

A review of the literature relating to rape victim blaming: An analysis of the impact of observer and victim characteristics on attribution of blame in rape cases

van der Bruggen, M. and Grubb, A.R.

Postprint PDF deposited in [CURVE](#) November 2014

Original citation:

van der Bruggen, M. and Grubb, A.R. (2014) A review of the literature relating to rape victim blaming: An analysis of the impact of observer and victim characteristics on attribution of blame in rape cases. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, volume 19 (5): 523-531. DOI: 10.1016/j.avb.2014.07.008

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2014.07.008>

Publisher:

Elsevier

NOTICE: this is the author's version of a work that was accepted for publication in *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. Changes resulting from the publishing process, such as peer review, editing, corrections, structural formatting, and other quality control mechanisms may not be reflected in this document. Changes may have been made to this work since it was submitted for publication. A definitive version was subsequently published DOI 10.1016/j.avb.2014.07.008"

This copy may differ from the published article. Copyright © and Moral Rights are retained by the author(s) and/ or other copyright owners. A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge. This item cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder(s). The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

CURVE is the Institutional Repository for Coventry University

<http://curve.coventry.ac.uk/open>

A review of the literature relating to rape victim blaming: An analysis of the impact of observer and victim characteristics on attribution of blame in rape cases

Madeleine van der Bruggen^{*}, MSc, MA

*Behaviour Analyst, Central Criminal Investigations Unit, Dutch Child Exploitation Team,
Zoetermeer, The Netherlands*

Amy Grubb, BSc, MSc, PGCert, FHEA, AFBPsS

*Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology, Department of Psychology and Behavioural
Sciences, Coventry University, Coventry, UK*

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5FB, UK.

Tel.: +44 24 7688 8957; Fax: +44 02476 795950

^{*} Corresponding author details: M. van der Bruggen, Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5FB, UK.
Tel.: +44 24 7688 8957; Fax: +44 02476 795950; Email: vanderbm@uni.coventry.ac.uk

A review of the literature relating to rape victim blaming: An analysis of the impact of observer and victim characteristics on attribution of blame in rape cases

Abstract *Historically, many studies have examined rape victim blaming among various observers, using a vignette methodology in which victim characteristics were manipulated. However, a gap in the research concerns a clear distinction between victim and observer characteristics and its separate influence on rape victim blaming. The current paper explores this distinction by examining the victim characteristics of gender, sexuality, degree of resistance exhibited, and victim-perpetrator relationship, as well as the observer characteristics of gender, professional status, gender role attitudes, and rape myth acceptance in relation to rape victim blame. Findings indicate that these variables have significant effects on rape blame attribution. A number of theoretical standpoints including the Just World Theory, Defensive Attribution Hypothesis, and notion of Homophobia are discussed in relation to the findings with the aim of enabling interpretation of the results. The limitations associated with the vignette methodology are also identified and discussed, along with reference to the development of newer methodologies and their contribution to the field.*

Keywords *Rape blame attribution; rape; sexual assault; victim / observer characteristics*

1. Introduction

Sexual assault and rape are serious problems in today's society; for example, statistics demonstrate that one in five women will become the victim of rape or attempted rape in their lives (United Nations Development Fund for Women [UNIFEM], 2008). Moreover, reporting rates to the police are exceptionally low and few perpetrators are successfully prosecuted (Bohner, Eyssel, Pina, Siebler, & Viki, 2009). Early feminist researchers suggested that rape is an inevitable phenomenon in patriarchal societies where males are the leading figures and hold authority over women (Burt, 1980). 'Rape myths', commonly held beliefs about what a typical rape situation looks like which influence the decision-making process and guilt assessment of lay people as well as jurors have also been identified (Bohner et al., 2009; Temkin & Krahé, 2008; Ward, 1995). It is generally believed that these myths determine the degree to which a victim is blamed and the perpetrator is exonerated for the rape (Gerger, Kley, Bohner, & Siebler, 2007; Ward, 1995). According to Janoff-Bulman (1979), blame can be twofold; in the form of characterological blame, where blame is attributed to a stable factor such as personality, and behavioral blame, where blame is attributed to a changeable factor such as the way the victim acts and reacts (Davies, Rogers, & Whitelegg, 2009).

Early research on this topic predominantly focussed on characterological and behavioral victim characteristics that make observers more likely to blame victims for their own misfortune. Significant results were found for victims' degree of intoxication (Richardson & Campbell, 1982), dress (Furnham & Boston, 1996), attractiveness (Calhoun, Selby, Cann, & Keller, 1978), respectability (Jones & Aronson, 1973), and professional status (Smith, Keating, Hester, & Mitchell, 1976), with these variables leading to negative rape blame attributions (Grubb & Turner, 2012). However, much of this traditional research can be characterized as naïve and unrealistic; for example, in one study the victim was either a stripper, a social worker, or a nun (Smith et al., 1976), thereby failing to represent a realistic

picture of rape or rape victims. Recent work utilize more realistic, relevant, and common professions within rape attribution research, and tends to investigate perpetrator-victim relationship rather than respectability (which was previously operationalized as being single, married, or divorced, and which indicates a negative and prejudicial connotation of the concept).

Nevertheless, these traditional studies set the agenda for the methodology commonly used in the field. The majority of rape blame attribution studies have typically utilized an experimental vignette methodology, whereby groups of observers read a hypothetical scenario in which characteristics of the victim and situation are controlled and manipulated, and are thereafter asked to make judgments about the rape scenario using quantitative rating scales (Alexander & Becker, 1978; Ward, 1995). The vignette procedure is thought to be more reliable, valid and realistic than simple questions usually used in surveys (Alexander & Becker, 1978) and it enables “a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the quantity and quality of factors that affect judgements of rape and perceptions of rape victims” (Ward, 1995, p. 70). Nevertheless, a point worth noting is that many studies find significant differences in victim blaming when manipulating various victim characteristics; yet, generally victim blaming does not occur to an extreme extent. Typically low levels of culpability are assigned to victims compared to blame assigned to perpetrators; an annotation that has to be considered when evaluating results.

In addition to the manipulation of victim characteristics, studies often investigate observer characteristics. Influences of observer gender and professional status, as well as the constructs of gender role attitudes and rape myth acceptance on rape victim blaming, are frequently assessed (Davies & Hudson, 2011; Kelly, 2009). Currently, knowledge about the influence of observer characteristics on rape victim blaming is fairly limited compared to knowledge about victim characteristics, due to practical, ethical, and sampling issues. Often,

only university or college students are tested, which remains a restricted and unrepresentative observer group. Also, in the majority of studies that investigate observer groups from specific professions or backgrounds, no control groups from the general population are used, which sets limits to the generalisability of results.

Furthermore, studies often fail to clearly distinguish between victim and observer characteristics, meaning that both are manipulated and investigated simultaneously, and the results are discussed as a collective. This makes it somewhat difficult to clearly differentiate the independent impact of observer or victim characteristics on rape blame attributions. This literature review will clarify this issue, and discuss what is currently known about victim and observer characteristics, and their separate effects on rape victim blaming. First, to enable interpretation of results, relevant theories on which the literature is based will be briefly discussed. The two main sections of this paper contain research findings from studies with a vignette methodology related to victim and observer characteristics, respectively. Thereafter, the review seeks to outline and describe some of the more current and promising methodologies, along with identification of the contribution of such experimental designs to the rape blame literature.

2. Methodology

In order to find an answer to the research question concerning what is currently known about victim and observer characteristics and their independent effects on rape victim blaming, a systematic search through the empirical literature was conducted. To develop a general overview and theoretical underpinning of the topic, firstly the University library catalogue was searched for books with relevance to the topic. Subsequently, the databases PsycInfo and Science Direct were systematically searched for peer reviewed articles only, using Boolean Logic, and using the key words “rape AND blame [in title] AND attribu*” (78 results), “rape

AND responsibility [in title] AND attribu*” (39 results), and “rape AND percept* [in title] AND blame*” (24 results). Google Scholar was searched for complementary relevant recent literature (2007 onwards), using the key words “rape blame” (in title only), to make sure that all relevant material was accessed. Finally, the databases were searched for specific papers on the relevant theories (Just World Theory, Defensive Attribution Hypothesis and Homophobia) to be discussed initially. All hits were screened for relevant methodology (vignette studies and newer methodologies), information on victim and observer characteristics, and relevance to a UK context. In the analysis, a distinction was made between traditional studies (from the 70s and 80s) and more recent papers (1990 onwards).

3. Findings

3.1 Theories

3.1.1 Just World Theory

Early studies predominantly aimed to find support for the Just World Theory (Lerner & Matthews, 1967), which states that people perceive the world to be a fair place where individuals deserve what they get and get what they deserve (Lambert & Raichle, 2000). By blaming rape victims, it is assumed that they deserve their misfortune, which gives people a sense of control, order, and justice (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). Just world beliefs are frequently manipulated as an individual difference variable, which is hypothesized to have a causal effect on victim blaming (Lambert & Raichle, 2000). Support for this theory is found in many studies investigating rape victim blaming (Furnham, 2003; Whatley & Riggio, 1993; Yamawaki, 2009); yet, other studies have not found support for this theory (Hammond, Berry, & Rodriguez, 2011) or have even found support for the opposite (Lambert & Raichle, 2000). For example, Kleinke and Meyer (1990) found that women with high just world

beliefs tend to view rape victims more favorably and blame them to a lesser extent than those with lower beliefs in a just world; a finding which is in direct contrast to that which would be expected if extrapolating directly from the theory. Moreover, Sinclair and Bourne (1998) found a dichotomous effect for just world beliefs, whereby the theory was supported for female, but not for male observers. It can, therefore, be concluded that the evidence regarding the impact of just world beliefs on victim blaming is mixed; it is clear that the Just World Theory in itself cannot fully explain the phenomenon of rape victim blaming, but it may act as a moderating or mediating variable for certain observers assessing certain victims.

3.1.2 Defensive Attribution Hypothesis

Another theory that has been used to explain why victims of rape are sometimes blamed for their misfortune is the Defensive Attribution Hypothesis (Shaver, 1970). This hypothesis states that the level of blame depends on observers' perceived similarity and identification with the victim: when victim and observer are increasingly similar, the victim will be blamed less (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). Evidence for this hypothesis is more convincing. Traditional research by Fulero and DeLara (1976) clarified that female psychology students assigned the least blame when they were similar, and most blame when they were dissimilar to the victim. Grubb and Harrower (2008) relate this to a process of self-protective distortion; a defence mechanism offering protection for possible future assault on the side of the observer. This occurs because the likelihood of a possible future assault is cognitively minimized and blame that could be encountered if the individual were to experience such victimization is trying to be avoided (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). Various more recent studies explored this topic further and identified that male observers blame female victims more than female observers because of their reduced identification with the female victim (Davies et al., 2009; Donovan, 2007; Kelly, 2009). Furthermore, overall perceived similarity to the rape victim as an

independent variable is an important and significant predictor of victim blame for child abuse as well as adult rape (Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994; Muller, Caldwell, & Hunter, 1994). Bell et al. (1994) point out that this occurs because observers are afraid that assigning blame to the victims may be akin to stigmatising themselves. However, one has to take into account that many studies are of a correlational nature or based on untested assumptions or mere speculations, which sets limitations to causal conclusions and generalizability (Grubb & Harrower, 2008).

3.1.3 Homophobia

Notions of identification and similarity with victims according to the Defensive Attribution Hypothesis (Shaver, 1970) become more complicated in more recent victim blame studies where victim gender and sexual orientation have been manipulated. With the inclusion of victims and observers with various sexual orientations, the number of independent variables has increased. The influence of victim sexuality on rape blame attribution is better explained by the notion of Homophobia, which suggests that observers scoring high on a homophobia scale (regardless of their gender or similarity to the victim) will blame homosexual victims more than heterosexual victims (Mitchell, Hirschman, & Hall, 1999; White & Yamawaki, 2009). Homophobia is indeed found to strongly correlate with blame towards homosexual male victims (Davies & Rogers, 2006) and is a significant predictor of rape victim blaming for homosexual as well as heterosexual victims (Burt & DeMello, 2002; White & Yamawaki, 2009), and of rape minimization when the victims are homosexual (White & Yamawaki, 2009). Furthermore, because they were found to have higher homophobic attitudes, heterosexual male observers blame homosexual victims more and make more anti-victim judgments than homosexual male and female observers (Davies & McCartney, 2003; Davies & Rogers, 2006). Davies and Rogers (2006) suggest that this effect occurs because scenarios

in which a homosexual male is raped by a male perpetrator triggers homophobic attitudes, which results in negative attributions towards victims and *ergo* victim blame. Individual attitudes towards sexuality and endorsement of homophobia specifically have, therefore, been demonstrated to have an impact on the way individuals make attributions about victims of rape. This is a serious issue, as research has found that homophobic attitudes can be evident even in the person to whom the victim reveals the incident (Davies & McCartney, 2003), experiences that may have a significant negative impact on the recovery of rape and sexual assault victims.

3.2 Victim characteristics

The variables which are most easily manipulated and investigated tend to be victim characteristics. The use of hypothetical scenarios enables researchers to manipulate and/or control for any relevant victim characteristic in order to assess whether a variable plays a significant role in the formation of attributions in rape cases. It is, therefore, surprising that some victim characteristics are yet to receive empirical academic investigation. In particular, research into victim ethnicity is almost exclusively limited to American studies comparing Black rape victims with White rape victims, with the rape being minimized most and the victim being blamed to the greatest extent when it involved a Black victim (Donovan, 2007; Foley, Evanic, Karnik, King, & Parks, 1995; Willis, 1992). Additional literature considering victim ethnicity is virtually non-existent and leaves a potential gap in our understanding of the cross-cultural role of ethnicity in rape blame attribution. Furthermore, there are limited studies which manipulate the age of the victim in a continuous manner. Some studies have investigated judgments towards child and adolescent rape victims, and found similar rape blame attributions to studies utilising adult rape victims (Davies, Austen, & Rogers, 2011; Davies et al., 2009; Muller et al., 1994). However, comparisons between a variety of different

victim age groups have yet to be systematically explored. Another major gap in the literature concerns victims' professional status, an area which is lacking in published empirical work. The limited research that has been conducted to investigate the role of professional status tends to consist of fairly outdated work which has been heavily criticized on the basis of naivety and lack of ecological validity. Inclusion of this variable within current empirical research would therefore be academically warranted and beneficial in terms of contribution to our understanding of rape blame attribution. More recent and current research has tended to focus on aspects such as victim gender, sexuality, degree of victim resistance and victim-perpetrator relationship and the impact of these victim characteristics on rape blame attribution.

3.2.1 Victim gender

Only recently has the variable of victim gender been manipulated in rape victim blame studies. Early research, inspired by feminist thinkers, assumed that only females could be raped by male perpetrators. However, in the last decennium academics have realized that a considerable number of men become victimized; yet, only few report this to the police (Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2001). It is suggested that male victims receive most behavioral blame (Howard, 1984), related to stereotypical assumptions about their masculinity, strength, and assertiveness, which makes observers assume that they should be able to fight back and defend themselves (Davies et al., 2001; Davies & Rogers, 2006). Female victims, on the other hand, are usually blamed because of characterological characteristics, for example, for being careless or too trusting (Davies & Rogers, 2006). In this respect, it is found that male victims of stranger rape are judged more negatively and assigned more blame than female victims, especially when they passively submit to their assault (Davies et al., 2009). Research indicates that when male victims do resist and try to fight back, blame decreases significantly

(Davies et al., 2009). However, Davies et al. (2001) and White and Kurpius (2002) only found support for these results within male observers. Surprisingly, similar results are found for adolescent victims, who “are treated as quasi adults despite being under the legal age of consent” (Davies et al., 2009, p. 335). This could either be due to observers finding male rape difficult to understand and accept, or due to observers perceiving the male victim to be un-masculine and submissive (Anderson & Lyons, 2005). Although less convincing and widespread, contradictory results have also been reported, whereby women are blamed to a greater extent for their victimization than men (Idisis, Ben-David, & Ben-Nachum, 2007; Schneider, Soh-Chiew Ee, & Aronson, 1994), leading some researchers to propose that there are additional moderating variables at work when rape blame attributions are being formulated (Mitchell, Angelone, Kohlberger, & Hirschman, 2009).

3.2.2 Victim sexuality

Over the past decade, several studies exploring victim gender as a variable have also manipulated victim sexuality. Research has demonstrated that homosexual male victims are blamed more and the rape is minimized to a greater extent compared to heterosexual male victims, especially by male observers (Davies & Hudson, 2011). Additionally, homosexual males are perceived to have experienced more pleasure and less trauma during the incident and in the aftermath of the assault (Davies & Rogers, 2006; Mitchell et al., 1999). Findings indicate that for both acquaintance and stranger rape, homosexual men tend to be blamed more, held more responsible and the rape is minimized more compared to heterosexual male victims (Davies et al., 2001; White & Yamawaki, 2009). An ambiguity arises when also manipulating the variable of victim gender, as findings are contradictory compared to studies where only the gender of the victim is manipulated, and where males are generally blamed more than females (Davies et al., 2009). For stranger rape by male perpetrators specifically, it

is found that victims are blamed most when they are potentially attracted to their perpetrator; consequently, homosexual male victims and heterosexual female victims are assigned significantly more blame than are homosexual female and heterosexual male victims (Davies et al., 2011; Wakelin & Long, 2003). Accordingly, when sexuality is manipulated as an additional variable, heterosexual female victims are often blamed more than heterosexual male victims, which indicates that sexuality may act as a moderating variable. A serious limitation of these studies is that most of them distinguish between homosexual and heterosexual male victims and heterosexual female victims; whereas often the degree of blame assigned to homosexual female victims is ignored. An interesting recent study examined victim blame towards transgendered people, where sexuality was manipulated as heterosexual (male), homosexual (male), cross-dresser, female-to-male transsexual, and male-to-female transsexual. The study found no significant differences for severity of the rape, but did find that cross-dressers were blamed most, followed by transsexual victims of both types, and heterosexual victims were blamed least, especially by heterosexual male observers (Davies & Hudson, 2011).

These results have set the agenda for a new strand of research, but have to be evaluated with caution due to sample limitations (all participants were young adults from a relatively small area, and the number of participants in each condition was fairly small). To conclude, the results indicate that large groups of people adhere to traditional societal values and possess homophobic attitudes (Davies & Hudson, 2011); a conclusion that implies that a large group of people is stigmatized and treated negatively which may have a significant impact on the way homosexual victims of rape are responded to and treated by medico-legal agencies with the potential for victims to experience secondary victimization or inadequate responses from the criminal justice system.

3.2.3 Resistance

A further extensively explored variable is the degree of resistance posed by the victim and its influence on attribution of blame. Early research was based on the assumption that some resistance in the early stages of the attack decreases the possibility that the victim will actually end up being raped and that observers and jurors appreciate incidents more fully as being rape when the victim has showed some form of resistance (Branscombe & Weir, 1992). Male victims, in particular were thought to be capable of resisting their attackers (Krulowitz, 1981), which may be explained by observers perceiving women to be less able to defend themselves from male perpetrators. Recently, studies have become more complex, with inclusion of a number of variables in addition to resistance in order to explore their moderating influences simultaneously. However, results are still similar to those reported by earlier research. Victims who do not resist tend to be blamed the most (Davies, Rogers, & Bates, 2008); with these findings being more profound for male victims compared to female victims (Davies et al., 2009; Sims et al., 2007).

Male observers, in particular, seem to attribute more intelligence and less fault to rape victims when they resist to a high degree; for female observers this effect is less profound (Krulowitz & Nash, 1979; Sims, Noel, & Maisto, 2007). This may be explained by female observers possibly being more tolerant towards victims, and more understanding of submissive victims. This is confirmed by Davies et al. (2009), who found interaction effects between observer gender and victim resistance; compared to female observers, male observers blamed submissive victims significantly more than resistant victims. This study further concluded that homosexual male victims who fail to resist are blamed most, and resisting heterosexual males are blamed least by these male observers (Davies et al., 2009). Further academic research may investigate this discrepancy further and establish an understanding of the mediating role of gender on the impact of resistance on rape blame

attribution. One study included time of initial resistance as a variable and found that when initial resistance occurred early in the incident, observers were less likely to think that the rape could have been avoided, which resulted in less blame for the victims, and more blame for the perpetrator (Kopper, 1996). Furthermore, a recent study differentiated various types of resistance, and found that perpetrators were blamed more and held more responsible when victims resisted verbally, compared to both verbally and physically (Black & Gold, 2008). Victims also tend to be blamed less when the perpetrator has violent intentions and uses considerable force (Mitchell et al., 2009; Proite, Dannells, & Benton, 1993). However, these are single studies; the field would benefit from replications and further research exploring these specific variables in more depth.

3.2.4 Victim-perpetrator relationship

A final victim variable that has been extensively investigated concerns the victim-perpetrator relationship. Often a distinction is made between stranger, acquaintance, date, and marital rape; yet, most studies only focus on either one, two or occasionally three of these conditions. Some traditional research indicates that victims of stranger rape are blamed more compared to victims of acquaintance rape (Calhoun, Selby, & Warring, 1976; Smith et al., 1976; Tetreault & Barnett, 1987). However, recent research indicates that victims are consistently blamed more when it concerns date and acquaintance scenarios, compared to stranger scenarios (Bell et al., 1994; Kelly, 2009; Sleath & Bull, 2010; White & Yamawaki, 2009; Yamawaki, 2009). This disparity most likely occurs because traditional and recent research utilize different types of scenarios, each with unique characteristics (regarding location, language use etc.), which makes comparisons problematic, and which could lead to inconsistency in outcomes in the rape blame process (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). Marital rape, in particular, is often minimized and perceived as less serious or is not even considered

as rape at all; and it is also perceived as less violating and psychologically damaging than acquaintance or stranger rape (Simonson & Subich, 1999). The same is true for married women dissolving their marital relationships; in these circumstances, the rape seems to be minimized to a significantly greater extent compared to women being raped by a stranger (Ewoldt, Monson, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2000). It has been speculated that when the victim and perpetrator are acquainted, the perpetrator may not recognize the victim's refusal, which leads to notions of implied consent and shared responsibility (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). However, these underlying assumptions have not as yet, been empirically tested and/or validated, allowing scope for potential qualitative research to explore the underlying assumptions for rape blame attributions in more detail (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). In summary, the results indicate that the better the victim and perpetrator know each other and the closer their relationship, the more blame is typically assigned to victims for the rape.

3.3 Observer characteristics

In addition to victim characteristics, studies often investigate the influence of various observer characteristics on rape victim blaming. Due to practical and ethical considerations, access to participants is often restricted. It is, therefore, not surprising that knowledge regarding observer characteristics and their influence on rape victim blaming is fairly limited compared to the literature relating to victim characteristics. Although research in this domain has been conducted all over the world in countries, such as Japan, Australia, South-Africa, Turkey and Israel, specific comparative studies focusing on observer ethnicity and rape victim blaming are limited. The few studies that have considered ethnicity as a relevant characteristic found that South-African undergraduate psychology students are more likely to blame victims compared to Australian undergraduates (Heaven, Connors, & Pretorius, 1998), Japanese college students are more likely to blame victims and minimize rape more

compared to American college students (Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005); and Caucasian-American male students are more blameworthy towards victims compared to Hispanic-American and Asian-American students (Schneider, Mori, Lambert, & Wong, 2009). Nevertheless, comparative studies into this matter are important, as it is generally assumed that attitudes toward rape and degrees of rape blame attribution vary on the basis of culture (Ward, 1995). Furthermore, only recently has there been research conducted in relation to the impact of observer sexuality on rape blame attribution. For example, Davies and Hudson (2011) and Davies and McCartney (2003) found that heterosexual male observers blame victims more and have higher endorsement of rape myths compared to homosexual male and heterosexual women. However, there is still a need to empirically explore and fully understand the role of such observer characteristics on attribution formation in relation to sexual violence victims. Observer characteristics that have been more extensively researched are gender, professional status, and degree of gender role conformity and rape myth acceptance. A synopsis of the research relating to the impact of each of these variables on rape blame attribution is discussed in the following section.

3.3.1 Observer gender

The only observer characteristic that is widely researched, and for which results are relatively unambiguous, is that of observer gender. It has consistently been found that male observers blame rape victims more than female observers; a finding which is replicated within both traditional (Bell et al., 1994; Furnham & Boston, 1996; Proite et al., 1993) and current research (Davies et al., 2009; Schneider et al., 2009; Sims et al., 2007). These results relate to situations with female victims (Furnham & Boston, 1996; Sims et al., 2007) as well as male victims (Davies et al., 2009; Whatley & Riggio, 1993; White & Kurpius, 2002), homosexual (Davies et al., 2001; Davies et al., 2011) as well as heterosexual male victims (Burt &

DeMello, 2002; Mitchell et al., 1999) and for date rape situations (Black & Gold, 2008; Proite et al., 1993), stranger rape situations (Bell et al., 1994; Davies et al., 2008; Grubb & Harrower, 2009), as well as marital rape situations (Ewoldt et al., 2000). Additionally, male observers tend to be more accepting about rape situations (Talbot, Neill, & Rankin, 2010), and minimize the seriousness of rape scenarios more than female observers (Newcombe, Van den Eynde, Hafner, & Jolly, 2008). Moreover, because male observers may identify with the perpetrator more than female observers, it is suggested that male observers blame the perpetrator significantly less than female observers as a result of this identification (Kahn et al., 2011). Ward (1995) suggested that this difference can be explained by male observers assigning more fault to victims based on their characterological characteristics. Therefore, victims would be morally responsible for their misfortune, and will inevitably be blamed by male observers. On the contrary, female observers would respond more strongly to situational determinants and careless behavior on the side of the victims instead, which means that, in this case, victims would only be blamed when portraying a certain type of reckless behavior (Ward, 1995). These results could have immense implications for the criminal justice system as they imply that the balance of men and women in juries can possibly influence guilt verdicts in real life rape trials (Fischer, 1997).

3.3.2 Observer professional status

Although most studies have utilized university psychology students as participants, there are limitations to using this specific sample. Students represent a higher educated group within the general population, which is associated with more liberal attitudes, a lower tendency to accept stereotypes and a higher degree of supportiveness towards victims of rape (Idisis et al., 2007; Ward, 1995), which sets limits to the generalizability of results from these studies. To increase the external validity, some studies have therefore used samples from the general

population (Ward, 1995). Research suggests that observers from the general population make similar judgments of blame as student participants. For example, research by Kelly (2009) found that a general population sample also allocated a greater amount of blame towards intoxicated victims as compared to sober victims, and victims acquainted to their attacker as compared to victims unknown to their attacker (Kelly, 2009).

More specifically, researchers have tended to target individuals within professions regularly working with perpetrators and victims of rape as participants, in order to explore the influence of observer professional status on rape victim blaming. Early research found that medical students make similar blame attributions as other student samples (Gilmartin-Zena, 1983). Findings indicated that although low levels of culpability were assigned to victims, victim blaming was still present, especially among male observers (Gilmartin-Zena, 1983); and these results have also been supported by more recent research (Anderson & Quinn, 2009). Another early study by Alexander (1980) investigating nurses' victim blame judgments indicated that nurses portray similar blame attributions for victims of violent crimes on the one hand and rape victims on the other hand. However, significant differences were found for 'respectable' versus 'non-respectable' victims, operationalized as victims' marital status, dress, resistance, injuries received from the crime and victim-perpetrator relationship, with significantly more blame being assigned to 'non-respectable' victims (Alexander, 1980).

A study from Israel found that therapist observers consider rape scenarios with male as well as female victims as slightly more severe than non-therapist observers; findings that were explained by therapists' prior knowledge of the social problem of rape which was suggested to reduce stereotyping (Idisis et al., 2007). However, a study from the United States that used a sample of counselors in training nationwide, reported that trainees blamed male victims, especially when they did not resist their attacker, to a greater extent than female

victims, and that male trainees in particular, had higher rape myth acceptance, and assigned a greater level of blame to victims, compared to female trainees (Kassing & Prieto, 2003). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that members of the clergy are particularly adhering to rape myths, and, therefore, are more likely to endorse and portray negative attitudes towards rape victims (Sheldon & Parent, 2002). Sheldon and Parent (2002) suggest that this may be related to their fundamentalist and sexist viewpoints which have traditionally been reinforced throughout the ecclesiastical profession. These results imply that negative stereotypes about rape victims even exist among individuals likely to work with these victims. On the other hand, a study based in the United Kingdom utilized a sample of police officers, and found the sample to be fairly pro-victim. Although also within this population some rape blame attributions were exposed, no significant results for victim sexuality were found; results that were attributed to an increased training of police officers and good practice (Davies, Smith, & Rogers, 2009). These findings suggest that despite some small differences between and within groups likely to work with rape victims, most profession groups portray similar blame attributions as the general population.

It can be concluded that recently academic attention has been paid to the examination of observers' profession and its influence on rape victim blaming. However, further exploration is warranted in order to fully understand the impact of professional status on rape blame attribution. This is particularly important for individuals within professions working with rape victims, as their rape blame attributions may have a significant impact on the experiences and *ergo* recovery of victims.

3.3.3 Gender role attitudes

A further widely researched variable is that of observer gender role attitudes: a construct often measured through pre-existing and validated scales exploring the extent to which

observers assign conservative values to women and position them in stereotypical roles within society (Grubb & Turner, 2012). Some authors prefer the term 'benevolent sexism', which corresponds with sexism and the stance that traditionally feminine and innocent women should be rewarded (Grubb & Turner, 2012; Kelly, 2009). An example of traditional gender role attitudes that could drive causal attributions and allocation of blame is that women should stay at home whereas men should be dominant and take the role as breadwinner. It is widely hypothesized that as observers score more highly on measures of gender role attitudes or benevolent sexism, their prejudicial attitudes towards rape victims will increase (Grubb & Turner, 2012). Many studies have supported this hypothesis; observers who portray a greater endorsement of traditional gender role stereotypes generally blame victims to a greater extent (Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2008; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Simonson & Subich, 1999; White & Kurpius, 2002), recommend lower sentences for the perpetrators (Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2004), and accept and minimize the rape to a greater extent (Proite et al. 1993; Talbot et al., 2010; White & Yamawaki, 2009). Interestingly, these results have been demonstrated to be more profound for date rape scenarios compared to stranger rape scenarios (White & Yamawaki, 2009; Yamawaki, 2007). This would indicate that the conventions of traditional gender roles do not apply (or apply less) to victims not acquainted to their perpetrators (Grubb & Turner, 2012).

Other studies have found that benevolent sexism or gender role attitudes merely act as mediating variables between observer gender and degree of blame (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Kelly, 2009). These studies have found that male observers generally hold more stereotypical beliefs towards gender roles than female observers, which, in turn, leads to the formation of causal attributions about rape incidents and harsher attitudes towards victims and a greater degree of victim blame (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Grubb & Turner, 2012). Studies also suggest gender role attitudes to have a mediating effect between observer ethnicity and

degree of blame, and could, therefore, account for cross-cultural differences in rape victim blaming (Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005). For example, Japanese students were found to have more traditional gender role attitudes compared to their American counterparts. For Japanese students, the perceived intimacy between victim and perpetrator accounted for an increase in minimization of the seriousness of rape, an increased level of victim blame, and for a tendency of excusing the perpetrators (Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005). It may also be that the effects of gender role attitudes itself are moderated by additional variables. It was found that the perception of victims' intentions and the perception of victims as behaving appropriately versus inappropriately act as moderating variables between gender role attitudes and rape blame attribution, which would indicate a more moderate influence of gender role attitudes than assumed (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Masser, Lee, & McKimmie, 2010).

3.3.4 Rape myth acceptance

Feminist writers have argued that 'rape myths' determine the degree to which a victim is blamed for her own rape (Ward, 1995). Rape myths can be defined as pervasive assumptions about rape, which "affect subjective definitions of what constitutes a 'typical rape', contain problematic assumptions about the likely behavior of perpetrators and victims, and paint a distorted picture of the antecedents and consequences of rape" (Bohner et al., 2009, p. 18). In addition to the feminist notion that rape myths contribute to the rape blaming process, it is argued that rape is a product of patriarchal societies where men dominate (Ellis, 1989; Ward, 1995), and it is used to keep women in a subordinate position (Brownmiller, 1975). However, an extension of these rape myths related to female victims that feminists ignore, are rape myths related to male victims. Male victims of rape are often blamed, due to masculinity considerations i.e., men should be strong, and, therefore, should be capable of avoiding their own rape (Davies & Rogers, 2006). It has been hypothesized that observers holding stronger

rape myth beliefs will blame victims more than people without such strong beliefs and research has consistently provided evidence for this correlation. Rape myth acceptance is found to be a significant predictor of rape victim blaming (Mason, Riger, & Foley, 2004; Yamawaki, 2009), and rape perpetrator blaming (Kopper, 1996; Sleath & Bull, 2010), with observers scoring high on rape myth acceptance tending to blame the victim more and the perpetrator less. Furthermore, observers with high levels of rape myth endorsement generally minimize the rape to a greater extent (Newcombe et al., 2008), and are less likely to believe that a rape has actually occurred (Mason et al., 2004), than people who endorse rape myths to a lesser extent. High scoring observers are also more likely to believe that the rape could have been avoided (Kopper, 1996). A recent study using regression analysis has even concluded that rape myth acceptance was the strongest predictor for participants' rape perceptions with $\beta = .36$ (Basow & Minieri, 2011). It is, therefore, suggested that rape myth acceptance should be one of the main targets in preventive programs developed for preventing sexual violence and for improving attitudes towards rape victims (Bohner et al., 2009).

As with gender role attitudes, other studies suggest that rape myth acceptance acts as a mediating variable between observer gender and rape blaming, with male observers more likely to endorse high rape myth beliefs and consequently assigning more blame to rape victims than female observers (Hammond et al., 2011). A meta-analysis that reviewed 37 studies gives support for this notion: rape myth acceptance is associated with negative attitudes towards women and is more prevalent in men (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010), which accounts for the feminist (and empirically validated) view that rape myth acceptance is related to male observers' rape victim blaming. Research, therefore, continues to confirm the malignant nature of rape myth acceptance on observer rape attribution formation and consistently identifies the need to address and change inaccurate societal attitudes about rape and rape victims brought about by the endemic nature of rape myths. This change in societal

attitude is necessary to ensure that victims of sexual violence are responded to appropriately and provided with the adequate support and treatment required for their recovery.

3.4 New methodologies

Although most studies use a vignette methodology, as it is thought to be the most valid and reliable method, some researchers acknowledge the limitations that are associated with this method, and have, therefore, searched for new inventive methodologies. Cohn, Depuis, and Brown (2009), for example, adopted a videotape approach rather than written vignettes, which was intended to make the situation more realistic and provide observers with more contextual information. This study confirmed the findings from research using the vignette methodology; victims were blamed less when they resisted and when they had a good reputation. Moreover, gender role attitudes and rape myth acceptance were again found to be significant predictors of victim blame thereby reinforcing the findings of vignette based studies (Cohn et al., 2009). Other researchers have adopted a qualitative approach instead, in order to be able to investigate the naturalistic aspect of the concept of blame as it occurs in conversation in more depth. Anderson (1999), for example, found that observers spontaneously assign behavioral as well as characterological blame to victims during conversation.

Another interesting discourse analytical study investigated how sexual scripts occur in conversation, and how these are related to rape myths; the findings of which demonstrated that sexual scripts determine the social construction and support of rape (Ryan, 2011). Further interview-based studies have identified that observers talking about rape blame take into account similar variables as investigated in experimental designs, such as degree of resistance, provocative behavior, and victim-perpetrator relationship (Sheldon & Parent, 2002), thereby enhancing the reliability of such experimental designs and triangulating

findings to some extent. Finally, in a content analysis, it was found that newspaper headlines containing rape myths promote rape-supportive attitudes in readers (Franiuk, Seefeldt, & Vandello, 2008); a notion that has profound consequences, as stereotypical portrayals in newspapers can help in justifying the perpetrators' acts (Ward, 1995).

Some studies have utilized different experimental designs, including that of mock jury trials, in which observers study civil rape cases and are subsequently asked to evaluate responsibility, decide upon a verdict and assign a sentence. Findings from these studies also demonstrate the existence of various degrees of victim blaming (Foley & Pigott, 2000; Stewart & Jacquin, 2010) and the jurors' use of so-called "socio-sexual scripts" (Ellison & Munro, 2009; p. 291) and rape myths in order to decide upon a verdict (Ellison & Munro, 2009). For example, it has been found that jurors scoring high on rape myth acceptance rate defendants as less guilty compared to jurors scoring low on rape myth acceptance (Foley & Pigott, 2000; Stewart & Jacquin, 2010) and female jurors are more likely to provide a guilty verdict in rape trials compared to male jurors (Fischer, 1997). Observers, furthermore, appeared to be influenced when they read summaries of rape trials with guilty versus non-guilty verdicts, with men expressing less empathy and a greater degree of rape myth acceptance after reading a non-guilty verdict (Sinclair & Bourne, 1998). These studies confirm that observer/juror characteristics can influence the verdict decision process and provide a more ecologically valid insight into rape blame attribution and enhance the credibility of the findings when applied to real life settings.

4. Conclusion and summary

Historically, various theories explaining rape victim-blaming were developed and studies were conducted to investigate the background and mechanisms of rape blame attribution, with most convincing evidence for the Defensive Attribution Hypothesis (Shaver, 1970) and

the notion of Homophobia (White & Yamawaki, 2009), as opposed to the Just World Theory (Lerner & Matthews, 1967). More recently, the field gained a renewed interest and more extensive, reliable and valid studies have been conducted, adding more realistic and relevant variables, typically using the vignette methodology. It can be concluded that the vignette methodology is a good way to investigate rape myths, rape victim blaming, and rape minimizing in light of the difficulties associated with studying an ethically and personally sensitive topic. Studies consistently find significant results, and for most variables the results are unambiguous. However, most studies investigate victim and observer characteristics simultaneously, and explore their mutual influence on rape victim blaming. The current review has explored what is currently known about victim characteristics and observer characteristics, and their separate effects on rape victim blaming.

This review illustrated that on the side of victim variables, male victims are generally blamed more than female victims (Burt & DeMello, 2002), most likely due to their masculinity and perceived capability of fighting back (Sims et al., 2007). Moreover, it was found that homosexual men are blamed most and held more responsible compared to heterosexual male victims (Davies et al., 2001; White & Yamawaki, 2009), making some researchers suggest that victims are blamed most when they are potentially attracted to their perpetrator (Wakelin & Long, 2003). Finally, research has consistently found that the better the victim and perpetrator know each other the more the victim is blamed (Kelly, 2009; Sleath & Bull, 2010; White & Yamawaki, 2009; Yamawaki, 2009).

As for observer variables, male observers generally blame victims more and minimize rape to a greater extent than female observers (e.g., Davies et al., 2009; Sims et al., 2009). For the remaining three variables, observer professional status, gender role attitudes, and rape myth acceptance, the results are less consistent and unanimous. With regard to professional status, only few professions have been investigated specifically; yet, most rape blame results

were in line with results from general or college/university populations. A limitation associated with these studies relates to the lack of control groups; although some studies investigate rape blame attributions amongst various professional groups, they often lack a control group from the general population, which makes it difficult to generalize and compare the findings. With regard to the variables of gender role attitudes and rape myth acceptance, many studies have found that these are important predictors for rape victim blaming and rape minimization (e.g., Basow & Minieri, 2011; White & Kurpius, 2002). However, other studies have concluded that they merely act as mediating variables between observer gender and rape victim blaming, with men generally portraying higher gender role attitudes and rape myth acceptance, which in turn leads to a higher degree of victim blame (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Hammond et al., 2011). This could possibly have vast implications for decision-making processes within the criminal justice system, as these may be influenced by unconscious pre-existing stereotypes and (prejudicial) beliefs and attitudes (Grubb & Turner, 2012).

Although vignettes are a good way to investigate rape victim blaming, this methodology has its limitations, which leads to a gap in the research. This gap can be filled by using additional methodologies, such as qualitative research designs for more in-depth analyses of certain variables, and for an improvement in ecological validity. The inclusion of mock jury trial based research also has a place within the current literature and can add to our understanding of rape blame attribution processes. Most research in these two domains has confirmed and triangulated the results received from vignette studies and adds to our understanding of rape blame attribution in real life settings. It is important to identify the fact that many of the variables involved in rape attribution formation are intertwined, and that there may in fact be many mediating variables which play a part in the formation of observer attitudes towards victims of rape.

4.1 Limitations and future research

Although all studies discussed in this review can be considered well designed and accurate, and although the vignette procedure is thought to be more reliable, valid and realistic than simple questions usually used in surveys (Alexander & Becker, 1978); this methodology does entail some limitations that need to be considered. First of all, historically numerous different scenarios varying in length, descriptions and format have been used. It has been suggested by some researchers that it may be more reliable and valid, therefore, to use some form of universal rape scenario vignettes within such experimental research, in order to make comparisons across studies easier and more feasible (Grubb & Harrower, 2008); however, the practicalities of such a suggestion are yet to be explored. Equally, one has to take into account that the degree of blame found via vignette studies is low overall, regardless of the manipulated victim and observer characteristics, and that perpetrators are consistently blamed much more than victims (Davies et al., 2001; Davies & McCartney, 2003). Significant results, therefore, represent very small differences within populations. As such, one should not neglect the differences, but should keep in mind that the full picture may not be as extreme as it may appear on the basis of rape victim blame studies.

Furthermore, some authors have suggested that vignettes are artificial and, consequently, may lack in external and ecological validity, as one still does not know how individuals will respond in real life situations (Davies et al., 2001; Davies et al., 2011; Ward, 1995). Additionally, most studies use college and university student samples; therefore, the use of non-representative samples in conjunction with the limitations of ecological validity may reduce the predictive validity and generalizability of current studies. It is, therefore, suggested that future research should focus more on both specialized and broader samples. When doing this research, one has to consider possible social desirability biases that can lead to distortions (Ward, 1995). For example, in this review, it became evident that police

officers in the United Kingdom are overall pro-victim which was related to good practice (Davies et al., 2009). However, these officers may have guessed the purpose of the study and therefore answered according to what is perceived to be best practice. As a result, social desirability needs to be controlled for in any future research focusing on such public facing professions. Finally, the current review has ignored a major relevant variable because it was out of the scope of this review; yet, it is relevant to the rape attribution formation process. Perpetrator characteristics have not been considered specifically. The current review only included studies where the perpetrator was a male (with no reference to any perpetrator characteristics); however, recently there have been studies exploring attitudes towards female sex offenders (Gakhal & Brown, 2011), a variable that could be included in the more specific rape blame attribution literature. Initial research indicates that observers' reactions may vary when perpetrator characteristics are manipulated, which is a factor that should be investigated and receive further academic attention within future rape blame attribution research.

In summary, it can be concluded that rape victims are still blamed to some extent for their own victimization, and that certain variables are key to increasing the degree to which individuals are blamed for the rape. This finding has important implications for rape victims and, more specifically, treatment services and medico-legal agencies designed to support victims of sexual violence. It is highly important that practitioners working with rape victims are aware of the negative blame attributions held by the general public, and should be very wary of not using these attributions in the treatment atmosphere (Davies & Rogers, 2006) so as not to subject rape survivors to secondary victimization or deter their recovery. Further research should be directed towards the raising of awareness and development of training for practitioners to enable them to work with rape victims as effectively and non-judgmentally as possible. Another important question that may be tackled in further research concerns whether it is possible to reduce rape blame in the general population. Much is known about

the psychological process of victim blaming. Consequently, we may be at the point to be able to develop strategies for education to reverse this process and thereby to create awareness about the reality and seriousness of rape situations.

5. References

- Abrams, D., Viki, G.T., Masser, B., & Bohner, G. (2003). Perceptions of stranger and acquaintance rape: The role of benevolent and hostile sexism in victim blame and rape proclivity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 111-125.
- Alexander, C.S. (1980). The responsible victim: Nurses' perceptions of victims of rape. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 21*, 22-33.
- Alexander, C.S., & Becker, H.J. (1978). The use of vignettes in survey research. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 42*, 93-104.
- Anderson, I. (1999). Characterological and behavioral blame in conversations about female and male rape. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 18*, 377-394.
- Anderson, I., & Lyons, A. (2005). The effect of victims' social support on attributions of blame in female and male rape. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 35*, 1400-1417.
- Anderson, I. & Quinn, A. (2009). Gender differences in medical students' attitudes towards male and female rape victims. *Psychology, Health & Medicine, 14*, 105-110.
- Basow, S.A., & Minieri, A. (2011). "You owe me": Effects of date cost, who pays, participant gender, and rape myth beliefs on perceptions of rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 26*, 479-497.
- Bell, S.T., Kuriloff, P.J., & Lottes, I. (1994). Understanding attributions of blame in stranger rape and date rape situations: An examination of gender, race, identification, and students' social perceptions of rape victims. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 24*, 1719-1734.
- Black, K.A., & Gold, D.J. (2008). Gender differences and socioeconomic status biases in judgments about blame in date rape scenarios. *Violence and Victims, 23*, 115-128.
- Bohner, G., Eyssel, F., Pina, A., Siebler, F., & Viki, G.T. (2009). Rape myth acceptance: Cognitive, affective and behavioural effects of beliefs that blame the victim and exonerate the perpetrator. In M. Horvath & J. Brown (Eds.), *Rape: Challenging contemporary thinking* (pp. 17-45). Cullompton: Willan.
- Branscombe, N.R., & Weir, J.A. (1992). Resistance as stereotype-inconsistency: Consequences for judgments of rape victims. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 11*, 80-102.
- Brownmiller, S. (1975). *Against our will: Men, women and rape*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Burt, D.L., & DeMello, L.R. (2002). Attribution of rape blame as a function of victim gender and sexuality, and perceived similarity to the victim. *Journal of Homosexuality, 43*, 39-58.
- Burt, M. (1980). Cultural myths and support for rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 38*, 217-230.

- Calhoun, L.G., Selby, J.W., Cann, A., & Keller, G.T. (1978). The effects of victim physical attractiveness and sex of respondent on social reactions to victims of rape. *British Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology, 17*, 191-192.
- Calhoun, L.G., Selby, J.W., & Warring, L.J. (1976). Social perception of the victim's causal role in rape: An exploratory examination of four factors. *Human Relations, 29*, 517-526.
- Chapleau, K.M., Oswald, D.L., & Russell, B.L. (2008). Male rape myths: The role of gender, violence, and sexism. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 23*, 600-615.
- Cohn, E.S., Dupuis, E.C., & Brown, T.M. (2009). In the eye of the beholder: Do behavior and character affect victim and perpetrator responsibility for acquaintance rape?. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 39*, 1513-1535.
- Davies, M., Austen, K., & Rogers, P. (2011). Sexual preference, gender, and blame attributions in adolescent sexual assault. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 151*, 592-607.
- Davies, M., & Hudson, J. (2011). Judgments toward male and transgendered victims in a depicted stranger rape. *Journal of Homosexuality, 58*, 237-247.
- Davies, M., & McCartney, S. (2003). Effects of gender and sexuality on judgements of victim blame and rape myth acceptance in a depicted male rape. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 13*, 391-398.
- Davies, M., Pollard, P., & Archer, J. (2001). The influence of victim gender and sexual orientation on judgments of the victim in a depicted stranger rape. *Violence and Victims, 16*, 607-619.
- Davies, M., & Rogers, P. (2006). Perceptions of male victims in depicted sexual assault: A review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 11*, 357-367.
- Davies, M., Rogers, P., & Bates, J. (2008). Blame towards male rape victims as a function of victim sexuality and degree of resistance. *Journal of homosexuality, 55*, 533-544.
- Davies, M., Rogers, P., & Whitelegg, L. (2009). Effects of victim gender, victim sexual orientation, victim response and respondent gender on judgements of blame in a hypothetical adolescent rape. *Legal and Criminological Psychology, 14*, 331-338.
- Davies, M., Smith, R., & Rogers, P. (2009). Police perceptions of rape as a function of victim gender and sexuality. *The Police Journal, 82*, 4-12.
- Donovan, R.A. (2007). To blame or not to blame: Influences of target race and observer sex in rape blame attribution. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 22*, 722-736.
- Ellis, L. (1989). *Theories of rape: Inquiries into the causes of sexual aggression*. Washington, DC: Hemisphere.
- Ellison, L., & Munro, V.E. (2009). Of 'normal sex' and 'real rape': Exploring the use of socio-sexual scripts in (mock) jury deliberation. *Social and Legal Studies, 18*, 291-312.

- Ewoldt, C.A., Monson, C.M., & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J. (2000). Attributions about rape in a continuum of dissolving marital relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 15*, 1175-1182.
- Fischer, G.J. (1997). Gender effects on individual verdicts and on mock jury verdicts in a simulated acquaintance rape trial. *Sex Roles, 36*, 491-501.
- Fulero, S., & DeLara, C. (1976). Rape victims and attributed responsibility: A defensive attribution approach. *Victimology, 1*, 551-563.
- Foley, L. A., Evanic, C., Karnik, K., King, J., & Parks, A. (1995). Date rape: Effects of race of assailant and victim and gender of subjects on perceptions. *Journal of Black Psychology, 21*, 6-18.
- Foley, L.A., & Pigott, M.A. (2000). Belief in a just world and jury decisions in a civil rape trial. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 30*, 935-951.
- Franiuk, R., Seefeldt, J.L., & Vandello, J.A. (2008). Prevalence of rape myths in headlines and their effects on attitudes toward rape. *Sex Roles, 58*, 790-801.
- Furnham, A. (2003). Belief in a just world: Research progress over the past decade. *Personality and Individual Differences, 34*, 795-817.
- Furnham, A., & Boston, N. (1996). Theories of rape and the just world. *Psychology, Crime & Law, 2*, 211-229.
- Gakhal, B.K., & Brown, S.J. (2011). A comparison of the general public's, forensic professionals' and students' attitudes towards female sex offenders. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 17*, 105-116.
- Gerger, H., Kley, H., Bohner, G., & Siebler, F. (2007). The acceptance of modern myths about sexual aggression scale: Development and validation in German and English. *Aggressive Behavior, 33*, 422-440.
- Gilmartin-Zena, P. (1983). Attribution theory and rape victim responsibility. *Deviant Behavior, 4*, 357-374.
- Grubb, A.R., & Harrower, J. (2008). Attribution of blame in cases of rape: An analysis of participant gender, type of rape and perceived similarity to the victim. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour, 13*, 396-405.
- Grubb, A.R., & Harrower, J. (2009). Understanding attribution of blame in cases of rape: An analysis of participant gender, type of rape and perceived similarity to the victim. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 15*, 63-81.
- Grubb, A.R., & Turner, E. (2012). Attribution of blame in rape cases: A review of the impact of rape myth acceptance, gender role conformity and substance use on victim blaming. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 17*, 443-452.
- Hammond, E.M., Berry, M.A., & Rodriguez, D.N. (2011). The influence of rape myth

acceptance, sexual attitudes, and belief in a just world on attributions of responsibility in a date rape scenario. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 16, 242-252.

Heaven, P.C.L., Connors, J., & Pretorius, A. (1998). Victim characteristics and attribution of rape blame in Australia and South Africa. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 138, 131-133.

Howard, J.A. (1984). The "normal" victim: The effects of gender stereotypes on reactions to victims. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 47, 270-281.

Idisis, Y., Ben-David, S., & Ben-Nachum, E. (2007). Attribution of blame to rape victims among therapists and non-therapists. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 25, 103-120.

Janoff-Bulman, R. (1979). Characterological versus behavioural self-blame: Inquiries into depression and rape. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 1798-1809.

Jones, C., & Aronson, E. (1973). Attribution of fault to a rape victim as a function of respectability of the victim. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 26, 415-419.

Kahn, A.S., Rodgers, K.A., Martin, C., Malick, K., Claytor, J., Gandolfo, M., ... Webne, E. (2011). Gender versus gender role in attributions of blame for a sexual assault. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 41, 239-251.

Kassing, L.R., & Prieto, L.R. (2003). The rape myth and blame-based beliefs of counselors-in-training toward male victims of rape. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 81, 455-461.

Kelly, T. (2009). *Judgments and perceptions of blame: The impact of benevolent sexism and rape type on attributions of responsibility in sexual assault*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada). Retrieved from [https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/17781/1/Kelly Theresa C 200906 PhD thesis.pdf](https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/17781/1/Kelly%20Theresa%20C%20200906%20PhD%20thesis.pdf).

Kleinke, C.L., & Meyer, C. (1990). Evaluation of rape victim by men and women with high and low belief in a just world. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 14, 343-353.

Kopper, B.A. (1996). Gender, gender identity, rape myth acceptance, and time of initial resistance on the perception of acquaintance rape blame and avoidability. *Sex Roles*, 34, 81-93.

Krulewitz, J.E. (1981). Sex differences in evaluation of female and male victims' responses to assault. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 11, 460-474.

Krulewitz, J.E., & Nash, J.E. (1979). Effects of rape victim resistance, assault outcome, and sex of observer on attributions about rape. *Journal of Personality*, 47, 557-574.

Lambert, A.J., & Raichle, K. (2000). The role of political ideology in mediating judgments of blame in rape victims and their assailants: A test of the just world, personal responsibility, and legitimization hypotheses. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26, 853-863.

Lerner, M.J., & Matthews, G. (1967). Reactions to suffering of others under conditions of

indirect responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 5, 319-325.

Mason, G.E., Riger, S., & Foley, L.A. (2004). The impact of past sexual experiences on attributions of responsibility for rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 19, 1157-1171.

Masser, B., Lee, K., & McKimmie, B.M. (2010). Bad woman, bad victim? Disentangling the effects of victim stereotypicality, gender stereotypicality and benevolent sexism on acquaintance rape victim blame. *Sex Roles*, 62, 494-504.

Mitchell, D., Angelone, D.E., Kohlberger, B., & Hirschman, R. (2009). Effects of offender motivation, victim gender, and participant gender on perceptions of rape victims and offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24, 1564-1578.

Mitchell, D., Hirschman, R., & Hall, G.C.N. (1999). Attributions of victim responsibility, pleasure, and trauma in male rape. *Journal of Sex Research*, 36, 369-373.

Muller, R.T., Caldwell, R.A., & Hunter, J.E. (1994). Factors predicting the blaming of victims of physical child abuse or rape. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 26, 259-279.

Newcombe, P.A., Van den Eynde, J., Hafner, D., & Jolly, L. (2008). Attributions of responsibility for rape: Differences across familiarity of situation, gender, and acceptance of rape myths. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 38, 1736-1754.

Proite, R., Dannells, M., & Benton, S.L. (1993). Gender, sex-role stereotypes, and the attribution of responsibility for date and acquaintance rape. *Journal of College Student Development*, 34, 411-417.

Richardson, D., & Campbell, J.L. (1982). Alcohol and rape: The effect of alcohol on attributions of blame for rape. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 8, 468-476.

Ryan, K.M. (2011). The relationship between rape myths and sexual scripts: The social construction of rape. *Sex Roles*, 65, 774-782.

Schneider, L.J., Soh-Chiew Ee, L.S.C., & Aronson, H. (1994). Effects of victim gender and physical vs. psychology trauma/injury on observers' perceptions of sexual assault and its aftereffects. *Sex Roles*, 30, 793-808.

Schneider, L.J., Mori, L.T., Lambert, P.L., & Wong, A.O. (2009). The role of gender and ethnicity in perceptions of rape and its aftereffects. *Sex Roles*, 60, 410-421.

Shaver, K.G. (1970). Defensive attribution: Effects of severity and relevance on the responsibility assigned for an accident. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 14, 101-113.

Sheldon, J.P., & Parent, S.L. (2002). Clergy's attitudes and attributions of blame toward female rape victims. *Violence Against Women*, 8, 233-256.

Simonson, K., Subich, L.M. (1999). Rape perceptions as a function of gender-role traditionality and victim-perpetrator association. *Sex Roles*, 40, 617-634.

Sims, C.M., Noel, N.E., & Maisto, S.A. (2007). Rape blame as a function of alcohol presence and resistance type. *Addictive Behaviors, 32*, 2766-2775.

Sinclair, H.C., & Bourne, L.E. jr. (1998). Cycle of blame or just world: Effects of legal verdicts on gender patterns in rape-myth acceptance and victim empathy. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 22*, 575-588.

Sleath, E., & Bull, R. (2010). Male rape victim and perpetrator blaming. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 25*, 969-988.

Smith, R.E., Keating, J.P., Hester, R.K., & Mitchell, H.E. (1976). Role and justice considerations in the attribution of responsibility to a rape victim. *Journal of Research in Personality, 10*, 346-357.

Stewart, D.N., & Jacquin, K.M. (2010). Juror perceptions in a rape trial: Examining the complainant's ingestion of chemical substances prior to sexual assault. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 19*, 853-874.

Suarez, E., & Gadalla, T.M. (2010). Stop blaming the victim: A meta-analysis on rape myths. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 25*, 2010-2035.

Talbot, K.K., Neill, K.S., & Rankin, L.L. (2010). Rape-accepting attitudes of university undergraduate students. *Journal of Forensic Nursing, 6*, 170-179.

Temkin, J., & Krahé, B. (2008). *Sexual assault and the justice gap: A question of attitude*. Oxford: Hart.

Tetreault, P.A., & Barnett, M.A. (1987). Reactions to stranger and acquaintance rape. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 11*, 353-358.

United Nations Development Fund for Women. (2008). *Violence against women: Facts and figures*. Retrieved from http://www.unifem.org/attachments/gender_issues/violence_against_women/facts_figures_violence_against_women_2007.pdf .

Viki, G.T., Abrams, D., & Masser, B. (2004). Evaluating stranger and acquaintance rape: The role of benevolent sexism in perpetrator blame and recommended sentence length. *Law and Human Behavior, 28*, 295-303.

Wakelin, A., & Long, K.M. (2003). Effects of victim gender and sexuality on attributions of blame to rape victims. *Sex Roles, 49*, 477-487.

Ward, C.A. (1995). *Attitudes toward Rape: feminist and social psychological perspectives*. London: Sage Publications.

Whatley, M.A., & Riggio, R.E. (1993). Gender differences in attributions of blame for male rape victims. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 8*, 502-511.

White, B.H., & Kurpius, S.E. (2002). Effects of victim sex and sexual orientation on

perceptions of rape. *Sex Roles*, 46, 191-200.

White, S., & Yamawaki, N. (2009). The moderating influence of homophobia and gender-role traditionality on perceptions of male rape victims. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 39, 1116–1136.

Willis, C. E. (1992). The effect of sex role stereotype, victim and defendant race, and prior relationship on race culpability attributions. *Sex Roles*, 26, 213-226.

Yamawaki, N. (2007). Rape perception and the function of ambivalent sexism and gender-role traditionality. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22, 406-423.

Yamawaki, N. (2009). The role of rape myth acceptance and belief in a just world on victim blame attribution: A study in Japan. *Psychologia: An International Journal of Psychology in the Orient*, 52, 163-174.

Yamawaki, N., & Tschanz, B.T. (2005). Rape perception differences between Japanese and American college students: On the mediating influence of gender role traditionality. *Sex Roles*, 52, 379-392.