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Rape Perception and the Function of Ambivalent Sexism and Gender-Role Traditionality

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This study explores the roles of benevolent sexism (BS), hostile sexism (HS), and gender-role traditionality (GRT) in minimizing rape, blaming the victim, and excusing the rapist. As predicted, hostile sexists minimize the seriousness of the rape in both stranger and date-rape scenarios. In the victim-blame scale, both BS and GRT significantly moderate victim blame in a date but not stranger scenario. BS and GRT moderate the perpetrator-excuse measure in a date scenario but HS is the significant moderator in a stranger scenario. These results show that external observers make different assumptions about a rape incident based on their GRT, BS, and HS levels in different victim-perpetrator relationships.

Keywords: *rape; ambivalent sexism; gender-role traditionality*

Others' perceptions of and attitudes toward rape victims and perpetrators are important components in the victim's treatment and recovery. Research suggests that two thirds of rape victims tell someone about their experience at some point after the assault and that they tend to seek support more from an informal social network (family and friends) than from more formal assistance (police, clergy, and doctors) (Golding, Siegel, & Sorenson, 1989; Koss, Dinero, & Seibel, 1988). Ullman (1996) reported that more than the other resources positive reactions from friends, such as emotional support, have been strongly associated with better recovery outcomes. In addition, negative social reactions—minimizing an incident of sexual assault, blaming the victim for the rape incident, and excusing the rapist and his or her actions—were significantly associated with increased psychological

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distress, delayed recovery, and poor perceptions about physical health (Ullman, 1996; Ullman & Siegel, 1995). Consequently, rape victims suffer not only from the actual assault but also from the negative reactions of the people around them. Therefore, it is vital to examine individuals' perceptions of and attitudes toward rape, rape victims, and rapists to explore what factors influence those negative perceptions.

Much of the early research on the perception of rape focuses on the sex-role socialization analysis of rape (Burt, 1980; Check & Malamuth, 1983). This theory proposes that men and women develop normative gender role behaviors and beliefs as set by society. In the case of heterosexual sexual interaction, society expects men to be dominant, powerful, and sexually aggressive but expects women to be passive, submissive, and sexually reluctant. Burt (1980) asserted that sexually aggressive behaviors are supported through cultural attitudes and beliefs that promote false beliefs about rape and a hostile climate toward rape victims. She termed these cultural attitudes and beliefs *rape myth acceptance*. She found that traditional gender role attitudes were one of the significant predictors of rape myth acceptance and were largely responsible for rape proclivity and negative attitudes toward rape victims. Support for this theory has come through research on gender-role traditionalism (GRT), which has been found to significantly moderate denying and justifying male sexual aggression against women (Bridges, 1991; Simonson & Subich, 1999; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005). More recently, however, Abrams, Viki, Masser, and Bohner (2003) found that ambivalent sexism, particularly benevolent sexism, was a significant moderator of negative attitudes toward acquaintance rape victim and that rape myth acceptance did not moderate the effects of type of rape on victim blame. Since Glick and Fiske (1996) ascertained the different type of sexist attitude from traditional sexism, recent rape perception studies have increasingly emphasized the role of ambivalent sexism.

Ambivalent Sexism, GRT, and Perceptions of Rape

Glick and Fiske (1996) held that there are two superficially opposing, and hence ambivalent (AS, for ambivalent sexism), faces of sexist attitudes that are, beneath the surface, positively related to each other. The first face is hostile sexism (HS), and it consists of the sorts of negative and antipathetic attitudes toward women that are typically thought to comprise gender-based prejudices. The second face is called benevolent sexism (BS), and it consists

of manifestly positive and sympathetic attitudes toward women that are not typically thought of as necessarily sexist. Specifically, Glick and Fiske (1996) defined *BS* as a “set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles but that are subjectively positive in feeling tone and also tend to elicit behaviors typically categorized as prosocial or intimacy seeking” (p. 491). Whereas these faces have been empirically shown to coexist across cultures (Feather, 2004; Glick, Fiske, & Mladinic, 2000), especially in cultures wherein men have more power than women (Glick & Fiske, 1996), according to Glick and Fiske (1996), *HS* and *BS* tend to be positively correlated because they both justify traditional gender role and power relations.

Blaming Rape Victims

A recent study by Abrams et al. (2003) examined the mechanism of victim blame by using *AS* as a moderator. According to Glick and Fiske (1996), ambivalent sexists tend to perceive women as good or bad to avoid feeling conflicted about their coexisting positive and negative attitudes toward women. For example, for benevolent sexists to protect women, women need to be seen as sexually pure and innocent. Therefore, if a woman violates benevolent sexists' expectations (being raped by her date when she is supposed to be sexually pure), she no longer deserves to be protected. Abrams et al. (2003) proposed that *BS* can explain the phenomenon of victim blame in the case of acquaintance rape. Indeed, they found that individuals who endorsed high *BS* blamed the victims of acquaintance rape more often than did individuals who endorsed low *BS*. However, *BS* did not moderate tendencies to blame the victims of stranger rape. They argued that this phenomenon occurs because the victim who is raped by her date violates the benevolent sexists' expectation that women are sexually pure and innocent. The expectations that benevolent sexists have are, in fact, traditional gender-role expectations (Glick, Diebold, & Bailey-Werner, 1997); however, to date, no studies have explored the relationship between *GRT* and *AS* as moderators in explaining the attitude toward rape and rape victims. Therefore, in this study the moderating roles of *GRT*, *HS*, and *BS* are investigated to examine external observers' perceptions of and attitudes toward rape, rape victims, and rapists.

Minimization of the Seriousness of Rape

Minimization of the seriousness of rape is particularly important to investigate. Campbell, Wasco, Ahrens, Sefl, and Barnes (2001) found that one of

the most damaging factors for rape victims was not only being blamed by their friends and families but also not being believed by their formal and informal social support networks. Previous studies examined the minimization of rape victims by investigating the roles of GRT and found that adherence to traditional gender roles is significantly associated with minimization of the seriousness of rape (Bridges, 1991; Simonson & Subich, 1999; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005). Recent research has attempted to understand the mechanisms of rape perception by examining the moderating role of AS to discover varied aspects of attitudes toward rapists and rape victims. However, these studies appear to focus entirely on some aspect of negative response from external observers: blaming the victim or excusing the rapist (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2004). In this study, the role of minimization of the seriousness of rape, which is one of the most detrimental forms of rape perception, is explored. It is proposed that AS, particularly HS, may play an important role in explaining the minimization of rape victims. In particular, unlike the findings from previous studies, it is proposed that BS does not predict the minimization of the seriousness of rape.

Glick and Fiske (1996) argued that biologically men must rely on women as bearers of their children and for the satisfaction of their sexual needs, and that this dyadic dependency creates a unique situation in which members of a powerful group must depend on members of a subordinate group. Some men, particularly hostile sexists, fear and resent women who use sexuality or feminist ideology to seize male power. Therefore, hostile sexists may deny or minimize the seriousness of rape by assuming that a female rape victim is making a fuss about a rape incident by exaggerating the seriousness of the incident, all the while assuming that the rape victim was using sexual allure to gain benefit (such as money or attentions) for herself or to detain, dominate, or destroy the perpetrator. In fact, the typical items that measure HS are the ideas that women are easily offended, exaggerate problems, seek power, and ask for unreasonable demands. In this study, I hypothesized that individuals who endorsed high HS tend to deny the seriousness of the rape incident more than do individuals who endorse low HS. In addition, I investigated the relationship between HS, BS, and GRT as moderators to predict minimization of the seriousness of the rape incident.

Excusing the Rapist

Viki et al. (2004) asserted that there is a need to explore the mechanism of rapist blame (as well as excusing rapists), because laypersons participate in the criminal justice process as jurors in making judgments about the

responsibility of rapists. In their examination of the role BS plays in how people make decisions relating to cases of both stranger rape and acquaintance rape, Viki et al. found that BS but not HS moderates the effects of type of rape on rapist blame. They attributed this finding to the fact that excusing the rapist results from the views that the rape victim is viewed as blameworthy or as having behaved inappropriately and that BS predicts victim blame. They further argued that HS does not predict the idealization of women in traditional gender roles on victim blame; consequently, HS would not predict rapist blame. Nevertheless, because the majority of rape perpetrators are, in fact, males, one cannot ignore laypersons' perceptions of the traditional gender roles of males, which assume that men are sexually dominant and aggressive (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Other research proposes that perceptions of traditional gender roles are significantly associated with excusing rapists (Simonson & Subich, 1999; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005). No research study addresses the relationship between GRT and AS as moderators on judgment for excusing rapist; thus, this study examined the role of GRT, BS, and HS to predict external observers' attitudes toward rapists.

Method

Participants

A total of 126 undergraduate students (58 women, 68 men) from a large private university in the Rocky Mountain region of the United States participated in this study. All participants were recruited from an undergraduate research pool in introductory psychology courses and received research credit that fulfilled a course requirement. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 26 years, with an average age of 20.4. Of those participants, 92% had never been married and 8% were divorced or separated; 89% were White or Caucasian, 6% were Hispanic or Latino(a), 4% were Asian American, and 1% were African American.

Procedure

Participants were told that the study would investigate how people react to several types of sexual interactions between a man and a woman. All participants were informed that they would be asked to read a rape scenario in which a man and a woman were depicted either as strangers or as a dating

couple. An equal number of participants were randomly assigned to stranger- or date-rape scenarios. The ratio of men and women who were assigned to the stranger- and date-rape scenarios was approximately equal. After participants read the assigned scenario, they were asked to complete the Rape-Supportive Attribution Scale (Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Monson, 1998); the Sex-Role Stereotypical Victim Blame Attribution Scale (Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Monson, 1998); the Excuse Rapist Scale (Simonson & Subich, 1999), the Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale, Form BB (King & King, 1990); the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1997); and a demographic survey.

Design

This study used a between-group design with type of scenario as the independent variable and minimization of rape, blaming victim, and excusing perpetrator as dependent variables. I selected HS, BS, and GRT as moderators to explain the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variables.

Scenarios

The heterosexual rape scenarios used in the study were the same scenarios used by Simonson and Subich (1999). In each scenario, a woman is depicted as forcefully saying “no” to a man’s sexual proposition. He ignores her rejection, forces himself on her, and completes the act of intercourse. Both scenarios were identical except for the level of relationship between the victim and the rapist. In the stranger-rape scenario, a woman was raped by a man whom she had never seen before; in the date-rape scenario, a woman was raped by her date.

Measures

Rape-Supportive Attribution Scale. The Rape-Supportive Attribution Scale was developed by Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998), and it purports to measure the degree to which external observers minimize the seriousness of sexual assault. This scale will be referred to as the *rape-minimization measure* in the remainder of this document. Minimization of the seriousness of the rape incident was examined by using items that show the victim was not perceived as psychologically damaged from the sexual assault and show that the situation was not perceived as a violent act or as

violating the victim's rights. Participants respond to items on an 11-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 10 (*to great extent*). This measure also examines the extent to which one considers the incident in the scenarios as rape, ranging from 0 (*definitely not rape*) to 10 (*definitely rape*). All items were reverse-scored and summed. Total scores could range from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating greater minimization of the rape incident. Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998) reported an internal consistency estimate of 0.82.

Sex-Role Stereotypical Victim Blame Attribution Scale. The Sex-Role Stereotypical Victim Blame Attribution Scale was also developed by Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998). This measure will be referred to as the *victim-blame measure* in the rest of the document because this five-item instrument assesses one's perceptions of victim blame by reviewing the victim's control of and responsibility for the rape, desire for intercourse, enjoyment of sexual assault, and the victim's provocation of the incident. The items were scored on an 11-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 10 (*a great extent*). All items were summed and higher scores reflect the endorsement of greater victim blame in the assigned rape scenarios. Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Monson (1998) reported an internal consistency of 0.64.

Excuse Rapist Scale. The Excuse Rapist Scale was developed by Simonson and Subich (1999) and includes five items that examine perceptions of the rapist's understanding of the victim's refusal, ability to stop the incident, excessive sex drive, responsibility for the rape, and psychological problems. Each item was answered on an 11-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 0 (*not at all*) to 10 (*a great extent*). All items were reversed and summed. Higher scores represent the tendency to excuse the rapist. Simonson and Subich (1999) reported an alpha reliability of 0.45. In this study, the items measuring the perpetrator's psychological problems and his excessive sex drive were dropped to make a cohesive measure.

Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale, Form BB. The Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale, Form BB (SRES-BB) is widely used to assess GRT. The SRES-BB includes 25 items measuring educational roles, employment roles, marital roles, parental roles, and stoical-interpersonal-heterosexual roles. Participants responded to items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Higher scores represent greater endorsement of egalitarian gender-role beliefs and attitudes. However, because GRT is the focus

of this study, all items were recoded to indicate that individuals who scored high in this measure endorse rigid GRT.

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) is a 22-item inventory with two subscales: HS and BS. Participants responded to the items by using a 6-point Likert-type scale in which 0 = *strongly disagree*; 1 = *somewhat disagree*; 2 = *disagree slightly*; 3 = *agree slightly*; 4 = *somewhat agree*; and 5 = *strongly agree*. An example of items on the HS subscale is “When women lose to men in fair competitions they typically complain about being discriminated against,” and an example of items on the BS subscale is “Women should be cherished and protected by men.” The reported reliability for BS, HS, and total ASI were 0.89, 0.81, and 0.90, respectively (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Results

Reliabilities, Means, and Correlations Between Measurements

Reliability coefficients for the dependent variables were as follows: Rape Supportive Attribution Scale = 0.78; Sex-Role Stereotypical Victim Blame Attribution Scale = 0.82; Excuse Rapist Scale = 0.76. The internal consistencies for predictor variables were as follows: SRES-BB = 0.93; BS = 0.73; HS = 0.86. The reliability levels of all dependent measurements and predictor instruments were acceptable. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for each variable for male and female respondents, and Table 2 shows the correlations among the dependent variables as well as between the dependent variables and the presumed mediators.

Preliminary Analyses

All measurements were centered prior to the analyses (Jaccard, Turrissi, & Wan, 1990). Similar to Abrams et al. (2003) and Viki et al. (2004), there were no main or interaction effects of gender (with BS, HS, and GRT) on any of the dependent variables (all $ps > .05$). Thus, gender was not included in later analyses. Correlation analyses were performed to investigate the relationships between predictor variables (Table 2). Similar to previous findings, HS and BS were significantly positively correlated. Glick and Fiske (1997) compared the ASI to other sexism scales. Although they did not explore the relationship

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations for the Dependent
Variables and the Mediator Variables in Relation to Gender

Variable	Men		Women	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Dependent Variables				
RSAS	35.8	4.98	36.1	3.01
SRSVBAS	6.81	7.44	6.01	6.08
ERS	19.21	1.66	19.36	1.37
Predictor Variables				
SRES-BB	31.36	14.38	21.43	10.70
HS	2.58	0.87	2.11	0.80
BS	3.24	0.69	2.73	0.68

Note: RSAS = Rape-Supportive Attribution Scale; SRSVBAS = Sex-Role Stereotypical Victim Blame Attribution Scale; ERS = Excuse Rapist Scale; SRES-BB= Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale, Form BB; HS = Hostile Sexism subscale; BS = Benevolent Sexism subscale. SRES-BB is designed to measure egalitarian gender roles but it is recoded to indicate gender-role traditionality rather than gender egalitarianism.

Table 2
Correlation Coefficients Among the Mediator Variables

Scale	Egalitarianism	Benevolent Sexism	Hostile Sexism
Gender-role traditionality	—	0.397**	0.518**
Benevolent sexism		—	0.250**
Hostile sexism			—

** $p < .01$.

between GRT assessed by the SRES and ASI in their validation study, they asserted that traditional gender roles should be associated with the construct of AS. The preliminary analyses in the present study did, in fact, confirm their hypothesis that both BS and HS are significantly positively correlated with egalitarianism ($r = 0.39$ and $r = 0.51$, respectively; $p < .01$). That is, individuals who are high in BS and HS tend to have more rigid GRT. To examine whether all predictors (BS, HS, and GRT) could have independent relationships with the types of rape, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed. It showed that there was no significant effect

Table 3
Regression Analyses of the Effects of
Predictors on Rape Minimization

Regression Model	β	<i>t</i>
Step 1: Main effect		
Hostile sexism	.34	3.83***
Benevolent sexism	.07	0.80
Gender-role traditionality	.04	0.46
Type	.35	4.53***
Step 2: Interaction effect		
Hostile Sexism \times Type	.13	1.04
Benevolent Sexism \times Type	.04	0.33
Gender-Role Traditionality \times Type	.27	1.22

*** $p < .001$.

from type of rape on any of the predictors. This result implies that all predictors could be tested as independent predictors to determine whether they predicted the effects of type of rape on all dependent variables. Furthermore, multiple regression analyses were performed to investigate whether predictors had significant effects on the dependent variables.

Minimization of Seriousness of Rape

Hierarchical regression analyses were performed to test the impact of type of rape, BS, HS, and GRT on the rape-minimization measure. In the first model, all predictors and types of rape were entered to assess the main effects for all predictor variables. Significant main effects of type of rape and HS were obtained ($\beta = 0.35$ and $\beta = 0.34$, respectively, $ps < .001$). As previous studies indicated, external observers tend to minimize the seriousness of the date-rape scenario more than that of the stranger-rape scenario. Furthermore, as hypothesized, main effects of HS on the minimization of the seriousness of the rape were obtained. Consistent with the hypothesis, individuals who scored high on the HS subscale tended to minimize the rape more than did individuals who scored low on the HS subscale. No significant main effects of BS or GRT were found ($\beta = 0.07$ and $\beta = 0.04$, respectively, *ns*; see Table 3).

Because the type of rape had a significant main effect, the interaction effect with type of rape should be appropriate to test. Thus, in the second model, the interaction terms (BS \times Type of Rape, HS \times Type of Rape, and

GRT \times Type of Rape) were entered. No significant interaction effect was obtained from these analyses (all $ps = ns$). BS, HS, and GRT are all significantly related to minimization of the rape incident, yet when HS is controlled BS and GRT no longer have significant effects. These findings indicate that HS, not BS or GRT, was a significant predictor for minimization of both stranger- and date-rape incidents.

Blaming Rape Victim

Hierarchical regression analyses were again performed to test the effects of the type of rape, BS, HS, and GRT on the victim-blame measure. In the first model, all predictors and types of rape were entered to assess the main effects on the victim-blame measure. Significant main effects of type of rape, BS, HS, and GRT were obtained ($\beta = 0.32$, $\beta = 0.19$, $\beta = 0.22$, $\beta = 0.29$, respectively, $ps < .02$). In the second model, the interaction terms (BS \times Type of Rape, HS \times Type of Rape, and GRT \times Type of Rape) were entered. As predicted, the interaction terms BS \times Type of Rape and GRT \times Type of Rape were significant on the victim-blame measure ($\beta = 0.31$, $t(3) = 2.56$, $p < .01$; $\beta = 0.53$, $t(3) = 2.54$, $p < .01$, respectively). However, the interaction term HS \times Type of Rape was not significant. These results indicate that there are different relationship patterns among BS, GRT, and victim blame in the different rape scenarios. Regression analyses for simple effects indicate that both BS and GRT are not significant predictors in the stranger-rape scenario. In contrast, as predicted, both BS and GRT are significant predictors in the date-rape scenario ($\beta = 0.33$, $t(63) = 2.87$, $p < .006$; $\beta = 0.44$, $t(63) = 3.29$, $p < .002$, respectively). To uncover the significance for differences between BS \times Type of Rape and GRT \times Type of Rape, the three-way interaction term Type of Rape \times GRT \times BS was entered on the victim-blame measure as the third model. This analysis revealed that there was no significant change between the second model and the third model. Therefore, the interactions of BS \times Type of Rape and GRT \times Type of Rape were not significantly different from each other as predictors on the victim-blame scale (see Table 4).

Excusing the Rapist

Hierarchical regression analyses were once more performed to test the effect of type of rape, BS, HS, and GRT on the perpetrator-excuse measure. All predictors and types of rape were entered in the first model to evaluate the main effects. Significant main effects of type of rape, BS, HS, and GRT

Table 4
Regression Analyses of the Effects of
Predictors on Victim Blame

Regression Model	β	<i>t</i>
Step 1: Main effect		
Hostile sexism	.22	2.45*
Benevolent sexism	.19	2.34*
Gender-role traditionality	.29	3.15**
Type	.32	4.23***
Step 2: Interaction effect		
Hostile Sexism \times Type	.07	0.56
Benevolent Sexism \times Type	.31	2.56*
Gender-Role Traditionality \times Type	.53	2.54*

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

were obtained ($\beta = 0.18$, $\beta = 0.17$, $\beta = 0.17$; $\beta = 0.59$, respectively, $ps < .03$). In the second model, all interaction terms (BS \times Type of Rape, HS \times Type of Rape, and GRT \times Type of Rape) were entered. As predicted, all interaction terms were significant on the perpetrator-excuse measure ($\beta = 0.29$, $t = 3.13$, $p < .002$; $\beta = -.20$, $t = -2.13$, $p < .036$; $\beta = 1.01$, $t = 6.74$, $p < .0001$, for BS, HS, and GRT \times Type of Rape, respectively). Furthermore, regression analyses of simple effects were performed to test the roles of moderators in different scenarios. In the stranger-rape scenario, HS was the only significant predictor on the perpetrator-excuse measure ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < .001$). BS and GRT were not significant moderators in the stranger-rape scenario. However, in the date-rape scenario, both BS and GRT were significant predictors on the perpetrator-excuse measure ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < .0001$; $\beta = 0.91$, $p < .0001$, respectively). This study further showed that people who scored high in GRT also tended to excuse the rapist in the date-rape scenario. To discover whether there is a significant difference between BS \times Type of Rape and GRT \times Type of Rape, a three-way interaction term (Type of Rape \times BS \times GRT) was entered on the perpetrator-excuse measure. This analysis revealed that there was no significant change between the second model and the third model. Therefore, the interactions of BS \times Type of Rape and GRT \times Type of Rape were not significantly different from each other as predictors on the perpetrator-excuse measure (see Table 5).

Table 5
Regression Analyses of the Effects of Predictors
on Perpetrator Excuse

Regression Model	β	<i>t</i>
Step 1: Main effect		
Hostile sexism	.17	2.23*
Benevolent sexism	.17	2.47**
Gender-role traditionality	.59	7.41***
Type	.18	2.69**
Step 2: Interaction effect		
Hostile Sexism \times Type	.20	2.13*
Benevolent Sexism \times Type	.29	3.14**
Gender-Role Traditionality \times Type	1.10	6.73***

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

Discussion

Previous studies have not addressed the moderating roles of AS on minimization of the rape. Moreover, the relationship between AS and GRT as moderators of rape perceptions have not been addressed. As such, this study explored the moderating roles of BS, HS, and GRT on external observers' rape perception and the relationship between AS and GRT. The findings from this study not only replicated previous research (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003; Viki et al., 2004) but also provided some new evidences that the explored moderators function differently in the different aspects of rape perceptions.

Numerous studies suggest that secondary victimization—rape victims' negative experiences resulting from negative treatment by others after the rape incident—are prevalent and that certain responses by others are detrimental to victims' psychological and physical well-being (Campbell, 1998; Campbell et al., 2001). As a result, three forms of secondary victimization: Minimization of the seriousness of rape incident, blaming the rape victim, and excusing the rapist were addressed in this study.

The results from this study are consistent with previous research in finding that BS, HS, and GRT are all significant moderators of the external observers' rape perceptions. As had already been demonstrated in previous research, participants in this study minimized the rape incident, blamed the

rape victim, and excused the rapist more often in the date-rape scenario than they did in the stranger-rape scenario. With regards to minimization of the seriousness of rape, HS, not BS or GRT, was as predicted the significant moderator in both the stranger- and date-rape scenarios. This result suggests that individuals who score high in the HS subscale tend to deny the victims' psychological damage, the level of violence in the rape incident, and the fact that the incident was rape more than do individuals who score low in the HS subscale. This result further supports the argument that hostile sexists tend to minimize the rape incident because they perceive women as exaggerating problems, being easily offended, and seeking benefits or power by using sexuality.

Concerning the attitude of blaming the victim, BS was as hypothesized a significant moderator on victim blaming only in the date-rape incident. This finding is consistent with the results of previous research (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002). This study further showed that, similar to BS, GRT also moderated victim blaming in the date-rape scenario. Therefore, the results from this study further support the claim of Abrams et al. (2003) that individuals who hold benevolent attitudes toward women and apply strict GRT to women tend to blame a rape victim by assuming that the woman who is raped by her date violates their expectations of how women ought to behave. Moreover, because the victim was raped by a stranger and did not violate the GRT that is expected by benevolent sexists, neither BS nor GRT can moderate the victim blaming in the stranger-rape incident.

Relating to excusing the rapist, HS, but not BS or GRT, was the significant moderator in the stranger-rape scenario, although BS and GRT were significant moderators in the date-rape scenario. Moreover, BS and GRT were not significantly different from each other as moderators on the attitude of excusing the rapist in the date-rape scenario. Again, these findings were consistent with the previous study by Viki et al. (2004), which concluded that persons high in BS tend to excuse the rapist more than do persons low in BS. However, this study further showed that GRT also moderated the effect on the attitude of excusing the perpetrator. According to Viki et al. (2004), an attitude of excusing the rapist is predicted by the layperson's negative views of the rape victim. However, this study shows that the layperson's attitude toward men is also an important predictor for excusing the rapist. In sum, these findings indicate that external observers use different reasonings to judge the rape incident, the victim, and the rapist.

As Campbell et al. (2001) noted, when women confide their experiences of rape to receive formal or informal support "they place a great deal of

trust in our social systems as they risk disbelief, scorn, shame, and refusals of help” (p. 1253). Statistically, the majority of rape incidents are committed by offenders known to the victim. Koss et al. (1988) discovered that 85% of the completed rapes were such cases and that in 57% of the rapes the perpetrator was a date. Furthermore, although it is believed that victims of date rape psychologically suffer much less than do victims of stranger rape, the severity of the consequences of date rape has been established by previous research (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985; Russell, 1990; Shapiro, 1997). In line with previous studies, the present study suggests that external observers tend to minimize the rape, blame the victim, and excuse the rapist more in cases of date rape than they do in cases of stranger rape. Therefore, the vast majority of rape victims are at particular risk for experiencing secondary victimization. Unfortunately, when date-rape victims finally do confide their experiences of rape to others, individuals who seemingly have positive attitudes toward women may blame the date-rape victims and excuse the perpetrator more than individuals who have negative attitudes toward women, potentially exacerbating self-blame because rape victims tend to blame themselves for being raped in the first place. The irony is that the vast majority of people in this society consider a benevolent attitude toward women as prosocial behavior. Although the intent to protect women seems to be positive, one should acknowledge that the consequences of positive intent could be harmful and detrimental for women and that BS is still, in fact, a form of sexism. This study further reveals that even in the stranger-rape scenario, hostile sexists assume that the female rape victim is exaggerating her psychological damage or view her as being less credible because of her claim. For a rape victim to be believed and credible, simply having said “no” to the rapist may not be sufficient grounds to be granted her claim of damage beyond the presence of physical injury (Schneider, Ee, & Aronson, 1994).

These results also support Glick and Fiske’s (1996) analyses that HS and BS are complementary attitudes by showing that HS and BS are significantly and positively correlated. Furthermore, these findings also sustain their assertion that both HS and BS are sexist attitudes that maintain and reflect societal gender inequality. For example, the prosocial notion of protective paternalism requires members of the “weaker” group to behave in certain ways. In the rape situation, for women to be protected and cherished, benevolent sexists stipulate that women must embrace GRT. Otherwise, they blame the rape victim for violating their stipulations. This process leads the benevolent sexist to excuse the rapist—that is, protecting the rapist while blaming the rape victim. Hostile sexists, on the other hand,

suspect women of using sexuality to gain benefit or take power from men. They minimize the psychological damage of the rape victim or exercise disbelief in the victim's claim by minimizing the incident of the rape. Glick and Fiske (2001) proposed that this combination of benevolent sexists' expectations toward women and hostile sexists' fear of women effectively maintains gender inequality and is indicative of the justification of males' structural power. As seen in this rape study, sexist attitudes toward women, whether positive or negative, have detrimental consequences on the rape victim through experiencing secondary rape.

The findings of this study also support the argument that blaming date-rape victims arises from victims' perceived violation of traditional gender roles, which causes benevolent sexists to no longer feel the need to protect them (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki et al., 2004). As shown in previous studies, the situational characteristics of the victim associated with victim blame, such as the victim's drinking, dressing provocatively, being unfaithful to her husband, or being raped by an intimate partner, are all considered violations of the traditional gender roles (Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004; Schuller & Wall, 1998; Viki & Abrams, 2002). On the other hand, men (the perpetrators in most rape cases) tend to have their violent acts against women excused simply because rape may be seen by sexist individuals who hold to rigid gender roles as merely an extreme extension of a traditional gender role.

Viki and Abrams (2002) conducted a follow-up study to support their previous study (Abrams et al., 2003) and found that benevolent sexists blame the date-rape victim because the victim violates their expectations by manipulating the context of the scenarios. One scenario they used was that a married woman is raped while cheating on her husband, and the other scenario was that no information was provided regarding the personal characteristics of the victim. They found that benevolent sexists blamed the cheating wife more than the other victim, which had no personal information. Such a study is necessary to validate the argument that hostile sexists minimize the rape because they assume that women exaggerate their psychological damage to seize power from men.

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