

Title: Beyond rape myths: A more complex view of perceptions of rape victims (1).

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This research examined personal beliefs and perceptions of cultural stereotypes surrounding rape victims. Students (ages 18-21) at a primarily Caucasian University listed either their personal beliefs or their perceptions of cultural stereotypes surrounding rape victims and rated a specific rape victim either according to their personal beliefs or their perceptions of cultural stereotypes. Personal beliefs about rape victims tended to focus more on perceptions of victim reactions to the rape (e.g., depression, anxiety, etc.) rather than on rape myths (e.g., she asked for it, was promiscuous, etc.). Perceptions of cultural stereotypes, however, comprised rape myths rather than the victim reactions to rape. We propose that perceptions of rape victims are more multifaceted than has previously been suggested.

INTRODUCTION

Somewhere in America, a woman is raped approximately every 2 min. However, less than one third of these rapes and sexual assaults are reported to law enforcement officials (U.S. Department of Justice, 1997). In addition, many women who are raped do not identify themselves as rape victims (Kahn, Mathie, & Torgler, 1994; Koss, 1985). One reason that women do not report rape and do not acknowledge being raped might be based in societal stereotypes surrounding sexual violence. Stereotypes about rape victims include the notions that she "asked" to be raped, secretly enjoyed the experience, or lied about it. Rape victims who feel that these stereotypes will be applied to them may be unwilling to report the rape.

Given the importance of these stereotypes in terms of the victim's experience, a number of studies have examined their impact. Specifically, researchers have been interested in factors that influence victim blaming (see Pollard, 1992, for a review). For instance, a victim of rape is blamed more for her victimization when she has had previous sexual experiences (L'Armand & Pepitone, 1982), which seems related to the stereotype that certain types of women "ask for it" by being promiscuous. Rape victims are blamed more when they resist the attack later in the rape encounter rather than earlier (Kopper, 1996), which seems to suggest the stereotype that these women are engaging in token resistance (Malamuth & Brown, 1994; Muehlenhard & Rogers, 1998) or leading the man on because they have gone along with the sexual experience thus far. Finally, rape victims are blamed more when they are raped by an acquaintance or a date rather than by a stranger (e.g., Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994; Bridges, 1991; Bridges & McGrail, 1989; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Kanekar, Shaherwalla, Franco, Kunju, & Pinto, 1991; L'Armand & Pepitone, 1982; Tetreault & Barnett, 1987), which seems to evoke the stereotype that victims really want to have sex because they know their attacker and perhaps even went out on a date with him. The underlying message of this research seems to be that when certain stereotypical elements of rape are in place, rape victims are prone

to being blamed.

Stereotypical Beliefs: Rape Myths

Stereotypes about rape victims are often subsumed under what are called rape myths. Burt (1980) defines rape myths as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" (p.217). Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) define rape myths as "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (p. 134). Koss et al. (1994) have argued that rape myths can be subsumed under three themes: victim masochism (e.g., they enjoy/want it), victim precipitation (e.g., they ask for/deserve it, it only happens to certain types of women), and victim fabrication (e.g., they tell lies/exaggerate). Belief in such myths may allow men to justify male sexual violence and women to deny personal vulnerability to rape (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995).

Rape myth acceptance has generally been thought to be widespread, with various personality (e.g., adversarial sexual beliefs, acceptance of interpersonal violence) and demographic (e.g., gender, race, age) factors predicting the degree to which individuals will accept rape myths (Burt, 1980; Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Gilmartin-Zena, 1988; Hinck & Thomas, 1999; Johnson, Kuck, & Schander, 1997). For example, one consistent finding in the literature is that males are more accepting of rape myths than are females. This result may reflect defensive attributions, or the idea that individuals tend to blame victims who are dissimilar to themselves (Shaver, 1970). Because most rape victims are women, men feel different from this particular group of victims and are thus more likely to endorse rape myths than are women (Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Gilmartin-Zena, 1988).

Evidence from legal verdicts also suggests that rape myths may be widespread (Heise, Pitanguy, & Germain, 1993). For example, most countries outside North America do not legally recognize the possibility of rape occurring within marriage (Koss, Heise, & Russo, 1994). Even within the United States, eight states do not have marital rape laws (Russell, 1998). In the United States, the conviction rate for rape is well below that of other violent crimes (Frazier & Haney, 1996; Williams, 1981). Most rape cases never go to court; they are often dismissed by police (Campbell & Johnson, 1997) or dropped by prosecutors (Frohmann, 1991). It has been suggested (e.g., LaFree, 1989; Sinclair & Bourne, 1998) that rape myth acceptance may play a role in these laws and verdicts that do not validate the victim's experience.

It is clear that rape myths are present in many individuals (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). It is probable that rape myth acceptance is even higher than has been assessed to date, because of the negative attitudes being below individuals' level of awareness (Bargh, 1996; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995) or to self-censorship of politically incorrect views (Jones & Sigall, 1971). It is also probable that even though individuals may not express high levels of rape myth acceptance, their actual behavior towards rape victims might suggest otherwise (Wicker, 1969).

Beliefs Other Than Rape Myths?

Clearly, then, many people adhere to rape myths. However, it is less clear what other sorts of beliefs about rape victims might be prevalent. Perhaps some individuals are empathetic toward rape victims or understand that rape is a traumatic event. Empathy has typically been measured using the Rape Empathy Scale (RES; Dietz, Blackwell, Daley, & Bentley, 1982), which consists of 20 paired statements that represent empathy with either the rape victim or the rapist. Participants are asked to circle the statement that corresponds to their preference. Research has found that men who report some proclivity to rape are lower in rape empathy than are men who report no such tendency (Osland, Fitch, & Willis, 1996). Rape empathy has also been shown to be a reliable predictor of mock jurors' verdicts (Deitz et al., 1982; Deitz & Byrnes, 1981; Deitz, Littman, & Bentley, 1984; Weir & Wrightsman, 1990).

The RES, however, is still essentially a rape myth acceptance scale. The majority of the paired statements consist of a rape myth and the negation of that myth (e.g., "I believe that all women secretly want to be raped," versus "I don't believe that any women secretly want to be raped"). The former indicates empathy with rapists; the latter indicates empathy with rape victims. Rape myth acceptance scales typically state a rape myth or state a negation of a rape myth (which will later be reverse-scored), and participants indicate their agreement with each statement on a Likert scale. Taken as a whole, then, the RES still seems to measure individuals' rape myth acceptance.

There are, however, some paired statements that do seem to move beyond traditional rape myths. Specifically, a few items focus explicitly on the trauma of rape (e.g., "After the rape has occurred, I think the man [woman] would suffer more emotional torment in dealing with the police than the woman [man] would"). It is difficult, however, to know how these items uniquely contribute to perceptions of rape victims because all items are combined into one scale (Dietz et al., 1982). It is still relatively unclear how victims' reactions to rape are perceived by others.

Research suggests that rape is very emotionally damaging to the victims (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1976; Calhoun, Atkeson, & Resick, 1982; Nadelson, Notman, Zackson, & Gornick, 1982). Individuals who have been raped are more depressed and anxious than nonvictimized women (Kilpatrick, Resick, & Veronen, 1981). They often intrusively recall the assault and blame themselves, which can lead to poor adjustment following the rape (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Posttraumatic stress disorder is extremely common among individuals who have been raped (Koss, Dinero, Seibel, & Cox, 1988). We were interested in whether or not perceivers of raped individuals know that rape has such a negative impact.

This study was designed to examine the possibility that individuals have a more complex mental representation of rape victims than is assessed by research focusing solely on blame and rape myths. Accurate perceptions, such as the knowledge that rape has devastating consequences, may be an important component of the constellation of beliefs

about raped individuals. This information could be used to increase the likelihood that services for victims will be utilized. Rape victims may fear the negative retribution that they will receive if they report being raped; perhaps knowledge that at least some individuals possess realistic perceptions of the trauma of rape and thus will be more understanding could lessen that fear and increase reporting rates.

On the other hand, perceivers' understanding of the trauma of rape might not necessarily be beneficial for rape victims if that information is used to describe how rape victims should behave. Burgess and Borgida (1999) make a distinction between descriptive and prescriptive gender stereotypes. The descriptive component refers to the characteristics that women do possess (e.g., "Women are nurturing"), whereas the prescriptive component refers to the characteristics that women should possess (e.g., "Women should be nurturing"). Burgess and Borgida argue that although these components are related, they lead to different consequences. Prescriptive stereotypes are considered more hostile and more likely to be related to sexual harassment.

Similar processes might operate for perceptions of rape victims. For example, suppose many individuals report that they believe rape victims are negatively affected by rape. Many rape victims in fact do not exhibit overt negative reactions; they appear calm (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1978). If a rape victim is encountered who does not exhibit symptoms, perceivers might be less inclined to believe that she was raped or may minimize the extent to which she was actually traumatized. In other words, these observers would have made the transition from believing that rape victims are visibly upset (descriptive) to believing that they should be visibly upset (prescriptive). In terms of interventions targeting individuals likely to encounter rape victims (e.g., police officers, health care workers), it would be important to know their beliefs regarding the extent to which rape victims are negatively affected by the experience; the intervention could then be tailored such that the individuals come to realize that rape victims might be in shock and not exhibiting extreme emotional responses.

There is some evidence that women are expected to be visibly upset after a rape (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1974; Gilmartin-Zena, 1988; Holmstrom & Burgess, 1983) and to take a long time to recover (Schneider, Ee, & Aronson, 1994). In one study, a rape victim was rated as more credible when she was described as clearly upset rather than controlled and calm the day after the rape (Calhoun, Cann, Selby, & Magee, 1981). Krulewitz (1982) presented students with vignettes describing a rape victim as having either a negative emotional response (anger or guilt) to the rape or as calm and unemotional. Participants identified more with a victim who exhibited an emotional response rather than a victim who remained calm and unemotional. An emotional victim was perceived as less responsible for the rape than a calm victim, and the rape was perceived as more serious when the victim was emotional rather than calm. This study seems to suggest that an emotional response to rape is perceived as normal and appropriate. As mentioned earlier, many victims are nonemotional after being raped (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1978) and may thus encounter insensitivity from observers who believe they should be exhibiting more emotion (e.g., "It must not have been that bad since you aren't crying").

Other research has examined respondent and victim characteristics that could influence the extent to which victims are perceived to be harmed by rape (King, Rotter, Calhoun, & Selby, 1978; Luginbuhl & Mullin, 1981; Tieger, 1981). For example, one study found that 24% of police officers, 11% of lawyers, 6% of doctors, and 3% of rape counselors agreed that "sexually experienced women are not really damaged by rape" (Ward, 1995). In addition, rape is considered less psychologically harmful to the victim when carried out by a steady date rather than a first date or a stranger (Bridges, 1991).

In sum, there is some evidence that a stereotype exists regarding how victims are impacted by rape. Rape victims are expected to exhibit signs of distress, and certain types of victims are seen as less affected by rape than others are. Because these beliefs are often not explicitly part of rape myth acceptance scales (e.g., Burt, 1980; Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Johnson et al., 1997), it is unclear how prevalent these beliefs are. It is also unclear to what extent people recognize these beliefs as being stereotypical. Given that people generally seem to equate stereotypes with negative attributes (e.g., Devine, 1989; Hoyt, 1998), and since the belief that victims are traumatized by rape is subjectively positive and sympathetic, perhaps such beliefs will be less likely to be identified as stereotypes about rape victims than are more traditional rape myths. However, because many victims do not exhibit visible signs of distress (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1978), and most victims do experience rape as an extremely negative event regardless of their relationship with the attacker (Koss et al., 1988), such beliefs do represent stereotypes. If such characterizations of rape victims are not seen as stereotypes, then they may be exerting a subtle yet negative impact on perceptions of rape victims.

Hypotheses

In this experiment, we were interested in examining personal beliefs and perceptions of the cultural stereotypes surrounding rape. We hypothesized that personal beliefs would include the idea that rape is traumatic for the victim (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1974; Gilmartin-Zena, 1988; Krulewitz, 1982), although it was uncertain to what extent participants would emphasize this perceived trauma.

Perceptions of cultural stereotypes, on the other hand, should be primarily negative in nature, encompassing mainly rape myth items. Past research has found that most individuals are aware of cultural stereotypes surrounding African Americans (Devine, 1989; Devine & Elliot, 1995). Accordingly, we expected that most individuals would be aware of cultural stereotypes surrounding victims of rape.

METHOD

Overview

Our experiment was designed to measure personal beliefs and perceptions of cultural stereotypes about rape victims using two procedures. It has been argued that using more

than one procedure can garner a richer set of data (e.g., Stangor & Lange, 1994). For example, Madon (1997) used a combination of an adjective checklist, rating scale, and free response procedure to assess stereotypes about gay males. In our study, we used a rating scale and a free response procedure in an effort to measure the more complex views people possess about rape victims.

Participants

Participants consisted of 241 introductory psychology students (102 males and 139 females), roughly aged 18-21, at a primarily Caucasian (93%) midwestern University who participated for partial fulfillment of a course requirement. (3)

Design and Procedure

Participants were told that this study was concerned with how people form impressions of others and that there would be two main parts to the experiment. In one, participants generated a list of traits about rape victims (free response task), which were then coded as either rape myths or emotional/behavioral reactions of the victim. In the second, participants read descriptions of individuals and rated them on several bipolar trait scales (impression formation task). Each of these tasks was completed according to participants' own beliefs (personal beliefs) or according to their perceptions of others' beliefs (cultural stereotypes). The order of these two main tasks was counterbalanced; half of the participants completed the free response task first, and half completed the impression formation task first. Following these two main tasks, all participants made judgments about rape victims in general. A written debriefing concluded the experiment.

This experiment used a 2 (gender of participant: male, female) x 2 (perspective: personal beliefs, cultural stereotypes) x 2 (type of rape: stranger, acquaintance, none) x 2 (order: free response task first, impression formation task first) x 2 (coding of traits: rape myth, emotional/behavioral reaction) mixed design with repeated measures on the last variable.

Free Response Task

Participants in this phase of the experiment were asked to generate a list of characteristics about rape victims. Participants in the personal beliefs condition generated traits that they personally thought were true about rape victims. The instructions (adapted from Devine & Elliot, 1995) were as follows:

For this experiment, we are interested in your personal beliefs about rape victims. On the following lines, we would like you to write down adjectives and phrases that make up your personal beliefs about victims of rape. Write down those characteristics that you feel are true of rape victims. Please list as many things that you can think of that represent your beliefs about rape victims.

Participants in the cultural stereotypes condition generated traits that they thought were

part of the cultural stereotype of rape victims. The instructions (adapted from Devine & Elliot, 1995) were as follows:

In this experiment, we are interested in the cultural stereotype of rape victims. A cultural stereotype is defined as something that people typically believe to be true about some group. For example, a cultural stereotype about librarians might be that they are quiet and like to read. On the following lines, we would like you to write down adjectives and phrases that make up the cultural stereotype of rape victims. Note, these characteristics may or may not reflect your personal beliefs. So, write down those characteristics that you know to be part of the cultural stereotype, whether or not you believe the stereotype to be true. Please list as many things that you can think of that represent the cultural stereotype of rape victims.

Impression Formation Task: Descriptions

Each participant received a booklet containing descriptions of four target individuals (descriptions adapted from Miller, Ashton, McHoskey, & Gimbel, 1990). In order to mask the true purpose of the experiment, the type of rape manipulation was varied in the description of the third target person. For participants in all conditions, the first two and the last target descriptions were identical. The first vignette described Holly, a 20-year-old history major involved in a sorority and an assistant at the school's Minority Affairs office. The second vignette described Brian, a 27-year-old photographer working for a small daily newspaper with interests in old cars and writing. The fourth target was Cathy, a 30-year-old computer programmer with interests in cooking, softball, and volleyball. The target of interest was Sarah, described as follows in the acquaintance rape condition:

Sarah is a 21-year-old undergraduate majoring in business administration. She maintains a 3.4 grade point average and is active in her sorority. She is 5 feet 4 inches tall and weighs 115 pounds. During her leisure time she enjoys jogging, tennis, and reading. Two of her future goals in life are to travel and someday own and operate her own business. [About a year ago, she was raped by an acquaintance while walking to her dorm room. She has been receiving periodic counseling and seems to be doing well.]

In the stranger rape condition, the word acquaintance was replaced by the word stranger. In the control condition, the bracketed text was excluded, and no mention was made of rape or counseling.

Impression Formation Task: Bipolar Trait Ratings

After each vignette, participants rated the target on 39 bipolar traits. (4) Half the participants were asked to indicate their own personal feelings about the target (personal beliefs), and the other half were asked to indicate what they thought the average student would think (cultural stereotypes). Each pair was on a scale from 0 to 10.

Judgment Items

Finally, all participants completed judgments about rape victims in general. Each item was on a Likert scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (very much). (5)

RESULTS

Free Response Task

Participants listed either their personal beliefs or their views of the cultural stereotypes about rape victims. Table I contains the most commonly listed personal beliefs, and Table II contains the most commonly listed cultural stereotypes. (6) As Table I shows, many of the personal beliefs reflect the idea that rape has negative consequences for victims (e.g., scared, hurt, angry). Many of the cultural stereotypes (see Table II), on the other hand, reflect victim-blaming (e.g., dresses promiscuously, flirtatious, slut, etc.). It should be noted, however, that there is substantial overlap between the personal beliefs and cultural stereotypes. Fifty percent of the traits listed for personal beliefs were also listed for cultural stereotypes. It is also interesting to note the variability in personal beliefs and perceptions of cultural stereotypes. The highest rated traits for both personal beliefs and cultural stereotypes were listed by less than half the sample.

Two independent raters coded each trait as either a rape myth, an emotional/behavioral reaction, or other (76% agreement). Disagreements were resolved through discussion. Rape Myths: A trait was coded as a rape myth if it referenced rape victim stereotypes from popular rape myth scales (e.g., asked for it, promiscuous, certain type of person, wanted it, cried rape for revenge, lied about it, etc.). Emotional/Behavioral Reactions: A trait was coded as an emotional/behavioral reaction if it referenced some reaction that a victim would have as a result of being raped (e.g., depressed, anxious, relationship problems afterwards, scared to be alone, etc.). Other: Any trait that could not be characterized as a rape myth or an emotional/behavioral reaction of the victim was placed into this category (e.g., characteristics of rapists, ambiguous entries, etc.).

Responses were submitted to a 2 (gender of participant: male, female) x 2 (perspective: personal beliefs, cultural stereotypes) x 2 (order: free response task first, impression formation task first) x 2 (coding of traits: rape myth, emotional/behavioral reaction) ANOVA with repeated measures on the last variable.

The results revealed the expected Perspective x Coding of trait interaction, $F(1, 219) = 27.97, p < .001$. As expected, personal beliefs about rape victims were composed of more emotional/behavioral reactions ($M = 5.25, SD = 4.42$) than rape myths ($M = 2.26, SD = 2.59$). Cultural stereotypes of rape victims, on the other hand, were composed of more rape myths ($M = 4.67, SD = 3.49$) than emotional/behavioral reactions ($M = 3.43, SD = 3.82$). However, this two-way interaction was qualified by a significant gender of Participant x Perspective x Coding of trait three-way interaction, $F(1, 219) = 3.887, p < .05$ (see Fig. 1). When asked about their personal beliefs, males and females did not differ

in the number of rape myths that they listed; they personally believed few rape myths, $F(1, 219) = 2.02$, ns. However, females were more likely than males to list emotional or behavioral reactions of the victim in their personal beliefs about victims of rape, $F(1, 219) = 2.58$, $p < .05$.

When asked about the cultural stereotype of rape victims, females were more likely than males to list rape myths, $F(1, 219) = 2.72$, $p < .05$. Males and females did not differ in the number of emotional or behavioral reactions they listed for cultural stereotypes, $F(1, 219) = 0.98$, ns.

Order of packets and type of rape read earlier (if they had in fact read a rape scenario before listing personal beliefs or cultural stereotypes) did not have a significant effect on listings of personal beliefs or cultural stereotypes (all $ps > .05$).

Impression Formation Task

Participants in this phase of the experiment rated a target woman on several bipolar characteristics. The 39 bipolar trait ratings were subjected to a principal axes factor analysis with varimax rotation, which yielded a four-factor solution accounting for approximately 52% of the variance. The four factors reflected attractiveness, manipulativeness, emotional well-being, and passivity. (7) The items that loaded on each factor were submitted to a 2 (gender of participant: male, female) x 2 (perspective: personal beliefs, cultural stereotypes) x 2 (type of rape: stranger, acquaintance, none) x 2 (order: free response task first, impression formation task first) ANOVA. (8)

The results revealed several main effects for the type of rape variable (see Table III). A woman raped by a stranger was seen as less attractive than a woman not raped, $F(2, 219) = 7.536$, $p < .001$. Women described as being raped were seen as less manipulative than a woman not raped, $F(2, 219) = 28.919$, $p < .001$, and as lower in emotional well-being than a woman not raped, $F(2, 219) = 101.129$, $p < .001$. No other effects were significant, all $Ps > .05$.

Judgment Items

The judgment items were submitted to a 2 (gender of participant: male, female) x 2 (perspective: personal beliefs, cultural stereotypes) x 2 (type of rape: stranger, acquaintance, none) x 2 (order: free response task first, impression formation task first) ANOVA. Consistent with the hypothesis that personal beliefs would be more positive than cultural stereotypes, participants thought that others would blame the rape victim more than they themselves would, $F(1, 216) = 102.23$, $p < .001$. They thought that others would be less willing to associate with a rape victim than they would, $F(1, 217) = 109.25$, $p < .001$. They also thought that others would exhibit less compassion, $F(1, 217) = 30.00$, $p < .001$ and sympathy, $F(1, 217) = 34.16$, $p < .001$ for a rape victim than they would (see Table IV for means). Order of tasks, gender of participant, and type of rape read earlier (stranger, acquaintance, or none) were not significant for the judgment items, all $ps > .05$.

DISCUSSION

This study assessed personal beliefs and cultural stereotypes about victims of rape using two procedures. Both methodologies revealed that individuals personally believe victims are negatively impacted by the experience of rape. In the impression formation task, participants rated a victim of both stranger and acquaintance rape as lower in emotional well-being than a nonvictimized woman. The free response methodology revealed a similar pattern of results. Personal beliefs about rape victims were more likely to be composed of emotional/behavioral reactions of the victim rather than rape myths.

Interestingly, females in the free response task were more likely than males to indicate that their personal beliefs consisted of the emotional and behavioral reactions that rape victims experience. This result is consistent with research that has found that women are more sensitive to others' emotions than are men (Cross & Madson, 1997). Given this greater sensitivity, women should be more in tune with the negative impact that rape has on victims and should be more likely than males to list such characteristics for their personal beliefs.

Surprisingly, males and females did not differ in terms of the number of rape myths that they listed for their personal beliefs. Although an analysis of sex differences was not a focus of this paper, it might have been expected that males would list more rape myths for their personal beliefs than would females (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). This did not occur. Perhaps social desirability concerns affected males' willingness to endorse rape myths (Plaud & Bigwood, 1997). There are a few studies that have found a nonsignificant relationship between sex of participant and level of rape myth acceptance (Burt & Albin, 1981; Calhoun et al., 1981; Edmonds, Cahoon, & Shipman, 1991; Krahe, 1988; Schneider et al., 1994). Future research is needed to examine the circumstances under which males will report more rape myths than females.

One interesting finding is that individuals may endorse rape myths and at the same time recognize the negative effects of rape. In our sample, over half (57%) listed some combination of rape myths and emotional/behavioral reactions of victims for their personal beliefs about rape victims. Thirty-two percent listed solely emotional/behavioral reactions of the victims, and only 9% listed solely rape myths for their personal beliefs about rape victims.

It might seem puzzling at first glance that people could simultaneously believe in rape myths and believe that rape is so harmful. One possibility, discussed earlier, is that these emotional/behavioral reactions listed by participants are in fact rape myths of a different sort. If women are supposed to be negatively affected by rape (Burgess & Borgida, 1999), and if they are less credible when they appear calm (Krulowitz, 1982), then these beliefs may comprise another, relatively unexplored type of rape myth that has detrimental consequences for victims. For example, a jury may be less likely to convict in rape cases

if the victim is not crying during her testimony. A woman may not even believe she was raped if she feels her reaction does not measure up to societal standards. Rape myth scales thus far have examined in great detail beliefs about victims before the rape (e.g., how they were dressed). Perhaps rape myth acceptance scales should be reconceptualized to include more beliefs regarding victims during and after the rape.

It is also possible that people genuinely believe both rape myths and that victims are negatively impacted by the rape experience. Katz and Haas (1988) have argued that people can simultaneously hold both positive and negative attitudes about a group; for example, "...Blacks are perceived as deserving help, yet as not doing enough to help themselves; and both attitudes may exist side by side within an individual" (p. 894).

A similar kind of attitudinal ambivalence may occur regarding individuals who have been raped. Any rape victim may be subject to both positive and negative views. Rape victims may be perceived as suffering afterwards, but they may also be blamed for being raped in the first place. In other words, prerape attitudes about the woman might be negative and postrape attitudes about her might be sympathetic (e.g., believing that she brought the rape on herself to some extent and also believing that the experience would cause her pain afterward).

Alternately, categorization processes may contribute to some individuals' propensity to endorse both myths and emotional/behavioral reactions of the victim. Glick and Fiske (1996) considered this possibility with regard to sexism. They differentiated sexism into two components: hostile (e.g., women are asking for special favors, women exaggerate discrimination, etc.) and benevolent (e.g., women should be protected by men, women should be put on a pedestal, etc.). Individuals who score high in both hostile and benevolent sexism are considered ambivalent sexists. One reason why ambivalent sexism occurs might be because women are subtyped. Certain types of women (e.g., feminists) might represent the hostility component, and other types of women (e.g., homemakers) might represent the benevolent component (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997). Therefore, when completing the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, individuals may score high on both components because different subtypes of women come to mind.

Similar processes may occur regarding perceptions of rape victims. For example, when asked to list their personal beliefs about victims of rape, many individuals may subtype accordingly. Some women (e.g., those who were wearing revealing clothing, those who were drinking) may be perceived as causally implicated in the rape. Other women may be viewed as more innocent, and characteristics of those women may revolve around the trauma she is going through. Therefore, some individuals can espouse both myths and emotional! behavioral reactions since they are thinking of different types of victims.

One goal of the present research was to elucidate how individuals perceive cultural stereotypes about rape victims. We had predicted that most individuals would be aware of the cultural stereotypes; rape victims ask for it, deserve it, lie about it, and so forth. The free responses provided support for this hypothesis. As predicted, cultural stereotypes

were more likely to be composed of rape myths than the victim's emotional or behavioral reactions to being raped. In addition, females listed more rape myths than did males for the cultural stereotype. Males listed as many emotional or behavioral reactions of the victim as rape myths when characterizing the cultural stereotype. The traditional rape myth literature states that the victim's reaction is not part of the stereotype of rape victims (e.g., Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). If anything, the stereotype posits the opposite—that rape is not emotionally damaging to victims (especially for sexually experienced women). These results suggest that there are perhaps stereotypes about rape victims regarding victims' reactions to rape that are not tapped by the traditional rape myth acceptance scales. These results also may suggest that females are more knowledgeable about cultural stereotypes surrounding rape victims than are males.

If females are more knowledgeable than males about cultural stereotypes regarding rape victims, this might be due to the socialization of women. Women are taught to be more aware of personal safety issues and the threat of rape (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997; Koss et al., 1994). It is also possible that some participants in this study had been victims of rape. Most rape victims are female, so it is possible that some of the females in our sample were thinking of themselves when they were filling out the questionnaires. Perhaps females are more knowledgeable about stereotypes surrounding rape victims because they have the most experience with these stereotypes.

The results for the task in which participants rated the "Sarah" target on a number of dimensions were hard to interpret. We had expected that participants would believe that others would think a rape victim differed on a number of characteristics from a woman not raped. For example, participants might have believed that others would think a rape victim was promiscuous, flirtatious, a drinker, manipulative, and so forth. In our study, however, no significant effects emerged on this variable in the impression formation task. These nonsignificant effects might have been due to limitations of this particular vignette. For instance, this vignette might have stood out relative to the other vignettes due to the mention of rape. Further, although the woman's relationship with the perpetrator was varied by using the terms "stranger" and "acquaintance," the rape was described as occurring outside, which fits the stereotype of a stranger rape (Kahn et al., 1994). Hence, participants might have assumed that the acquaintance was barely known and thus judged the vignette essentially as a stranger rape scenario. The results depicted in Table III support this conclusion; the victims were rated similarly regardless of their relationship with the perpetrator. Future research should more conclusively distinguish between stranger and acquaintance rape when presenting participants with scenarios.

Future Directions

The concept of attitudinal ambivalence deserves more attention in the rape literature. Perceptions of rape victims are complex, encompassing rape myths, sympathy, empathy, knowledge of the effects of rape, and more (see Sinclair & Bourne, 1998). Although research on the traditional rape myths is very important, it does not produce a full picture of individuals' beliefs. A scale could be devised to assess ambivalence about rape victims,

which might be a useful tool for assessing peoples' beliefs. In addition, it would be interesting to note how people who are either ambivalent, positive, or negative about rape victims respond to a specific case of rape.

More research is also needed to assess perceptions of the cultural stereotypes surrounding rape victims. The present research suggests that cultural stereotypes are composed primarily of the traditional rape myths. However, females listed significantly more myths than did males, which suggests that females are more knowledgeable about cultural stereotypes surrounding rape than are males. It was suggested above that females may be more knowledgeable due to their experiences with potentially being victims of rape. Recent research on cultural stereotypes about ethnic groups, however, has not found that those most affected by stereotypes are more knowledgeable about them (Madon et al., 2001). Nevertheless, future research might examine this issue with a sample of rape victims.

It is also important to assess the belief structures of individuals who are likely to come in contact with rape victims (e.g., police officers, health care workers). As mentioned earlier, if such individuals believe that victims should be visibly upset after the rape, they may be less sympathetic toward victims who are in shock and not manifesting overt negative reactions. Knowledge that these attitudes exist is the first step toward creating interventions designed to change such beliefs.

One limitation of the present study is that only perceptions of rape victims were examined. How do perceptions of rape victims differ from perceptions of other kinds of victims? Future research might examine the extent to which there exists a general schema of victims, and the extent to which that schema is representative of perceptions of rape victims more specifically.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that rape myths are present in many individuals (e.g., Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Rape myths may be held implicitly by other individuals (e.g., Bargh, 1996; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Even if many people do not express high levels of rape myth acceptance, their actual behavior toward rape victims may not be concordant with their attitudes (e.g., Sinclair & Bourne, 1998). The present research was an attempt to expand on research regarding rape myths to examine peoples' beliefs about the trauma of rape. Future research should be conducted to ascertain whether these beliefs comprise another type of rape myth (as when such beliefs prescribe how victims ought to feel and behave after a rape), or if these beliefs comprise genuine understanding of the trauma of rape. Rape myth acceptance is one very important aspect of rape attitudes; our research suggests that an understanding of the aftermath of rape is another.

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(3.) Exact demographic information was not collected.

(4.) The bipolar trait items were as follows: likable-unlikable, active-passive, depressed-cheerful, anxious-calm, nonathletic-athletic, promiscuous-not promiscuous, cautious-risk-taker, socially awkward-socially skilled, ambitious-unambitious, physically attractive-physically unattractive, concerned with appearance-unconcerned with appearance, unfriendly-friendly, popular-unpopular, careless-careful, independent-dependent, aggressive-unaggressive, adjusted-maladjusted, vain/stuck up-not vain/not stuck up, extrovert-introvert, not at all feminine/masculine-very feminine/masculine, emotional-unemotional, very flirtatious-not at all flirtatious, intelligent-unintelligent, sensitive-insensitive, abstains from alcohol-drinks alcohol frequently, truthful-untruthful, likes to call attention to self-does not like to call attention to self, timid-self-confident, competent-incompetent, seductive-not seductive, fearful-not fearful, angry-not angry, not trusting of others-trusting of others, ashamed-not ashamed, manipulative-not manipulative, strong-weak, warm-cold, low sex appeal-high sex appeal, stable-unstable.

(5.) The judgment questions were as follows: (1) How much sympathy do you have for rape victims? (2) How much do you consider rape victims to be stigmatized; that is, to be perceived negatively on various characteristics because of her having been raped? (3) How much compassion do you have for rape victims? (4) How much do you blame rape victims for having been raped (that is, having done something to put themselves in the position of being raped)? (5) Suppose a casual acquaintance of yours was a rape victim. Would the rape have any influence in terms of you not wanting to associate with her?

(6.) The full list of personal beliefs and cultural stereotypes is available from the first author upon request.

(7.) The following items loaded on Factor 1 (Attractiveness): physically attractive (.71), concerned with appearance (.78), popular (.66), feminine (.68), flirtatious (.72), drinks alcohol (.67), likes to call attention to herself (.58), seductive (.57), and high sex appeal (.68); Factor 2 (Manipulativeness): promiscuous (.57), vain (.61), insensitive (.64), untruthful (.57), manipulative (.64), and cold (.52); Factor 3 (Emotional Well-Being): cheerful (.74), not fearful (.69), not angry (.82), trusting (.88), not ashamed (.84), and stable (.69); and Factor 4 (Passivity): unambitious (.57), dependent (.60), unaggressive (.59), and weak (.67).

(8.) Order effects were not significant and will not be discussed further. In addition, no significant effects emerged on the Passivity factor and it will not be discussed further.

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[Figure 1 omitted]

Table I

Most Commonly Listed Personal Beliefs About Rape Victims (n = 124)

Percentage of participants

Trait/characteristic who listed the trait

1. Scared/afraid/fearful 45
2. Violated 31
3. Hurt 28
4. Female 27
5. Victims 25

6. Angry 24
7. Ashamed 24
8. Untrusting 23
9. Alcohol involved 21
10. Blame self 19
11. Not responsible/not to blame 19
12. Problems in relationships 16
13. Scarred 16
14. Attractive 15
15. Helpless 15
16. Weak 14
17. Vulnerable 14
18. Taken advantage of 14
19. Strong 14
20. Life changes/issues for life 13

Table II

Most Commonly Listed Cultural Stereotypes About Rape Victims (n = 117)

Percentage of participants

Trait/characteristic who listed the trait

1. Weak 47
2. Female 44
3. Attractive 42
4. Scared/afraid/fearful 40
5. Alcohol involved 31
6. Young 27
7. Dresses promiscuously 26
8. Flirtatious 25
9. Slut/whore/tramp/bimbo 23
10. Asking for it 22
11. Angry 20
12. Helpless 17
13. Naive 17
14. Victims 17
15. Untrusting 16
16. Depressed 16
17. Stupid/dumb 15
18. Quiet 15
19. Blame self 15
20. Careless 13

Table III

Mean Trait Ratings as a Function of Type of Rape

Type of rape

Factors None Stranger

Attractiveness [7.38.sub.a] (1.13) [6.66.sub.b] (1.20)

Manipulativeness [4.82.sub.a] (1.00) [3.57.sub.b] (1.16)

Well-being [6.86.sub.a] (1.02) [4.16.sub.b] (1.64)

Type of rape

Factors Acquaintance

Attractiveness [7.09.sub.ab] (1.36)

Manipulativeness [3.96.sub.b] (1.19)

Well-being [3.87.sub.b] (1.62)

Note. Higher numbers indicate more of each construct on a scale from 0 to 10. Standard deviations are reported in parentheses next to each mean. Across rows, means with different subscripts differ at $p < .05$.

Table IV

Mean Judgments of Rape Victims as a Function of Perspective

Perspective

Judgments Personal beliefs Cultural stereotypes

Blame [1.91.sub.a] (2.14) [4.97.sub.b] (2.34)

Compassion [8.60.sub.a] (1.73) [7.22.sub.b] (1.99)

Sympathy [9.07.sub.a] (1.26) [7.86.sub.b] (1.88)

Association [0.87.sub.a] (1.51) [3.81.sub.b] (2.60)

Note. Judgments were made on 11-point scales (0 = not at all, 10 = very much). Standard deviations are reported in parentheses next to each mean. Across rows, means with different subscripts differ at $p < .05$.

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