario below and then answer each of the questions to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the scale given to you. Finally, answer the questions provided at the end of the statements in Section 2 before exiting the survey.*

Carter, a young, African American college student, attended a party on Friday night. Jenny, a friend of the host, also attended this party. They did not know each other previously, but met that night at the party and visited each other throughout the evening. Jenny noticed Carter had drunk quite a bit of alcohol, so she thought she would offer him a ride home. Besides, she thought he was quite attractive, especially with his big, brown eyes and dark skin.

Carter accepted Jenny's offer to drive him home. When they got to Carter's apartment building, Jenny walked Carter up to his apartment and gave him a kiss goodnight. Carter invited Jenny into his apartment to "watch a movie." Jenny accepted, so Carter put in a movie for them to watch. Neither of them was actually watching the movie; instead they were kissing, touching, and stroking each other. They undressed each other and continued making out. Carter told Jenny he did not want to have intercourse but was enjoying making out with her. Later Carter felt his penis penetrate Jenny's vagina. He told her to stop, but she did not.

**Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your opinion: 1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly disagree**

Carter had control over the events that occurred in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
Carter acted carelessly in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
Carter's behavior was responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Carter was at fault for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Carter was to blame for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Overall, Carter was most responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Carter was obligated to have sex with Jenny.	1	2	3	4
Carter was interested in having sex with Jenny.	1	2	3	4

**Vignette 5: Maria.**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the scenario below and then answer each of the questions to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the scale given to you. Finally, answer the questions provided at the end of the statements in Section 2 before exiting the survey.*

Maria, a young Latina college student, attended a party on Friday night. Sam, a friend of the host, also attended this party. They did not know each other previously, but met that night at the party and visited each other throughout the evening. Sam noticed Maria had drunk quite a bit of alcohol, so he thought he would offer her a ride home. Besides, he thought she was quite attractive, especially with her long, dark hair and tanned skin.

Maria accepted Sam’s offer to drive her home. When they got to Maria’s apartment building, Sam walked Maria up to her apartment and gave her a kiss goodnight. Maria invited Sam into her apartment to “watch a movie.” Sam accepted, so Maria put in a movie for them to watch. Neither of them was actually watching the movie; instead they were kissing, touching, and stroking each other. They undressed each other and continued making out. Maria told Sam she did not want to have intercourse but was enjoying making out with him. Later Maria felt Sam’s penis penetrate her vagina. She told him to stop, but he did not.

**Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your opinion: 1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly disagree**

Maria had control over the events that occurred in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
Maria acted carelessly in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
Maria’s behavior was responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Maria was at fault for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Maria was to blame for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Overall, Maria was most responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Maria was obligated to have sex with Sam.	1	2	3	4
Maria was interested in having sex with Sam.	1	2	3	4

**Vignette 6: Matteo.**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the scenario below and then answer each of the questions to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement using the scale given to you. Finally, answer the questions provided at the end of the statements in Section 2 before exiting the survey.*

Matteo, a young Latino college student, attended a party on Friday night. Jenny, a friend of the host, also attended this party. They did not know each other previously, but met that night at the party and visited each other throughout the evening. Jenny noticed Matteo had drunk quite a bit of alcohol, so she thought she would offer him a ride home. Besides, she thought he was quite attractive, especially with his tan complexion and dark hair.

Matteo accepted Jenny’s offer to drive him home. When they got to Matteo’s apartment building, Jenny walked Matteo up to his apartment and gave him a kiss goodnight. Matteo invited Jenny into his apartment to “watch a movie.” Jenny accepted, so Matteo put in a movie for them to watch. Neither of them was actually watching the movie; instead they were kissing, touching, and stroking each other. They undressed each other and continued making out. Matteo told Jenny he did not want to have intercourse but was enjoying making out with her. Later Matteo felt his penis penetrate Jenny’s vagina. He told her to stop, but she did not.

**Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your opinion: 1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly disagree**

Matteo had control over the events that occurred in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
Matteo acted carelessly in the described scenario.	1	2	3	4
Matteo’s behavior was responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Matteo was at fault for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Matteo was to blame for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Overall, Matteo was most responsible for the event that occurred at the end of the scenario.	1	2	3	4
Matteo was obligated to have sex with Jenny.	1	2	3	4
Matteo was interested in having sex with Jenny.	1	2	3	4



## Appendix B

### Multiple Linear Regression Results on Rape Myth Acceptance

Another multiple linear regression analysis was generated to measure the effects of respondent race, gender, age, and education level on rape myth acceptance. This allowed for further investigation of the respondent characteristics that enable college students to condone rape myths. The following table displays a more detailed description of the results.

Multiple Linear Regression Results on Rape Myth Acceptance

<b>Item</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>
Respondent Race		
White (Reference)	-	-
Black	4.38	2.63
Other	6.73**	2.27
Respondent Gender	-4.13**	1.34
Respondent Education		
Freshman (Reference)	-	-
Sophomore	-1.55	2.00
Junior	-3.86	2.00
Senior	-2.12	2.16
Other	-6.65	3.48
R <sup>2</sup>	.12	

p<.001\*\*\* p<.01\*\* p<.05\*

VITA

KIRSTEN ANN PIATAK

Personal Data:

Date of birth: February 5, 1990

Place of birth: San Mateo, CA

Education:

Fairfield Area High School, Fairfield, PA 2008

Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA:

B.A. Criminology and Spanish, May 2013

East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN:

M.A. Criminal Justice and Criminology, May 2015

Professional Experience:

Graduate Assistant

Department of Criminal Justice/Criminology, 2013-2015

Research Projects:

“Assessing Victim Blame: Intersections of Rape Victim Race, Ethnicity, and Gender” Poster presented at the 2014 SCJA Conference.

Co-authored with Dr. Courtney Crittenden, Ph.D.

Honors and Awards:

Dean’s List

Graduated Summa cum Laude, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

John J. Prandy Criminology Award, Indiana University of Pennsylvania