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Ambivalent Sexism: Why do victims get blamed?

by

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April 15, 2020

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For graduation with Honors

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Michele Acker for the continuous support of my thesis research, for her patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge of the theories of this thesis. I appreciate the hard work and time she has dedicated to this project and her willingness to be available during its entirety. I am grateful for the knowledge she has passed on. My research abilities have greatly improved because of her advising.

I would like to thank Dr. Frey and Associate Professor Tammy Birk for their guidance and supervision during the process of this project. I appreciate them for providing the necessary information regarding this research.

I would like to thank the Otterbein University Research Fund for resources it awarded this project in order to complete data collection. The chance to conduct this research benefited my academic research skills.

I would like to thank my friends and family for the constant encouragement during this project. Thank you for being there when I was stressed and needed reassurance during the process of this research. Your support always allowed me to keep pushing forward.

Abstract

The current study empirically investigates the factors that influence how a person judges the victims and perpetrators in a sexual assault case. This work grows out of the MeToo Movement; a cultural shift that has allowed women to come forward and share their experiences with sexual assault (Mendes et. al, 2018). The goals of the current research are to understand how someone who holds ambivalent sexist beliefs and beliefs in rape myths may view the #MeToo Movement and a victim of assault. This study has 2 (victim race) X 2 (victim gender) X 2 (participant gender) design, where 181 participants read a vignette that varies the victim race and gender and is based on a famous sexual assault case. The dependent variables are responsibility for what happened and blame (the victim or the perpetrator). Participants will complete the Ambivalent Sexism Scale, a MeToo Perception scale, and the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale. The present study tested three main hypotheses. The first one found that there was a significant effect of victim gender and culpability. The second hypothesis found that MeToo scores were correlated with who people thought was responsible for what took place in the vignette. Plus, those who were in Rape Myth Acceptance had negative views of the MeToo Movement. Finally, participants who had higher hostile sexism scores were more likely to have high MeToo scores. Further empirical research is needed to study the perceptions of the MeToo movement and its impact on victim blaming, especially in marginalized communities.

Key Words: Ambivalent Sexism, MeToo Movement, Rape Myth Acceptance, Victim Blaming

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Introduction

The MeToo Movement; a cultural shift that has allowed women to come forward and share their experiences with sexual assault (Mendes et. al, 2018), provides an excellent context to re-examine the psychology of sexism, and how it impacts everyday judgments. Sexism is a deep prejudice involving ambivalence, hostility and negative stereotypes towards women. Ambivalent Sexism is a multidimensional concept that can be used to understand why men hold prejudicial attitudes towards women. Glick and Fisk (2000) argue that the elements of ambivalent sexism, benevolent and hostile sexism, are seen across past and present cultures. Hostile and Benevolent sexism are the use of harassment, threats, and violence to enforce a women's subordination to men. Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism rely on the patriarchy, gender stereotypes, and gender differentiation (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The patriarchy is a hierarchical structured society in that it promotes male privilege by being male dominated, male identified, and male centered (Johnson, 2014). Gender differentiation stems from the idea that women and men often inhabit different social roles and occupations within hierarchical society, where women's roles are defined by motherhood and men's roles are based on being the breadwinner of the household. Sexual reproduction by both men and women is held constant throughout different societies which promotes relationships between men and women (Glick et. al, 2000). These three elements combined create the social and biological causes that allow for ambivalent sexism to be normalized in society (Glick et. al., 2000).

Hostile sexism involves misogynistic attitudes towards women and the need to dominate women creating an unequal power dynamic. Hostile sexism is reinforced through stereotypes and gender roles (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism may be directed towards women who challenge men's power and status (Glick et. al., 2000). Benevolent sexism is a set of attitudes that are characteristically sexist in terms of viewing women in stereotypical ways and in strict

gender roles but are positive in tone from the perception of the perceiver and tend to elicit prosocial, intimacy seeking, and paternalistic behavior (Glick and Fiske, 1996). However, the underpinnings of benevolent sexism are not as prosocial as they seem, as they are still based on sexist assumptions based on traditional feminine stereotypes and patriarchal dominance (Glick and Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism serves to justify men's dominance and power because it views women as the weaker gender and asserts that women should inhabit stricter gender roles. This puts women on a pedestal and promotes the assumption that women are more emotional and less likely to rely on logical and intelligent thought. Benevolent sexism relies heavily on the close heterosexual relationships created between men and women, and the paternalistic ideas of the "ideal mate" (Lee, Glick, & Chen, 2010). Previous research has found that women are more likely to accept benevolent sexism compared to hostile sexism. Benevolence idealizes the traditional female gender role, so people are less likely to view benevolence as sexism. (Lee, Glick, & Chen, 2010). In a large-scale study conducted across 19 nations, it was found that women were less likely to reject benevolent sexism and more likely to reject hostile sexism when the levels of sexism were high in the culture (Glick et. al., 2000). Some researchers believe that this is due to the idea that benevolence can be subjectively positive for the perceiver, so in heterosexual couples benevolent attitudes allow for people to maintain and legitimize the women's unequal role in the relationship (Glick and Fiske, 1996; Lee, Glick, & Chen, 2010). In turn, a person who is high in ambivalent sexism may have conflicting and opposing views of women (Glick and Fiske, 1996). Due to the conflicting ideologies between hostile and benevolent sexism, ambivalent sexists classify women into different categories, "good" women and "bad" women (Abrams et. al., 2003; Glick and Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism may be directed towards gender nonconforming women who challenge men's power and status like feminists and

career women (Glick et. al., 2000), while both benevolent and hostile sexism may be directed towards gender conforming women (Abrams et. al., 2003). Previous research has found that when ambivalent sexists classify a woman as a “bad” woman she is more likely to be victim blamed in an acquaintance-rape vignette (Abrams et. al., 2003). Based on this research, in the current study, I expect those who hold ambivalent sexist beliefs will continue to blame a victim of sexual assault. Moreover, I predict those high in benevolent sexism are likely to hold disapproving views of the MeToo Movement, as saying “Me Too” disrupts the patriarchal view of women.

Sexual Assault and Victim Blaming

Moving beyond sexist beliefs to behaviors, it is the case that, sexual assault and rape are pervasive in American society. From a statistical perspective, every 98 seconds an American is sexually assaulted. On average, there are 321,500 victims (age 12 and older) of rape and sexual assault each year in the United States (RAINN.org, 2019). Ninety-one percent of victims of rape and sexual assault are female while 9 percent are male. Getting accurate sexual assault and rape statistics are often difficult as most sexual assaults are not reported to authorities; the estimates say that 230 sexual assaults out of every 1,000 sexual assaults are reported, such that about three out of four cases of sexual assault go unreported (RAINN.org, 2019). Many cases go unreported because women and girls fear retaliation against them after they report the incident due to victim blaming (RAINN.org, 2019). Individuals in marginalized communities are even less likely to report their sexual assault to authorities (Foley et. al, 1995; Rymer &Cartei, 2015). Victim blaming is where individuals find examples within the victim’s behavior to hold the victim responsible for the incident (Fox & Cook, 2011). Victim blaming allows for bystanders of the sexual assault (the people that hear or read about the sexual assault) to observe the sexual assault

event as the victims fault based on misconceptions and biases placed on the victim of the sexual assault; which leads to inaccurate view of the sexual assault (Culda, Opre, & Dobrin, 2018). The consequences of victim blaming allow for bystanders of the assault and to minimize the prevalence and harm caused by the perpetrator of the assault, and for the perpetrator to be exempt from the punishment of committing the assault (Stubbs-Richardson, Rader, & Cosby, 2018). Victim blaming can be studied by looking at attribution errors people make about sexual assault victims.

Prior research has explored the idea that victim blaming in sexual assault could be due to Rape Myth Acceptance. Rape myths are “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women” (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). An endorsement of these rape myths corresponds to a person’s acceptance of these rape myths (Burt, 1980). Rape myths transfer the blame from the perpetrator to the victim, which results in victim blaming. Previous research has found that rape myths are defined by the cultural functions that they serve, particularly the social control of women to justify sexual aggression by men towards women (Abrams et. al, 2003; Bohner, 1998). Rape myths can either be overt and direct, or covert and subtle. In previous research it has been found that more direct and overt rape myths (e.g. “She was wearing revealing clothing, so she was asking for it,”) have become less socially acceptable by the general public (McMahon & Farmer, 2011) whereas more covert rape myths remain acceptable. The shift to covert rape myths are more likely to relate to victim blaming, as many covert rape myths assume that the victim did something to contribute to the fact that they were assaulted (McMahon & Farmer, 2011). There are still many different types of rape myths. For example, many rape myths questions whether the assault was rape (e.g. “A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and

then regret it.”; McMahon & Farmer, 2011). Many other rape myths communicate that men are only perpetrators and women are the victims, stranger rape is the only kind of rape, and men don't mean to commit sexual assault (Crall & Goodfriend, 2016). Moreover, society's overall acceptance of rape myths has serious consequences for the psychological well-being of sexual assault and rape survivors (Crall and Goodfriend, 2016). Rape myth acceptance create the assumptions that the sexual assault in any form are not true offenses, and thus victims of sexual assault tend to downplay the event as less serious. This results in less private and public disclosure of sexual assault. However, there was a modest increase in reporting of sexual assault in 2017 (Morgan & Truman, 2018) where it became clear that this was a common experience as more women responded by using the hashtag MeToo.

The MeToo Movement

Originally the hashtag MeToo was coined by community organizer and activist Tarana Burke in 2006. She founded the MeToo Organization because as someone who experienced sexual assault ten years prior, she wanted to do something to help lower income women and girls of color who also experienced sexual assault (Mendes et. al, 2018). The MeToo Movement was particularly important for marginalized populations (Foley et. al., 1995; Rymer and Cartei, 2015). Prior research shows the Black women are more likely to be victim blamed and less likely to be taken seriously in cases of sexual assault (Foley et. al., 1995). Research indicates that people rate the offense of sexual assault as less serious when the victim is Black (Donovan, 2007). Prior research has shown that Transgender individuals are vulnerable to sexual assault (Rymer and Cartei, 2015). Much less is known about the experiences of sexual assault towards Non-binary individuals specifically because much research groups both gender identities together. A report by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center shows that 47 percent of all

transgender people have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lives (nsvrc.org, 2019). Further, this Movement is one Burke calls a Movement through empathy, to not only show how widespread and pervasive sexual assault is, but also to let survivors know that they are not alone (Mendes et. al, 2018). Women coming together to try to end rape culture in America has been going on for the last 40 years, from Take Back the Night rallies, to the Times Up Movement, now #MeToo and grew exponentially after it became popularized on Twitter in 2017.

Since the early 2010's there has been an increase in feminist groups using social media platforms to begin a dialogue, network and organize against sexism and rape culture (Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2018). According to the research of Mendes et. al., "#MeToo is perhaps one of the most high-profile examples of digital feminist activism we have yet encountered" (Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2018, pg. 236). Further, these campaigns are providing important spaces for a wider range of women and girls (in relation to age, ability, race and other factors) to participate in collective action on topics such as sexual harassment, sexism and rape culture (Mendes, et. al, 2018). The #MeToo has allowed women on social media to come forward and share their personal experiences with sexual assault (Mendes, et. al, 2018). As a result, the MeToo Movement allows for a collection of women to speak out against their abusers, to hold their abusers accountable, and to find the support to heal from the abuse.

There have been many high-profile cases that have allowed for the MeToo Movement to thrive in the 2010s. These cases changed the way assault victims share their stories of abuse and have brought justice to the victims. For instance, the Steubenville Rape Trial was one of the first modern rape trials to have widescale media coverage, a presence on social media, and brought focus to acquaintance rape. On the night of August of 2012, a sixteen-year-old girl, who is only identified as Jane Doe, went to a party with acquaintances, Trent Mays and Ma'lik Richmond,

who went to Steubenville High school (Macur & Schweber, 2012). Jane Doe was sexually assaulted by Mays over the course of the night after both Mays and Doe were intoxicated. Much of the night and the sexual assault was captured on social media through pictures, videos, and tweets (Levy, 2013). One of these videos showed Doe drunk and unconscious at the time of the assault (Levy, 2013). A few days after the assault, Jane Doe's parents contacted police (Zimmerman, 2018). In March of 2013, Mays and Richmond were tried as minors and were found guilty of sexual assault (Almasy, 2013). During late 2012 and early 2013, the case became subject of much social media discourse, where it divided many who encountered the trial (Zimmerman, 2018). Many individuals defended Trent Mays and Ma'lik Richmond because they were star football players at Steubenville Highschool, which was a school known for its football program (Macur & Schweber, 2012). Plus, many believed that Jane Doe was at fault because she drank more than she could handle and became unconscious (Macur & Schweber, 2012). At the same time, many still believed Jane Doe's story and supported her story. In early 2013, 1,000 people attended a rally in Steubenville demanding that Mays and Richmond be brought to justice (Zimmerman, 2018). Further, the case highlighted the prevalence of acquaintance rape, a discourse that wasn't explicitly talked about in popular media at the time of the trial (Zimmerman, 2018). The social media attention, the rally, and the trial gave survivors of acquaintance rape a platform to share their stories that wasn't there before the case.

On October 5, 2017, the *New York Times* published an article detailing decades of sexual abuse committed by Harvey Weinstein, a high-profile director and producer for Miramax and the Weinstein company (Kantor & Twohey, 2017). Since then 100 women, from actresses to assistants of Weinstein have come forward with accusations against Weinstein that range from sexual harassment to rape that took place between the 1980s to the 2010s (Schonbek, 2020);

many assaults have taken place in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada (bbc.com, 2020). Many actresses or aspiring actresses claim that he would force them into sexual propositions in return for advancing their careers (Kantor & Twohey, 2017). Days after the *New York Times* article was published, on October 15th, actress Alyssa Milano tweeted, “Me too. Suggested by a friend: “If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote ‘Me too’ as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem” (Milano, 2017). This spurred sexual assault survivors to post ‘Me too’ and to #MeToo on social media platforms across the globe (Ohlheiser, 2017). Eventually, Milano did credit Tarana Burk and connect back to her organization Me Too (Stevens, 2017). After the *New York Times* article there was a steady flow of women coming forward with their stories of abuse at the hands of Weinstein and calling for justice. Moreover, between 2017 to 2020, thousands of sexual assault survivors have come forward and shared their accounts of sexual assault through social media with the #MeToo.

The research looks at different perspectives of the MeToo Movement because it is a massive cultural phenomenon, but due to its recency there isn't much empirical psychological research on the MeToo Movement. Most evidence about the different perspectives of the MeToo Movement comes from news sources like the *Chicago Tribune*, which shows that from a nationally representative poll from the Bucknell Institute for Public Policy, 41 percent of respondents views the Movement favorably, and 21 percent view the Movement unfavorably. While women are more likely to view the Movement as favorably than men (61 percent to 39 percent), the poll also finds that there is a division on views along political party lines (Stevens, 2018). Sixty- three percent of Democrats have a favorable view of the Movement, but for Republicans that number falls to 20 percent, and thirty- seven percent of people who identify as

Independents have a favorable view of the Movement (Stevens, 2018). These polls are descriptive in that they tell us different demographic factors predicting perceptions of the MeToo Movement, but they do not explain *why* people's perceptions differ. The current research extends this poll data by attempting to explain differences in responses to the MeToo Movement by using the theoretical perspectives of Ambivalent Sexism and Rape Myth Acceptance and extending it to judgements of a specific sexual assault case. This study portrays a sexual assault case based on the Steubenville case, but varies some details to see how those changes impact peoples' judgments.

The hypotheses for the study are as follows: The first hypothesis is that there should be an effect of the race and gender of the victim of the sexual assault and the perceived culpability of the victim. Participants are expected to attribute more blame to the victim when the victim is portrayed as a black woman or a non-binary person, and that this blame will be increased when the victim is black *and* non-binary. I predicted that if the victim was a white woman, then participants will be less likely to be victim blamed. Further, I predict a main effect between the participant gender and culpability of the victim. I expect that participants that are men will be more likely to blame the victim in the sexual assault scenario than female participants, and also be less likely to blame the perpetrators. Finally, I predict that both women and men participants to believe that alcohol plays a critical role in what happened in the sexual assault scenario.

My next set of hypotheses are concerned with rape myth acceptance as a measure of victim blaming attitudes and participants views on the MeToo Movement. I expect that those who have high rape myth acceptance scores will be more likely to see the MeToo Movement as a negative social force, since the MeToo Movement uplifts victims of sexual assault and those who have high victim blaming attitudes are less likely to support victims of sexual assault. I expect

that those who have low rape myth acceptance scores will view the MeToo Movement as a positive social force.

The third hypothesis is concerned with ambivalent sexism and views of the MeToo Movement. In this study I expect that people who hold ambivalent sexist views will view the MeToo Movement as a negative social force, as people who hold ambivalent sexist views hold negative and stereotypical views of women while the MeToo Movement works to support women. I expect those low in ambivalent sexism to view the MeToo Movement as a positive social force.

Method

Participants

There were 181 participants, 57 males, and 124 females. The mean age of the participants was 19.5 years old (range: 18-27). Most of the sample was white (76%), African American (11.5%), Latinx (4.9%), and less than 4.4% of Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. Participants were from the Otterbein Psychology department. Participants within the Psychology department were compensated with course credit for survey completion. Participants within the Psychology department were recruited via Sona System, an online participant recruiting pool.

Design and Materials

My research consists of an online survey. Participants first provided informed consent. They were presented with one of four vignettes. After participants read one vignettes, they completed a simple manipulation check to make sure that they understood the vignette. After, the

were given a survey about how they perceived the victim and perpetrator of the vignette. Finally, participants took the MeToo Movement Perception questionnaire, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, the Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, and a demographics survey. Overall, the survey took about 15 minutes to complete.

The current study had two parts. The experimental portion of the study had a 2 x 2 x 2 between subject's design, where participants are presented with one of four vignettes that were based on the Steubenville Rape Case (Macur & Schweber, 2012). For this study, we manipulated the independent variables as the victim's gender (Female-bodied or Non-binary), the victim's race (Black/White), and the participants' gender (Male/Female). The dependent variables for the vignettes are *responsibility* for what happened that night and *blame* of the victim or the perpetrator. Participants' responses for the responsibility scale and the blame-ability scale were averaged to a single responsibility and blame-ability score. In the second part of the survey, participants were given the MeToo Movement Perception Scale which was created for this study. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with different statements about the MeToo Movement (see Appendix B). These questions are on a 7-point Likert Scale, 1 being strongly agree to 7 being strongly disagree. Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 were reversed scored. All items were averaged together to make a single perceptions score. Low scores on perceptions of the MeToo Movement indicate a favorable view of the MeToo Movement, while higher scores indicate an unfavorable view of the MeToo Movement. This scale was created specifically for this study but it has a high internal consistency with Cronbach alpha of .854. Then, participants completed Glick and Fiske's (1996) Ambivalent Sexism Scale (ASI). The scale consisted of 22 questions on which participants were asked to indicate agreement or disagreement on a scale that ranged from 0 (Disagree strongly) to 5 (Agree Strongly), with no

midpoint (Glick & Fiske, 1996) [See Appendix C]. The ASI can be used as an overall measure of sexism, with benevolent and hostile sexism components weighted equally by averaging the score for all items after reversing the items. Higher scores in both Hostile and Benevolent sexism reflect a higher level of prejudice towards women, while lower scores in both constructs reflect lower levels of prejudice towards women. Moreover, participants completed a ten-item portion of two subscales of the Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Subscale 2: He Didn't Mean Too and Subscale 4: She Lied) to assess participants acceptance of common rape myths (McMahon and Farmer, 2011) [See Appendix D]. The Cronbach alpha for the combined subscales is 0.856. A sample item from Subscale 2 is, "Rape happens when a guy's sex drive goes out of control." A sample item from Subscale 4 is, "Rape accusations are often used as a way to get back at guys." Participants responded to items on a seven-point Likert scale from one being strongly agree and seven being strongly disagree. Higher score indicates the rejection of rape myths and a lower acceptance of rape myths, while lower score indicates rejection of rape myths and a higher acceptance of rape myths. Item responses were averaged together to create a single rape myth acceptance score. Finally, the participants were given a demographics questionnaire which asked about the participants' gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, religious preferences, age, and political affiliation [See Appendix E]. Data were analyzed using SPSS.

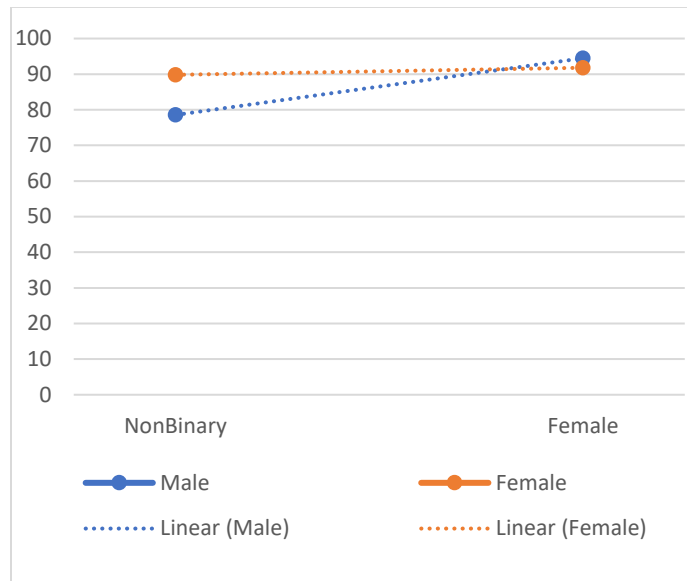
Results

The present study tested three main hypotheses. The first hypothesis was to find that there would be a main effect for the race and gender of the sexual assault vignette and the participant blaming the victim. The data were analyzed using a Between-Subjects Two-Way ANOVA for

culpability by the gender and race of the victim. There was a significant main effect of victim gender (Non-binary) and culpability ($F_{(1, 180)} = 8.89, p = 0.03$). It was found that participants were significantly more likely to blame a nonbinary victim in the sexual assault vignette M (nonbinary) = 84.18, M (female) = 93.13. It was found that there was no significant relationship between victim race and culpability so- race was dropped from subsequent analyses. My next hypothesis concerned the gender of the participants, whereby I predicted men would be more likely to victim-blame than women. There was no such main effect as men and women were equally likely to victim-blame, but there was one 2-way interaction such male participants were more likely to hold the non-binary victim responsible for what happened to them. ($F = 4.19, p = .04$) (See Table One below).

Table 1. Mean levels of blame as a function of victim gender and participant gender

Victim Gender	Participant Gender	
	Males	Females
Non-binary	78.555	89.817
Female	94.467	91.798

Figure One. Mean levels of blame as a function of victim gender and participant gender

My second set of hypotheses were concerned looking at the relationship between victim blaming and perceptions of the MeToo Movement. It was found that MeToo Scores were correlated with who people thought was responsible for what took place during the vignette. In general, the more favorably people saw the MeToo Movement, the less likely they were to shift blame from victim to perpetrator, $r(183) = -0.35, p = .000$. Participants were less likely to hold the victim responsible if they showed high support for the MeToo on the scale, $r(146) = .41, p = .000$, regardless of condition, and participants were more likely to hold the perpetrator responsible, $r(182) = -.41, p = .000$.

Based on poll data, people who are more conservative politically tend to not support MeToo. Since the participants in this study were across the political spectrum (see Table 2), I was able to test if this relationship held in the current study. Using the responses to the MeToo scale I created, we can see that more liberal participants have more favorable views of the MeToo

Movement, $r(180) = .48, p = .000$. I also predicted that those who were higher in Rape Myth Acceptance would have negative views of MeToo and this was supported $r(180) = -.510, p = .000$.

Table 2. Political affiliation frequency

Valid	Frequency	
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Liberal	17	9.3
Liberal	37	20.2
Somewhat Liberal	42	23
Slightly Liberal	27	14.8
Slightly Conservative	31	16.9
Somewhat Conservative	9	4.9
Conservative	13	7.1
Strongly Conservative	4	2.2
Total	180	98.4

My third hypothesis predicted that people who hold ambivalent sexist views will view the MeToo Movement as a negative social force. It was found that participants who have higher hostile sexism scores were more likely to have high MeToo scores, $r(183) = .500, p = .000$, but surprisingly there was no relationship between benevolent sexism and perceptions of the MeToo Movement.

Table 3. Correlations between MeToo, Political ideology, RMA, sexism, and blame.

Variable	MeToo	Liberal Affiliation	RMA	Hostile Sexism	Vignette Responsibility	Erica Culpability	Anthony Culpability
1. MeToo	-	.48**	-.51**	.50**	-.35**	.41**	-.412

Discussion

The first hypotheses put forward in the research were partially confirmed. According to the results, there was a significant main effect of victim gender but not for victim race. Participants were more likely to blame the non-binary victim. This finding is especially important because there isn't research specifically looking at how non-binary victims are perceived in a sexual assault scenario and little research on how sexual assault effects the lives of non-binary Individuals. It is known in the research that marginalized groups are the most targeted in sexual assault cases (Rymer & Cartei, 2015). In a like manner, men were more likely to blame the non-binary victim. Non-binary individuals are often targeted because of negative attitudes, isolation, and social exclusion (Rymer & Cartei, 2015). It can be assumed that non-binary individuals were more likely to be victim blamed within the current research based on the participants negative attitudes toward non-binary individuals.

Pervious research has shown that race does matter in sexual assault scenarios, especially for Black women. In previous research, participants rated the offense of rape as less serious if the victim was a Black woman (Donovan, 2007; Foley et. al., 1995). This undermines Black women's sexual trauma (Donovan, 2007). There are two main explanations to explain the undermining of Black women's sexual trauma. One is the Jezebel stereotype which depicts a hypersexualized and promiscuous Black woman. The other is the Matriarch stereotypes which depicts Black women as unfeminine and tough. (Donovan, 2007) Both stereotypes are used to

justify the sexual trauma forced upon Black women and the culpability attributed to their perpetrators can be minimized so that Black women are more likely to be victim blamed (Donovan, 2007). Their research found partial support for the jezebel stereotype and no significant support for the matriarch stereotype (Donovan, 2007), so it is not fully clear why that black women were more likely to be blamed. Although, I predicted the race of the victim would have a similar impact in the study, that was not the case. Not replicating that finding may be due to the college sample holding fewer stereotypes. Unfortunately, the more likely explanation is that it did not matter due to a flaw in the study design. Upon re-examining the study materials, it seems that people may not have noticed the race of the victim within the vignette. To reduce any confounding variables all the victims lived in a 'middle class neighborhood', and race was indicated by the black and white qualifier in front of 'middle class neighborhood' depending on the scenario. Participants may not have picked up on this subtle difference in the vignette. Future research will need to more carefully examine whether race continues to be a factor.

The second hypothesis put forward in the research was confirmed. The more favorably people saw the MeToo Movement, the less likely they were to shift the blame to the victim. Participants were less likely to victim blame when they showed support for the MeToo on the scale, and more likely to victim blame when they did not show support for the MeToo Movement. I conjecture that the MeToo Movement has made people less likely to victim blame, if they were less likely to victim blame to begin with. So, if someone were more likely to victim blame before the MeToo they may be likely to victim blame more. It may be that people who didn't hold victim blaming views before the MeToo Movement are now more likely to victim blame. These findings are especially important because there is no empirical research on how perceptions of the MeToo Movement might impact individual judgments.

In 2018, poll data suggested that politically liberal individuals were more likely to support the MeToo Movement (Stevenson, 2018). The data confirms that more liberal participants had favorable views of the MeToo Movement. Liberal individuals see the MeToo Movement as a positive social force. Further, it was found that those who were higher in rape myth acceptance have negative views of the MeToo Movement. This further corroborate with Abrams et. al. theory that rape myths, “serve to deny, trivialize, or justify sexual violence, exerted by men against women (Abrams et. al., 2003, p. 111).

The third hypothesis put forward in the research were partially confirmed. I found that those who have higher score of hostile sexism held high MeToo scores. Participants were more likely to hold hostile sexist views, regardless of gender. This is a different finding from Glick and Fiske’s findings that most sexist individuals hold both benevolent and hostile sexists’ views (Glick and Fiske, 1996). There were no significant results found between participant views of benevolent sexism and perceptions of the MeToo Movement. I assume that the reason for this is because benevolent sexism is more socially accepted by people, in general. For instance, when women accept benevolent sexism views women are more likely to excuse acts of hostile sexism committed by the intimate men in their lives (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Further, Gilck and Fiske et. al. imply in their research that weaker hostile sexism and benevolent sexism correlations among sexist respondents could result in many sexist respondents endorsing one sexist ideology over the other (Glick and Fiske, 2000). For these reasons, the third hypothesis was partially confirmed.

In this research, I found that there is still victim-blaming, particularly if the victim is outside the sexual binary. However, I also found some hopeful results that may be due to discourse on sexual assault through MeToo. For instance, there were no differences in the degree to which men and women victim-blamed the female victim in this study which suggests

increased awareness by men of how sexual assault works. In fact, many of my participants, 39.7 percent, did not blame the victim at all.

Survivors across the globe are speaking out and continuing the discourse on sexual harassment and assault. People have been using the #MeToo or similar in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. In late 2018, the #MeToo had been used more than 19 million times on Twitter (Anderson & Toor, 2018). One way the MeToo Movement's influence can be tangibly measured is by progress in the courts systems and the changing legislation across the globe. For instance, in South Korea prominent lawyer Seo Ji-hyun publicly accused her boss, a senior prosecutor, Ahn Tae-guan of sexual misconduct (Stone & Vogelstein, 2019). In January 2019, Ahn was sentenced to prison for two years, which was an unprecedented victory for sexual assault survivors in South Korea (Stone & Vogelstein, 2019). In Egypt, new legal precedent and regional conversation was started after Rania Fahmy became the first Egyptian woman to win a court ruling on sexual harassment charges (Al-Youm, 2018). In the United States, justice was served for the women who had been abused by Harvey Weinstein. In May 2018, in New York City, Weinstein was charged with rape, criminal sex act, sex abuse, and sexual misconduct involving two separate women. On January 6, 2020, the trial process began in New York City, if charged he could face up to 28 years in prison. On the same day, In California the Los Angeles County district attorney's office, charged Harvey Weinstein with rape and sexual assault of two women over two days in 2013. On March 11, 2020, Harvey Weinstein was convicted for 20 years for committing criminal sexual acts and three years for rape. Further, in June 2019, the International Labor organization (ILO) adopted new international legal standards on sexual violence and harassment at work. This convention includes countries agreeing to put national laws, prevention measures, and a commitment to enforce the convention when signed. It requires

employers to have workplace policy addressing sexual violence and harassment and ensure access to victim mediation and support (Stone & Vogelstein, 2019). Many proponents of the convention states that it was the MeToo Movement that showed how pervasive sexual violence and harassment is in workplaces (hrw.org, 2019). The MeToo Movement has been able to bring justice for people across the globe.

Even though the MeToo Movement has done a ton of good, it can be seen how backlash has affected the lives of survivors of sexual violence. The backlash of the MeToo Movement evident in the Ford-Kavanaugh sexual assault hearings of 2018. On September 27, 2018, Dr. Christine Blasey Ford Testified before a Senate Judiciary Committee with allegations of sexual assault committed by Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh. As a teen, Dr. Ford was nearly raped by Kavanaugh at a party. The first time she spoke out about the assault was during a couples counseling session with her husband and the account was documented by her therapist at the time. At the Senate hearing, Ford's testimony was specific, powerful, and gutting (Klein, 2018). She did everything she could to be a good and credible witness. She tried to answer questions, asked repeatedly for a full investigation to help clear the holes in her memories of that night, and thanked the committee for the consideration that they gave her (Klein, 2018). She was an incredibly competent and compelling witness. Then, Kavanaugh read his rage-filled statement to the senate committee and his anger worked in his favor. He looked like he had been falsely accused (Klein, 2018). After he gave his opening statement, many of the Republicans on the committee apologized to him for what he had gone through since Dr. Ford came forward. In the end, Dr. Ford's testimony didn't matter for the Senate Committee as Brett Kavanaugh was appointed to the Supreme Court on July 9, 2018. Nor did it matter for the thousands of Kavanaugh supporters who slammed Ford in the media. What Kavanaugh was able to do was to

showcase victim blaming on a wide scale, exemplifying people's tendency to empathize with the powerful man over his less powerful female victim (Klein, 2018). Further, the Ford-Kavanaugh sexual assault hearings brought backlash to the MeToo Movement as some people held Ford responsible for what happened to her or didn't believe her story at all. However, backlash can be a good sign for a Movement, it means that progress is happening. It means that marginalized groups are standing up against those who are in power, and those people in power feel threatened. This study did not study backlash although it quite possible it was present among some participants. This would be an interesting variable to include in future research.

There are several limitations to this study. The first is due to the composition of the sample. It is mostly white, heterosexual, middle class women, and the age of the participants was restricted to the mid-20s. So, the results found on this campus may not be generalizable to other campuses in the nation, or beyond college campuses. For instance, larger universities with more diverse student population may yield different results. The second limitation may be in the use of the scales I chose to use to measure sexism. The ASI is a bit outdated and could be updated with new scenarios that capture how hostile sexism and benevolent sexism play out within relationships between people. For instance, no one says, "No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman" (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Also, the language of the ASI can be confusing. For instance, "In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men." Language that is confusing can change the meaning of the question depending on how the person interprets the question. A final limitation of my research is that the responses to the scenario had a ceiling effect. That is, the scenario may have been too extreme and the language for my questions might have been too simple. That is, the majority of people did not see any ambiguity and found it easy to blame the perpetrator in the sexual assault

scenario. A sexual assault scenario without witnesses might have been ambiguous enough that peoples ideologies would be more apparent in their evaluations.

In respect to future research, I believe that further empirical research is needed to systematically study the views of the MeToo Movement and its impact on victim blaming. Most research is only based on poll data and is only focused on how people view the Movement itself. It is important to see if and how the Movement is helping society and to see if it is helping to end victim blaming. Further, future research should examine how sexual assault is perceived when the victims are nonbinary individuals. They are usually grouped with trans individuals and research is focused on the prevalence of assaults, not the perceptions of them. It is likely that the non-binary community faces unique challenges when in sexual assault cases. Finally, future research is needed to expand the understanding of other demographic characteristics such as victim race. My results did not demonstrate race as an effect, other research has found that race does matter in who gets believed in a sexual assault situation. Future research should expand the demographics of the victim and the perpetrator to include different races, gender identities, sexualities, and ages. Studies like these not only for the scientific body of research surrounding these topics but also can contribute to efforts aimed at reducing victim blaming.

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Appendix A

*Tables for overall group means and frequencies**Table 4. Group means for culpability and responsibility*

<i>Overall Blame Means</i>			
Group Statistics for Culpability and responsibility	N	Mean	St. D
Erica Culpability	91	94.29	10.87
Anthony Culpability	91	89.67	16.83
Responsibility	91	89.26	20.03
Alcohol	83	54.24	34.7

Table 5. Religious preferences of sample

<i>Frequency of Religious Preferences</i>		
Valid	Frequency	Percent
Catholic Christian	49	26.8
Protestant Christian	64	35
Jewish	1	0.5
Islamic	3	1.6
Buddhism	1	0.5
Other	61	33.3
Total	179	97.8

Appendix B

The MeToo Scale

1. The MeToo Movement is about social support for women who have experienced sexual assault and/or sexual harassment.
2. The MeToo Movement is about getting vengeance against men (R)
3. The Metoo Movement is man-hating. (R)
4. The Metoo Movement is used to make false accusations. (R)
5. The Metoo Movement has made it a scary time to be a man. (R)
6. The Metoo Movement is about raising awareness about sexual assault and/or sexual harassment.
7. The Metoo Movement contributes to a fairer and more just world for all people.
8. Social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) are a good way to spread information on the Metoo Movement.
9. The Metoo Movement is a way to protect the victim of sexual assault and/or sexual harassment.
10. The Metoo Movement is unrealistic. (R)
11. Do you believe that the Metoo Movement goes too far or not far enough? (R)

Scoring Instructions These questions are on a 7-point Likert Scale, 1 being strongly agree to 7 being strongly disagree. Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 were reversed scored. All items were averaged together to make a single perceptions score. Low scores on perceptions of the MeToo Movement indicate a favorable view of the MeToo Movement, while higher scores indicate an unfavorable view of the MeToo Movement.

Appendix C

Ambivalent Sexism Scale (ASI) (Glick and Fiske, 1996)

1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman. B(I)
2. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality." H
3. In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men. B(P)*
4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist. H
5. Women are too easily offended. H
6. People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex. B(I)*
7. Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men. H*
8. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess. B (G)
9. Women should be cherished and protected by men. B(P)
10. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them. H
11. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men. H
12. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores. B(I)
13. Men are complete without women. B(1)*
14. Women exaggerate problems they have at work. H
15. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash. H
16. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against. H
17. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man. B(P)

Appendix C

Ambivalent Sexism Scale (ASI) (Glick and Fiske, 1996)

18. There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances. H*
19. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility. B(G)
20. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives. B(P)
21. Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men. H*
22. Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined B(G)

Key: H = Hostile Sexism, B = Benevolent Sexism, (P) = Protective Paternalism, (G) = Complementary Gender Differentiation, (I) = Heterosexual Intimacy, * = reverse scored item.

Scoring Instructions: The ASI may be used as an overall measure of sexism, with hostile and benevolent components equally weighted, by simply averaging the score for all items after reversing the items listed below. The two ASI subscales (Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism) may also be calculated separately. For correlational research, purer measures of HS and BS can be obtained by using partial correlations (so that the effects of the correlation between the scales is removed).

Reverse the following items (0 = 5, 1 = 4, 2 = 3, 3 = 2, 4 = 1, 5 = 0): 3, 6, 7, 13, 18, 21.

Hostile Sexism Score = average of the following items: 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21.

Benevolent Sexism Score = average of the following items: 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20, 22.

Appendix D

Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Subscale 2: He Didn't Mean Too and Subscale 4: She Lied) (McMahon and Farmer, 2011)

Subscale 2: He Didn't Mean To

1. When guys rape, it is its usually because of their strong desire for sex.
2. Guys don't usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.
3. Rape happens when a guy's sex drive gets out of control.
4. If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.
5. It shouldn't be considered rape if a guy is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.
6. If both people are drunk, it can't be rape.
7. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.
8. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys.
9. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often led the guy on and then had regrets.
10. A lot of times, girls who claim they were raped just have emotional problems.
11. Girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim that it was a rape.

Scoring Instructions: Participants responded to items on a seven-point Likert scale from one being strongly agree and seven being strongly disagree. Higher score indicates the rejection of rape myths and a lower acceptance of rape myths, while lower score indicates rejection of rape myths and a higher acceptance of rape myths. Item responses were averaged together to create a single rape myth acceptance score.

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
2. What is your Ethnicity?
3. What is your gender identification?
4. What is your sexual orientation?
5. What is your political affiliation?
6. How Liberal or Conservative do you consider yourself?
7. What is your religious preference?
8. How spiritual do you consider yourself?
9. What is the highest degree that one or more of your parents or legal guardians has completed?