

THE OBJECTIFICATION AND BLAME OF REVENGE PORN VICTIMS

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by

CHRISTINE ROSEMARY SERPE

M.A., John Jay College, City University of New York, 2015

B.A., Stony Brook University, State University of New York, 2011

Kansas City, MO

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Christine Rosemary Serpe, Candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree

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ABSTRACT

The current study sought to explore the relationship between objectification and victim blame in cases of revenge porn across cases in which the victim was sexually diverse (i.e., bisexual, lesbian, straight). Participants included in this study were straight, cisgender (i.e., identifying with the gender assigned at birth) men and women ages 18 and older living in the United States. Given that bisexual women face harsher sexual stereotypes than lesbian and straight women, it was hypothesized that bisexual women would be more objectified than the straight and lesbian victims in the vignettes. Additionally, as objectification and victim blame appear to be related, it was hypothesized that the bisexual victim in the vignette would be blamed more for her implications in a revenge porn case than would the straight and lesbian victims. The findings revealed that objectification and victim blame were significantly correlated. No significant differences were found between bisexual, lesbian, or straight victims on measures of objectification or victim blame. Men participants were found to assign greater victim blame to the victims in the vignettes than were women participants. This study has important implications for targeting advocacy efforts around sexual violence and implications for training future counseling psychologists to enhance their advocacy efforts.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Education, have examined a dissertation titled “The Objectification and Blame of Revenge Porn Victims” presented by Christine Rosemary Serpe, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Supervisory Committee

Chris Brown, Ph.D., Committee Chair
Division of Counseling and Educational Psychology

Kimberly Langrehr, Ph.D.
Division of Counseling and Educational Psychology

LaVerne Berkel, Ph.D.
Division of Counseling and Educational Psychology

Carolyn Barber, Ph.D.
Division of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Foundations

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CHAPTER 1

CONCEPT PAPER

When discussing sexual violence or assault, it is easy to imagine physical contact between two individuals; however, in our rapidly changing world, we may fail to consider how technology has affected the landscape of sexual assault and violence. Reports of contact sexual violence (e.g., perpetrator physically violates the victim) are high, with statistics suggesting that 1 in 4 women will experience a complete or attempted rape, and that nearly 44% of women (52.2 million) have been the victim of some form of sexual violence in her lifetime (e.g., contact sexual violence, sexual coercion, unwanted sexual contact: Smith et al., 2017). Whereas sexual violence might typically be thought of as a physical act, estimates of non-contact sexual violence (e.g., being harassed in a public place, being forced to watch sexually explicit material) suggest that about 1 in 5 (20%) women will experience some form of non-contact sexual violence in her lifetime (Smith et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the presence of new technologies is ubiquitous, signaling changes to communication practices and information exchange. Among all adults, mobile phone ownership is reported to exceed 90%, and is reported to be 96-97% among individuals between the ages of 18 and 44 (Rainie, 2013). The most commonly owned device at 77% is a smartphone, which comes equipped with internet and social media accessibility (77%: Smith, 2017). Similar statistics report increased internet use in the last decade, and that nearly 77% of Americans use social media (Smith, 2017). Emerging literature documents the connection between this rapid expansion of new technologies (e.g., mobile phones, social media) and increased access to professional and amateur pornographic material (Barron & Kimmel, 2000) through various internet platforms (e.g., reddit, PornHub, etc.). Therefore,

pornographic material is ubiquitous and easy to access through the host of devices we have for daily use.

Advances in technology and information exchange come with the benefits of increased communication and access to information. In addition, advances in technology have facilitated how we communicate with one another and our choice in the types of information we choose to share. For example, based on a survey of 6,000 U.S. adults, 16% admitted to sharing sexual images of themselves via electronic device (i.e., sexting; Garcia, et al., 2016). In that same study, it was also reported that 23% of individuals who received intimate photos of another party, shared those images with someone else (Garcia et al., 2016). Moreover, widespread use of texting and messaging through social media apps (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, snapchat) provide more opportunities for non-contact sexual violations though these mediums, also known as Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence (TFSV), a complex concept comprised of distinct typologies of sexual violence (e.g., unauthorized creation and distribution of images; Henry & Powell, 2014). Such changes in technology have affected the landscape of sexual offenses and signals the needs to further investigate these behaviors and associated attitudes.

Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence

Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence (TFSV) is an emerging social and public health issue. According to Henry and Powell (2014), TFSV is characterized by using media and/or technology to aid, produce, promote, and/or distribute sexual assault images or to commit a sexual offense. TFSV is characterized by six categories (Henry & Powell, 2014) including: (1) the unauthorized creation and distribution (actual or threatened) of sexual images (e.g., revenge porn, nonconsensual pornography), (2) sexual assault images (e.g.,

images of a rape), (3) using the telephone or internet to initiate a sexual assault (e.g., using online chat groups to lure a victim, hiring someone to commit rape), (4) online sexual harassment (e.g., cyberstalking), (5) gender-based hate speech (e.g., sites and comments advocating for violence against women), and (6) virtual rape (e.g., assault of an online avatar). As individuals become hyper-connected through greater internet and mobile access, there are greater avenues for sexual harms (Henry & Powell, 2014). Victims of one type of TFSV, *revenge porn*, were found to have significant mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress symptoms, and safety-related anxiety (Bates, 2017).

Revenge Porn

Nonconsensual pornography, which falls under the umbrella of TFSV, refers to situations when sexual images of another individual is distributed without their consent. Revenge porn, a type of nonconsensual pornography, occurs when an individual, typically a malicious ex-male romantic partner, distributes sexually explicit images or videos online of a former partner without her consent and with intent to harass or to harm her (Franklin, 2014). As perpetrators of revenge porn are more likely to be men and victims are more likely to be women (Franklin, 2014), male and female pronouns will be used when discussing perpetrator (he/him) and victim (she/her). This does not imply that men cannot be victims of revenge porn; rather, it serves to be reflective of current trends. In their review of the literature, Walker and Sleath (2017) suggested that scholars are fairly consistent in their contention that revenge porn includes the dissemination of explicit media without the consent of the individual depicted. Unfortunately, the authors also identified that the majority of available studies examine the behavior (e.g., nonconsensual distribution of photos) without exploration of the motivation (e.g., revenge, profit). However, of available studies and writings, Walker

and Sleath discussed that the literature is fairly consistent in suggesting that revenge porn typically occurs in the context of the deterioration of a relationship, though it is rarely included within the definition as an explicit variable. Furthermore, as revenge is the motive, the end goal appears to be inflicting harm or harassment on the victim (Citron & Franks, 2014). However, Citron and Franks, both legal scholars, have suggested that regardless of motive (e.g., revenge, profit), nonconsensual image sharing is likely to inflict emotional harm or damage on its victims. It is also worth noting that not all revenge porn experiences are alike, and representative examples appear to display a degree of variability among them. For example, sexually explicit content may be created consensually (e.g., voluntarily sharing personal photos) or forcefully (e.g., taping a sexual assault) and without the consent of the individual (e.g., secretive videotaping: Franklin, 2014). In situations where the explicit images and/or videos were created and shared consensually, the online posting/distribution of those explicit images without the partner's consent elevates this to nonconsensual pornography. In revenge porn, the intention of the image sharing is to inflict harm or harassment on the victim, usually carried out by adding the woman's personally identifying information (e.g., address, phone number) and/or degrading language alongside her images.

Perpetrator motivations for revenge can range from real or imagined infidelity, the end of a relationship, or other factors that appear to prompt the perpetrator to inflict harm upon the victim. Revenge porn, and thus the associated harms (e.g., harassment, suicidality, job loss) are predominately inflicted by malicious ex-partners, which suggest this to be a type of intimate partner offense (Bloom, 2014). Furthermore, in cases of revenge porn, sexually explicit images and/or videos are typically uploaded to the internet along with the victim's personally identifying information (e.g., place of work, phone number) with the intention of

harming or harassing the victim, inciting fear, and gaining a sense of revenge and control (Bloom, 2014).

Unfortunately, a host of websites exist for this sole purpose. Some contain message boards, which allow users the option to make degrading comments about the victim, her appearance, and/or moral character (Stroud, 2014). One of the original websites, “Is Anyone Up” (shut down in 2012), popularized uploading content of former female partners along with defamatory and threatening language (Broderick, 2014). Following investigations of hundreds of women affected by ‘Anon-IB’ (“anonymous image board”), the revenge porn platform was shut down by police in 2018 (McKay, 2018). Even more troubling is the fact that even after websites are shut down, content can often still be accessed through loopholes created via the dark web and connection channels through websites like Reddit and 4chan. Revenge porn is unlikely to remain isolated to the original platform or website. Internet users share images and information across social media platforms (e.g., Tumblr), making it incredibly difficult to completely remove revenge porn images from the internet (Hern, 2017).

As noted above, revenge porn falls under the umbrella of nonconsensual pornography, but not all nonconsensual pornography is considered revenge porn. For example, if a woman were to send a sexually explicit photograph to her partner and were that partner to upload that image to the internet for money or share that photo with a group of friends to “brag” about his sex life, it would not necessarily be deemed revenge porn. There needs to be additional information showing a revenge motive and intent to directly harm or harass the victim. The malicious partner’s desire for revenge and intent to harm or damage qualifies non-consensual pornography as *revenge porn*.

The images/videos in some instances of revenge porn appeared to have been initially captured and/or created consensually (e.g., consent to film a sexual act, consensually sending nude photos via text message; Franklin, 2014). Thus, sexually explicit content might be consensually created, shared, or transmitted between parties during the time of the relationship, but lack consent to distribute the content beyond the context of the relationship. For example, after being asked by her male partner, a woman might consensually send nude photographs of herself over text message or e-mail. At the time, the woman might have consensually agreed to take these photographs and consented to share them privately with her male partner. Yet, in other instances of revenge porn, there appears to lack consent in both the initial creation of content and the later distribution (Franklin, 2014). For example, a male partner might videotape his female partner without her knowledge or consent to do so during a sexual act. Ultimately, consent in the creation of the original images may vary from incident to incident, but there is always a clear lack of consent in the latter distribution and sharing of such content aimed to harm the victim (Franklin, 2014). Regardless of how the content was initially captured or created, the nonconsensual distribution of such content with the motivation of revenge and intent to harm the victim through sharing of personal information or other tactics used to humiliate is what most fully captures the concept of revenge porn (Franklin, 2014).

Relevant Examples of Revenge Porn. The study of revenge porn has garnered attention from psychologists and legal scholars in the past several years; however, there is limited data that describe victims' experiences. What follows is a mixture of scholarly reports and news media to further describe and detail representative examples of revenge porn, which might help facilitate a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

Undoubtedly, technology increases our ability to communicate, and to pursue relationships. For Kara Jefts, using Skype was tantamount to keeping her long-distance relationship alive. Jefts reported that in order to maintain their relationship, she and her Italian boyfriend would often sext (i.e., send sexually explicit photos/videos or messages via messaging technology) with each other over Skype (Alter, 2017). Thus, the benefits of technology might be the ability to develop and maintain long-distance relationships. However, after their relationship ended, Jefts's boyfriend circulated her intimate photos online. Explicit images of Jefts could be found on Google, and "were emailed to her family and friends, posted on Facebook with violent threats against her" (Alter, 2017). Additionally, Jefts was left to manage the potential economic aftermath by needing to minimize the chance the images would surface at her place of work. Jefts also discussed the long-term stigma associated with this experience, especially worsened by the fact that revenge porn images spread quickly and are difficult to take down or remove. In a qualitative study, Bates (2017) corroborated these findings, echoing that survivors of revenge porn experience numerous adverse mental health symptoms after the event, including depression, suicidality, anxiety, and posttraumatic symptoms.

Images on the internet can be easily copied, pasted, saved, and moved around to numerous websites, making permanent removal a near impossible task. Holly Jacobs, a revenge porn survivor, found her photos posted to over 200 porn websites (Alter, 2017). Similar to Jefts, Jacobs reported economic challenges, and eventually left her profession because of the ubiquity of the images. Jacobs also reported being diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. She also reported needing to change her name in order to escape the continued social and psychological consequences of the

incident as her images continued to be shared.

Lena Chen became a victim of revenge porn while studying at Harvard University. Chen broke up with her boyfriend after she found him cheating on her, which resulted in months of receiving incessant texts and calls from him (Oppenheim, 2018). She indicated that her ex-boyfriend had posted intimate photos of her online, which resulted in chronic harassment from strangers on the internet. Scholars have also supported that harassment often moves beyond the ex-partner and is often inflicted by strangers on the internet. According to Linkous (2014), nearly half of victims reported cyber harassment and stalking from strangers who found their images online. For Chen, the harassment became so profound that she found herself, “unable to write, sleep or socialize,” and eventually moved to Berlin and changed her name to escape the emotional damage and repercussions. The emotional impacts of revenge porn are evident and the broad scope of impact disturbing.

Understanding Revenge Porn as Non-Contact Intimate Partner Violence

Sexual violence is characterized by an array of unwanted and/or forceful sexual assault experiences including both contact (e.g., rape, frottage) and non-contact (e.g., threats of future assault/rape, unwanted exposure to sexual images) violations (Basile, Smith, Breiding, Black, & Mahendra, 2014). The adverse effects of contact sexual violence, such as sexual assault and rape, are well documented and include somatic complaints, psychological distress, depression and anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and symptoms, and suicidality (e.g., Chang et al., 2017; Elliot, Mok, & Briere, 2004; Hanson, 1990; Kimerling & Calhoun, 1994; Martin, Rosen, Durand, Knudson, & Stretch, 2000; Rosellini et al., 2017; Santiago, McCall-Perez, Gorcey, & Beigel, 1985).

Non-contact sexual violence includes situations that involve sexual violation and/or

trauma without the use of physical force. The following examples would constitute non-contact sexual violence: (a) exposure to sexual images or situations against one's will (e.g., forced viewing of pornography, exhibitionism), (b) verbal harassment (e.g., spreading sexual rumors, creating a sexually hostile climate), (c) threats of rape or sexual assault, and/or (d) the unwanted filming and/or distribution of sexually explicit content of another individual (Basile, Smith, Breiding, Black, & Mahendra, 2014). Few studies exist that examine the psychological impact of non-contact sexual violence; however, within the intimate partner violence (IPV) literature, some data has documented the psychological harms associated with non-contact, coercive, and terrorizing behaviors.

Whereas there is a dearth of literature directly examining the psychological outcomes of non-contact sexual violence, some of the IPV literature focuses on the effects of emotional and psychological violence within the context of intimate relationships (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). Psychological violence is characterized by emotionally abusive behaviors such as threats, humiliation, coercion, intimidation, and other non-physical tactics used to exert dominance and power over a victim (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). According to Kelly and Johnson (2008), one type of IPV, Coercive Controlling Violence, is characterized by an abusive pattern of exerting power and control over one's partner, which includes a constellation of behaviors such as intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, threatening children, economic abuse, and/or coercion and threats. Since nonviolent tactics might be as effective at controlling one's partner as physical violence, Coercive Controlling Violence does not necessarily exhibit high degrees of contact violence. The outcomes of this pattern of abuse are well documented, with victims reporting fear and anxiety (e.g., Ferraro, 2006; Sackett & Saunders, 1999), loss of self-esteem (e.g., Kirkwood, 1993), depression (e.g.,

Golding, 1999), and post-traumatic stress symptoms (e.g., flashbacks, avoidance, nightmares; Saunders, 1994). As mentioned earlier, physical violence might not be characteristic of IPV when emotional abuse is effective in seeking the abuser's goals of exerting power and control over their partner. For those solely experiencing emotional abuse, the impact appears to have similarities.

Some victims of IPV might report serious abuse in the absence of physical violence. Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, and McKeown (2000) found that 25% of women screened for IPV in a primary care setting met criteria for psychological violence only, and that these women would have been missed by the screener had physical violence been the sole metric for assessment of IPV. Coker and colleagues (2000) also reported that individuals who reported psychological violence as their only IPV experience shared a similar physical health pattern as those experiencing physical violence (e.g., debilitating chronic pain, migraines, irritable bowel syndrome, and other chronic physical health conditions). Mechanic, Weaver, and Resick (2008) demonstrated that, after controlling for physical violence, injuries and sexual coercion in a sample of women experiencing intimate partner violence, that psychological abuse and stalking resulted in moderate to severe posttraumatic stress disorder and depressive symptomatology. Such findings point to the importance of considering the impact of psychological and emotional abuse within the context of intimate relationships when physical violence may not be present. Similarly, as revenge porn might not be associated with the addition of physical violence, the associated emotional damage inflicted might lend credence to casting this type of non-contact sexual violation within an IPV framework.

Whereas there is limited quantitative data measuring the aftermath of revenge porn,

anecdotally, survivors have discussed the intense fear, anxiety, depression, and suicidality associated with such an experience, and in some cases, the economic costs associated with being a victim of revenge porn (Allen, 2016; Ankel, 2018; Citron & Franks, 2014). To date, one study exists that explicitly expounded the mental health effects of revenge porn. Bates (2017) found that revenge porn and sexual assault victims share a similar psychological sequela in the aftermath of their respective traumas, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, avoidance, and a host of maladaptive coping skills and behaviors. In this study, revenge porn victims described how nonconsensual image sharing violated their personal privacy and safety and created a sense of loss of control and a lack of agency (Bates, 2017).

In addition to the study from Bates (2017), survivor's stories can be found on news and other media outlets. One survivor recounted how her place of employment – a university – was listed alongside her nude photos that were auctioned off on eBay (Chiarini, 2013). When she attempted to take a medical leave of absence from her place of employment to manage the after effects, she was denied, and blamed by her employer for the incident (Chiarini, 2013). In addition to the economic challenges she faced, Chiarini also described intense fear, anxiety, depression, and an eventual suicide attempt to try and escape the pain associated with a vicious violation of personal privacy and autonomy. Unfortunately, the economic impact of revenge porn is great and not unique to Chiarini's experience. For example, were a potential employer to conduct an internet search for a potential employee they might find the potential hire's information connected to nude photos of her, pointing to the likelihood of professional and economic repercussions (Citron & Franks, 2014). Ultimately, victims of revenge porn appear to share trauma symptomatology overlap with

those experiencing contact sexual violence and psychological abuse present in IPV instances.

Given the similarities of harms found between sexual assault, IPV, and revenge porn, one might conclude that revenge porn falls under the umbrellas of sexual violence and IPV. From a feminist standpoint, one might further argue that sexual violence and IPV (e.g., assault, rape, coercive controlling behaviors) has more to do with power and dominance than sex (Brownmiller, 1993; Kelly & Johnson, 2008). In their study of offenders and victims of rape, Groth, Burgess, and Holmstrom (1977) revealed that offenders used sex to express power or anger but that there were no rapes in which sex was the primary motive or dominant issue. Several scholars have also argued that revenge porn should be considered within the continuum of IPV. In their review of available revenge porn literature, Walker and Sleath (2017) indicated that perpetrators of revenge porn use technology to exert control and power over their victims. Henry and Powell (2015) suggested that the use of technology has allowed perpetrators to commit “old” crimes (e.g., violence against women, harassment) in new ways. In this case, technology is used as an extension of the constellation of behaviors found in IPV (e.g., intimidation, threats).

As the goal of revenge porn is to psychologically and/or physically harm the victim, it is not difficult to see how power and control are central to this violation. For example, Chiarini (2013) commented on the threats that she received from her partner prior to his auctioning her photos on eBay. She recounted his jealousy and possessiveness even after the breakup, his false accusations of infidelity, and the eventual threat that she “reveal” the other men she was sleeping with otherwise face the consequences of having her private photos auctioned off. At one point, her former boyfriend shared that he would “destroy” her. These attempts to control Chiarini were inherent to an innate desire to exert dominance and power

over her. Lastly, since revenge porn exists within the context of a current or former relationship, it might be appropriate to consider this behavior consistent with IPV. However, when it comes to casting revenge porn as an act of violence, not all scholars are convinced.

For example, some have argued against comparing the harms associated with technology-facilitated non-contact sexual violence to contact based physical violence (MacKinnon, 1997; Williams, 2006), citing that violence is considered a physical act (Huff, Johnson, & Miller, 2003). However, this might actually do victims of revenge porn a disservice, as criminal cases of technology-facilitated sexual violence are rarely prosecuted beyond the sexual violence displayed in the distributed video or related content, which may or may not be present, depending on how the content was initially created/shared. This means the harms associated with distribution of such content, such as humiliation, depression, anxiety, suicidality, are rarely prosecuted in the United States (Bates, 2017; Henry & Powell, 2014). These legal limitations of what constitutes *violence* poses challenges for victims of revenge porn when consensually created content is shared non-consensually with intent to harm (e.g., inclusion of identifying information), as the sexual acts in the images might not be viewed as inherently criminal. Yet, given the scope of harms incurred (e.g., fear, depression, suicidality), these situations should be counted as serious violations with the potential to debilitate, and therefore, worthy of prosecution (Citron & Franks, 2014). Unfortunately, the media has popularized the phrase “revenge porn”, a semantic choice that might cast unwarranted blame on victims.

Reports in the media tend to use the phrase “revenge porn” in describing nonconsensual pornography at the hands of a malicious ex-partner (e.g., Ankel, 2018; Hauser, 2018). By its very definition, *revenge* means to hurt or harm another person in return

for the hurt or harm they caused you. Unfortunately, use of the word “revenge” might serve to trivialize such profoundly impactful experiences and places the assumption of blame on the victim (as revenge implies something has gone amiss in the relationship). Even more problematic are the assumptions about female sexual autonomy embedded within these cases – women are viewed as objects, and consent viewed as continuous as opposed to intermittent (Citron & Franks, 2014). As such, use of the phrase “revenge” and general attitudes regarding female sexuality and female autonomy might further complicate understanding these cases as serious and violent, in which the victim is not culpable.

Conceptualizing Objectification

As mentioned above, women are often reduced to objects in these scenarios. The phrase “object” quite literally suggests that an individual has been reduced to a status that is less-than human. Formally, Objectification Theory (OT) was proposed by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) to provide a framework for understanding the sexual objectification experiences and outcomes of women. By definition, sexual objectification is the sociocultural and/or interpersonal reduction of women to their bodies, body parts, or bodily and/or sexual functioning. Similarly, OT suggests that women live in an inherently objectifying environment, in which objectification experiences are ubiquitous and lifelong (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Objectification is also thought of as the misperception that a woman’s body can represent her as a person (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997), an inherently dehumanizing phenomenon as this conceptualization of women fails to capture their lived experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

However, an important note must be made when discussing objectification. Sexual objectification (as discussed by Fredrickson and Roberts) is related to objectification in

general but they are not necessarily one in the same. Individuals may be made to feel like an *object*, just not necessarily a sexual one. For example, women might experience sexual objectification in their places of work by bosses who makes suggestive comments about their bodies. In the same vein, these women might also feel objectified based on oppressive work environments in which they are made to feel expendable or like cogs in a corporate machine (e.g., poor working conditions, a lack of human rights). In both instances, women are reduced to an instrumental purpose: the provision of sexual gratification to their bosses or the delivery of dehumanized labor. Further expanding on this notion, Loughnan and Pacilli (2013) suggested that separation of one's body from one's self results in "objectification as an outcome, the act of treating a person as if they had the status of a mere object," (p. 310).

Objectification is complex and can include attitudes about how we perceive others. Recently, researchers have begun to approach dehumanization from a sexual objectification standpoint (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). One such study demonstrated that sexualized women were less likely to elicit attributions of mind and moral concern (Loughnan et al., 2010). As such, objectification also suggested a denial or dehumanization of others. As Andrea Dworkin (2000) wrote, "When objectification occurs, the person is depersonalized," (p. 30). Philosophical conceptualization of objectification suggest that objectification is to deny human qualities in one's self and in others (see Loughnan & Pacilli, 2013). To date, most known empirical studies focus on the internalized effects of objectification (see Moradi & Huang, 2008), and few exist that examine the degree to which individuals objectify others, or the process of objectifying another human being. For purposes of this study, given the sexualized nature of revenge porn, and the sexualized status of the women in the vignettes (discussed later), dehumanization viewed through a sexual objectification lens is relevant to

this research.

Pertinent to this study, findings from Loughnan and colleagues (2010) suggested that attitudes of the objectifier (i.e., the individual objectifying another) viewed sexualized women as having less “mind” (e.g., ability to feel hunger, pain, desire) than non-sexualized women. This suggests that sexualized women become depersonalized and are denied basic human qualities, such as experiencing discomfort or hunger. In their study, participants were asked to rate photos that depicted only a woman’s head, her full-body or body-only (no head). All photos were created by using a stock image of a woman in a swimsuit and then modified to reflect varying levels of objectification: head-only (low objectification), full body (moderate objectification) and body-only (high objectification). Participants were then asked to make judgements about the women depicted in the photos, which included judgements about to what extent the woman experienced 20 mental states including perceptive experiences (e.g., hearing, seeing), emotions (e.g., fear, joy), thoughts (e.g., reason, thinking), and intentions (e.g., wishes, plans). Additionally, participants were asked to make judgements regarding the women’s moral status and how worthy these individuals were of moral treatment (e.g., “how much does this woman deserve moral treatment?”). Overall, findings suggested that participants rated the body-only image (high-objectification) of the woman as having fewer human characteristics than when she was depicted as a full-body (moderate objectification) or head-only (low objectification). This implies that the more an individual is objectified the more likely they are to be denied basic human characteristics and qualities, suggesting depersonalization to be a key component of the objectification process. Interestingly, Loughnan and his colleagues did not find any gender differences between male and female participants, indicating that “both men and women depersonalize

the objectified” (p. 715).

A more recent examination of this phenomenon from Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini and Elder (2017) suggested that objectification could be measured across the dimensions of warmth, competence, morality, and humanity. In the first phase of the study, Study 1, participants were female-only. First, to obtain a baseline score, participants rated themselves on the four aforementioned dimensions. Participants were then asked to recall a time in their lives in which they felt objectified by another individual. Participants were then asked to rate themselves across the four dimensions according to how they felt at the time of the objectifying experience. Generally, participants indicated reduced feelings of warmth, competence, and humanity. Unexpectedly, ratings of morality appeared to show an increase when the individual was objectified by another woman. However, the authors attempted to replicate these findings in the second phase and further investigated the inconsistency of the morality finding. In Study 2, both men and women were included. Participants were first asked to rate themselves across the original four dimensions to establish a baseline, this time using a different, more well validated, measure of morality. Participants were then asked to remember a time they were objectified in the workplace either by another individual or during a work-related activity. To probe for objectification during a work related activity, participants were asked to remember a time in which performing their job made them feel “as a mere instrument, object, cog in the machine, or tool rather than a person” (p. 226). After this, participants were asked to evaluate themselves at the time of the experience across the four dimensions. The authors reported that participant gender had no effect on the dependent measures, and was therefore eliminated from the main analyses. Regardless of the type of objectification (e.g. objectified by colleague, objectified by activity) participants reported

perceiving themselves as less warm, less competent, and having less humanity. When examining perception of morality in Study 2, researchers found that participants rated themselves as less moral when objectified. While the findings regarding morality were mixed, Study 2 was more in-line with previous studies in which reduced morality has been shown to be an outcome of objectification (e.g., Chen, Teng & Zhang, 2013). The results from this study suggested the salience of objectification across contexts and validated the theoretical assertion that objectification can be measured by the denial of personhood.

Bernard, Gervais, Allen, Delm e and Klein (2015) similarly suggested dehumanization to be salient in measuring objectification, in that contextualizing women with humanizing features (i.e., warmth and competence) decreased objectification. Therefore, perceiving others without human features (e.g., competence, warmth, intelligence) results in an objectified individual. In doing so, the objectifier “treats the objectified as a mere tool of his ends, not as an end in herself,” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 68), and so the objectified body is used as a personal tool to fulfill the wishes and desires of the objectifier.

Nussbaum (2010) further asserted that objectification “confers a spoiled, or stigmatized, identity, and is thus a species of shaming,” (p. 73), which further suggests that objectified women are dehumanized and denied space at the table of what constitutes being a human being. This stigmatized status further perpetuates her dehumanization as the objectified is viewed as social pariah or one with fault. When it comes to the display and treatment of women on the internet, and in particular, pornographic websites, descriptions of women are often reduced to crude descriptions of her body parts (e.g., cunt, tits), accompanied by descriptions of rape and/or assault (Nussbaum, 2010). Furthermore, the Internet serves as a bastion for male power and privilege, in which women victimized

through its means experience real world consequences such as economic, and interpersonal disadvantages (Nussbaum, 2010).

Unfortunately, the rape culture in that we all exist lends credence to the perpetual objectification, dehumanization, and male domination over women (see Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005). The internet, the primary medium for the distribution of revenge porn, serves as a petri dish of misogyny, in which users are emboldened by the promise of anonymity. Jane (2014) examined the content of misogynistic and sexually violent language used to describe women on the internet and reported the common practice of harassing and threatening women online with threats of sexual violence and death, and degrading commentary about their appearances. Jane contended that this points to a larger sociocultural issue in which cyber misogyny proliferates because sexism and inequality between men and women are still institutionalized. Seen through a lens of objectification, revenge porn is an undeniable side effect of rape culture and appears to flourish on the anonymized internet.

Dodge (2016) discussed how the dissemination of revenge porn on the internet allow users to rapidly share and comment on sexualized images of women. In her discussion, Dodge further explained that media depicting women in sexual assault situations were subject to slut-shaming and disturbing victim blaming language. Jane (2014) commented on this type of language, noting the dichotomy between desiring and being repulsed by women, in which women were both sexualized and shamed for being “sluts”. In addition, women’s bodies were often the subject of discussion (i.e., “too fat”), as was their sexual desirability based on perceived sexual identity (i.e., ‘too lesbian’). The specific language surrounding sexual assault images of women on the internet, namely ‘whore’ and ‘slut’, further imply that women are responsible for being violated. This further perpetuates the myth that female

sexuality is to be blamed for sexual assault.

Further complicating our understanding of objectification attitudes and attitudes toward women portrayed on the internet is the assessment of objectification of sexual minority women. For purposes of this research, the term “sexual minority women” (SMW) will generally be used to represent all women identifying as sexual minorities (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual). In some cases, the phrase “sexual minority person” or “sexual minority individual” will be used to represent all persons falling underneath the queer umbrella (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer). Occasionally, throughout this manuscript, SMW will be associated with specific sexual identities (e.g., pansexual, queer) and these instances will be clarified by indicating those specific identities in parentheses. Up until the last decade, when researchers were called to expand the scope of objectification literature to more diverse communities, the canon of objectification research predominately focused on cisgender (i.e., identifying with the gender assigned at birth), straight women’s experiences (see Moradi & Haug, 2008). Up to this point, straight women’s experiences of objectification were widely documented, with this group appearing to be highly objectified in a culture that routinely sexualizes and reduces women to their bodies, body parts, and sexuality (see Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). However, heeding this call, emerging studies examined the experiences of SMW (Watson, Grotewiel, Farrell, Marshik & Schneider, 2015), lesbian women (Hill & Fischer, 2008), and bisexual women (Brewster et al., 2014), noting nuanced differences between these communities and their straight counterparts.

An expansion of the objectification literature to include SMW suggested that sexual objectification experiences might vary depending on one’s sexual identity (Engeln-Maddox, Miller, & Doyle, 2011), and that SMW’s experiences with objectification might be

influenced by the effects of discrimination and internalized heterosexism (Watson et al., 2015). To date, most studies have focused specifically on internalization of objectification experiences and the direct outcomes of objectification (Moradi & Haung, 2008) as opposed to targeting who is more likely to objectify SMW (i.e., men or women) or how the objectifier perceives SMW.

The monolith of the current sociocultural media landscape tends to display women as objects, items to be gazed upon – images and roles traditionally cast and created in the male fantasy (Mulvey, 1975). As stated earlier, OT provides a framework for understanding the relationships between sexual objectification experiences and its associated outcomes (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Examples of sexual objectification can be found in the media, where women’s bodies are highly sexualized for the pleasure of men. This occurs frequently in advertising. Another example includes all-female sports leagues designed to captivate male audiences. Such was the case with the Lingerie Football League, in which women’s bodies were placed on display as a male spectator sport. Objectification also occurs in interpersonal situations (e.g. street harassment), and objectifying environments (e.g., gender inequity in work environments: Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, 2011). Surprisingly, there is little empirical evidence to suggest differences between men and women in terms of who harbors the most objectifying attitudes. As mentioned earlier, according to Loughnan and colleagues (2010), men and women were both as likely to objectify sexualized women (e.g., woman in a swimsuit) by assigning her fewer human qualities (e.g., warmth). The limitation here is drawing conclusions from a singular study when there is sociological evidence to suggest that women are cast in a sexualized imagery for the pleasure of the male viewer (Mulvey, 1975). Furthermore, it is men that stand to gain from objectification – the

instrumentation of women's bodies are for their pleasure and gratification (Loughnan & Pacilli, 2013; Nussbaum, 2010). Yet given the limited data, it is difficult to draw compelling conclusions about specific gender differences.

When it comes to objectification of SMW, there is some evidence to suggest that straight men, more so than straight women, are likely to objectify bisexual women. In a qualitative study from Serpe, Brown, Criss, Lamkins, and Watson (2020), bisexual women reported numerous experiences with straight men in which they were made to feel objectified on the basis of sexual identity alone. According to their participants, straight men were more aggressive in pursuing sexual relationships and soliciting threesomes than were straight women. In addition, participants suggested that straight men viewed them as fantasy objects or literal sex toys for their personal pleasure. A nod to the instrumentation of objectification, in that women were reduced to mere objects (Loughnan & Pacilli, 2013). Such findings might point to the possibility that men will be more likely to objectify bisexual women than women will. However, given the findings from one study that reported no gender differences between persons doing the objectification (Loughnan et al., 2010), it is difficult to draw conclusions.

In addition, gender appears to be a salient variable when understanding differences in general attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals (Herek, 1988; Herek, 2000; Israel & Mohr, 2004). The available literature tends to suggest that when comparing straight men and women, that straight men harbor the most negative attitudes toward LGB individuals and feel most negatively toward gay and bisexual men as compared to lesbian women (Herek, 1988; Herek, 2000). This might be explained by understanding threats to masculinity, in that when straight men are asked to evaluate their attitudes toward gay men

they simultaneously contemplate their own sexuality, which might cause anxiety about their identity and maleness (Herek, 2000; Kimmel, 2010). The anxiety that arises when men are confronted with inconsistent representations of stereotypical masculinity (e.g., gay men) has to do with a protection of rigid gender role behaviors and perceptions. As Kimmel writes, “Homophobia is the fear that other men will unmask us [other men], emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men,” (p. 88). Furthermore, men tend to endorse more stereotypic and rigid gender beliefs as a form of masculine protection from not being perceived as gay or not otherwise completely straight as this would pose a significant social threat (Kimmel, 2010).

Furthermore, when examining differences in attitudes toward straight, lesbian, and bisexual women, most research tends to report attitudes in the aggregate (e.g., global attitudes toward LGB persons) and fails to distinguish between SMW (i.e., lesbian, bisexual: Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001; Wilson et al., 2014; Worthen, 2013). However, some studies have suggested that bisexual populations might experience enhanced forms of discrimination or “double discrimination” (i.e., discrimination from both lesbian/gay and straight populations: Ochs, 1996). In a study of straight, lesbian and gay individuals, respondents indicated moderate to severe biphobic attitudes (Mulick & Wright, 2004, 2011). Biphobia, or the repulsion or disdain for bisexual individuals, appears to be informed by the problematic and sexualized stereotypes surrounding bisexuality, which often turn bisexual women into sex objects based on identity (Klesse, 2005; Worthen, 2013).

Regarding lesbian communities, it has been theorized that lesbian women may be less prone to the negative effects of objectification as they are less concerned with attracting men and might be more immune to sociocultural messages about female sexuality and

performativity (Dworkin, 1988; Siever, 1994). However, such findings are mixed, as some studies report lesbians to be as susceptible to body dissatisfaction as straight women (Striegel-Moore, Tucker, & Hsu, 1990), and that lesbian women's experiences with sexual objectification (e.g., sexualized gaze) and self-objectification (e.g., internalization) do not significantly differ from straight women (Hill & Fischer, 2008). Furthermore, whereas bisexual women also fall under the queer umbrella with lesbian women, their experiences may be markedly different due to general treatment in society and interpersonally.

When examining bisexual women's experiences, it has been reported that bisexual persons might face more stereotypes and negative attitudes concerning assumptions about how they conduct themselves sexually (Ochs, 1996; Worthen, 2013). For example, one such study reported that bisexual women disclosed frequent eroticization from men, feeling as though their sexual identity was seen as entertainment for others (Nadal et al., 2011). Bisexual women may face harsher stereotypes regarding their sexuality; being portrayed and seen as though they exist for other's fantasies, and experiencing more hostile requests for sexual acts, such as threesomes (Serpe et al., 2020). Similarly, many of the available representations of bisexual women exist within pornography, which further perpetuates stereotypes about hypersexuality and lends itself to further objectification of this population (Klesse, 2005). While we contend that women in general, experience lifelong objectification, bisexual women might experience intensified objectification as their sexual identities appear to be perceived and portrayed as inherently hypersexualized and promiscuous, and therefore as objects. Perceptions of women as sex objects have direct impact on victim blame attitudes, which might impact the ways that women are perceived by others, particularly when the victim of a criminal offense.

Objectification and Victim Blame

Since objectification reduces individuals to mere objects devoid of subjective experiences (e.g., to dehumanize), objectification might influence the degree to which another individual perceives the objectified individual as being worthy of fair treatment. Previous studies have demonstrated links between judgements about moral concern and the judgements of internal mental states of another individual (Bastian, Laham, Wilson, Haslam, & Koval, 2011; Gray, Gray & Wegner, 2007). Specifically, Bastian and colleagues (2011) found that viewing others as either having or lacking important human qualities could predict whether they were blamed or praised. Specifically, their findings suggested that denying people human qualities led to perceptions that they were less deserving of moral treatment. Denying humanness in others is consistent with theories regarding objectification and depersonalization (Loughnan et al., 2017; Loughnan & Pacilli, 2013), which suggests that depersonalization leads to enhanced blame.

In their study, Loughnan and associates (2010) found that participants exhibited reduced moral concern for sexualized men and women. Such findings suggest that the degree to which an individual is objectified (e.g., reduced to a body without internal states) might impact the degree to which they are blamed for their victimhood. If objectification decreases moral concern for another human being, this might also impact perception of victim status, and victim blame. Similarly, studies that have supported the link between increased objectification and reduced moral concern (Holland & Haslam, 2013; Loughnan et al., 2010) might support the notion that objectified female victims might be denied moral concern and will be seen as more at fault.

Studies that examine sexualization of women have supported a positive relationship

between sexualization and blame attribution. In one such study, more provocatively dressed women were perceived to be more at fault for their sexual assault than non-provocatively dressed women (Edmonds & Cahoon, 1986; Workman & Freeburg, 1999). A more recent study from Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez, and Puvia (2013) used rape-scenario vignettes in which the victim was either provocatively or non-provocatively dressed. Researchers assessed for mind attribution (e.g., subjective emotional experiences, desires, abstract thinking) of the victim, and moral concern for her (e.g., how bad they would feel if she was treated unfairly). Participants were then presented with a rape-scenario in which they completed a victim blame measure (Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez & Puvia, 2013). In the objectification condition (i.e., provocatively dressed scenario), participants expressed less moral concern for the victim, rated her as having less mind attribution, being more at fault for her rape, and consequently, experiencing less suffering than the non-provocatively dressed victim (Loughnan et al., 2013).

Participant gender appears to be a salient factor when examining victim blame attribution (see Russell & Hand, 2017). In their review of the literature examining victim blame attribution, Russell and Hand (2017) found that studies reported male participants to be more likely than female participants to assign blame to victims. Grubb and Harrower (2008) reported that men were more likely than women to attribute blame to victims regardless of the type of rape depicted (e.g., stranger, date). In an additional review of the victim blame attribution literature, van der Bruggen and Grubb (2014) similarly identified gender and sexual identity to be salient characteristics. Specifically, the research indicated that straight men were more likely to blame rape victims than were homosexual men and straight women (Davies & Hudson, 2011; Davies & McCartney, 2003). Moreover, van der

Bruggen and Grubb (2014) suggested that current and past research consistently identify men as being more likely to blame victims than women, a trend appearing across contexts. For example, they reported that men were more likely to blame victims regardless of the victim's gender, victim's sexual identity, and regardless of the rape situation (e.g., date rape, stranger rape). Since perpetrators are typically male, it is suggested that male participants tend to attribute more blame to victims because they are more likely to identify with the perpetrator (Kahn et al., 2011). Overall, men appear more likely to attribute blame to a victim, regardless of her sexual identity. However, given the relationship between objectification and victim blame, sexual identity of the victim might be an additional variable influencing the attribution of victim blame.

Though less attention has been paid to race, literature has suggested that White individuals tend to perceive Black female rape victims as more at fault than their White counterparts (Varelas & Foley, 1998). In their comparison study of White and Latino/a undergraduate students, Jimenez and Abreu (2003) reported that White women were more empathic toward rape victims and endorsed fewer rape myths than did Latinas. These findings were consistent with other studies in which persons of color have been reported to be more accepting of rape myths than White individuals (Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Mori, Bernat, Glenn, Selle, & Zarate, 1995). Jimenez and Abreu suggested their findings were reflective of prevailing cultural attitudes about gender roles and favoring of men over women. A similar pattern emerged in which Latino men were less likely to endorse victim empathy and endorsed more rape myth acceptance than did White men. This may partly be explained by more rigid rules concerning gender, sexuality and masculinity in Latino culture (Jimenez & Abreu, 2003).

However, race may not be the best predictor when it comes to the evaluation of attitudes toward victims. In their comparison of White and African American individuals, Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre and Morrison (2005) examined victim blame attribution when controlling for variables such as age, religion, education and socioeconomic status (SES). The authors reported that African American men felt the least favorably toward victims of rape than did White and African American women and White men. Yet when socioeconomic status (SES) and education levels were factored in, race was no longer significantly predictive of attitudes toward victims. This suggested that higher SES and additional education were predictive of having more favorable attitudes toward victims of rape. However, this finding did not impact attitudes among African American men and was significant for the main effect of race. In addition, the authors reported that age was a significant factor, in that younger participants were more favorable toward rape victims than were older individuals. This suggests that our understanding of race effects on victim blame or attitudes toward victims may be significantly limited in scope and understanding. Lastly, their examination of religious affiliation (e.g., Catholic, Jewish) did not yield significant results.

Although understudied in the literature, there appears to be some data supporting the connection between objectification of women and victim blame; however, this question might become more complicated when a woman is inherently more objectified based on her sexual identity. A recent study by Tebbe, Moradi, Connelly, Lenzen, and Flores (2018) found that SMW (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, queer) reported experiences of being treated as a spectacle or experiment (e.g., being used to explore one's personal sexual identity), and reported feeling fetishized, and hypersexualized by others. When specifically

examining the experiences of bisexual individuals, binegativity, or a pattern of prejudicial attitudes about bisexual identities (Dyar & Feinstein, 2018; Yost & Thomas, 2012), is found to permeate straight, lesbian, and gay communities (Brewster & Moradi, 2010; Klesse, 2005; Mulick & Wright, 2004, 2011; Ochs, 1996). This type of discrimination, referred to as “double discrimination” (Ochs, 1996), captures the prejudicial treatment bisexual people experience from both straight and lesbian and gay (LG) communities. This is particularly troubling as bisexual individuals may struggle to find supportive communities or feel connected to the greater LG population (Ochs, 1996). For bisexual individuals, negative attitudes regarding bisexuality tend to focus on assumptions and stereotypes about how bisexual individuals conduct themselves sexually (Dyar & Feinstein, 2018; Serpe et al., 2020). This includes assumptions that bisexual individuals are promiscuous, hypersexual, and indiscriminately interested in sexual experiences (Dyar & Feinstein, 2018; Nadal et al., 2011). Bisexual women have directly reported similar experiences, particularly with straight men, in which they are perceived as a set of sexual behaviors, and therefore an unworthy of romantic love (Serpe, et al., 2020).

Purpose Statement

It is certainly noteworthy that lesbian communities face discriminatory challenges associated with being a sexual minority person (Heron, Braitman, Lewis, Shappie & Histon, 2018; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001; Wilkinson, 2008) just as bisexual women do. However, current research suggests that prevailing attitudes toward bisexual women tend to be sexually focused and that cultural messages about bisexual identity tend to affirm this belief (Serpe et al., 2020). Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that straight men are the most likely to harbor negativistic beliefs about sexual minority persons (e.g., Herek, 1988; Herek 2000). In

addition, whereas one study suggested that men and women objectified sexualized images similarly (Loughnan et al., 2010), the overarching sociocultural context in which men view and treat women as instrumental objects suggests that men are more likely to objectify others, particularly women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Loughnan & Pacilli, 2013). In addition, the emerging rape culture and continued patriarchy make the need to examine attitudes among straight men paramount.

A phrase coined by feminist scholars, rape culture contends that it is through the proliferation of rape, sexual violence and objectification of women in the media and popular culture that leads to normalization of victimization (Laake & Calkins, 2017). Furthermore, the attitudes are ubiquitous and are often viewed as being a “fact of life” or an inevitable experience for women. Society also tends to trivialize and normalize these experiences and will also engage in sociocultural victim blaming so that victim credibility is discussed in an effort to determine responsibility (Laake & Calkins, 2017). Men and women are liable to internalize these messages, which might explain why the social shame associated with sexual violence and abuse causes so many survivors to remain silent (Weiss, 2010). Or why the collective response to revenge porn victims are questions about why a woman would have taken sexually explicit photos of herself in the first place, rather than questions about why someone would share her photos in the first place. In addition, given the objectification and treatment of particular groups, such as bisexual women, further analysis is warranted to better understand how sexual identity impacts perceptions about victimhood.

Bisexual women face numerous stereotypes about their sexual behaviors and misperceptions about hypersexuality (Ochs, 1996; Klesse, 2005; Worthen, 2013), attitudes most acutely delivered from straight men (Serpe et al., 2020). Thus, it is certainly possible

that bisexual women are more likely to face harsher objectification than lesbian women. In addition, given the intensified discrimination experiences among bisexual individuals, such as double discrimination and biphobia (Mulick & Wright, 2004, 2011; Ochs, 1996), it might be possible that bisexual women experience intensified objectification and victim blame after an assault.

This might be particularly worse for offenses with limited legal protection, such as revenge porn (Franklin, 2014). Further complicating matters is the fact that victims of revenge porn might have freely shared sexual images at one time during a relationship, implying responsibility for their victimhood (Citron & Franks, 2014). Although previous research has examined victim blame attitudes, such as victim blame following a rape (Abrams, Viki, Masser & Bohner, 2003; Loughnan et al., & Puvia, 2013), currently, no known empirical research exists assessing victim blame attitudes of revenge porn victims. Increased access to communication technology has changed the landscape of sexual offenses (i.e., TFSV), making the study of revenge porn an important next step. In addition, whereas contact based sexual offenses (e.g., rape, sexual assault) carry the weight of legal consequences, sexual offenses carried out through relatively newer mediums and platforms (e.g., the Internet, revenge porn websites) have fewer options for legal recourse.

Furthermore, the legal literature identifies the ambivalence among law enforcement and the court systems who perceive revenge porn as illegitimate or dismissible because the victim might have made the choice to share her intimate photos with the perpetrator (Citron & Franks, 2014). Unfortunately, how a victim is perceived might have important implications for how seriously they are taken by others, such as law enforcement officials. Moreover, the more likely a victim is objectified, the more likely they are to be blamed for

their victimhood (Loughnan et al., 2013). As mentioned earlier, bisexual women might face greater objectification than straight and lesbian women, highlighting important potential implications for treatment following a sexual violation. Perhaps straight and lesbian women are less objectified as a whole and thus treated as more human and as more deserving of moral treatment than bisexual women. In turn, the more objectified one is the more likely they are to be blamed for their victim status.

Therefore, the current study sought to expand the literature by examining how a sample of straight, cisgender adult men and women ages 18 and older living in the United States objectified perceived sexually diverse (i.e. bisexual, lesbian, straight) women victims of revenge porn. Specifically, this study employed objectification and victim blame as variables of interest and sought to evaluate the degree to which these variables were related. Of particular importance was the examination of straight men as compared to straight women, as men have historically been the most implicated in objectification of women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Loughnan & Pacilli, 2013; Nussbaum, 2010), victim blame attitudes (see Russel & Hand, 2017), and dislike of sexual minority persons (Herek 1988; Herek, 2000). These findings have important implications for understanding the changing landscape of sexual offenses and how sexually diverse women are objectified and blamed for being implicated in a sexual offense (in this case, revenge porn).

CHAPTER 2

MANUSCRIPT

Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence (TFSV) is an emerging social and public health issue. According to Henry and Powell (2014), TFSV is characterized by using media and/or technology to aid, produce, promote, and/or distribute sexual assault images or to commit a sexual offense. TFSV is characterized by six categories (Henry & Powell, 2014) including (1) the unauthorized creation and distribution (actual or threatened) of sexual images (e.g., revenge porn, nonconsensual pornography), (2) sexual assault images (e.g., images of a rape), (3) using the telephone or internet to initiate a sexual assault (e.g., using online chat groups to lure a victim, hiring someone to commit rape), (4) online sexual harassment (e.g., cyberstalking), (5) gender-based hate speech (e.g., sites and comments advocating for violence against women), and (6) virtual rape (e.g., assault of an online avatar). As individuals become hyper-connected through greater internet and mobile access, there are greater avenues for sexual harms (Henry & Powell, 2014). Victims of one type of TFSV, *revenge porn*, were found to have significant mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress symptoms, and safety-related anxiety (Bates, 2017).

Revenge Porn

Nonconsensual pornography, which falls under the umbrella of TFSV, refers to situations where sexual images of another individual are distributed without the consent of the individual. Revenge porn, a type of nonconsensual pornography, occurs when an individual, typically a malicious ex-male romantic partner, distributes sexually explicit images or videos online of a former partner without her consent (Franklin, 2014). As perpetrators of revenge porn are more likely to be men and victims more likely to be women

(Franklin, 2014), male and female pronouns will be used when discussing perpetrator (he/him) and victim (she/her). This does not imply that men cannot be victims of revenge porn but serves to be reflective of current trends. Revenge is the motive; the end goal appears to be inflicting harm or harassment on the victim (Citron & Franks, 2014). However, Citron and Franks, both legal scholars have suggested that regardless of motive (e.g., revenge, profit), nonconsensual image sharing is likely to inflict emotional harm or damage on its victims. It is also worth noting that not all revenge porn experiences are alike, and representative examples appear to display a degree of variability among them. For example, sexually explicit content may be created consensually (e.g., voluntarily sharing personal photos) or forcefully (e.g., taping a sexual assault) and without the consent of the individual (e.g., secretive videotaping; Franklin, 2014). In situations where the explicit images and/or videos were created and shared consensually, the online posting/distribution of those explicit images without the partner's consent elevates this to nonconsensual pornography. In revenge porn, the intention of the image sharing is to inflict harm or harassment on the victim, usually carried out by adding the woman's personally identifying information (e.g., address, phone number) and/or degrading language alongside her images.

Perpetrator motivations for revenge can include real or imagined infidelity, the end of a relationship, or other factors that appear to prompt the perpetrator to inflict harm upon the victim. Revenge porn, and thus the associated harms (e.g., harassment, suicidality, job loss) are predominately inflicted by malicious ex-partners, which suggest this to be a type of intimate partner offense (Bloom, 2014). In cases of revenge porn, sexually explicit images and/or videos are typically uploaded to the internet along with the victim's personally identifying information (e.g., place of work, phone number) with the intention of harming or

harassing the victim, inciting fear, and gaining a sense of revenge and control (Bloom, 2014).

Unfortunately, a host of websites exist for this sole purpose. Some contain message boards, which allow users the option to make degrading comments about the victim, her appearance, and/or moral character (Stroud, 2014). One of the original websites, “Is Anyone Up” (shut down in 2012), popularized uploading content of former female partners along with defamatory and threatening language (Broderick, 2014). Following investigations of hundreds of women affected by ‘Anon-IB’ (“anonymous image board”), the revenge porn platform was shut down by police in 2018 (McKay, 2018). Even more troubling is the fact that even after websites are shut down, content can often still be accessed through loopholes created via the dark web and connection channels through websites like Reddit and 4chan (Hern, 2017).

As noted above, revenge porn falls under the umbrella of nonconsensual pornography, but not all nonconsensual pornography is considered revenge porn. For example, were a woman to send a sexually explicit photograph to her partner, and that partner then uploads that image to the internet for money, or shares that photo with a group of friends to “brag” about his sex life, it would not necessarily be deemed revenge porn. There needs to be additional information showing a revenge motive and intent to directly harm or harass the victim. The malicious partner’s desire for revenge and intent to harm or damage qualifies non-consensual pornography as *revenge porn*.

The images/videos in some instances of revenge porn appeared to have been initially captured and/or created consensually (e.g., consent to film a sexual act, consensually sending nude photos via text message: Franklin, 2014). Thus, sexually explicit content might be consensually created, shared, or transmitted between parties during the time of the

relationship, but is then later distributed without consent of the individual at a later time. For example, after being asked by her male partner, a woman might consensually send nude photographs of herself over text message or e-mail. At the time, the woman might have consensually agreed to take these photographs and consented to share them privately with her male partner. Yet, in other instances of revenge porn, there appears to lack consent in both the initial creation of content and the later distribution (Franklin, 2014). For example, a male partner might videotape his female partner without her knowledge or consent to do so during a sexual act. Ultimately, consent in the creation of the original images may vary from incident to incident, but there is always a clear lack of consent in the latter distribution and sharing of such content aimed to harm the victim (Franklin, 2014). Regardless of how the content was initially captured or created, the nonconsensual distribution of such content with the motivation of revenge and intent to harm the victim through sharing of personal information or other tactics used to humiliate is what most fully captures the concept of revenge porn (Franklin, 2014).

Understanding Revenge Porn as Non-Contact Intimate Partner Violence

Sexual violence is characterized by an array of unwanted and/or forceful sexual assault experiences including both contact (e.g., rape, frottage) and non-contact (e.g., threats of future assault/rape, unwanted exposure to sexual images) violations (Basile, Smith, Breiding, Black, & Mahendra, 2014). The adverse effects of contact sexual violence, such as sexual assault and rape, are well documented and include somatic complaints, psychological distress, depression and anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and symptoms, and suicidality (e.g., Chang et al., 2017; Elliot, Mok, & Briere, 2004; Hanson, 1990; Kimerling & Calhoun, 1994; Martin, Rosen, Durand, Knudson, & Stretch, 2000; Rosellini et al., 2017; Santiago,

McCall-Perez, Gorcey, & Beigel, 1985).

Non-contact sexual violence includes situations that involve sexual violation and/or trauma without the use of physical force. The following examples would constitute non-contact sexual violence: (a) exposure to sexual images or situations against one's will (e.g., forced viewing of pornography, exhibitionism), (b) verbal harassment (e.g., spreading sexual rumors, creating a sexually hostile climate), (c) threats of rape or sexual assault, and/or (d) the unwanted filming and/or distribution of sexually explicit content of another individual (Basile, Smith, Breiding, Black, & Mahendra, 2014). Few studies exist that examine the psychological impact of non-contact sexual violence; however, within the intimate partner violence (IPV) literature, some data exists have documented the psychological harms associated with non-contact, coercive, and terrorizing behaviors.

Whereas there is a dearth in the literature directly examining the psychological outcomes of non-contact sexual violence, some of the IPV literature focuses on the effects of emotional and psychological violence within the context of intimate relationships (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). Psychological violence is characterized by emotionally abusive behaviors such as threats, humiliation, coercion, intimidation, and other non-physical tactics used to exert dominance and power over a victim (Kelly & Johnson, 2008). Coker, Smith, Bethea, King and McKeown (2000) found that 25% of women screened for IPV in a primary care setting met criteria for psychological violence only, and that these women would have been missed by the screener had physical violence been the sole metric for assessment of IPV. Coker and colleagues also reported that individuals who reported psychological violence as their only IPV experience shared a similar physical health pattern as those experiencing physical violence (e.g., debilitating chronic pain, migraines, irritable bowel syndrome, and

other chronic physical health conditions). Mechanic, Weaver, and Resick (2008) demonstrated that, after controlling for physical violence, injuries and sexual coercion in a sample of women experiencing intimate partner violence, psychological abuse and stalking resulted in moderate to severe posttraumatic stress disorder and depressive symptomatology. Such findings point to the importance of considering the impact of psychological and emotional abuse within the context of intimate relationships when physical violence may not be present. Similarly, as revenge porn might not be associated with the addition of physical violence, the associated emotional damage inflicted might lend credence to casting this type of sexual violence within an IPV framework.

Currently, there is a dearth of available data documenting the aftermath of revenge porn. Survivors have discussed the intense fear, anxiety, depression, and suicidality associated with such an experience, and in some cases, the economic costs associated with being a victim of revenge porn (Allen, 2016; Ankel, 2018; Citron & Franks, 2014). To my knowledge, one study exists that explicitly expounded the mental health effects of revenge porn. Bates (2017) found that revenge porn and sexual assault victims share a similar psychological sequela in the aftermath of their respective traumas, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, avoidance, and a host of maladaptive coping skills and behaviors. In this study, revenge porn victims described how nonconsensual image sharing violated their personal privacy and safety and created a sense of loss of control and a lack of agency (Bates, 2017).

In addition to the study from Bates (2017), survivor's stories can be found on news and other media outlets. One survivor recounted how her place of employment – a university – was listed alongside her nude photos that were auctioned off on eBay (Chiarini, 2013).

When she attempted to take a medical leave of absence from her place of employment to manage the after effects, she was denied, and blamed by her employer for the incident (Chiarini, 2013). In addition to the economic challenges she faced, Chiarini also described intense fear, anxiety, depression, and an eventual suicide attempt to try and escape the pain associated with a vicious violation of personal privacy and autonomy. Unfortunately, the economic impact of revenge porn is great and not unique to Chiarini's experience. For example, were a potential employer to conduct an internet search for a potential employee, they might find the potential hire's information connected to nude photos of her, pointing to the likelihood of professional and economic repercussions (Citron & Franks, 2014). Ultimately, victims of revenge porn appear to share trauma symptomatology overlap with those experiencing contact sexual violence and psychological abuse present in IPV instances.

Given the similarities of harms found between sexual assault, IPV, and revenge porn, one might conclude that revenge porn falls under the umbrellas of sexual violence and IPV. From a feminist standpoint, one might argue that sexual violence and IPV (e.g., assault, rape, and coercive controlling behaviors) has more to do with power and dominance than sex (Brownmiller, 1993; Johnson & Kelly, 2008), a notion that is empirically validated in the literature (Groth, Burgess & Holmstrom, 1977). As the goal of revenge porn is to psychologically and/or physically harm the victim, it is not difficult to see how power and control are central to this violation. For example, Chiarini (2013) commented on the threats she received from her partner prior to his auctioning her photos on eBay. She recounted his jealousy and possessiveness even after the breakup, his false accusations of infidelity, and the eventual threat that she "reveal" the other men she was sleeping with otherwise face the consequences of having her private photos auctioned off. At one point, her former boyfriend

shared that he would “destroy” her. These attempts to control Chiarini were inherent to an innate desire to exert dominance and power over her. Lastly, since revenge porn exists within the context of a current or former relationship, it might be appropriate to consider this behavior consistent with IPV. However, when it comes to casting revenge porn as an act of violence, not all scholars are convinced.

Some have argued against comparing the harms associated with technology-facilitated non-contact sexual violence to contact based physical violence (MacKinnon, 1997; Williams, 2006), citing that violence is considered a physical act (Huff, Johnson, & Miller, 2003). However, this might actually do victims of revenge porn a disservice, as criminal cases of technology-facilitated sexual violence are rarely prosecuted beyond the sexual violence displayed in the distributed video or related content, which may or may not be present, depending on how the content was initially created/shared. This means the harms associated with distribution of such content, such as humiliation, depression, anxiety, suicidality, are rarely prosecuted in the United States (Bates, 2017; Henry & Powell, 2014). These legal limitations of what constitutes *violence* poses challenges for victims of revenge porn when consensually created content is shared non-consensually with intent to harm (e.g., inclusion of identifying information), as the sexual acts in the images might not be viewed as inherently criminal. Yet, given the scope of harms incurred (e.g., fear, depression, suicidality), these situations should be counted as serious violations with the potential to debilitate, and therefore, worthy of prosecution. Unfortunately, the media might also do a disservice to victims in their fight to see these incidents brought to justice given the popularized phrasing “revenge porn”.

Reports in the media tend to use the phrase “revenge porn” in describing these

situations (e.g., Ankel, 2018; Hauser, 2018). Unfortunately, the word “revenge” might serve to trivialize such profoundly impactful experiences and places the assumption of blame on the victim (as revenge implies something has gone amiss in the relationship). Even more problematic are the assumptions about female sexual autonomy embedded within these cases – women are viewed as objects, and consent viewed as continuous as opposed to intermittent (Citron & Franks, 2014). As such, use of the phrase “revenge” and general attitudes regarding female sexuality and female autonomy might further complicate understanding these cases as serious and violent, where the victim is not culpable.

Conceptualizing Objectification

Objectification Theory (OT) was proposed by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) to provide a framework for understanding the sexual objectification experiences and outcomes of women. By definition, sexual objectification is the sociocultural and/or personal reduction of women to their bodies, body parts, or bodily and/or sexual functioning. Similarly, Objectification Theory suggests that women live in an objectifying environment, where objectification experiences are ubiquitous and lifelong (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Sexual objectification is also thought of as the misperception that a woman’s body can represent her as a person (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997), which is inherently dehumanizing as this conceptualization of women fails to capture their lived experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

However, an important note must be made when discussing objectification. Sexual objectification (as discussed by Fredrickson and Roberts) is related to objectification in general but they are not necessarily one in the same. One can be made to feel like she is reduced to a collection of body parts intended for sexual gratification from others. She may

also be made to feel like an object in an oppressive work place where her body is seen as instrumental to work, but an expendable entity (e.g., poor working conditions, a lack of human rights). Pertinent to this study, objectification might also be conceptualized as the denial of human attributes in others (Loughnan et al., 2010). As Andrea Dworkin (2000) wrote, “When objectification occurs, the person is depersonalized,” (p. 30). To date, most known empirical studies focus on the internalized effects of objectification (see Moradi & Huang, 2008), and few exist that examine the degree that individuals objectify others, or the process of objectifying another human being. Loughnan and colleagues (2010) examined the attitudes of the objectifier (i.e., the individual objectifying another) and demonstrated that sexualized women were perceived with less “mind” (e.g., ability to feel hunger, pain, desire) than non-sexualized women, suggesting that objectified individuals are perceived as less than human. Bernard, Gervais, Allen, Delm e and Klein (2015) similarly suggested dehumanization to be salient in measuring objectification, in that contextualizing women with humanizing features (i.e., warmth and competence) decreased objectification. Therefore, perceiving others without human features (e.g., competence, warmth, intelligence) results in an objectified individual. This implies that the more an individual is objectified the more likely they are to be denied basic human characteristics and qualities, suggesting depersonalization to be a key component of the objectification process. Ultimately, in doing so, the objectifier “treats the objectified as a mere tool of his ends, not as an end in herself,” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 68), and so the objectified body is used as a personal tool to fulfill the wishes and desires of the objectifier.

Nussbaum (2010) further asserted that objectification “confers a spoiled, or stigmatized, identity, and is thus a species of shaming,” (p. 73), which further suggests that

objectified women are dehumanized and denied space at the table of what constitutes being a human being. This stigmatized status further perpetuates her dehumanization as the objectified is viewed as social pariah or one with fault. When it comes to the display and treatment of women on the internet, and in particular, pornographic websites, descriptions of women are often reduced to crude descriptions of her body parts (e.g., cunt, tits), accompanied by descriptions of rape and/or assault (Nussbaum, 2010). Furthermore, the Internet serves as a bastion for male power and privilege, in which women victimized through its means experience real world consequences such as economic, and interpersonal disadvantages (Nussbaum, 2010).

Unfortunately, the rape culture that we all exist in lends credence to the perpetual objectification, dehumanization, and male domination over women (see Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005). What might further complicate our understanding of objectification attitudes is the assessment of objectification attitudes toward sexual minority women. For purposes of this research, the term “sexual minority women” (SMW) will generally be used to represent all women identifying as sexual minorities (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual). In some cases, the phrase “sexual minority person” or “sexual minority individual” will be used to represent all persons falling underneath the queer umbrella (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer).

Occasionally, throughout this manuscript, SMW will be associated with specific sexual identities (e.g., pansexual, queer) and these instances will be clarified by indicating those specific identities in parentheses. Up until the last decade, when researchers were called to expand the scope of objectification literature to more diverse communities, the canon of objectification research predominately focused on cisgender (i.e., identifying with the gender assigned at birth), straight women’s experiences (see Moradi & Haung, 2008). Up to this

point, straight women's experiences of objectification were widely documented, with this group appearing to be highly objectified in a culture that routinely sexualizes and reduces women to their bodies, body parts, and sexuality (see Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

However, heeding this call, emerging studies examined the experiences of SMW (SMW: Watson, Grotewiel, Farrell, Marshik & Schneider, 2015), lesbian women (Hill & Fischer, 2008), and bisexual women (Brewster et al., 2014), noting nuanced differences between these communities and their straight counterparts.

An expansion of the objectification literature to include SMW suggested that sexual objectification experiences might vary depending on one's sexual identity (Engeln-Maddox, Miller, & Doyle, 2011), and that SMW's experiences with objectification might be influenced by the effects of discrimination and internalized heterosexism (Watson et al, 2015). To date, most studies have focused specifically on internalization of objectification experiences and the direct outcomes of objectification (Moradi & Haung, 2008) as opposed to targeting who is more likely to objectify SMW (i.e., men or women) or how the objectifier perceives SMW.

Generally, our culture objectifies women for the purpose of male gratification. Mulvey (1975) suggested that our culture displays women's bodies through the lens of a sexualized male gaze, in that images of women are designed for the purpose of male consumption. Examples of sexual objectification can be found in the media where women's bodies are highly sexualized for the pleasure of men (e.g. advertising), in interpersonal situations (e.g. street harassment), and objectifying environments (e.g. gender inequity in the workplace) (Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, 2011). Yet, a study from Loughnan and colleagues (2010) revealed that in a sample of men and women, that both participants, regardless of

gender identity, were likely to objectify others. This signals an inconsistency in the literature and a need for further exploration.

Further, when it comes to objectification of SMW, there is evidence to suggest that straight men more so than straight women are likely to objectify bisexual women. In a qualitative study from Serpe, Brown, Criss, Lamkins and Watson (2020), bisexual women reported numerous experiences with straight men where they were made to feel objectified on the basis of sexual identity. According to participants, straight men were more aggressive in pursuing sexual relationships and soliciting threesomes than were straight women. In addition, their participants commented on straight men viewing them as fantasy objects or literal sex toys for their personal pleasure. Such findings might point to the possibility that straight men are more likely than straight women to objectify bisexual women.

In addition, gender identity appears to be a salient variable when understanding differences in general attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals (e.g., Herek, 1988; Herek, 2000; Israel & Mohr, 2004). The available literature that examines general attitudes toward SMW tends to suggest that when comparing straight men and women that straight men harbor the most negative attitudes toward SMW (Herek, 1988; Herek, 2000). When examining differences in attitudes toward lesbian, and bisexual women, most research tends to report attitudes in the aggregate (e.g., global attitudes toward LGB persons) and fails to discuss differences between the two (e.g., Bowen & Bourgeois 2001; Wilson et al., 2014; Worthen, 2013). However, some studies suggest that bisexual populations might experience enhanced forms of discrimination or “double discrimination” (e.g., discrimination from both lesbian/gay and straight populations: Ochs, 1996). In a study of straight and sexual minority individuals, respondents indicated moderate to severe

biphobic attitudes (Mulick & Wright, 2004, 2011). Biphobia, or the repulsion or disdain for bisexual individuals, appears to be informed by the problematic and sexualized stereotypes surrounding bisexuality, which often turn bisexual women into sex objects based on identity (Klesse, 2005; Worthen, 2013).

Regarding lesbian communities, it has been theorized that lesbian women may be less prone to the negative effects of objectification as they are less concerned with attracting men and might be more immune to sociocultural messages about female sexuality and performativity (Dworkin, 1988; Siever, 1994). However, such findings are mixed, as some studies report lesbians to be as susceptible to body dissatisfaction as straight women (Striegel-Moore, Tucker, & Hsu, 1990), and that lesbian women's experiences with sexual objectification (e.g., sexualized gaze) and self-objectification (e.g., internalization) do not significantly differ from straight women (Hill & Fischer, 2008). Furthermore, whereas bisexual women also fall under the queer umbrella with lesbian women, their experiences may be markedly different due to general treatment in society and interpersonally.

When examining bisexual women's experiences, it is reported that bisexual persons might face more stereotypes and negative attitudes concerning assumptions about how they conduct themselves sexually (Ochs, 1996; Worthen, 2013). For example, one such study reported that bisexual women disclosed frequent eroticization from men, feeling as though their sexual identity was seen as entertainment for others (Nadal et al., 2011). Bisexual women may face harsher stereotypes regarding their sexuality; being portrayed and seen as though they exist for other's fantasies, and experiencing more hostile requests for sexual acts, such as threesomes (Serpe et al., 2020). Similarly, many of the available representations of bisexual women exist within pornography, which further perpetuates stereotypes about

hypersexuality and lends itself to further objectification of this population (Klesse, 2005).

While we contend that women in general experience lifelong objectification, bisexual women might experience intensified objectification as their sexual identities appear to be perceived and portrayed as inherently hypersexualized and promiscuous, and therefore as objects.

Perceptions of women as sex objects have direct impact on victim blame attitudes, which might impact how women are perceived by others, particularly when the victim of a criminal offense.

Objectification and Victim Blame

Since objectification reduces individuals to mere objects devoid of subjective experiences (e.g., to dehumanize), objectification might influence the degree that another individual perceives the objectified individual as being worthy of fair treatment. Previous studies have demonstrated links between judgements about moral concern and the judgements of internal mental states of another individual (Bastian, Laham, Wilson, Haslam, & Koval, 2011; Gray, Gray & Wegner, 2007). Specifically, Bastian, Laham, Wilson, Haslam and Koval (2011) demonstrated that modulating human characteristics predicted whether an individual was blamed or praised. Another study found that participants exhibited reduced moral concern for sexualized men and women (Loughnan et al., 2010). Such findings suggest the degree that an individual is objectified (e.g., reduced to a body without internal states) might in turn impact the degree they are blamed for their victimhood. If objectification decreases moral concern for another human being, this might also impact perception of victim status, and victim blame. Similarly, studies that have supported the link between increased objectification and reduced moral concern (Holland & Haslam, 2013; Loughnan et al., 2010) might support that notion that objectified female

victims might be denied moral concern and will be seen as more at fault.

Studies that examine sexualization of women have supported a positive relationship between sexualization and blame attribution. In one such study, more provocatively dressed women were perceived to be more at fault for their sexual assault than non-provocatively dressed women (Edmonds & Cahoon, 1986; Workman & Freeburg, 1999). A more recent study from Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez and Puvia (2013) utilized rape-scenario vignettes where the victim was either provocatively or non-provocatively dressed. Researchers assessed for mind attribution (e.g., subjective emotional experiences, desires, abstract thinking) of the victim, and moral concern for her (e.g., how bad they would feel if she was treated unfairly). Participants completed a victim blame measure after being presented with a rape scenario (Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez & Puvia, 2013). In the objectification condition (i.e., provocatively dressed scenario), participants expressed less moral concern for the victim, rated her as having less mind attribution, being more at fault for her rape, and consequently, experiencing less suffering than the non-provocatively dressed victim (Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez & Puvia, 2013). There also appears to be evidence to suggest that gender identity is a salient factor in predicting blame attribution.

When it comes to examination of the attribution of victim blame attitudes, studies have suggested participant gender to be a salient factor (see Russell & Hand, 2017). In particular, that straight men are consistently more likely to make attributions of victim blame (Davies & Hudson, 2011; Davies & McCartney, 2003; Grubb & Harrower, 2008; Russell & Hand, 2017; van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). A study by Grubb and Harrower (2008) reported that straight men were more likely than straight women to attribute blame to victims regardless of their gender identity, sexual identify or type of rape depicted (e.g., stranger,

date). Since perpetrators are typically male, it is suggested that male participants tend to attribute more blame to victims because they are more likely to identify with the perpetrator (Kahn et al., 2011). Overall, men appear more likely to attribute blame to a victim, regardless of her identity. However, given the relationship between objectification and victim blame, sexual identity might be an additional variable influencing the attribution of victim blame. We further see these attitudes among straight men in the examination of SMW.

A recent study from Tebbe, Moradi, Connelly, Lenzen and Flores (2018) found that SMW reported experiences of being treated as a spectacle or experiment (e.g., being used to explore one's personal sexual identity), reported feeling fetishized, and hypersexualized by others. For bisexual individuals, binegativity, or negative and prejudiced attitudes about bisexual identity (Dyar & Feinstein, 2018; Yost & Thomas, 2012) permeates straight, lesbian, and gay communities (Brewster & Moradi, 2010; Klesse, 2005; Mulick & Wright, 2004, 2011; Ochs, 1996). Ochs (1996) coined this "double discrimination" as particularly troubling for bisexual communities as they may struggle to find community within straight and the larger lesbian and gay communities. For bisexual individuals in particular, negative attitudes regarding bisexuality tends to focus on assumptions and stereotypes about how bisexual individuals conduct themselves sexually (Dyar & Feinstein, 2018; Serpe et al., 2020). Specifically, these attitudes are reported as being most perpetrated by straight men (Serpe et al., 2020). This includes assumptions that bisexual individuals are promiscuous, hypersexual, and indiscriminately interested in sexual experiences (Dyar & Feinstein, 2018; Nadal et al., 2011).

It is certainly noteworthy that lesbian communities face discriminatory challenges associated with being a sexual minority person (Heron, Braitman, Lewis, Shappie & Histon,

2018; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001; Wilkinson, 2008) just as bisexual women do. However, given the intensified discrimination experiences among bisexual individuals, such as double-edged discrimination from lesbian/gay and straight communities, and biphobia within the greater queer communities (Mulick & Wright, 2004, 2011; Ochs, 1996), it might be possible that bisexual women experience intensified objectification and victim blame after an assault. This might be particularly worse for offenses with limited legal protection, such as revenge porn (Franklin, 2014). This is especially challenging when victims might be perceived as culpable for their actions because they made a “choice” to freely share images at one time during a relationship (Citron & Franks, 2014).

Currently, no known psychological studies exist assessing victim blame attitudes of revenge porn victims, the legal literature points to ambivalent law enforcement and court systems who view these cases as illegitimate or dismissible because a victim made a choice to share her intimate photos with the perpetrator (Citron & Franks, 2014). However, just as it is reasonable to expect your financial information be kept safeguarded by your accountant, it is reasonable to expect that one’s intimate and romantic partner keep one’s intimate photos safeguarded as well.

Current Study

The current study sought to explore the relationship between objectification and victim blame attitudes in cases of revenge porn when the sexual identity of the woman victim varied (i.e., bisexual, lesbian, straight). In addition, I explored the variables of objectification and victim blame between cisgender, straight men and women participants. Emerging literature suggests that victim objectification positively predicts victim blame (Edmonds & Cahoon, 1986; Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez & Puvia, 2013; Workman & Freeburg, 1999).

Similarly, current research indicates that objectification experiences may vary between straight, lesbian, and bisexual women (e.g., Brewster et al., 2014; Hill & Fischer, 2008; Watson et al., 2015), which might be influenced by general perceptions about differences between these groups (e.g., Worthen, 2013; Nadal et al., 2011). Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that straight men are more likely than women to harbor negativistic beliefs about sexual minority persons (Herek, 1988; Herek 2000), signaling the likelihood that men may be more likely to objectify and blame victims in this study. In addition, whereas one study suggested that men and women similarly objectified sexualized images (Loughnan et al., 2010), the overarching sociocultural context in which men view and treat women as instrumental objects suggests that men are more likely to objectify others, particularly women (Fredrickson & Roberts; Loughnan & Pacilli, 2013). In addition, the emerging rape culture and continued patriarchy that we all live in makes the need to examine attitudes between men and women paramount.

Whereas all women experience objectification, lesbian, and bisexual women in particular might face enhanced objectification as the available representations of them are often pornographic and hypersexual (Klesse, 2005; Worthen, 2013). Mass objectification of bisexual women might inform others perceiving them as less-human, less worthy of moral treatment, and more at fault for their involvement in a sexual offense. In addition, given the limited information that exists on revenge porn, and the need to view these cases as legitimate, the current study sought to understand if objectification was related to victim blame. In addition, I sought to understand differences in how straight, cisgender men and women objectify and blame sexually diverse victims (i.e., straight, bisexual, lesbian) of revenge porn and propose the following hypotheses and research questions:

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Hypothesis 1: Scores on the four measures used to assess objectification (i.e., warmth, competence, morality, humanity) will be inversely related to victim blame.

Hypothesis 2: The bisexual victim will be objectified more than the straight and lesbian victims as evidenced by lower scores on (2a) warmth, (2b) competence, (2c) morality, and (2d) humanity.

Research Question 1: To what extent does objectification relate to the gender of the partner in the vignette?

Hypothesis 3: The bisexual victim will be blamed more than the straight and lesbian victims as evidenced by higher scores on victim blame.

Research Question 2: To what extent does victim blame relate to the gender of the partner in the vignette?

Hypothesis 4: It is predicted that men will assign greater objectification to the victims in the vignettes than women.

Hypothesis 5: It is predicted that men will assign greater victim blame to the victims in the vignettes than women.

Method

Participants

This study recruited a sample of straight, cisgender men and women ages 18 and over currently residing in the United States. A power analysis using the G*Power tool revealed that in order to achieve power of .80, a significance level of $<.05$, and a medium to large effect size (e.g., $R^2 = .50$ to $.80$), a sample of approximately 250 was required. To determine sample size, power analyses using the G*Power were employed for each type of planned

analysis (e.g., ANOVA, multiple regression). The final sample size of 250 was based on the highest estimate received from the various power analyses, which was an ANOVA.

The total sample comprised 359 individuals. A total of 188 women (52.4%) and 171 men (47.6%) participated (see Table 1 for demographic data by gender). Participants were on average 30.57 ($SD = 9.90$) years old, ranging between 18 and 71 years of age. The majority of participants identified as Democratic ($n = 191$; 53.2%), followed by Independent ($n = 52$; 14.5%), Republican ($n = 41$; 11.4%), Libertarian ($n = 14$; 3.9%), and Green ($n = 6$; 1.7%). Forty-six (12.8%) participants indicated not affiliating with any political party, and a total of nine participants (2.5%) indicated they did not affiliate with any of the political parties listed in the survey. The majority of participants identified as White/European ($n = 286$; 79.7%), followed by Hispanic/Latinx ($n = 22$; 6.1%), Asian/Pacific Islander ($n = 18$; 5.0%), Black ($n = 9$; 2.5%), Biracial/Biethnic ($n = 9$; 2.5%), Multiracial/Multiethnic ($n = 8$; 2.2%), Native/Indigenous ($n = 2$; 0.6%), and Middle Eastern/North African ($n = 1$; 0.3%). A total of four participants (1.1%) indicated their racial/ethnic identity was not listed on the survey, and indicated they identified as Indian, Italian-American, Pakistani, and White with South African heritage. The majority of participants earned a Bachelor's Degree ($n = 125$; 34.8%), followed by some college/no degree ($n = 79$; 22.0%), Master's Degree ($n = 75$; 20.9%), High School Diploma ($n = 23$; 6.4%), Associate's Degree ($n = 20$; 5.6%), Doctorate Degree or equivalent (e.g., PhD, MD; $n = 16$; 4.5%), having attended vocational or trade school ($n = 9$; 2.5%), Professional Degree (e.g., JD; $n = 9$; 2.5%), some high school/no diploma ($n = 2$; 0.6%), and GED ($n = 1$; 0.3%). Most participants reported full-time employment ($n = 221$; 61.6%), followed by those identifying as students ($n = 71$; 20.1%), part-time employees ($n = 43$; 12.0%), homemakers ($n = 11$; 3.1%), unemployed ($n = 7$;

1.9%), retired ($n = 1$; 0.8%), or unable to work or on disability ($n = 2$; 0.6%). Participants were somewhat diverse with regard to their geographic location. A total of 114 participants (31.8%) identified as living in the Midwest, followed by 96 (26.7%) in the Northeast, 78 (21.7%) in the Southeast, 35 (9.7%) on the West Coast, 22 (6.1%) from the Southwest, and 14 (3.9%) from the Northwest. Participants largely resided in either a suburban, inside a city area ($n = 126$; 35.1%) or within an urban/metropolitan area ($n = 114$; 31.8%), with the remainder living in suburban areas outside of a city area ($n = 85$; 23.7%), or in a rural area ($n = 34$; 9.5%).

Table 1.

Demographic data by gender

		Women (<i>n</i> = 188)		Men (<i>n</i> = 171)	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age		29.6	9.70	31.50	10.01
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Political affiliation	Democratic	120	63.8	71	41.5
	No affiliation	22	11.7	24	14.0
	Independent	18	9.6	34	19.9
	Republican	16	8.5	25	14.6
	Other	5	2.7	4	2.3
	Libertarian	4	2.1	10	5.8
	Green	3	1.6	3	1.8
Race/ethnicity	White/European	148	78.7	138	80.7
	Hispanic/Latinx	12	6.4	10	5.8
	Biracial/Biethnic	8	4.3	1	0.6
	Asian/Pacific Islander	7	3.7	11	6.4
	Black	6	3.2	3	1.8
	Multiracial/Multiethnic	5	2.7	3	1.8
	Middle Eastern/North African	1	0.5		
	Native/Indigenous	1	0.5	1	0.6
	Not listed			4	2.3
Education	Bachelor's Degree	59	31.4	66	38.6
	Master's Degree	53	28.2	22	12.9
	Some College/No Degree	35	18.6	44	25.7
	Associates Degree	11	5.9	9	5.3
	High School Diploma	10	5.3	13	7.6
	Doctorate Degree or equivalent	10	5.3	6	3.5
	Vocational or Trade School	5	2.7	4	2.3
	Some High School/No Diploma	2	1.1		
	Professional Degree (e.g., J.D.)	2	1.1	7	4.1
	GED	1	0.5		
Employment status	Employed full-time	113	60.1	108	63.2
	Student	32	17	40	23.4
	Employed part-time	27	14.4	16	9.4

	Homemaker	10	5.3	1	0.6
	Unemployed	3	1.6	4	2.3
	Retired	2	1.1	1	0.6
	Unable to work/on disability	1	0.5	1	0.6
Geographic region					
	Midwest	64	34	50	29.2
	Northeast	58	30.9	38	22.2
	Southeast	41	21.8	37	21.6
	West Coast	11	5.9	24	14
	Southwest	9	4.8	13	7.6
	Northwest	5	2.7	9	5.3
Community type					
	Suburban (Location Inside a City Area)	70	37.2	56	32.7
	Urban/Metropolitan Area	52	27.7	62	36.3
	Suburban (Location Outside of a City Area)	46	24.5	39	22.8
	Rural Area	20	10.6	14	8.2
Annual income					
	100,000 or more	18	9.6	25	14.6
	90,000-99,999	8	4.3	8	4.7
	80,000-89,999	8	4.3	7	4.1
	70,000-79,999	17	9	7	4.1
	60,000-69,999	15	8	6	3.5
	50,000-59,999	19	10.1	21	12.3
	40,000-49,999	13	6.9	14	8.2
	30,000-39,999	30	16	13	7.6
	20,000-29,999	15	8	14	8.2
	10,000-19,999	23	12.2	19	11.1
	0-9,999	22	11.7	36	21.1

Procedures

This study employed an experimental design using convenience sampling. Straight cisgender men and women participants were recruited through announcements and postings on social media sites. Recruitment postings posted to reddit pages that targeted study recruitment (i.e., r/samplesize), and pages that were more generally used as forums and open to men or women. The recruitment flyer was also posted to several colleague's Facebook and Instagram pages, and was shared by others in their social networks. To increase diversity of who received the page, individuals not in counseling psychology or associated fields also shared the study across their social networks. A snowball sampling method was encouraged by asking participants to refer the study to their networks and individuals whom might be interested in the study. As many countries vary in their legal and attitudinal approaches to revenge porn, and in order to control for extraneous variance due to regional differences, inclusion criteria were limited to individuals currently living in the United States. Initial recruitment efforts were employed for approximately six weeks. At this point in the recruitment process, women outnumbered men in terms of study access a little less than half, and the primary investigator sought approval from the IRB to limit recruitment efforts to men only, thereafter lasting another month, resulting in a more even number between men and women.

To secure a sample of straight, cisgender men and women ages 18 years or older living in the United States, screener questions (Appendix A) were used to assess eligibility before granting participant access to the demographic survey and rest of the study. These screener questions asked participants to indicate if they (a) identified as straight (i.e. heterosexual), (b) cisgender, (c) were at least 18 years of age, and (d) currently lived in the

United States. Participants who selected “no” to one or more of these questions were redirected out of the study. Participants who met the inclusion criteria were eligible to complete the demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) and participate in the study.

Prior to engaging in the study, participants received information on the purpose, methods, and potential risks for participation in the study. Recruitment materials informed potential participants that the study they were being asked to participate in was “examining how victims of non-consensual pornography (e.g., revenge porn) are viewed by others.” They were also provided with eligibility requirements and information about the optional raffle. Participants choosing to access the study were then asked to provide informed consent to proceed. In order to safeguard participant confidentiality, no personally identifying information (e.g., names, addresses) was collected, and all data were stored on the university-approved, password-protected, cloud-based storage system (i.e., Box), to which only the primary research team members had access. At the end of the study, participants were given the choice to take part in a voluntary raffle for one of 20 amazon.com gift cards valued at \$15 each, resulting in an approximately a 1 in 12.5 chance to win. In order to participate in the raffle, participants needed to provide their e-mail address. For added security, participants were informed that their e-mail addresses would be stored separately from their study data.

After opening the survey link, participants were presented with the informed consent page, including the nature and duration of the study, voluntary raffle at the end of the survey, and potential risks. Participants were also reminded of their voluntary participation and right to exit the survey at any time. Following informed consent, participants completed the demographic questionnaire (Appendix B). Finally, participants were randomly assigned into one of four revenge porn vignettes where the sexual identity of the victim and their partner’s

gender varied. To achieve equal proportions of men and women across the study conditions (i.e., vignettes), Qualtrics stratified randomization by gender.

Survey materials were created using Qualtrics, an online survey platform that allowed for the random assignment of surveys to participants. Study participants were instructed to read their assigned vignette and then were provided with a summary of the vignette to ensure they understood the salient components (Appendix C). The addition of a summary was consistent with research that recommended the variables of interest should be clearly indicated in the vignette (Evans et al., 2014). In addition, this was discussed with Dr. Chris Brown, chair of the study, who determined this to be an appropriate method to highlight the information in the vignettes. Finally, participants were asked to complete the following scales: (a) Warmth Scale (Appendix D), (b) Competence Scale (Appendix E), (c) Morality Scale (Appendix F), (d) Human Uniqueness and Human Nature Scale (see Appendix G), (e) and the Victim Blame Scale (see Appendix H).

Instrumentation

Demographic form. Participants who selected “No” to questions asking them to affirm they were (a) cisgender (b) straight (e.g., heterosexual), (c) 18 years of age or older, and (d) United States Citizens were redirected out of the study. Participants meeting the eligibility criteria were invited to answer basic demographic questions including: age, political affiliation, race/ethnicity, income level, employment status, and geographic location (Appendix B).

Vignettes. Vignettes were inspired by available definitions of revenge porn, legal literature, and descriptions of revenge porn through credible media outlets (e.g., New York Times, The Guardian). The vignette structure was designed using a similar format from a

related dissertation authored by Trangsrud (2010). Whereas revenge porn scenarios differ as to how the original photos or videos might be captured (e.g., consensual photo transmission, being unaware that one is being filmed), the photos are ultimately distributed without the consent of the victim. The vignettes were created to depict consensual creation and sharing of the original images but non-consensual distribution of the photos to the internet. This was in attempt to highlight the experience of revenge porn without having participants respond to a potential non-consensual capture of the original photos (e.g., unaware one is being filmed) as this realistically represents two distinct offenses: non-consensual image creation and non-consensual image distribution. In addition, as revenge porn includes a malicious partner or ex-partner, the vignettes included information about the dissolution of the relationship, which included fighting, accusations of infidelity, the victim's choice to end the relationship, and the perpetrator's anger regarding the breakup.

In order to evaluate the validity of the vignettes, two subject matter experts (SME) in revenge pornography provided feedback. The first SME had earned a PhD in Forensic Psychology and was currently working as senior research professor for the department of behavioral sciences at a large research university with areas of expertise in intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, non-consensual sharing, and revenge porn. The second SME earned a PhD in Criminology and was currently a professor for a large research university with areas of expertise in on sexual violence, assault, intimate partner violence, technology-facilitated abuse, discrimination, and trauma. As discussed earlier, both SMEs confirmed that whereas revenge porn varies in presentation (e.g., level of consent to initially share photos), the vignettes used in the current study indeed displayed a revenge porn scenario and were face valid. In terms of feedback, one SME suggested incorporating explicit language that

identified the characters in the vignettes as legal adults. Specifically, if the characters in the vignettes were perceived as being under the age of 18, this would raise issues about child sexual abuse and exploitation. Therefore, the vignettes were updated to include clear and concise language indicating that the individuals depicted were both over the age of 18. Next, the second SME suggested removing language about the attractiveness of the persons in the vignette as this may inadvertently change perceptions about the perpetrator and victim. Lastly, the original language suggested the victim was “reluctant” to share her photos. The second SME, having done extensive research in the area of blame attribution, suggested clarifying that the victim in the scenario was happy to share her photos with the perpetrator as this would likely render a more accurate measure for victim blame attribution.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four vignette conditions: (1) straight victim, (2) lesbian victim, (3) bisexual victim with a male partner, and (4) bisexual victim with a female partner. Vignettes included the same information with the exception of the victim’s sexual identity and the name and gender of the perpetrator (Appendix C). Keeping the vignettes consistent across conditions helped to minimize introduction of confounding variables and extraneous variance. Length of relationship did not appear to significantly influence perceptions of victim blame in revenge porn cases (Bothamley & Tully, 2017), thus length of the relationship was purposefully kept vague in the current study so as not to influence participants. Ultimately, the vignettes described how the sexually explicit photos were initially obtained, the cessation of the relationship, and then how the victim found out she was implicated in a revenge porn incident.

Measuring objectification. Philosophical conceptualizations have suggested objectification to be the denial of human qualities in one’s self and in others (Loughnan &

Pacilli, 2013). A recent empirical study from Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and Elder (2017) explored this premise by examining objectification across the dimensions of warmth, competence, morality, and human nature. Consistent with prior research on internalized objectification, the authors chose to include only women in their sample ($n = 101$). All participants were native English speakers and were recruited from Amazon's MTurk. The majority of their sample identified as White ($n = 85$), nine as African-American, five as Asian and two as another ethnicity. No other demographic data were reported. When objectified, these measures suggested persons to perceive themselves as less warm, competent, moral, and having fewer human qualities. In addition, all measures were correlated with one another, indicating these measures to be related. A weakness in using these measures was that the authors did not provide any evidence of statistical construct validity for these measures other than asserting that individuals who were objectified were significantly more likely to perceive themselves to be less warm, competent, moral, and having fewer human qualities than those not objectified. However, there did appear to be evidence of content validity, in that the measures aligned with theoretical assumptions of objectification (e.g., Loughnan & Pacilli, 2013).

Competence. Competence was assessed by modifying the five-item competence scale used by Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and Elder (2017: e.g., "I am intelligent"; Cronbach's alpha of 0.78). For purposes of the current study, language was changed to reflect attribution of competence in the victim, Emily (e.g., "I perceive Emily to be intelligent": see Appendix E). These items were measured on a 5-point scale assessing the degree to which participants agree or disagree with the statements (i.e., 1 = *completely disagree*, 5 = *completely agree*). The Competence measure evidenced acceptable internal

consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.73. Following assessment of the item total statistics, the decision was made to remove one of the items (i.e., "I perceive Emily to be competitive"), thereby increasing the internal consistency of the measure to a good internal consistency of 0.80. The final Competence score evidenced an average score between one (i.e., a low degree of perceived competence) and five (e.g., a high degree of perceived competence).

Morality. Morality was assessed by modifying the two-item morality scale used by Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and Elder (2017: e.g., "I am morally pure"). The authors indicated the two items to be significantly correlated, $r(99) = .35, p < .001$, suggesting a strong relationship between the two items. In the present study, language was modified to reflect attribution of morality in the victim, Emily (e.g., "I perceive Emily to be morally pure": see Appendix F). These items were measured on a 5-point scale assessing the degree to which participants agree or disagree with the statements (i.e., 1 = *completely disagree*, 5 = *completely agree*). Next, a bivariate correlation was also employed in the current study, which revealed the Morality items to be significantly correlated: $r(357) = 0.50, p < .001$. The final Morality score resulted in an average score between one (i.e., a low degree of perceived morality) and five (e.g., a high degree of perceived morality).

Humanity. Humanity was assessed by modifying the 12-item Humanity scale used by Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and Elder (2017). This measure consisted of six items that measured human nature (e.g., "I feel like I was open minded"), and six items that measured human uniqueness (e.g., "I feel like I was refined and cultured"). In the original study, the human nature factor evidenced good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.77 and the Human Uniqueness factor evidenced good internal consistency with a Cronbach's

alpha of 0.77. The authors did not report the total internal consistency of the scales. For purposes of this study, the language was changed to reflect attribution of humanity in Emily (e.g., “I feel like Emily is open minded”; see Appendix G). These items were measured on a 5-point scale assessing the degree to which participants agree or disagree with the statements (i.e., 1 = *completely disagree*, 5 = *completely agree*). The current study revealed an acceptable internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.72 on the Human Nature items, and an acceptable internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.78 on the Human Uniqueness items. In the current study, the Humanity total scale also evidenced good internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.85. The final Humanity score, which was based on the total average score of both factors, evidenced an average score between one (i.e., a low degree of perceived humanity) and five (i.e., a high degree of perceived humanity).

Warmth. Warmth was assessed by modifying the four-item warmth scale used by Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and Elder (2017; e.g., “I am good natured”). In their original study, this measure evidenced good internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of .78. In the current study, Warmth evidenced good internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.85. Language was changed to reflect attribution of warmth in the victim, Emily (e.g., “I perceive Emily to be good natured”: see Appendix D). These items were measured on a 5-point scale assessing the degree to which participants agree or disagree with the statements (i.e., 1 = *completely disagree*, 5 = *completely agree*). The final Warmth score evidenced an average score between one (i.e., a low degree of perceived warmth) and five (e.g., a high degree of perceived warmth).

Exploratory Factor Analysis. The scales from Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and

Elder (2017) were modified to assess objectification across the same dimensions of Competence, Morality, Humanity, and Warmth. To reflect the assessment of objectification of others, these measures were modified from assessment of these characteristics in one's self (e.g., "I am...") to reflect participants' perception that these characteristics exist in Emily, the victim in the vignettes (e.g., "I perceive Emily to be..."). The scales were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*) and were retained for use with this study. All final scores were recorded with an average score ranging from 1 (i.e., a low degree) to 5 (i.e., a high degree).

To date, no known studies have formally reported evidence of construct validity of a measure of victim objectification. In an attempt to gain construct validity, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed. Ultimately, the results of the EFA did not result in evidence of a four-factor structure, with items cleanly loading onto their respective factors (i.e., Competence, Morality, Humanity, Warmth). However, given the evidence of internal consistency for each subscale in Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and Elder's (2017) original study, the plan to employ these measures separately and as initially intended by the co-authors was maintained. For more details concerning the EFA and the specific findings, see Appendix J.

Measure of victim blame. Victim blame was assessed by adapting the seven-item measure from Abrams, Viki, Masser, and Bohner (2003). The adapted items were nearly identical with the exception of names and adapting the language to reflect the revenge porn vignettes. Six items directly addressed victim blame (e.g. "How much do you think Laura should blame herself for what happened?"). These items were measured on a 7-point scale assessing the degree to which participants agree or disagree with the statements (i.e., 1 = *not*

at all, 7 = completely). One item asked participants to indicate who was to blame for the incident using a similar format (i.e., 1 = *name of perpetrator is completely to blame*, 4 = *somewhat*, 7 = *name of victim is completely to blame*). In the original study, this measure evidenced good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75. In addition, this study included 65 undergraduate students from England (31 men, 34 women). Participants ages ranged from 19 to 44 years old ($M = 24.31$, $SD = 5.83$). Of their participants 80.0% were identified as "European," 18.7% were identified as "Asian or African," and 2.4% were identified as "other."

Similar studies have adapted this measure with good results of internal consistency reliability, with one recent study reporting a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80 (Persson, Dhingra & Grogan, 2018). In their study, participants were nursing staff and students, and members of the general public from England and Sweden. Of their sample ($n = 81$), 42 were nurses and 39 were members of the general public. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 69 years ($M = 31.9$). Standard deviation was not listed. A majority of their sample identified as female (84%) and the remaining 16% as male, and no racial data were reported. Unfortunately, no known studies have investigated or reported the validity of this measure and should be considered a relative weakness.

In the current study, the measure of Victim Blame evidenced questionable internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.57. Item-total statistics suggested that removing item 7, which asked participants to indicate who was more to blame (e.g., victim or perpetrator), which increased the Cronbach's Alpha to an acceptable level. Given that this item was measured on a different scale than the preceding six items, there was evidence to remove the item. This resulted in a final Cronbach's alpha of 0.76, indicating acceptable

internal consistency. Two items were reverse coded before calculating the total score (i.e., “How much control do you think John had over the situation?” and “How much sympathy do you have for Emily?”). The final score evidenced an average between one (i.e., a low degree of victim blame) and seven (i.e., a high degree of victim blame).

Accurate Responding. In order to identify participants who may have randomly responded to the survey items, two validity check items were included in the middle of the Objectification and Victim Blame questions. These items asked participants to select specific responses in order to show they are paying attention (i.e., “To see if you are paying attention, select the response ‘Strongly Agree’”; Appendix G). In order to safeguard the validity of the data, participants who did not respond correctly to either of the two validity questions were removed from the data set.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

A total of 390 participants were in the initial dataset. Following data cleaning and deletion of unusable data (described below), a total of 359 participants were retained for analysis. All data were cleaned and examined to assess for missing data and percentage of missing data. Assessment of the missing data revealed that eight participants had completed the objectification measures but failed to complete the victim blame measures. Listwise deletion was employed to handle these cases. In addition, one participant failed to respond to two items within the objectification measures. As mean values were used for analyses, these items were left blank and the participant was retained. Data were also screened for participants who may have responded randomly by using the screener items. Twenty-three out of the original 390 participants (17%) did not correctly answer one or more of the validity

items and were discarded from the data set. As this study employed multiple regression, preliminary analysis included assessment of univariate normality (i.e., skewness, kurtosis, mean, SD) to determine suitability (Table 2). Results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality indicated significant deviations from normality on all study measures. However, it is suggested that significant deviations from normality are likely to be detected in larger sample sizes, and thus these statistics can be interpreted with caution in favor of examining the visual normality of histograms (Field, 2013), which appeared mostly normal.

Table 2.

Means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis of study variables

Variables	Statistic				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skew	Kurtosis	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
Competence	3.63	0.55	-0.33	-0.73	0.09*
Morality	3.57	0.78	-0.71	0.13	0.18*
Humanity	3.94	0.43	-0.84	2.29	0.11*
Warmth	3.62	0.57	-0.10	0.13	0.12*
Victim Blame	2.92	1.06	0.59	0.12	0.11*

* indicates significance at the .05 level

Lastly, in order to examine potential relationships between variables of interest (i.e., gender, race, and education) and outcome measures (i.e., objectification, victim blame), bivariate correlations were employed to assess the potential need to control for specific variables. A series of point-biserial correlations were run between Objectification and Victim Blame measures on the variable of gender, where gender was dummy coded into a dichotomous variable (men = 0, women = 1). The Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) was examined to determine strength and direction of the relationship. The significance (α) level of .05 was used to test if the relationship was significant. To assess for differences between

race, socioeconomic status (SES), and education, a series of correlations were also employed with the Objectification and Victim Blame measures. In order to achieve this, these demographic variables were recoded into dummy variables for analysis.

Using a point-biserial correlation, gender was significantly correlated with Competency, $r_{pb}(354) = 0.16, p < .001$; Humanity, $r_{pb}(354) = 0.16, p < .001$; and Warmth, $r_{pb}(354) = 0.14, p < .001$, which suggested that participant gender was significantly related to how the victims in the vignettes were perceived. More specifically, gender was significantly correlated with competence, humanity, and warmth, indicating that women were more likely to assign these traits to the victims in the vignettes than men participants. On the other hand, Morality was not found to be related one's gender. Testing the relationship between gender and Victim Blame revealed significant correlations in opposing directions. Specifically, it was found that gender was negatively correlated with victim blame, $r(354) = -0.14, p < .001$, which suggested that women were less likely to assign blame to the victims in the vignettes than men.

Next, in order to assess for relationships between variables and race within the current study, a series of bivariate correlations were employed. Specifically, this study included participants who identified as White/European, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Native/Indigenous, and Middle Eastern/North African, Biracial/Biethnic, Multiracial/Multiethnic, and those who did not identify with any of the previously mentioned racial groups. However, it is worth noting that given the small numbers of Native/Indigenous ($n = 2$), and Middle Eastern/North African ($n = 1$), and race not identified ($n = 4$), these participants were not included in the following series of correlations. No significant correlations were found between race and Competence, Morality, and Humanity scores.

With regards to Warmth scores, several correlations were revealed. Using a Pearson correlation, White participants (coded as 1), as compared to all other racial groups (coded as 0), were found to rate the victims significantly higher in Warmth, $r(354) = 0.10, p = 0.04$. A significant association was also found comparing Black (coded as 1) participants to (coded as 0) non-Black participants on ratings of Warmth scores, $r(354) = -0.13, p = .04$. This inverse relationship suggested that Black participants were more likely to assign somewhat weaker Warmth ratings than other racial groups. Lastly, no significant relationships were found between race and the Victim Blame measure.

Using a Pearson correlation, education was not found to be significantly correlated with Competence or Warmth. Findings revealed that participants with a high school diploma (coded as 1), as compared to all other educational backgrounds (coded as 0: e.g., bachelor's degree, professional degree), were found to rate the victims significantly lower in Morality scores, $r(354) = -0.14, p = .01$. This suggested that high school diploma earners were more likely to assign slightly weaker Morality ratings than other educational groups. However, there were only 23 high school diploma earners in this sample, which raised concern about the robustness and interpretability of this finding; more data points would be needed to give validity to this finding. Professional degree earners (e.g., JD; coded as 1), as compared to other educational backgrounds (coded as 0), were found to rate the victims significantly lower on Humanity scores, $r(354) = -0.12, p = .03$, suggesting that those with professional degrees were more likely to assign less Humanity to the victims than were participants with other education. However, professional degree earners made up only 2.5% ($n = 9$) of the total sample, which tempers the strength of this finding.

For the last measure, Associate Degree earners, as compared to participants with

other education, were found to rate the victims significantly higher on Victim Blame, $r(354) = 0.14, p = .01$. This suggested that Associate Degree earners were more likely to assign greater blame to the victim than other participants in this study. Conversely, Bachelor's Degree earners, as compared to participants with other education were found to rate the victims lower on Victim Blame, $r(354) = -0.16, p = .04$, which suggested that those with Bachelor's Degrees were less likely to assign blame to the victim than participants with other education.

A chi-square test of independence was performed to assess the need for control variables in the primary analyses; the four vignettes were analyzed on the basis of differences between demographic variables, which resulted in non-significant results on gender identity, $X^2(3) = 1.01, p = 0.80$, racial identity, $X^2(24) = 21.07, p = 0.63$, political affiliation, $X^2(18) = 24.98, p = 0.13$, annual income $X^2(30) = 28.83, p = 0.53$, employment status $X^2(18) = 12.96, p = 0.80$, level of education $X^2(27) = 23.01, p = 0.68$, geographic location, $X^2(15) = 14.30, p = 0.50$, community type, $X^2(9) = 12.14, p = 0.21$, and age in years, $X^2(123) = 140.73, p = 0.13$. Therefore, no variables were controlled in the primary analyses.

Primary Analyses

Hypothesis 1. A Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used to test the first hypothesis that the four indicators of objectification, Competence, Morality, Humanity, and Warmth, would be inversely related to victim blame. All objectification measures were significantly correlated with victim blame. Specifically, Competence and Victim Blame were negatively but weakly related $r(358) = -0.40, p < .001$, suggesting that the less competent the victim was perceived to be, the more blame was assigned to them. Similarly, Morality and Victim Blame evidenced a moderate to weak negative relationship $r(354) = -$

0.41, $p < .001$, suggesting that the less moral a victim was perceived to be, the more blame was assigned to them. Humanity also revealed a moderate to weak negative relationship $r(354) = -0.45, p < .001$, which suggested that the less humanity a victim was perceived as having, the more likely they were to be assigned with blame. Lastly, Warmth revealed a weak negative relationship $r(354) = -0.23, p < .001$, suggesting some evidence that the less warm a victim was perceived to be, the more blame was assigned to them. Therefore, the first hypothesis was supported in that all four indicators of objectification were inversely related to victim blame.

Hypothesis 2. The second hypothesis, which predicted the bisexual victim to be objectified more than the straight and lesbian victim as evidenced by lower scores on Competence, Morality, Humanity, and Warmth, was tested using a series of one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) with orthogonal planned contrasts. Mean values were calculated for the objectification measures between the vignettes (Table 3).

Table 3.

Mean and standard deviations for objectification scores between sexual identity groups

	Bisexual ($n = 177$)		Lesbian ($n = 84$)		Straight ($n = 96$)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Competence	3.79	0.64	3.85	0.56	3.81	0.69
Morality	3.55	0.76	3.58	0.78	3.59	0.81
Humanity	3.93	0.44	3.92	0.39	3.96	0.46
Warmth	3.60	0.54	3.63	0.59	3.64	0.60

The independent variable was sexual identity and the dependent variables were the

four outcome measures of objectification. A total of four ANOVAs were used to evaluate if there were differences between the bisexual, straight, and lesbian groups on the outcomes of Competence, Morality, Humanity and Warmth. The Levene's test, which assessed whether the distribution of variance across the groups was non-significant for each dependent variable; therefore, equal variances were assumed for all reported analyses.

Following the ANOVA, the F -ratio for each ANOVA was evaluated to determine if there were significant main effects of sexual identity between the groups on the outcome measures. There were no significant differences among the four groups on the outcome measures of Competence, $F(3, 354) = 1.96, p = 0.12$, Morality $F(3, 355) = 0.07, p = 0.97$, Humanity $F(3, 354) = 0.81, p = 0.49$, or Warmth $F(3, 355) = 0.15, p = 0.95$. Despite the non-significant ANOVAs, the planned contrasts were also evaluated, which included comparisons of the two bisexual vignettes (i.e., bisexual-female partner, bisexual-male partner) against the lesbian and straight vignettes, comparisons of the straight vignette to the two bisexual vignettes, and a comparison of the lesbian vignette to the two bisexual vignettes. In order to test the prediction that bisexual victims in the vignettes experienced greater objectification, the t -statistics was evaluated to assess for significant differences between the two groups as specified in the planned contrasts.

First, comparisons between the straight and bisexual vignettes were evaluated, which revealed non-significant differences between these groups on measures of Competence $t(354) = 0.32, p = 0.75$, Morality $t(355) = 0.42, p = 0.68$, Humanity $t(355) = 0.59, p = 0.56$, and Warmth $t(355) = 0.56, p = 0.58$. Second, comparisons between the lesbian and bisexual vignettes also revealed non-significant results on measures of Competence $t(354) = 0.73, p = 0.46$; Morality $t(355) = 0.31, p = 0.75$, Humanity $t(354) = -0.01, p = 0.99$, and Warmth t

(355) = 0.36, $p = 0.72$.

Research Question 1. In order to explore to what extent objectification was related to the gender of the partner in the vignettes, additional planned contrasts were employed using the same ANOVAs from Hypothesis 2. Mean scores are represented in Table 4.

Table 4.

Mean and standard deviations for objectification scores between partner-gender groups

	Male partner ($n = 193$)		Female partner ($n = 164$)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Competence	3.85	0.66	3.76	0.60
Morality	3.57	0.77	3.57	0.79
Humanity	3.97	0.44	3.90	0.43
Warmth	3.62	0.59	3.61	0.54

Comparisons were made between conditions in which a male partner was present (i.e., bisexual-male, straight) to conditions in which a female partner was present (i.e., bisexual-female, lesbian) across outcome measures of Competence, Morality, Humanity, and Warmth. Planned contrasts between the male partner conditions to the female partner condition revealed non-significant differences for Competence scores, $t(354) = 1.40$, $p = 0.16$, Morality, $t(355) = -0.01$, $p = 0.99$; Humanity, $t(354) = 1.40$, $p = 0.17$, or Warmth, $t(355) = 0.13$, $p = 0.89$.

Hypothesis 3. The third hypothesis, which predicted that the bisexual victim would be blamed more than the straight and lesbian victims as evidenced by higher mean scores on victim blame was tested using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with orthogonal planned contrasts. The independent variable was sexual identity and the dependent variable

was the victim blame measure. Mean scores are represented in Table 5.

Table 5.

Mean and standard deviation for victim blame scores between sexual identity groups

	Bisexual (<i>n</i> = 177)		Lesbian (<i>n</i> = 84)		Straight (<i>n</i> = 96)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Victim blame	2.85	1.03	2.97	1.08	3.02	1.06

The Levene’s test was non-significant, indicating that the variances were equally distributed across groups. The *F*-ratios were used to determine if there was a significant main effect of sexual identity between the groups on the outcome measures. Following the analysis, the *F*-statistic was found to be non-significant on the measure of Victim Blame; $F(3, 355) = 1.37, p = 0.25$. First, results of a planned contrast between the straight and bisexual vignettes were non-significant, $t(355) = 1.24, p = 0.22$, as were results of a planned contrast between lesbian and bisexual vignettes $t(355) = 0.82, p = 0.41$.

Furthermore, in order to address these non-significant differences, the item from the Victim Blame measure that asked participants to assign blame to either the victim or the perpetrator was independently assessed. This item was initially dropped from the scale, so it was not used in the previously described analyses; however, understanding how participants ranked either victim or perpetrator could be useful. This item was on a scale from 1 (the victim was to blame) to 7 (the perpetrator was to blame). A total average for all participants revealed that, overall, participants rated the perpetrator to be at fault ($M = 6.14, SD = 1.16$).

Research Question 2. In order to explore to what extent victim blame was related to the gender of the partner in the vignettes, an additional planned contrast was employed using

the same set of ANOVAs from Hypothesis 3. Mean scores can be found in Table 6.

Table 6.

Mean and standard deviations for victim blame scores between partner-gender groups

	Male partner (<i>n</i> = 193)		Female partner (<i>n</i> = 164)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Victim blame	2.88	1.01	2.97	1.10

Differences between victims with male partners (i.e., straight, bisexual-male partner) and those with female partners (i.e., lesbian, bisexual-female partners) revealed a non-significant result $t(355) = -0.81, p = 0.42$. These findings did not appear to suggest that the gender of the victims had any impact on differences in perceived victim blame.

Hypothesis 4. The fourth hypothesis predicted that men would assign greater objectification to the victims in the vignette than women. This was tested using linear regression analysis. In this hypothesis the predictor variable was participant gender and the outcome variables were objectification of the victim as measured by Competence, Morality, Humanity, and Warmth. First, gender was coded into dummy variables (men = 0, women = 1). Four regression analyses were conducted in order to test the hypothesis.

The first regression analysis, which examined if men would assign greater Competence to the victims in the vignette than women produced a significant *F*-ratio, indicating a significant model $F(1, 356) = 9.48, p < .001$, which suggested that gender was a significant predictor for Competency scores. Gender appeared to account for 3.0% ($R^2 = 0.03$) of the variance in Competency scores and evidenced a weak positive relationship ($b = 0.16$). Lastly, using the regression equation ($y = a + bx$) to examine differences between men and women, it appeared as though women were more likely to assign greater

competence to the victims than were men at a rate of about 0.21 points. Whereas the model was significant, the relationship between gender and Competence of the victim was weak.

The second regression analysis, which examined if men would assign greater Morality to the victims in the vignette than women produced a non-significant F -ratio, indicating our model was not significant $F(1, 357) = 3.55, p = .06$. This indicated that gender was a non-significant predictor for Morality scores. Gender appeared to account for 1.0% ($R^2 = 0.01$) of the variance in Morality scores and evidenced a weak inverse relationship ($b = 0.10$). Lastly, using the regression equation ($y = a + bx$) to examine differences between men and women, it appeared as though women were more likely to assign greater Morality to the victims than were men at a rate of about 0.16 points. Ultimately, the model was non-significant, which indicated that gender was not a significant factor in predicting perceptions of victim Morality.

The third regression analysis, which examined if men would assign greater Humanity to the victims in the vignette than women produced a significant F -ratio, indicating a significant model $F(1, 356) = 8.71, p < .001$. This indicated that gender was a significant predictor for Humanity scores. Gender appeared to account for 2.4% ($R^2 = 0.02$) of the variance in Humanity scores and evidenced a weak inverse relationship ($b = -0.16$). Lastly, using the regression equation ($y = a + bx$) to examine differences between men and women, it appeared as though women were more likely to assign greater Humanity to the victims than were men at a rate of about 0.14 points. Ultimately, this significant model indicated that gender was a factor in predicting perceptions of victim Humanity. However, given the weakness of the relationship, and the lack of variance accounted for, these results are weak.

The fourth, and final, regression analysis, which examined if men would assign

greater Warmth to the victims in the vignette than women produced a significant F -ratio, indicating a significant model $F(1, 357) = 7.03, p < .001$, which suggested that gender was a significant predictor for Warmth scores. Gender appeared to account for 2.0% ($R^2 = 0.02$) of the variance in Warmth scores and evidenced a weak inverse relationship ($b = -0.14$). Lastly, using the regression equation ($y = a + bx$) to examine differences between men and women, it appeared as though women were more likely to assign greater Warmth to the victims than were men at a rate of about 0.16 points. Ultimately, the finding of a significant model indicated that gender was a factor in predicting perceptions of victim Warmth. However, given the weakness of the relationship, and the lack of variance accounted for, these results were weak.

Ultimately, whereas there was support for three of the four measures of objectification (i.e., Competence, Humanity, Warmth), the relationship between these variables and gender was significant but weak. There was little variance accounted for in the measures, and the strength of relationships were weak. Thus, whereas men were more likely to objectify victims more than women respondents as evidenced by lower scores on Competence, Humanity, and Warmth, gender of the respondents appeared to be a weak predictor in determining these differences.

Hypothesis 5. The fifth hypothesis, which predicted that men would assign greater blame to the victims in the vignette than women was tested using linear regression analysis. In this hypothesis the predictor variable was participant gender and the outcome variable was the measure of Victim Blame. First, the dummy coding used from the preceding hypothesis was used. A linear regression analyses was conducted in order to test the hypothesis.

This regression analysis, which examined if men would assign greater Victim Blame

to the victims in the vignette than women produced a significant F -ratio, indicating a significant model $F(1, 357) = 7.41, p < .01$. This indicated that gender was a significant predictor for Victim Blame scores. Gender appeared to account for 2.0% ($R^2 = 0.02$) of the variance in Victim Blame scores and evidenced a weak positive relationship ($b = 0.14$). Lastly, using the regression equation ($y = a + bx$) to examine differences between men and women, it appeared as though women were less likely to assign blame to the victims than were men at a rate of about -0.28 points. Ultimately, this finding suggested that gender was a significant factor in predicting perceptions of Victim Blame. However, given the weakness of the relationship, and the lack of variance accounted for, these results are weak and should be interpreted with caution.

Discussion

The current study intended to examine the relationship between objectification and victim blame attitudes among a sample of straight, cisgender men and women in cases of revenge porn between sexually diverse women (i.e., bisexual, lesbian, straight). Emergent literature has suggested that sexually diverse women may have different experiences of objectification (Brewster et al., 2014; Hill & Fischer, 2008; Watson et al., 2015), and that objectification is likely influenced by general perceptions and stereotypes between these groups (Worthen, 2013). Similarly, Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez and Puvia (2013) have indicated that objectification is predictive of victim blame. To date, no known studies have examined objectification and victim blame attitudes toward revenge porn victims, especially victims who vary in sexual identity.

The first hypothesis predicting that the four objectification measures, Competence, Morality, Humanity, and Warmth, would be inversely related to Victim Blame was

supported. Competence and Victim Blame revealed a moderate to weak negative relationship. This suggested that the less competent the victim was perceived to be, the more likely she was to be blamed for her experience with revenge porn. Similarly, Morality revealed a moderate weak negative relationship, suggesting that victims who were perceived to be less moral were more likely to be the recipients of blame. Humanity revealed a moderate to weak negative relationship with victim blame, suggesting that those victims perceived to be less human were more likely to be assigned blame. Lastly, Warmth revealed a weak negative relationship with Victim Blame, which suggested that those perceived to be less warm were more likely to be the recipients of blame. Taken together, Competence, Morality, Humanity, and Warmth, characteristics of personhood, appeared to share an overall negative relationship with Victim Blame. Ultimately, these findings suggested that the victims in the revenge porn scenarios who were perceived to be less human were also perceived to be more implicated in their victimhood. Thus, those who are perceived to hold fewer human qualities are more likely to receive an attribution of blame.

In their study, Bastian and colleagues (2011) suggested that individuals who were denied “humanness,” a concept exemplified through moral value, agency, and responsibility, were found to be more deserving of blame for a hypothetical wrongdoing. Interestingly, Bastian and colleagues asked participants to assign different social groups based on stereotypes (e.g., “illegal immigrant”), ratings of human uniqueness (e.g., culturally refined) and human nature (e.g., emotionally responsive). Participants were asked to imagine that each member of a particular social category had performed a series of moral and immoral behaviors. Immoral behaviors such as “pushing someone out of the way so they could be first,” (p. 473). Their findings revealed a link between social status, perceived humanness,

and moral standing, such that individuals belonging to groups seen as having higher humanness were deemed more deserving of moral and fair treatment. When considering these findings in light of the current study, it is possible that stereotype effects would account for the victims across conditions regardless of sexual identity. All victims in our conditions were women and, regardless of sexual identity, perhaps constituted a more undesirable social group.

In addition, all women in the vignettes initially consented to sharing photos of themselves with the perpetrator, a behavior that might have influenced the findings. Participants in this study may have perceived the behavior of sharing sexual photos consensually with another individual to be an objectifiable offense (e.g., denying someone humanness). It is possible that the very act of consensually sharing these photos inadvertently influenced the perceptions of the participants. Future studies might consider modulating use of how the photos were initially created (e.g., consensually vs non-consensually) to garner a more thorough picture of influential variables on objectification.

Objectification of women in general is a pervasive issue (Moradi & Huang, 2008). The experience of objectification is likely to affect women throughout the lifespan and is felt everywhere from the media to interpersonal relationships. It is well noted that women's bodies and lives are portrayed as more stereotypically sexualized than are men. Therefore, the correlational findings in the current study between human qualities and victim blame, albethey weak connections, could be accounted for by the fact that women are more likely to be portrayed less favorably than men or other social groups. In addition, the hypothetical women in our study, all victims of revenge porn, could conjure stereotypic images of victims that were likely to cause the denial of human qualities.

The second hypothesis, which predicted that the bisexual victim in the vignettes would experience greater objectification as measured by Competence, Morality, Humanity, and Warmth, was not supported. Bisexual, lesbian, and straight victims were not found to be perceived differently across these four measures. This finding was particularly interesting given the mixed findings found among the sexual objectification literature that posits bisexual women to be greater targets for objectification (Klesse, 2005). However, as no known studies to have attempted to quantify these results, it is difficult to make statistical comparisons, only theoretical ones. Whereas sexual objectification is a special case of objectification, it was still a surprise to find no differences between these three groups. Despite the paucity of research which specifically focuses on bisexual experiences, recent literature had indicated that bisexual individuals tend to face harsh stereotypes regarding their sexual behavior (Serpe et al., 2020) in addition to feeling as though they are frequently eroticized by men (Nadal et al., 2011). Furthermore, representations of bisexual women, when available, tends to err on the erotic (Klesse, 2005), furthering the stereotyped convention that bisexual women are inherently sexual.

Conversely, when considering lesbian women, these communities are believed to be somewhat immune to the effects of objectification as they are typically less concerned with attracting men (Dworkin, 1988; Siever, 1994). Yet even this finding is contended, as some research has reported that lesbian women's experiences with internalized objectification do not differ significantly from straight women (Hill & Fischer, 2008). Regardless, the current study sought to examine the perception of the viewer (e.g., the participant) and to what degree they were likely to objectify the victims in the vignette. Perhaps participants did not make distinctions between bisexual, lesbian, and straight victims due to the fact that women

in general are portrayed as sexualized objects in society.

Women portrayed in advertising and the media, and in more treacherous places such as the internet (e.g., porn), are often portrayed devoid of human characteristics (Nussbaum, 2010). The process of denying individual humanity to victims in the vignettes was perhaps equally applied across conditions on the basis of gender as opposed to sexual identity, resulting in non-significant findings. It is plausible then, that women in general, not women of a specific sexual identity, experience dehumanization to a similar degree. In order to achieve greater clarity surrounding this issue, future studies may choose to examine the objectification measures in this study between hypothetical men and women victims.

Lastly, we might also consider the power of context in the vignettes. All of the vignettes offered the same story for each victim. It was possible that by providing participants with a story about the victims and the circumstances surrounding their experiences with revenge porn (e.g., a breakup) that we were helping participants in the study to view the victims as possessing human like qualities. Were somebody to come across revenge porn on the internet, they are highly unlikely to know how the relationship ended, or how someone came to have the photos in the first place. Perhaps the context of this information helped to humanize these victims, resulting in little difference in scores.

Research Question 1 examined the extent to which objectification related to the gender of the victim's partner. No objectification measures were significant, indicating no differences between the male-partnered and female-partnered victims on ratings of Competence, Morality, Warmth, and Humanity. Given that there were no differences found between the sexual identity of the victim on these same measures, there was little reason to believe there would be differences between groups based on the gender of one's partner as

this is still tied to one's sexual identity.

Hypothesis three, which predicted that the bisexual victim would be blamed more than the straight and lesbian victims was not supported. There were no differences between the bisexual, lesbian, and straight victims on the blame measure. Previous literature has suggested that the degree to which individuals are viewed as having human characteristics can predict the degree that persons are blamed or praised (Bastian et al., 2011). Given that the hypothetical victims in this study were not found to differ significantly across Objectification measures, it was then likely they would be assigned similar ratings on victim blame. Given the explanations in the literature, we would have likely needed to find that bisexual women were consistently rated as more objectified than lesbian and straight victims in order to find a higher degree of victim blame.

Loughnan and colleagues (2010) suggested that sexualized men and women elicited reduced moral concern from participants. It was also found that greater objectification was likely to result in greater victim blame (Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez, & Puvia, 2013). Thus, given that bisexual women experience pervasive sexualization (Klesse, 2005; Ochs, 1996; Worthen, 2013), it was somewhat surprising that they were not blamed more than the lesbian and straight victims.

Yet a lack of significant findings on the blame measure supported the conclusions of a more recent study from Morrison and Pedersen (2018), which examined differences between lesbian, straight, and bisexual victims. Given the pervasive sexualized misconceptions about bisexual women, Morrison and Pedersen similarly predicted that bisexual women would more likely be blamed for their sexual assault than straight and lesbian victims. Their study, which also relied upon the use of vignettes, found no significant

differences between bisexual, lesbian, and straight victims on the measure of blame. Morrison and Pedersen's study was the first of its kind to specifically address differences between bisexual, lesbian, and straight victims (as opposed to just lesbian and straight victims). They concluded that, much like in the current study, all victims were perceived with having equal responsibility for their implications in sexual assault. Furthermore, Morrison and Pedersen call for a "greater understanding of how sexuality influences perceptions of blame in cases of sexual assault," (p., 14), specifically studies that include bisexual victims alongside lesbian and straight ones. Perhaps victims, despite the salience of their sexual identity, are considered to be equally responsible for their victimhood. This may be a positive finding in that whereas bisexual women are perceived to be more sexualized than lesbian and straight women, they may be no more likely to experience blame than their counterparts. However, it did not appear as though bisexual victims were any more or less likely to be the recipients of objectification in this current study and this may therefore further explain the lack of findings for this specific hypothesis.

Participants were also given the opportunity to decide who they felt was most at fault in the vignettes and were asked to rate Emily (the victim), or John/Laura (the perpetrator) along a continuum of fault (*1 = Emily is completely to blame, 4 = Neither John/Laura or Emily are to blame, 7 = John/Laura is completely to blame*). Perhaps a more revealing discussion is that, overall, participants in the current study consistently rated the perpetrator as most at fault in the revenge porn scenarios. Specifically, the item that was used to assess this revealed that most participants were clear in their assignment of blame. This finding provides a sense of hope that national conversations and awareness surrounding sexual violence (e.g., the #metoo movement) have aided in the appropriate distribution of blame.

Perhaps the lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual victims in Morrison and Pedersen's (2018) study were also equally found to be not at fault for their sexual assaults.

Next, as part of an exploratory analysis and Research Question 2, the degree to which partner gender influenced victim blame was assessed. This analysis revealed no significant differences for ratings of victim blame between female-partnered and male-partnered victims. Currently, no known research has investigated the specific effects of partner/perpetrator gender on victim blame. There are potentials for sexual identity and partner gender to become conflated as these are necessarily dependent on one another to some degree. For example, lesbian women are likely to be partnered with another woman, whereas straight women are likely to be partnered with a man. Bisexual victims could be paired with a diversity of partners; however, in this study, the gender of their partners was made salient to represent either another woman or a man. Given that victim sexual identity did not appear to reveal a significant finding with regards to victim blame, it is not surprising that partner/perpetrator gender also did not influence the degree of victim blame. There may be a conflation between sexual identity and partner gender that is influential on the degree to which a victim is blamed.

Afterwards, the fourth hypothesis which predicted that men participants would assign greater objectification to the victims in the vignettes than women participants was found to be significant for three of the four objectification measures. Specifically, it was found that women participants rated our victims with higher Competency, Humanity, and Warmth than did our men participants; however, these relationships were weak and should be interpreted with hesitation. Little known research has specifically examined objectification perpetrated by a viewer, so whereas we might assume that men are more likely to objectify based on

scholarly literature that examines our sociocultural climate and sexualization of women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, 2011), we have little evidence that men and women objectify others differently. Conversely, Loughnan and colleagues (2010) reported that men and women were both just as likely to objectify a sexualized woman by assigning her fewer human qualities (e.g., Warmth). So, the current study actually served to complicate these findings by revealing a weak inverse relationship between gender and three of the four objectification measures. While weak, they still reveal a significant difference not supported by Loughnan and colleagues (2010).

Perhaps this difference can be accounted for based on empathy for the victim in our particular vignette. As participants were exposed to an offense most typically involving women victims (Franklin, 2014), women may be more likely to display empathy toward the victim than male participants. In their discussion of the available literature concerning gender differences and empathy, Baez and colleagues (2017) discussed that on self-report measures, women are more likely than men to portray themselves as empathetic. They suggested that these differences emerge on the basis of gender role stereotype, or that women, more so than men, are “regarded as warmer, nicer, and more sensitive, modest, and sociable than men,” (Baez et al., 2017, p. 21). In their study, Baez and colleagues (2017) found that women were more likely than men to display empathic responses for someone in pain. Interestingly, their reported effect sizes were so small that these gender differences were almost negligible. In addition, women were better able to distinguish the intention of someone inflicting accidental harm, and also were found to elicit greater empathy for individuals affected by intentional harm than were men. Again, these effect sizes were small and therefore also likely negligible. Yet Baez and colleagues (2017) failed to reproduce

these results in a smaller sample size, which complicates this line of research. They concluded that empathy is not a generalized response, but rather one that is context dependent. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain if the differences between men and women in our study were due to the context specific empathic response to revenge porn, or some other participant specific factor, such as social desirability, which is more likely to impact women than men in psychological research.

Furthermore, the current sample was comprised primarily of individuals identifying as Democratic. Lambert and Raichle (2000) discussed the role of political affiliation in victim blame attribution. Seeking to explore how victim blame attitudes are viewed through the lens of conservative or liberal ideologies, they found that conservative ideology positively predicted the degree to which a woman would be blamed for her implication in a rape scenario. Therefore, given the lack of representation of conservatively affiliated parties (e.g., Republican) in our sample, the dominant voice of Democrats could point to the lack of distinctive or significant findings across measures, though limited research in this area makes this difficult to ascertain at this time.

The fifth and final hypothesis, which predicted that men would assign greater blame to the victims in the vignettes than women, albeit a weak relationship, was supported. This finding resonated with previous studies in that men are consistently found to assign greater blame to victims more than women. According to Grubb and Harrower (2008), it is men who, regardless of type of rape depicted (e.g., acquaintance, stranger), are more likely to blame victims. Thus, the current study's examination of revenge porn might help to shed light on the diversity of sexual assault and violence experiences depicted in the victim blame literature.

Since perpetrators are typically male, it has been suggested that male participants tend to attribute more blame to victims because they are more likely to identify with the perpetrator (Kahn et al., 2011). Defensive Attribution Theory suggests that individuals increase or decrease assigned blame depending on how much they perceive to have in common with the victim (Shaver, 1970). Furthermore, according to Shaver's 'judgmental leniency', it would be expected that individuals decrease the blame associated with the individual they more identify with as this serves to bolster their internal sense of control and protect their self-image.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are important limitations in the method and findings of this study that are worth noting. First, the relative weakness of the Objectification measures needs to be considered. The measures used in the current study were based on those used in a study from Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and Elder (2017). Their study sought to examine internalized objectification, whereas the current study modified these measures to assess objectification of others, in our case, a hypothetical victim. Modification of any measures serves to potentially change the utility of the measure.

Moreover, Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and Elder (2017) conceptualized objectification to comprise four major components: Competence, Morality, Humanity, and Warmth, the same measures employed in the current study. In attempt to validate this, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed; however, the factors did not load as predicted, which detracted from the belief that these four measures could represent objectification. However, this is stated with caveat. Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and Elder's (2017) original measures were modified for this current study (i.e., self-

objectification changed to other-objectification). Given that the measures from Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, and Elder were used to represent self-objectification, and not objectification of others, this might explain the problematic factor loadings found in the current study's EFA.

Regardless, even though in the current study these measures were all treated individually in analyses, it is troubling that they evidenced problematic loading as this was likely to skew the results. A cleaner factor structure could have served to find differences in the results. Yet the current study still sought to use these measures separately, as they were created as separate measures and have been previously used separately as opposed to analyzed as a larger structure (Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, & Elder, 2017).

In order to overcome this limitation, future research should consider creating measures that reflect objectification across clearly defined factors. This could help to better understand how individuals objectify others, which is a sorely understudied area in the literature. In addition, studies that seek to conceptualize objectification as a construct could serve to better distinguish sexualized and non-sexualized forms of objectification. Whereas these both appear to lead to dehumanization (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014), having a more rigorous examination of the differences could help to further explore different types of objectification and their effects (e.g., victim blame).

Along the same lines, it might be illuminating to examine objectification with and without the context of revenge porn, or a related sexual offense, so as to develop a baseline of objectification. Without creating a baseline for how diverse sexual individuals are viewed (i.e., lesbian, bisexual, straight) when they are not implicated in revenge porn would be helpful for understanding how these experiences impact perception. Also, it would be

equally as interesting to examine how victims are perceived and objectified without context or information about what led up to the revenge porn incident. For example, the current study discussed how the perpetrator came to receive the photos and how the relationship ended. This context may serve to humanize the victim, whereas real victims of revenge porn are not afforded stories or information about how they became victims in the first place.

Lastly, there are important sampling bias considerations to make that likely influenced the results. First, Reddit was a primary mode of sample recruitment; specifically, the subreddit, r/samplesize, was employed. Whereas there are no current scholarly articles are known to exist which detail the demographic data of this popular subreddit among researchers, demographic surveys are occasionally employed asking for users of the subreddit to participate. In 2019, a demographic survey ($n = 548$) of r/samplesize revealed the majority of users to be mostly identified with the left-wing (u/notationdiction, 2019). Participants were asked to rate themselves on a spectrum of left-right political orientation, left being 0, and right being 100 ($M = 30.02$, $SD = 22.35$). Therefore, it was likely that the limited representation of non-liberally affiliated political orientations in the current study was impacted by sampling bias, and should be counted as a limit of the current study. Second, the use of social media pages, while convenient, still likely contain sampling bias as they rely on a networking features, implying that individuals who are accessing the study have something in common with the original poster. Whereas the primary investigator made attempts to distribute the study to diverse individuals, convenience sampling creates barriers to recruiting a truly diverse sample and should be taken into consideration for future studies.

Implications

There are some important implications to be derived from the currently study. A lack

of significant findings is likely positive. It may suggest that sexually diverse victims are no more or less likely to be objectified or blamed for their implication in revenge porn. Several important groups and movements may have contributed to this finding. For example, the #metoo movement, a movement that started on social media in attempt to raise awareness of the widespread sexual violence and harassment against women appears to have generated significant changes in the lived experiences of women. In a recent study, Keplinger, Johnson, Kirk, and Barnes (2019) demonstrated that women experienced a reduced sense of self-blame and negative self-views (i.e., lower self-esteem, higher self-doubt) following the #metoo movement. They indicated that women felt a greater sense of support around the topic. Social movements can generate significant change in the lived experiences of others, and this perhaps could also account for why participants in the current study were overall more likely to blame the perpetrator than the victim. However, findings revealed that men were more likely than women to blame the victim, so there is still room for movements to target men in their campaigns.

It is important to engage men in discussions on sexual violence as men compared to women in the current study were more likely to blame the victim, which speaks to the gender gap in victim blame research (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). Flood (2011) identified the panacea of programs that attempt to engage men in the prevention of social violence. For example, social media campaigns to more formal educational programs have been offered. Flood (2011) concluded that although it is difficult to engage men in this work, systematic and sustained efforts can result in positive changes among this group. Therefore, individuals in activism and educational organizations who seek to reduce sexual violence could consider the ways they are engaging with men and how to best direct their efforts toward reducing

victim blame.

Considering counseling psychology programs have a history of social justice advocacy and are often at the frontline of multicultural competence training among future psychologists (Vera & Speight, 2003), the current study findings might pose important implications for future training directions. Specifically, Vera and Speight encouraged counseling psychologists to develop awareness of biases and oppression so that they can better advocate for their clients both inside *and* outside the counseling setting. Fassinger and Gallor (2006) advocated a shift from the scientist-practitioner model to a scientist-practitioner-advocacy model, where counseling psychologists are advocating for clients on a more systemic level. Direct services other than counseling, such as prevention and outreach, are argued to be important activities for counseling psychologists, and should be incorporated within training models. With regard to revenge porn, counseling psychologists should strive to become aware of nuances within sexual violence, paying attention to how technology impacts people's lives. Counseling psychology programs may consider expanding language around sexual violence and intimate partner violence to include definitions that are inclusive of new technologies. Specifically, given the training and research backgrounds of counseling psychologists, developing and implementing outreach programs or advocacy campaigns to create safe-technology could be of benefit. In addition, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, including men in outreach programs are can be highly successful. Training counseling psychologists to be balanced in clinical and advocacy work could create significant benefit for the communities they serve. In addition, even providing education around technology-facilitated sexual violence would serve an important adjunct to clients and individuals who may have experienced these harms in the community.

In addition, counseling psychology programs should continue to be mindful of including bisexuality issues in their training programs and not succumbing to bisexual erasure, which may manifest in discussing lesbian and gay issues while ignoring the challenges faced by bisexual individuals. Morrison and Pederson (2018) pointed to the dearth of bisexual representation within the well-studied cannon of victim blame studies. Counseling psychology programs may consider how they are including bisexuality within their larger training framework, from psychoeducation to advocacy efforts. Furthermore, encouraging students to include bisexuality within research examining sexual diversity may serve to shed light on this understudied population, which could further promote the scientist-practitioner-advocacy model encouraged by Fassinger and Gallor (2006). Given the scope of multicultural competency training of counseling psychologists, this group already possesses the structure to expand their current discussions of sexual violence and sexual diversity for more effective and inclusive advocacy efforts.

In conclusion, whereas the majority of hypotheses were not upheld, there are still important considerations for future research and advocacy efforts. As we become more integrated with technology, we are likely to experience greater shifts in communication and information sharing behaviors, not all of which will be positive. Revenge porn, or non-consensual pornography, and other forms of technologically-facilitated forms of sexual violence, will likely continue to emerge, calling for greater awareness and action. It is important to attend to the implications of these forms of violence, particularly as they become normalized and commonplace.

Appendix A: Screener Questions.

Screener questions:

1. I am 18 years of age or older: Yes/No
2. I identify as straight (i.e., straight): Yes/No
3. I identify with the sex that is listed on my birth certificate (i.e., cisgender). For example, if “female” is listed on your birth certificate and you currently identify as “woman” or “female” you would select “Yes” for this question: Yes/No
4. I currently reside in the U.S.: Yes/No

Appendix B: Demographic Form

Demographic questionnaire:

5. What is your age in years: _____
6. Please select your gender:
 - a. Man/Male
 - b. Woman/Female
7. Please select which political party you **most** identify with
 - a. Democratic Party
 - b. Republican Party
 - c. Libertarian Party
 - d. Green Party
 - e. Constitution Party
 - f. I identify as an independent
 - g. I do not affiliate with any political party
8. Please describe your race/ethnicity/cultural identity
 - a. Asian/Pacific Islander (e.g., Korean, Chinese, Pilipino, Southeast Asian)
 - b. Black (e.g., African-American, Afro-Caribbean)
 - c. White/European American
 - d. Hispanic/Latino/Latina
 - e. Middle Eastern/North African (MENA)
 - f. Native American/American Indian
 - g. Biracial/Biethnic
 - h. Multiracial/Multiethnic
 - i. If not listed, please specify: _____
9. Please select your highest level of education achieved
 - a. Some high school/no diploma
 - b. High school diploma
 - c. GED
 - d. Vocational or trade school
 - e. Some college/no degree
 - f. Associates Degree
 - g. Bachelor's Degree (e.g., BA, BS, AB, BSW)
 - h. Master's Degree (e.g., MA, MS, MSW, MFA)
 - i. Professional Degree (e.g., J.D.)
 - j. Doctorate Degree or equivalent (e.g., M.D. Ph.D., Ed.D.)
10. Please select your personal annual income
 - a. 0-9,999
 - b. 10,000-19,999
 - c. 20,000-29,999

- d. 30,000-39,999
- e. 40,000-49,999
- f. 50,000-59,999
- g. 60,000-69,999
- h. 70,000-79,999
- i. 80,000-89,999
- j. 90,000-99,999
- k. 100,000 or more

11. Please select your employment status

- a. Employed full-time
- b. Employed part-time
- c. Student
- d. Unable to work/on disability
- e. Unemployed
- f. Retired
- g. Homemaker

12. Please select in which area in the United States you live

- a. Northeast
- b. Southeast
- c. Northwest
- d. Midwest
- e. Southwest
- f. West Coast
- g. Hawaii/Alaska

13. Please select if you reside in a predominantly

- a. Urban/Metropolitan Area
- b. Suburban Location Inside a City Area
- c. Suburban Location Outside of a City Area
- d. Rural Area

Appendix C: Vignettes

Instructions

After you read the following scenario you will be asked to respond to a number of questions about what you just read. Please read the scenario carefully prior to attempting to answer any of the questions.

Straight woman

Emily, an adult straight woman, was in a romantic relationship with John, an adult man. Emily and John shared common interests and they enjoyed spending time together. One evening, Emily and John were flirting over text message. As the conversation was heating up, John asked Emily to share sexually explicit photos of herself with him. Emily happily shared sexually explicit photos of herself with John. [1/4: Break to next section]

John would ask Emily for sexually explicit photos several more times during their relationship. Emily voiced her concern about sending these photos over text message. However, John assured Emily that these photos would be for his eyes only and that he would not share the photos with anyone else. [2/4: Break to next section]

Later in their relationship, John began accusing Emily of cheating on him, which caused them to fight more often. The couple had a difficult time resolving their issues and eventually Emily told John, “I don’t love you anymore, I want to break up.” John was upset and angry, he felt like it was unfair that Emily did not want to work on their relationship, and he felt like he wasted time dating her. John attempted to contact Emily several more times, but his calls and text messages went unanswered. [3/4: Break to next section]

Several months later, Emily’s friend sent her a link to a website that contained the sexually explicit photos she had sent to John. Alongside the photos was Emily’s personal information, including her full name, phone number, e-mail address, and place of work. Emily was humiliated and embarrassed. She was worried that her job, friends or family might see the photos. [4/4: End]

Summary items-To summarize...

Emily was a straight woman.

Emily was the one to break up with John.

Photos of Emily were uploaded to the internet alongside her personal information.

Bisexual woman-male partner

Emily, an adult straight woman, was in a romantic relationship with John, an adult man. Emily and John shared common interests and they enjoyed spending time together. One evening, Emily and John were flirting over text message. As the conversation was heating up, John asked Emily to share sexually explicit photos of herself with him. Emily happily shared sexually explicit photos of herself with John. [1/4: Break to next section]

John would ask Emily for sexually explicit photos several more times during their

relationship. Emily voiced her concern about sending these photos over text message. However, John assured Emily that these photos would be for his eyes only and that he would not share the photos with anyone else. [2/4: Break to next section]

Later in their relationship, John began accusing Emily of cheating on him, which caused them to fight more often. The couple had a difficult time resolving their issues and eventually Emily told John, "I don't love you anymore, I want to break up." John was upset and angry, he felt like it was unfair that Emily did not want to work on their relationship, and he felt like he wasted time dating her. John attempted to contact Emily several more times, but his calls and text messages went unanswered. [3/4: Break to next section]

Several months later, Emily's friend sent her a link to a website that contained the sexually explicit photos she had sent to John. Alongside the photos was Emily's personal information, including her full name, phone number, e-mail address, and place of work. Emily was humiliated and embarrassed. She was worried that her job, friends or family might see the photos. [4/4: End]

Summary items-To summarize...

Emily was a straight woman.

Emily was the one to break up with John.

Photos of Emily were uploaded to the internet alongside her personal information.

Bisexual woman-female partner

Emily, an adult straight woman, was in a romantic relationship with Laura, an adult man. Emily and Laura shared common interests and they enjoyed spending time together. One evening, Emily and Laura were flirting over text message. As the conversation was heating up, Laura asked Emily to share sexually explicit photos of herself with her. Emily happily shared sexually explicit photos of herself with Laura. [1/4: Break to next section]

Laura would ask Emily for sexually explicit photos several more times during their relationship. Emily voiced her concern about sending these photos over text message. However, Laura assured Emily that these photos would be for her eyes only and that she would not share the photos with anyone else. [2/4: Break to next section]

Later in their relationship, Laura began accusing Emily of cheating on him, which caused them to fight more often. The couple had a difficult time resolving their issues and eventually Emily told Laura, "I don't love you anymore, I want to break up." Laura was upset and angry, she felt like it was unfair that Emily did not want to work on their relationship, and she felt like she wasted time dating her. Laura attempted to contact Emily several more times, but his calls and text messages went unanswered. [3/4: Break to next section]

Several months later, Emily's friend sent her a link to a website that contained the sexually explicit photos she had sent to Laura. Alongside the photos was Emily's personal information, including her full name, phone number, e-mail address, and place of work. Emily was humiliated and embarrassed. She was worried that her job, friends or family might

see the photos. [4/4: End]

Summary items-To summarize...

Emily was a straight woman.

Emily was the one to break up with John.

Photos of Emily were uploaded to the internet alongside her personal information.

Lesbian woman

Emily, an adult straight woman, was in a romantic relationship with Laura, an adult man. Emily and Laura shared common interests and they enjoyed spending time together. One evening, Emily and Laura were flirting over text message. As the conversation was heating up, Laura asked Emily to share sexually explicit photos of herself with her. Emily happily shared sexually explicit photos of herself with Laura. [1/4: Break to next section]

Laura would ask Emily for sexually explicit photos several more times during their relationship. Emily voiced her concern about sending these photos over text message. However, Laura assured Emily that these photos would be for her eyes only and that she would not share the photos with anyone else. [2/4: Break to next section]

Later in their relationship, Laura began accusing Emily of cheating on him, which caused them to fight more often. The couple had a difficult time resolving their issues and eventually Emily told Laura, "I don't love you anymore, I want to break up." Laura was upset and angry, she felt like it was unfair that Emily did not want to work on their relationship, and she felt like she wasted time dating her. Laura attempted to contact Emily several more times, but his calls and text messages went unanswered. [3/4: Break to next section]

Several months later, Emily's friend sent her a link to a website that contained the sexually explicit photos she had sent to Laura. Alongside the photos was Emily's personal information, including her full name, phone number, e-mail address, and place of work. Emily was humiliated and embarrassed. She was worried that her job, friends or family might see the photos. [4/4: End]

Summary items-To summarize...

Emily was a straight woman.

Emily was the one to break up with John.

Photos of Emily were uploaded to the internet alongside her personal information.

Appendix D: Warmth Scale

Instructions: While you have limited information about Emily, please consider the following and rate your perception of Emily on each of the following. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Warmth

I perceive Emily to be tolerant

I perceive Emily to be warm

I perceive Emily to be good natured

I perceive Emily to be sincere

Appendix E: Competence Scale

Instructions: While you have limited information about Emily, please consider the following and rate your perception of Emily on each of the following. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Competence

I perceive Emily to be competent

I perceive Emily to be confident

I perceive Emily to be independent

I perceive Emily to be competitive

I perceive Emily to be intelligent

Appendix F: Morality Scale

Instructions: While you have limited information about Emily, please consider the following and rate your perception of Emily on each of the following. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

I perceive Emily to be morally pure

I perceive Emily to be sinful

Appendix G: Human Uniqueness and Human Nature Scale

Instructions: While you have limited information about Emily, please consider the following and rate your perception of Emily on each of the following. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Human Nature

- I feel like Emily has interpersonal warmth
- I feel like Emily is open minded, like she can think clearly
- I feel that Emily is emotional, like Emily is responsive and warm
- I feel that Emily is superficial, like she has no depth
- I feel like Emily is an object, not a human
- I feel like Emily is mechanical and cold, like a robot

Human Uniqueness

- I feel like Emily is refined and cultured
- I feel like Emily is an adult not a child
- I feel like Emily has self-restraint
- I feel like Emily is rational and logical, like she is intelligent
- I feel like Emily is less than human, like an animal
- I feel like Emily is unsophisticated

Appendix H: Measure of Victim Blame

Measure of Victim Blame

Instructions: these questions concern your opinions about the scenario you read involving the man and woman who were former dating partners. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all			Somewhat			Completely

How much do you think Emily should blame herself for what happened?

How much control do you think Emily had over the situation?

How much control do you think John/Laura had over the situation?

How much do you agree Emily should not have sent John/Laura photos of herself if she did not want her photos to be uploaded to the internet?

Do you think this incident could have been avoided?

Whose fault do you think it is, why things turned out the way they did?*

How much sympathy do you feel for Emily?

* For this item, the following will be used:

1 = Emily is completely to blame

2 = Emily is mostly to blame

3 = Emily is somewhat to blame

4 = Neither John/Laura or Emily are to blame

5 = John/Laura is somewhat to blame

6 = John/Laura is mostly to blame

7 = John/Laura is completely to blame

Appendix I: Validity Items

Item 1: Distributed in the middle of the Objectification items will read...

To show that you are paying attention, please select “Strongly Agree”

Item 2: Distributed in the middle of the Victim Blame items will read...

To show that you are paying attention, please select “Somewhat”

Appendix J: Exploratory Factor Analysis

The dimensionality of the objectification measures was analyzed via exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The measures of Competence, Morality, Humanity, and Warmth were theoretically suggested to measure the construct of objectification (Loughnan & Pacilli, 2013); however, no known studies have formally investigated the construct validity of these measures as a representation of objectification. The current study employed principal axis factoring (PAF) as this method attempts to account for measure error as opposed to principal component analysis (PCA), which assumes no measurement error (Schmitt, 2011). According to Costello and Osborne (2005), PAF is also the preferred method for factor extraction with *a priori* ideas about factor structure, which was the case for these measures based on the theoretical construct (see Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini, & Elder, 2017; Loughnan & Pacilli, 2013). Further, given the theoretical underpinning of the constructs (Field, 2013), and because the literature has indicated these measures are statistically correlated (Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini & Elder, 2017) use of a Promax (oblique) rotation was indicated. The use of this method was believed to potentially result in support of a four-factor measure (i.e., Warmth, Morality, Humanity, and Competence) of Objectification.

First, KMO's Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were examined for significance, indicating the appropriateness of EFA. KMO's Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.91, indicating the sample was large enough to perform a rotation. In addition, Bartlett's Test was significant ($p < .001$), indicating that factor analysis might be appropriate for the data. The initial results of PAF with a Promax rotation revealed a four-factor structure, and item-total correlations for each subscale were also collected and

examined for EFA suitability (correlations above .3; Table 2). A four-factor structure was supported using the Kaiser Eigenvalue criterion. However, the outcome of the analysis confirmed issues of items not loading onto their predicted factors or respective measures.

Initially, it was believed that the Competence items (1-5), the Morality items (6-7), the Humanity items (8-19) and Warmth items (20-23) would load onto their individual respective factors. However, results of the EFA revealed that many items did not load onto their predicted factors. Factor one revealed items from Competence, Morality, and Humanity. These items appeared to measure items that were interested in aspects of intelligence and perceived competence (e.g., “think clearly,” “logical, like she is intelligent,” “an adult, not a child,” and “competent.”). Whereas Competence was an assumed factor, many of the Competence items (e.g., “confident”) loaded elsewhere. The second factor appeared to generate evidence of a construct relating to warmth, as all items from the Warmth scale loaded with additional items from the Humanity scale (i.e., “interpersonal warmth,” and “responsive and warm”). Factor three loaded with three items from the original Humanity scale and appeared to measure dehumanization (e.g., “not a human,” “cold, like a robot,” and “less than human, like an animal”). Lastly, the fourth factor engendered two items from the Competence measure (e.g., “confident,” and “independent”) which suggested this factor to be expressing perceived confidence. Generally speaking, these items appeared to somewhat capture the original measures by representing intelligence/perceived competence, warmth, dehumanization, and confidence. Yet they did not appear to load onto their respective measures, causing question about the initial utility of these measures being able to represent the construct of objectification.

Unfortunately, given that there were no known measures of objectification of others,

and because the original four measures derived from Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini and Elder (2017) were separate measures with different authors intended to measure objectification of the self, there was a significant limitation in reaching construct validity at this time. A psychometric evaluation of the construct of objectification of others would be a helpful tool for future studies of this nature. Understandably, given that these four measures (Competence, Morality, Warmth, Humanity) were created for independent use, it would have been surprising that they would cleanly load onto their respective factors. There was also overlap between the items, which the results of the EFA appeared to reveal. Ultimately, given that the original study from Loughnan, Baldissarri, Spaccatini and Elder (2017) revealed these measures to be correlated, and because the current study indicated evidence of internal validity for the respective measures, the decision was made to retain the original plan to analyze these measures independently.

Table 7.

Objectification measure factor loadings

Item	Factor Loadings				h^2
	1	2	3	4	
1 I perceive Emily to be competent	0.54	-0.14	-0.03	0.26	0.40
2 I perceive Emily to be confident	0.03	-0.06	-0.06	0.87	0.71
3 I perceive Emily to be independent	-0.01	0.10	-0.01	0.71	0.57
4 I perceive Emily to be competitive	0.17	0.03	-0.27	0.23	0.09
5 I perceive Emily to be intelligent	0.71	0.04	-0.12	0.09	0.54
6 I perceive Emily to be morally pure	0.63	-0.03	0.09	0.02	0.46
7 I perceive Emily to be sinful	0.36	-0.12	0.25	0.08	0.27
8 I feel like Emily has interpersonal warmth	0.09	0.61	-0.11	0.01	0.39
9 I feel like Emily is open minded, like she can think clearly	0.52	0.21	0.01	0.06	0.51
10 I feel that Emily is emotional, like Emily is responsive and warm	-0.02	0.63	-0.10	0.07	0.37
11 I feel that Emily is superficial, like she has no depth	0.26	0.17	0.25	0.12	0.43
12 I feel like Emily is an object, not a human	0.12	-0.14	0.67	-0.14	0.40
13 I feel like Emily is mechanical and cold, like a robot	-0.13	0.16	0.63	0.10	0.49
14 I feel like Emily is refined and cultured	0.59	-0.02	-0.04	-0.02	0.30
15 I feel like Emily is an adult not a child	0.50	-0.07	0.17	-0.06	0.27
16 I feel like Emily has self-restraint	0.78	0.09	-0.06	-0.15	0.53
17 I feel like Emily is rational and logical, like she is intelligent	0.77	0.17	-0.07	-0.06	0.65
18 I feel like Emily is less than human, like an animal	0.04	0.01	0.72	-0.04	0.53
19 I feel like Emily is unsophisticated	0.44	0.00	0.21	0.13	0.45
20 I perceive Emily to be tolerant	0.17	0.52	0.05	-0.08	0.39
21 I perceive Emily to be warm	-0.05	0.93	-0.07	-0.07	0.71
22 I perceive Emily to be good natured	-0.01	0.84	0.08	-0.01	0.75
23 I perceive Emily to be sincere	-0.08	0.72	0.13	0.07	0.59

Items in bold indicate correlations above the 0.3 cutoff level.

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VITA

Christine Serpe currently resides in Salt Lake City, where she is completing her clinical internship with the Salt Lake City VA Healthcare System. Before moving to the Midwest for her doctorate, she had lived in New York State for most of her life. She graduated from Stony Brook University, State University of New York in 2011 with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Women's and Gender Studies, and from John Jay College, City University of New York with a Master's degree in Forensic Psychology in 2015. In 2020, she will graduate from the University of Missouri-Kansas City with a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. Thereafter, she will begin a postdoctoral fellowship with the VA Boston, pursuing specialization in PTSD.

Christine's research interests span the spectrums of gender and sexuality, and have explored issues of oppression, objectification, and discrimination. She has taught the Psychology of Gender, with a focus on sexual and gender diversity within the cannon. She has provided lectures focusing on the intersections of gender, sexuality, and psychology. She has mentored students and budding counselors. She has received grant funding to pursue her research and academic endeavors, such as the UMKC School of Graduate Studies competitive research grant and APA Science Directorate grant. She has completed practicums in a breadth of settings including community clinics, university counseling centers, and VA hospitals. She is most passionate about providing care to Veterans who have been exposed to trauma, particularly those who have experienced sexual trauma.