**Explaining Sexual Fantasy: What Predicts Submissive Fantasies for Women?**

by

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## DEDICATION

To the best friends in the world: I don't know where I'd be without yous.

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**ABSTRACT**

In a set of three studies, we explore predictors of women's interest in submissive sexual

fantasies and, also, provide an in-depth investigation of the role of sex guilt.  We initially

hypothesized that submissive sexual fantasy preference amongst women may be a reflection of

women's role in larger society (i.e., their lesser power as compared to men, or subscription to the

heterosexual script); however, our findings paint a different picture; one in which women's

relationship with submissive sexual fantasy preference is much more complicated and nuanced,

and less a direct representation of social roles and stereotypes. Though more research about

correlates of fantasy preference is needed, our results provide support for current discourse on

the positive value of sexual fantasies. In general, across our studies, greater interest in fantasies

(overall, regardless of type) tend to be correlated primarily with variables that indicate greater

levels of sexual functioning, including higher sexual assertiveness and lower conservative sexual

attitudes (as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale). Additionally, as a result of findings from

Study 1, in Study 2 we focus on sex guilt and develop a novel measure that more accurately

captures the multidimensionality of this construct with hopes of clarifying some of the

inconsistencies in previous research that has potentially obscured the relationship between sexual

guilt and other sexuality related variables.  In the concluding chapter, we discuss the implications

of the significant findings and use a feminist perspective to explore potential ways that culture-

level factors and patriarchal society may affect sexuality and sexual preferences at the individual level.

# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

With the recent release of the bestselling *Fifty Shades Trilogy,* James (2012) seems to have boosted the perceived acceptability of submissive sexual desires and fantasies among women nationwide. In this sexually graphic novel, a handsome older man introduces a young woman to BDSM (bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, and sadism and masochism) and teaches her how to be sexually submissive. The novel made BDSM-inspired themes more visible to the public and some have suggested that the book even stimulated increased sales of intimate attire, sex toys, restraints, and blindfolds (Felder, 2012). Despite the recent popularity of this trilogy and the accompanying novelty items, women's interest in submissive fantasies is not a new phenomenon. In fact, most studies that have investigated the gender differences in sexual fantasies have consistently found that women, more so than men, are inclined to indicate that submission is among their favorite or most frequent sexual fantasies (Arndt, 1985; Crepault, 1976; Davidson, 1986; Fisher, 1973; Hariton, 1973, March; Hariton & Singer, 1974; Kanin, 1982; Knafo & Jaffe, 1984; Pelletier & Herold, 1988; Talbot, Beech, & Vaughan, 1980).

Sexual fantasy can be operationalized in a number of ways; however, for the purposes of this project, we have chosen to use a definition put forth by Leitenberg and Henning as "almost

any mental imagery that is sexually arousing or erotic to the individual" (1995, p. 470). We have further narrowed our scope to only positive sexual cognitions (as opposed to negative sexual cognitions that are oftentimes unwelcome or worrisome sexual thoughts) because we are interested in understanding factors that contribute to fantasy preference, not just fantasy occurrence or frequency (for further discussion of positive vs. negative sexual cognitions, see Renaud & Byers, 2005; Renaud & Byers, 2006).

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The fact that women have more submissive fantasies than men is meaningful because the woman-submissive and man-dominant fantasy schema mimics gendered power relations in everyday life. In this research, we are interested in exploring the interplay between power dynamics within one's broader sociocultural context and internalized ideas about one's own power. We want to understand the ways that gendered scripts and expectations affect women's sexual preferences and behaviors, and in turn the ways that these sexual behaviors and preferences affect gendered scripts and behaviors. Therefore, through a series of studies we will examine the associations between specific sociocultural constructs and personality variables, with submissive sexual fantasy preference.

One hypothesized explanation for this apparent gender difference is that men and women are socialized differently in terms of sexuality and sexual behavior (Ellis & Symons, 1990). One way in which this differential socialization is reflected is in sexual scripts and the existence of sexual double standards (Gagnon & Simon, 1973a, 1973b). Within this framework, men are allowed greater sexual freedom; whereas, women are warned of the consequences of female sexual promiscuity, including pregnancy and a "loose" reputation (Ellis & Symons, 1990;

Leitenberg & Henning, 1995). Therefore, submissive sexual fantasies may allow women to experience sex without the consequences or implications of consent.

The notion that men and women are socialized differently is part of a larger discourse within the social constructionist paradigm that highlights the role of social interactions and cultural contexts in shaping the beliefs and attitudes of individuals (Matlin, 2008). In the next sections we discuss multiple theories that use the social constructionist perspective. Our conversation on relevant sociocultural perspectives begins with a discussion of social scripts, and specifically sexual scripts theory and the ways that sexual scripts guide one's sexuality and sexual decision making (Gagnon & Simon, 1973a, 1973b). Then, we shift our focus to explore the role of heterosexualization within patriarchal society and the ways in which this perpetuates unequal distribution of power between men and women and its potential impact on women's interest in submissive sexual fantasies.

### Sexual Scripts Theory

Sexual scripts are culture-specific guidelines that dictate the sexual behaviors that are deemed normal and acceptable within a particular culture (Bowleg, Lucas, & Tschann, 2004; Hyde & DeLamater, 1999). Common (hetero)sexual scripts within the United States describe how men should be the pursuers and women should be the pursued, thus assigning women the role of passive participants within heterosexual sexual activity (Byers, 1996; Greene & Faulkner, 2005; Impett & Peplau, 2002; Impett & Peplau, 2003; Lawrance, Taylor, & Byers, 1996). Heterosexualization is the process by which men and women are socialized to be heterosexual within a world which is predominantly heterosexual, while denying the existence or validity of other sexual orientations (Lee, 1994). Heterosexuality and (hetero)sexualization are examples of forces by which women are socialized to accept (and perhaps endorse) their position as lesser

than men and is also an integral component in the perpetuation of patriarchy (Rudman & Glick, 2008). Patriarchy, a system which privileges men and oppresses women via the unequal and hierarchical division of power, is not always explicitly enforced, and it is often the result of a combination of factors and messages that reinforce women's position as inferior to men (Walby, 1989). Notably this relationship for women is not always straightforward as women are taught to walk the line between being sexually prudent and sexually available. A failure to properly balance these contradictory components can result in negative social repercussions, such as bullying women for actual or perceived sexually lenient behavior, and overall reputational harm (Conley, Ziegler, & Moors, 2012).

Sexual scripts are pervasive and function on cultural, interpersonal, and intrapsychic levels (Greene & Faulkner, 2005). Fantasies are intrapsychic-level scripts and operate by reflecting on past behavior as a means of guiding current and future thoughts and behavior. However, for the purposes of this research, we will examine the interaction of the three different levels and the ways that they collectively work. For example, we are interested in exploring the role that culture-level scripts, which are guidelines for sexual behavior, operate within larger organizing structures (e.g., schools, media, religious institutions), play in shaping one's intrapsychic-level scripts. This is important because although sexual mores and guidelines can be explicit, sexual scripts often function at a subconscious level such that one is not always aware of the ways in which one's thoughts and behaviors are impacted by sociocultural contexts and scripts (Gagnon, 1990). Similarly, it has been hypothesized that women have become conditioned to a male dominant society via media and other social influences, which thus contributes to women's acceptance (and perhaps even endorsement) of male sexual aggression and female sexual subjugation (Corne, Briere, & Esses, 1992). It is possible that male dominance

across multiple domains has become so deeply ingrained within women's psyches that voluntary female sexual submissiveness exists as an extension of broader male dominance within society. Women's fantasies of being dominated by men may be an adaptation to a social structure that disenfranchises and oppresses women (Fahs, 2011). In other words, in a world that prescribes and even eroticizes women's passivity and submission, it would actually appear rational, and perhaps in some ways may even be advantageous, for women to internalize an unconscious preference for their own sexual submissiveness. Therefore, women who endorse sexual scripts and traditional gender roles might find submissive fantasies to be more appealing.

## Gendered Power Differentials

### Rape Culture

Rudman and Glick (2008) assert that sexist roles result from a patriarchal society in which men need to maintain dominance over women while also maintaining sexual relations with them. Sexual violence and the fear of sexual violence can result from the gender roles and scripts that prescribe male-dominance, female-submission. Furthermore, the combination of violence and sexism within a culture encourages the acceptance and perpetuation of rape, leading to a rape culture (Barnett, Miller-Perrin, & Perrin, 2005; Frieze, 2005). Rape culture does not exclusively refer to the act of rape, but rather describes a culture in which the fear of being raped is pervasive and restrictive of women's freedom and well-being (Ahrens, Dean, Rozee, & McKenzie, 2008). This discourse is reflected in heterosexual romantic scripts of male chivalry and responsibility for protecting women (Gavey & McPhillips, 1999), or more explicitly through pornographic (and sometimes mainstream) films that depict how women sometimes say "no" when they mean "yes" via "token resistance" to male advances (Muehlenhard & Hollabaugh,

1988; Muehlenhard & McCoy, 1991). Both of these examples demonstrate the ways in which men are active and dominant and women are passive and submissive.

Given this discourse, it is perhaps not surprising that researchers have found that media portrayals of women often include representations of women as sex objects, as submissive, and even as sexualized victims (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008). But this discourse exists beyond media representations and is a part of a lived reality for most women; as is demonstrated by the many (normalized) ways that men demonstrate their control over women's bodies, including sexual comments, harassment, sexual objectification, and even rape (Smolak & Murnen, 2011).

Submissive sexual fantasies appear to be iterations of the heterosexual script, in which men are the active pursuers and women are the passive submitters. Muehlenhard and Hollabaugh describe this script as depicted across multiple sources, "A typical scenario in pornography, movies, and jokes portrays a woman who refuses a man's sexual advances and who subsequently becomes highly sexually aroused when he ignores her protests," (1988, p. 172). Or, in other words, in this script women are sexually aroused when a man ignores her wishes, and then sexually assaults her – a theme very similar to themes found within submissive sexual fantasies.

Though individuals can make independent decisions regarding who (specifically, in heterosexual sex, woman or man) is dominant and who is submissive in the context of a specific sexual encounter, in broader culture, these roles are not negotiable. Furthermore, while both women and men *can* play submissive roles, the submissive role cannot be separated from gender and submission is necessarily feminized (MacKinnon, 1987). Therefore, a man who engages in submissive sexual behavior cannot do so without also being feminized.

**Gender Hierarchy within Sexual Contexts**

MacKinnon shares a similar position and provides a theoretical framework for understanding the social construction of female endorsement of male dominance, especially as it relates to sexuality. MacKinnon's interpretation and analysis of gender roles and sexuality is particularly relevant to the discussion of the internalization of gender roles and the subsequent manifestation of the gendered power dynamics in sexual fantasy, and specifically women's preference for submissive sexual fantasies.

MacKinnon (1987) asserts that gender provides a structure that differentially and unequally distributes power, and that sexuality is a means by which this power hierarchy is enforced and perpetuated. MacKinnon states, "Its underlying story is: on the first day, difference was; on the second day, a division was created upon it; on the third day, irrational instances of dominance arose. Division may be rational or irrational. Dominance either seems or is justified. Difference is" (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 34). MacKinnon's argument is distinct from the perspective that women are lesser than men. Rather, according to MacKinnon, within a world that defines maleness as power, women will always be at a disadvantage because of their lack of power. In sum, women have been socialized in an androcentric world that prioritizes masculinity over femininity and are therefore categorized as the subordinate simply for being born female. Accordingly then, women are perhaps accustomed to their own submission and submissive sexual fantasies potentially exist as an extension or representation of gender dynamics in this broader context.

In spite of the unconscious functioning of the gendered power differentials, it seems counterintuitive that women would willingly participate in a system that exists to oppress and subjugate them. Although it is men who benefit (power-wise) from androcentric power

structures, the hegemonic power differential could not succeed in the way that it does without

participation from both men and women. This may be a point of contention for a number of

women (and men), because for some this would be the equivalent of admitting to passive

participation in a system that disadvantages and harms women. For many women it might also

question or discredit their lifestyle. MacKinnon illustrates this point:

> I think that sexual desire in women, at least in this culture, is socially constructed as that by which we come to want our own self-annihilation. That is, our subordination is eroticized in and as female; in fact, we get off on it to a degree, if nowhere near as much as men do. This is our stake in this system that is not in our interest, our stake in this system that is killing us. I'm saying femininity as we know it is how we come to want male dominance, which most emphatically is not in our interest. (MacKinnon, 1987, p. 54).

MacKinnon highlights the conundrum that women face as a result of the eroticization of

male dominance and their consequent submission. However, she also illustrates how women's

enjoyment of envisioning themselves playing submissive roles within their fantasies is perhaps

no surprise when positioned within a larger cultural context that regularly situates men as

dominant over women. Therefore, we will be investigating the gender roles and power

differentials that exist in sexual relations and the ways in which they assist in reinforcing the

gendered power dynamics present beyond the bedroom.

**History of Sexual Assault**

Sexual violence and the fear of sexual violence are real outcomes of rape culture and

have been shown to have an impact on women's sexuality, including fantasy preference.

Previous research has found that women who experienced sexual abuse in childhood are more

likely to report having submissive sexual fantasies than women who did not experience

childhood sexual abuse (Briere, Smiljanich, & Henschel, 1994; Gold, 1991). Interestingly, this

relationship has not been found to exist amongst women who experience sexual assault as adults

(Pihlgren, Gidycz, & Lynn, 1992). However, due to the methodology it was sometimes hard to ascertain whether women who reported having submissive sexual fantasies enjoyed the submissive fantasies or if they just experienced them with a greater frequency but not in a positive manner. As a result of this uncertainty, more recent research has been conducted in order to better understand this relationship by looking at positive sexual cognitions separately from negative sexual cognitions (Renaud & Byers, 2006). In some of these studies, it was found that women and men with a history of childhood sexual abuse reported more positive cognitions of sexual submissiveness, but sexual abuse history was unrelated to reports of negative sexual cognitions of sexual submissiveness. The authors suggest that perhaps this is a result of some sort of conditioned arousal to one's own sexual submission rather than a necessarily painful and negative internalization and reenactment of previous abuse. This relationship was reversed for individuals who had experienced sexual abuse as adults, namely, individuals with a history of sexual abuse in adulthood were more likely to report negative cognitions of sexual submission, suggesting that these cognitions are more akin to unpleasant memories and flashbacks. Cumulatively, these findings suggest that sexual abuse history may have nuanced effects on one's sexual development throughout the life course and therefore, we believe it is important to further investigate the relationship between sexual assault history and interest in submissive sexual fantasies.

**THE UTILITY OF SEXUAL FANTASY IN INVESTIGATING GENDER DIFFERENCES**

Using fantasy as a means to explore sexuality-based gender differences allows for a revealing examination of sexuality because, unlike many other expressions or manifestations of sexuality, fantasies are more private and typically less dependent on a partner. Whereas one's sexual desire or sexual satisfaction may be hard to disentangle from partnered sexual activity, fantasy can exist independently from others and regardless of one's actual sexual behavior. In other words, one does not need to be sexually active in order to have sexually active fantasies, and consequently, we assume one has greater agency and autonomy within her fantasies than in some other components of her sexual life. As a result, fantasy offers unique information regarding gender differences in sexuality and could in some ways be more enlightening than actual sexual behavior (Ellis & Symons, 1990).

Furthermore, sexual fantasy provides a unique opportunity to investigate gender norms and relations, because we know that gender norms are especially salient in the context of sexuality (Rohlinger, 2002; Sanchez, Kiefer, & Ybarra, 2006). Traditional gender scripts define femininity as passive and warm, and masculinity as independent and strong (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). We know that these roles extend into sexual domains and are captured in the ways that men are expected to initiate sexual relationships and women are expected to reject or passively comply to men's advances (Greene & Faulkner, 2005; Impett & Peplau, 2003). These dynamics are also reflected in findings that indicate that women prefer submissive fantasies and men prefer dominant fantasies (Christensen, 1990; Iwawaki & Wilson, 1983; Mednick, 1977; Wilson & Lang, 1981; Zimmer, Borchardt, & Fischle, 1983). We are curious to know whether sexual fantasy provides a space to defy or reify social scripts (Lerum & Dworkin, 2009). In other words,

are sexual fantasies a mere reflection of the broader cultural climate do they allow for transgression from typical and traditional scripts of gendered sexual behaviors? Therefore we want to examine how gender norms and expectations may be experienced in one's fantasies. To our knowledge, no other researchers have examined the broader implications of fantasy content and fantasy preferences among women, which is why we are interested in examining women's preference for submissive fantasies.

The focus of current research is to investigate women's sexual fantasy preference in light of the current cultural context which prescribes women's roles as passive and reactive. And, because of this, we are specifically interested in submissive fantasy preference in women. We will investigate submissive fantasies, which we define as fantasies that involve being dominated by another person in a manner that does not involve serious physical pain that could lead to sustained injury. We have intentionally limited our scope because we are primarily interested in fantasies that are considered enjoyable, which, for most people, typically does not include fantasies involving serious pain or sustained injury (Bivona & Critelli, 2009). The fantasies that are included involve being overpowered by another person, oftentimes with the use of restraints. (For a specific list, see Table 1 and Table 2.)

**Perspectives on the Value and Purpose of Sexual Fantasy**

Though most researchers and theorists now recognize that fantasy is a tool that can positively contribute to one's sexual satisfaction, this has not always been the popular belief (Davidson, 1986). In fact, sexual fantasy was viewed negatively until the 1950s and 1960s when discourse on the value and purpose of sexual fantasy markedly shifted (Leitenberg & Henning, 1990). This older viewpoint, which posits that fantasies, especially among women, were problematic or pathological, is perhaps unsurprising given the larger social climate that was

generally not accepting of women's sexuality. Theorists from this time suggested that sexual fantasy was indicative of a wide range of pathologies and deficiencies from repression to immaturity to sexual dissatisfaction (Deutsch, 1944; Freud, 1963/1930; Hariton & Singer, 1974; Hollender, 1963; Shainess & Greenwald, 1971). Additionally, earlier information on fantasy was not particularly representative as it was more frequently obtained from clinical samples, and was thus much more likely to be interpreted in light of a pathological model (Brown & Hart, 1977).

However, currently, fantasy is much more likely to be interpreted in light of sex positive perspectives that suggest fantasy can be used as a healthy outlet for expressing sexual thoughts. For example, evidence supports the notion that sexual fantasies are likely related to positive sexual outcomes, including higher levels of sexual interest, activity, desire, and more positive attitudes about sexuality (Purifoy, Grodsky, & Giambra, 1992). There is also sufficient evidence to suggest that women almost universally experience some form of sexual fantasy (Brown & Hart, 1977; Crepault, 1976; Davidson, 1986; Ellis & Symons, 1990). Men are more likely to report more frequent fantasies than women and to believe that it is more permissible for them to fantasize; yet men and women report similar levels of arousal, as well as positive and negative feelings related to their experiences with fantasy (Cado & Leitenberg, 1990; Ellis & Symons, 1990; Knoth, Boyd, & Singer, 1988; Robinson & Calhoun, 1982; Sue, 1979). It is because sexual fantasy is related to so many positive outcomes and because of its recognized value within sexuality, that it is important to investigate further. It is important to note this shift in discourse if only to recognize that perspectives on the meaning and utility of sexuality and fantasy are not independent from the relevant cultural and historical context.

Though sexual fantasies in general are currently regarded as positive ways of experiencing and expressing one's sexuality, women's submissive sexual fantasy preference is

still criticized by some and seen as resulting from a male dominant society that eroticizes female sexual submission (Brownmiller, 2005; Corne et al., 1992; Leitenberg & Henning, 1995). Specific criticisms on the gendered nature of power-related fantasies focus on the ways that gender differences in fantasy preferences tend to resemble inequalities between men and women within broader social structures. Women's interest in submissive fantasies is criticized because it can be seen as maintaining traditional gender stereotypes, eroticizing patriarchy and male domination over women, and perpetuating rape culture (indeed a topic we are interested in investigating further in this project). It is likely that MacKinnon would be amongst these critics who disapprove of women's preference for submissive sexual fantasies. Given her critiques of sexuality as a means by which gender differences are perpetuated, she would likely find submissive sexual fantasies particularly problematic and as further contributing to women's roles as subordinate to men. However, other scholars, including Fahs (2011), highlight the complicated relationship that women have with regards to submissive fantasies and caution against condemning women who fantasize about being overpowered. Rather than determining the potential positive or negative value of submissive fantasy preferences among women, the purpose of this paper is to understand why this gendered preference might exist.

### Gender Differences in Sexual Fantasy

It is challenging to compare fantasies across studies because of the lack of consistent methodology; however, Leitenberg and Henning (1995) reviewed multiple studies and deduced that the broad content categories of sexual fantasies are similar for both men and women. The authors demonstrated that there were four major categories of sexual fantasies across numerous different studies and found that two of the most common themes involved scenes that depict either power and irresistibility or submission and dominance with some level of physical force.

Because of their established popularity, as well as their relationship to gendered power differentials in broader social contexts, we have also chosen to further investigate themes of power, submission and dominance within fantasy. More specifically, data generally support the notion that women and men have similar sexual fantasies because of their shared sociocultural experiences; however, they also recognize that gender-based variations in their sociocultural experiences also account for some of the differences in the sexual fantasies of men and women. The unique socialization of women versus men may help explain why women are more likely to imagine being the more passive "receivers" and men are more likely to imagine being the active "doers" (Christensen, 1990; Iwawaki & Wilson, 1983; Mednick, 1977; Wilson & Lang, 1981; Zimmer et al., 1983). This finding is perhaps more complex than some previous findings suggest, given that more recent research indicates that although men may have more sexual cognitions about dominance than women do, men do not always enjoy these sexual cognitions, and thus, women may actually find fantasies of dominance more pleasant than men do (Renaud & Byers, 2005).

When women and men are considered separately, researchers find significant gender differences that indicate that women have more passive fantasies and men have more active fantasies (Wilson & Lang, 1981). However, researchers also found that active and passive fantasies are correlated for both women and men. This finding replicates the previously established gender difference, that women have more submissive fantasies than men; however, it also complicates the relationship between gender and power-related fantasies. If active and passive fantasies are correlated, then a woman who is interested in passive fantasies is more likely than a woman who is not interested in passive fantasies to also have active fantasies. Although the gender difference clearly remains important, this finding leads us to question the

accuracy of viewing women as interested exclusively in passive fantasies and men as exclusively interested in active fantasies (cf. Greendlinger & Byrne, 1987; Hunt, 1974; Sue, 1979; Zurbriggen & Yost, 2004). Furthermore, when researchers categorize fantasies as either negative or positive, they find that positive and negative sexual cognitions are positively correlated. Taken together, these findings indicate the importance of looking at the relationship between different kinds of fantasies and suggest that we may need to control for this shared variance in order to determine factors related to the unique aspects of certain kinds of fantasies.

The bulk of research on gender differences is primarily descriptive, but few studies have examined the mechanisms that account for the gender differences. For this reason, we aim to understand the reasons behind women's sexual fantasy preference by exploring a number of variables that we believe play an important role in determining women's fantasy preference. Next, we turn to a discussion of specific constructs that we will be investigating in relation to women's submissive sexual fantasy preference.

## PROJECT AIMS

For our investigation of submissive sexual fantasy preference amongst women, we will explore a number of variables that we hypothesize will play an integral role in predicting this preference and will also contribute to our understanding of the gendered nature of fantasy preferences. Specific variables of interest include a number of variables that typically vary between men and women, including sexual assertiveness, sex guilt, and appearance of outer strength. In the next section we discuss these variables and the ways in which we predict they will affect submissive sexual fantasy preference amongst women.

## Sexual Assertiveness

Sexual assertiveness is conceptualized as a stable personality trait and is characterized by the ability to initiate, refuse, and negotiate sex (Hurlbert, 1991; Morokoff et al., 1997). There appears to be resounding support for the positive outcomes that are associated with high levels of sexual assertiveness in women (Hurlbert, Apt, & Rabehl, 1993; Schooler, Ward, Merriwether, & Caruthers, 2005; Testa & Dermen, 1999). It has been suggested that traditional gender stereotypes and a patriarchal culture in the US that emphasize a submissive, passive sexual role for women uniquely constitutes a barrier to women's sexual assertiveness (Mahalik et al., 2005; Rogers & Rogers, 2001; Yoder, Perry, & Saal, 2007). This theory indicates that although sexual assertiveness has been regarded as a beneficial trait, it may not be fully embraced by women as a result of a male dominated society that encourages greater female passivity and polices this norm by labeling sexually assertive women as deviant or unfeminine (e.g., Hynie & Lydon, 1995). Because research suggests that levels of sexual assertiveness might be related to the current cultural climate, in addition to women's broader social roles, it is fitting that there has been a significant increase in women's average self-reported assertiveness levels across time (Twenge, 2001).

Sexual assertiveness is associated with a number of positive outcomes, including greater sexual knowledge, decreased self-objectification, lesser endorsement of the sexual double standard, higher relationship and sexual satisfaction, greater condom use efficacy, and lower levels of self-silencing (Apt, Hurlbert, Pierce, & White, 1996; Curtin, Ward, Merriwether, & Caruthers, 2011; Greene & Faulkner, 2005; MacNeil & Byers, 2009; Schooler et al., 2005; Yamamiya, Cash, & Thompson, 2006). Additionally, women with a greater investment in traditional feminine gender roles and higher levels of body image consciousness had lower levels

of sexual assertiveness (Curtin et al., 2011; Wiederman, 2000). Furthermore, because sexual assertiveness represents the ability to negotiate the kind of sexual behavior and experiences that one desires, it has implications for satisfying relationships (Metts & Spitzberg, 1996). Previous studies have established that sexual assertiveness is advantageous because it is correlated with positive sexual health outcomes, but it is also related to a woman's ability to state her sexual needs and desires, and it is for this reason that it is a variable of interest for the current studies.

The relationship between sexual assertiveness and submissive fantasies is not currently well understood. We are interested in examining how sexual assertiveness in women is related to their interest in submissive fantasies. We hypothesize that high levels of sexual assertiveness and interest in submissive sexual fantasies are in some ways incongruous because sexual assertiveness is about agency and being in control; whereas, submissive fantasies are characterized by the eroticization of one's passivity and lack of control. It is because of this passivity and lack of control that submissive fantasies can be seen as in opposition to sexual assertiveness. As a corollary to this hypothesis, we posit that higher levels of sexual assertiveness correlate with lower levels of submissive fantasies.

## Sexual Guilt

Next, we will explore how sex guilt contributes to fantasy preference. Sex guilt, defined as the expectation for self-mediated punishment as a result of violating standards of sexual appropriateness, is typically correlated with a number of negative sexual outcomes (Mosher & Cross, 1971). High sex guilt plays a role in restricted sexual behavior, interest, and variety within sexuality, lower sexual satisfaction, and increased sexual dysfunction (Darling, Davidson Sr, & Passarello, 1992; Moreault & Follingstad, 1978; Morokoff, 1985). Additionally, family background is thought to contribute significantly to levels of sex guilt. For example, unhealthy

parental communications (or the lack of parental communication) about sex, and overly strict fathers have been related to higher sex guilt (Moore & Davidson Sr, 1997; Propper & Brown, 1986). And although the effects of sex guilt are relatively similar for men and women, women typically report higher levels of sex guilt (Follingstad & Kimbrell, 1986; Joffe & Franca-Koh, 2001; Moreault & Follingstad, 1978; Mosher & Cross, 1971), potentially as the result of stricter social restrictions on women's sexuality relative to men's. Researchers have tried to understand the role of sex guilt in the submissive fantasies of women. However, the relationship between power-themed fantasies and sex guilt is not entirely clear as researchers have found support for the relationship between both high and low guilt with power-themed sexual fantasy (Cado & Leitenberg, 1990).

**High Sex Guilt Leads to Fewer Submissive Fantasies**

One current hypothesis is that high sex guilt may inhibit the range and variety of sexual fantasies that women engage in since women may find fantasy to be a generally inappropriate way to express their sexuality (Robinson & Calhoun, 1982). In other words, this theory predicts that people with high sex guilt would have fewer submissive fantasies. Researchers have found that low levels of sex guilt play a role in predicting forceful sexual fantasy preference, or the preference for fantasies in which one is overpowered by his/her partner (Shulman & Home, 2006). Similarly, we also know that women who are high in sex guilt have fewer and less varied sexual fantasies (Pelletier & Herold, 1988). Additionally, for both men and women, high sex guilt was indicative of lesser arousal when researchers directed participants to engage in sexual fantasies or to write about sexual fantasies (Follingstad & Kimbrell, 1986; Green, 1985). More broadly, guilt about sexual fantasies is related to lower sexual functioning (e.g., Cado & Leitenberg, 1990; Woo, Brotto, & Gorzalka, 2011; Wyatt & Dunn, 1991; Zimmer et al., 1983).

High sexual guilt inhibits people's satisfaction with their sexual fantasies. For example, women who felt most guilty about having sexual fantasies[1] during intercourse reported fantasizing less often, and were also more likely to have sexual problems and to be less sexually satisfied in general. They were also more dissatisfied with their current or most recent sexual relationship than low-guilt women who fantasized more often (Cado & Leitenberg, 1990). Furthermore, participants who experienced higher guilt held different beliefs about the sexual fantasies they had than participants with low guilt. High-guilt participants believed that sexual fantasizing during intercourse was more immoral, socially unacceptable, abnormal, and uncommon than did low-guilt participants. High-guilt participants also felt that their fantasies were harmful to their relationships regardless of whether or not their partners knew about them. And finally, they believed that they should not "have to" use fantasies during partnered sexual activity unless there is something wrong with their relationship (Cado & Leitenberg, 1990).

**High Sex Guilt Leads to More Submissive Fantasies**

Some researchers have suggested that women have submissive fantasies as a result of their experience living in social contexts that restrict female sexuality, and therefore, being sexually dominated relieves women of the responsibility associated with imagining their active sexual behavior and stimulation (Knafo & Jaffe, 1984). For example, Moreault and Follingstad (1978) have found that women with high levels of guilt are more likely to report sexual fantasies that indicate lower levels of responsibility for engaging in sex. Consequently, women's interest in submissive fantasies serves to relieve potential guilt associated with sexual desire, especially desires considered taboo or inappropriate (Knafo & Jaffe, 1984; Leitenberg & Henning, 1995; Moreault & Follingstad, 1978). This latter explanation may also help account for women's

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[1] Notably, this measure of sex guilt specifically referred to guilt about sexual fantasies and thus is distinct from other, more commonly used measures. This distinction will be discussed further in the discussion section of Study 1.

greater interest in submissive fantasies because fantasizing about one's own submission removes active desire from the woman and instead transforms her into the object of desire (Knafo & Jaffe, 1984). However, this explanation has not been consistently empirically supported, as Pelletier and Herold (1988) were unable to replicate this finding based on analysis of an older sample.

As a result of these mixed findings, we were confident that sex guilt would play a role in submissive fantasy preference; however, because of the inconsistencies in the literature we were unsure if the relationship between guilt and submissive fantasy preference would be positive or negative.

### Appearance of Outer Strength Scale (AOS)

Although it is known that women are more likely to find submissive fantasies appealing, it is currently unclear whether this is a result of a reality in which women also have lesser power. We also do not know if fantasizing about one's submission is a result of one's actually being a submissive person in everyday life, or if it is perhaps more complicated than that. That is, are submissive fantasies appealing because they reflect reality or because they provide more of a break from reality? Do relatively powerful people seek out submissive fantasies in order to "play" with power? It has been proposed that within the BDSM community, playing a submissive role is used as a means of escape, but we do not know if this finding is applicable outside of the BDSM community (Baumeister & Butler, 1997). Because the submissive role is sometimes intended to be an overwhelming and all-consuming experience where one person completely submits to another, it is often used to escape self-awareness and avoid unpleasant thoughts (Baumeister & Butler, 1997). This theory has not been used to explain interest in submissive sexual fantasies amongst individuals not identified as part of the BDSM community. It is precisely because we do not know how this measure applies to individuals who are not in the

BDSM community that we have included the scale AOS that taps into one's presentation of strength and day-to-day experiences with stressors.

AOS is a measure of one's display of independence, a strong exterior and appearance of infallibility despite internal pressures and anxieties. High scores on AOS indicate that an individual feels a higher amount of stress *and* also feels that it is necessary to conceal outward displays of this stress. The AOS is a modified version of the Strong Black Woman scale (SBW) that was initially designed to investigate the embodiment of femininity ideologies that prescribe Black women as strong, assertive, and resistant to weakness (K. A. Thomas, 2006). The stereotype is both gendered as it is specific to women and also raced as it seeks to contrast the femininity of Black women from the femininity of White women. This stereotype is characterized by a constant display of strength and the cultural prescription that Black women should take on responsibility without showing any external indications of weakness or distress (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007). According to the stereotype, as well as research on Black women's endorsement of the stereotype, strong Black women prioritize their role as caretaker often to their own detriment – putting others' needs above their own, while also denying their need for help from others. Importantly, the Strong Black Woman scale was designed to assess demonstrations of perseverance through adversity, and thus requires both the existence of a struggle and the ability to overcome. The focus of the script is on a woman's outward appearance and behavior in addition to the simultaneous disregard of her actual emotional or physical condition.

Previous research on Black women has found both positive and negative outcomes associated with endorsement or embodiment of the SBW stereotype, including increased mental and physical distress, but also preservation of one's family and community (Beauboeuf-

Lafontant, 2007; Woods-Giscombé, 2010). However, to date, nobody has investigated this construct in individuals other than Black women, and thus this is the first study of which we are aware that will investigate the role of appearance of outer strength, using a modified version of the SBW, in a broader population.

## Feminist Identity

We hypothesize that feminism will be a negative predictor of fantasy preference because one's feminism and beliefs regarding gender equality are related to her sexual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Rudman & Phelan, 2007). For example, in two separate studies, researchers found that feminism is perceived as incompatible with femininity (Rudman & Fairchild, 2007), but also that heterosexual men who have feminist partners have higher levels of sexual satisfaction (Rudman & Phelan, 2007). Additionally, feminism should be a negative predictor of submissive fantasies because feminism is explicitly about one's beliefs and attitudes regarding power relations between men and women.

## Research Overview

We have proposed two studies (Study 1 and Study 3) that will empirically investigate sociocultural theories to explain women's greater proclivity to submissive fantasies. The overall aims of the studies are to a) confirm women's preference for submissive sexual fantasies; b) explore sociocultural factors and personality variables that predict women's preference in submissive fantasy; and c) examine individual differences that may help elucidate the underlying factors that contribute to women's fantasy preferences. Study 2 will focus on clarifying measurement issues that arose in Study 1 regarding sexual guilt.

# CHAPTER II

## STUDY 1

The purpose of Study 1 is to investigate women's fantasy preferences and explore a number of personality variables that predict a preference for submissive sexual fantasy.

### Participants and Procedure

Participants were recruited for an online study by a group of more than 100 student researchers. The researchers posted the link to the survey on social networking sites, including facebook, and emailed the link to friends.

Our final sample consisted of 355 women who completed the survey. The sample was 68.5% European American/White, 12.1% Asian American, 2.5% African American, 4.5% Latina/o, and 5.9% multi-racial, 5.1% of participants did not indicate their age. The mean age was 25.61 years ($SD = 12.48$). (See Table 3 for demographic information broken down for younger women vs. older women.)

### Measures and Materials

Study 1 was an online questionnaire that included a number of personality and sexuality variables that we hypothesized would be related to one's sexual fantasy preference. Participants

completed this 20-minute anonymous survey online and were able to take the survey anywhere in which they could get internet access.[2]

**Fantasy Items**

Participants rated the extent to which they found 55 listed fantasies to be appealing on a 6-point scale from *not at all appealing* to *very appealing*. Specifically, participants were asked, we asked participants, *Please rate how appealing you think each of these sexual fantasies is on the scale provided… Just because you find a fantasy to be appealing does NOT mean that you would actually like to play it out in real life, but that you find it to be sexually appealing when you think about it. Unless otherwise specified, when we say "partner" we mean the person who you are having sex with in the fantasy*. We intentionally chose to look at participants' ratings of fantasy appeal because we were only interested in those fantasies that participants were actually interested in and that were seen as pleasant. Fantasies were created with help from a group of 10 undergraduate research assistants. Special attention was paid to include fantasies that represented some type of power differential, sample items include, *Being handcuffed by my partner,* and *Inflicting pain on my partner*.

Four scales were created from the original list through the following procedures:  We submitted these items to a principal components analysis (PCA). Following the recommendations of Webster (2011), we used a varimax rotation because it was unknown in advance whether potential factors would correlate with one another. The location of the elbow in the scree plot indicated that a three components solution was appropriate for the data (Treynor, Gonzalez, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2003). Further, after review of the items loadings, a three-factor

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[2] Study 1 included a number of additional personality variables that we will not discuss further because we did not find any significant relationships between these variables and submissive fantasies. These variables include feminist identity (FIDS; Bargad & Hyde, 1991), self-silencing (Jack & Dill, 1992), and sex role ideology (Kalin & Penelope, 1978).

model was best supported statistically. However, dominant and submissive fantasies loaded on a single factor. Because the original intention of the study was to investigate submissive and dominant fantasies separately, we divided the power fantasies into two different factors. It is of theoretical interest that the dominant and submissive fantasies were loading onto one factor, since this indicates that these two types of fantasies are closely interlinked.

Of the original 55 items, 31 were retained. Items that did not load on any factor, that loaded relatively weakly on a single factor, or that loaded moderately on more than one factor were excluded from the scales. These four factors cumulatively accounted for 44.34% of the item variance in the data. There was a significant drop in Eigenvalues and portion of variance accounted for between the third and fourth factor. This yielded scales that had considerable face validity and were high in reliability.

We interpreted Factor 1 as fantasies about power. Because we are interested in the differences between submissive and dominant fantasies we divided power fantasies to reflect this focus. Therefore, Factors 1 and 2 were *Submissive Fantasies* and *Dominant Fantasies*. Factor 3 was interpreted as *Traditional Fantasies* (or fantasies containing normative heterosexual and monogamous themes; e.g., *sex with a loved one*), and Factor 4 as *Non-monogamous Fantasies* (or fantasies seen as less normative, oftentimes containing multiple people or contexts outside one's home; e.g., *sex in a public place with the risk of being caught*). See Table 4 for the alpha values and means for each fantasy factor.

**Brief Mosher Sex Guilt Scale**

Participants completed 10 items from an adapted version of the Brief Mosher Sex Guilt scale (Janda & Bazemore, 2011; Mosher, 1988). The revised version of the measure is correlated with the original version ($r$=.82) and has good internal reliability ($\alpha$ = .95; Janda & Bazemore,

2011). Rather than using a 7-point scale, we eliminated the middle-point[3] and had participants

respond on a 6-point scale (0 = not at all true for me; 6 = extremely true for me). Items were

averaged and higher scores indicated greater sexual guilt ($M = 2.79$, $SD = .87$, $\alpha = .83$).

**Appearance of Outer Strength Scale**

This scale was originally designed to assess strength among Black women (Avery, Cole,

& Ward, in preparation; K. A. Thomas, 2006); however, because we were interested in surveying

a broader population we altered some of the language so that it was more inclusive of

populations in addition to Black women. The purpose of the scale was to determine the extent to

which participants are concerned with displaying a strong outward appearance despite internal

anxieties and concerns of weakness. Items included "It is important that I never show

vulnerability or cry when I feel hurt." Items were rated on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1

(*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), and were averaged so that higher scores indicated

greater investment in appearing strong ($M = 3.06$, $SD = .87.69$, $\alpha = .81$).

**Hurlbert Index of Sexual Assertiveness**

The Hurlbert Index of Sexual Assertiveness (Hurlbert, 1991) was used to assess the

frequency that participants engaged in sexually assertive behavior on a 4-point scale, from *never*

to *always*. The original 25-item scale was used and 4 similar additional items were added.

Because the questions asked about sexual behavior, only those participants who indicated that

they had engaged in sexual activity responded to these items[4]. Items were averaged and higher

scores were indicative of greater sexual assertiveness ($M = 2.97$, $SD = .87= 43$, $\alpha = .89$).

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[3] Eliminating the midpoint may help reduce some social desirability bias (Garland, 1991)
[4] Because only women with sexual experience could respond to these items, regression analyses only included women who indicated that they had sexual experience.

**Feminist Identity and Attitudes Index**

To measure feminism, we used a scale that consisted of three items that assessed attitudes toward feminists and feminist identity. The items had previously been used by Rudman and Fairchild (2007) and asked participants to respond using a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Specifically, the items, "I consider myself to be a feminist"; "I would feel proud if someone called me a feminist"; and "I would feel offended if someone called me a feminist" (reverse scored) were averaged to create the *feminist identity index.* Participants then rated the extent to which they felt warm toward feminists from 1 (*very cold)* to 10 (*very warm)* to indicate their attitudes toward feminists.

**Sexual Assault History**

Using a modified version of the sexual assault items from the Life Stressor Checklist-Revised, we asked participants about their experiences of sexual assault before and after age 16 (Wolfe, Kimerling, Brown, Chrestman, & Levin, 1996). If participants indicated that they had experienced sexual assault, they were asked to specify the age at which the experience(s) occurred.

**Demographics**

Participants provided basic demographic information, including race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, sexual experience, and age.

## Results

**Data Analysis Plan**

We ran a series of hierarchical linear regressions to determine the variables that significantly contributed to women's interest in submissive sexual fantasies. (See Table 5 for a list of zero-order correlations between the independent and dependent variables.)

Preliminary analyses indicated that age was negatively correlated with submissive fantasy preference, $r(350) = -.23$, $p < .00^5$, indicating that older women were less likely to have submissive sexual fantasies than younger women. Therefore, we ran analyses separately by age group, and thus divided our sample into younger women (24 years old and younger; $M = 19.64$, $SD = 1.39$) and older women (25 years old and older; $M = 45.26$, $SD = 12.64$). The decision to divide our sample by age was also based on previous research that suggests that college student samples are unique from other populations in meaningful ways (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Because our participants were recruited primarily by snowball sampling via a team of undergraduate research assistants, we can confidently assume that a large portion of our sample consisted of undergraduate students. We also ran all regression analyses with the entire sample of women and then with only heterosexually identified women who indicated that they were not a part of the BDSM community (approximately 88% of our sample was heterosexual and not a part of the BDSM community) and found that there was little difference between the whole sample and the smaller sample of non-BDSM and heterosexual women. Therefore, we will present the analyses for the entire sample; however, we have also included the results from the smaller non-BDSM, heterosexual sample in Tables 6 and 7.

We examined the relationships between sexual assertiveness, Mosher sex guilt, and appearance of outer strength with appeal of submissive sexual fantasies via hierarchical linear regression, controlling for age and sexual abuse history[6]. Additionally, we were interested in controlling for general appeal of fantasies because of the high intercorrelations between fantasies

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[5] T-tests confirmed a significant difference in submissive sexual fantasy preference between older women ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.29$) and younger women ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.38$), $t(350) = 3.57$, $p = .000$.

[6] Based on zero order correlations that showed a nonsignficant relationship between the *feminist identity index* and *the feminist attitudes index* with submissive sexual fantasy preference, we decided to exclude this variable from the regression analyses.

and shared variance between fantasies, and thus chose the fantasy index with the highest mean (indicating that it was on average rated as the most appealing fantasy), *Traditional Fantasies*, to include in the first step of the model. We first centered all of the variables, and then in Step 1, we entered the *Traditional Fantasies* index, age, and sexual assault experience; at Step 2, we entered sexual assertiveness, Mosher sex guilt, and appearance of outer strength.

**Regression Analyses by Age**

**Younger women.** Variables entered at Step 1 were not significantly associated with preference for submissive sexual fantasies. At Step 2, regression analysis revealed significant $R^2$ changes, indicating that variables entered in Step 2 were associated with submissive sexual fantasy preference variance.

For younger women, the Mosher Sex Guilt scale was the only significant predictor of interest in submissive sexual fantasies. For the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, women with less sex guilt found submissive sexual fantasies to be more appealing.

**Older women.** Variables entered at Step 1 were significantly associated with preference for submissive sexual fantasies. Step 1 β weights indicated that submissive sexual fantasy preference was positively related to sexual assault history (indicating that participants who had been sexually abused before the age of 16 were more likely to have submissive sexual fantasies). At Step 2, regression analysis revealed significant $R^2$ changes, indicating that variables entered in Step 2 were associated with submissive sexual fantasy preference variance.

For older women, the Mosher Sex Guilt scale was again one of the biggest predictors of interest in submissive sexual fantasies; such that higher levels of sex guilt predicted lesser interest in submissive sexual fantasies. However, AOS was also a significant predictor, such that women who scored higher on AOS were also more likely to find submissive sexual fantasies to

be appealing. Thus, results were similar for older women and younger women; however, AOS was only a significant predictor for older women. The results of the regressions are presented in Tables 8 and 9.

**Discussion**

The primary goal of Study 1 was to determine which variables predict submissive fantasies in women. We examined specific variables, including sexual assertiveness, sex guilt, sexual assault history, and strong outer appearance, and how they related to women's preference for submissive fantasies. Sex guilt appeared to play the biggest role in predicting women's submissive fantasy preference (greater sex guilt is associated with lesser interest in submissive sexual fantasies); however, the relationship between submissive sexual fantasies and appearance of outer strength remains somewhat unclear and seems to be related to age. We found a positive relationship between AOS and submissive fantasies, such that women with higher levels of AOS had a greater preference for submissive fantasies. We also found a positive relationship between sexual assault history and submissive fantasies, such that women who had a history of sexual assault had a greater preference for submissive sexual fantasies. However, both of these relationships only remained significant in the regression model for older women.

Study 1 provided support for some of our original hypotheses. Although we still have some unanswered questions from this first exploratory study, our data provided adequate evidence for the negative relationship between sex guilt and submissive fantasies. Women who had higher sex guilt were less likely to report that they found submissive fantasies to be appealing, thus providing further evidence in support of theories that suggest that high sex guilt may inhibit the range and variety of sexual fantasies in which women engage (Pelletier &

Herold, 1988; Robinson & Calhoun, 1982; Shulman & Home, 2006). However, as we will discuss next, this finding may be less straightforward than our results suggest.

**Reconceptualizing Sex Guilt**

Mosher (1965), the creator of the sex guilt scale, conceptualizes guilt in a seemingly fitting way, as the self-mediated punishment that results when one behaves in a way s/he considers immoral. However, the measure that was designed to assess this construct appears to lack face validity as well as the multidimensionality required to comprehensively address the complexity of sexual guilt. Since its original creation in 1965, the Mosher Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory has been revised multiple times and is still the most widely used measure of sex guilt (Galbraith & Mosher, 1968; Janda & Bazemore, 2011; Janda, Witt, & Manahan, 1976). Therefore, our initial decision to use this scale seems very practical. But, upon closer examination, the sex guilt items do not appear to have high face validity, and instead, the scale appears to be measuring something closer to sexual conservatism or conventional sexual attitudes, as evidenced by items such as, "*dirty" jokes in mixed company are in bad taste*. It seems logical (whether one is a guilt researcher or an individual who has ever felt guilt) that a measure of guilt must include items that address the affective aspects of the experience of guilt, and not just an individual's standards for moral conduct. Knowing one's moral standards is not enough to make any valid conclusions about the amount of guilt one experiences – it is just one aspect (Woo et al., 2011).

Additionally, the Mosher Sex Guilt scale refers to specific moral standards and seems to be evaluating one's attitudes about particular sexual behaviors or outlook regarding certain situations (e.g., dirty jokes or premarital sex). As discussed by Tangney (1996), measures that include reference to specific scenarios require that the individual finds the action particularly

morally objectionable and, then consequently, feels guilty about it. In other words, for the measure to accurately reflect levels of guilt, it is first required that the individual agrees that the action / scenario is indeed a violation of moral standards. In some ways, measures of this kind are double-barreled and are thus limited because an individual may not feel guilt about the specified scenario, but could still have high levels of affective guilt about other, unmeasured scenarios.

More generally, guilt is classified as both a moral emotion and a "self-conscious emotion" that results from self-reflection and self-evaluation. It functions as feedback on our moral and social acceptability. Guilt is a negative feeling that occurs when one's behavior is not in accordance with her internalized sense of what is right, and results in regret and negative behavior evaluations as well the tendency to engage in behaviors aimed at changing the behavior (Tracy & Robins, 2004). Expanding this research to sexual contexts seems appropriate, especially given that researchers are beginning to recognize the importance of context-specific feelings of shame and guilt (Tracy, Robins, & Tangney, 2007). General guilt theorists have done a good job of conceptualizing and measuring trait and state guilt aspects of guilt (Tracy et al., 2007), but currently, the most commonly used measure of sex guilt neglects these components. The continued popularity of this scale despite its limitations is especially surprising given the extensive research on more generalized guilt and shame that is incredibly comprehensive and seems to adequately operationalize many different components of guilt (Tracy et al., 2007).

**CHAPTER III**

**STUDY 2**

We are curious if a more precise measure of sex guilt might help clarify some of the inconsistencies in previous research that has potentially obscured the relationship between sexual guilt and other sexuality related variables. Therefore, for Study 2 we are interested in including an additional measure of sex guilt. There are many different ways to measure guilt, yet currently there was only one standard way of measuring sex guilt. For reasons discussed previously, the Mosher Sex Guilt scale is a (mostly) valid measure of the moral standards component of sexual guilt; however, it lacks items that measure the affective components of guilt. Thus, our goal in Study 2 was to investigate ways of measuring affective sexual guilt. To do so, we decided that it was preferable to begin with an already validated measure of guilt and then to modify it so that it was specifically a measure of sexual guilt. After evaluating several different common guilt scales, we chose the Guilt Inventory (Jones et al., 2000; Kugler & Jones, 1992) because it seemed best suited for our specific needs. For one, it was divided into three components: trait guilt, state guilt, and moral standards, and thus adequately addressed a primary concern of the Mosher Sex Guilt scale; its exclusive focus on measuring one's moral standards. Furthermore, the original Guilt Inventory assessed moral standards as defined by how strictly one adheres to their moral standards, but without reference to specifics (e.g., reference to pre-marital sex as in

the Mosher Sex Guilt scale).

The Guilt Inventory was developed to incorporate three different, but integral components of guilt into one measure. The result was a 45-item measure that distinctly investigated trait guilt, state guilt, and moral standards. Additionally, the Guilt Inventory has demonstrated good test-retest reliability and convergent and discriminant validity. The purpose of the present study was to develop a Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, based on the original Guilt Inventory. The Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory would be useful for standardizing the measure of sex guilt when researchers are particularly interested in evaluating multiple components of sex guilt, especially given that previous findings regarding sex guilt are not always in agreement. Therefore, the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory is a new measure adapted from an existing general guilt scale that we developed to better address the affective components of guilt that are generally hard to assess using the Mosher Sex Guilt scale. A team of three researchers independently modified each item in the Guilt Inventory (Jones et al., 2000; Kugler & Jones, 1992) so that it specifically referred to sex guilt (rather than generalized guilt). Like the original Guilt Inventory, for the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, higher scores indicate higher levels of sexual guilt. Also, like the original Guilt Inventory, the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory was divided into three subscales that measure three components of guilt: trait, state, and moral standards. Sample items include *I have never felt great remorse or guilt for my sexual behaviors* (reverse scored) and *I have made some sexual decisions that I deeply regret. (*See Appendix 1 for the entire set of items that compose the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory.)

**Predicted Relationship between Sex Guilt and Other Constructs**

**Mosher Sex Guilt Scale**

How is the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory different from the Mosher Sex Guilt scale? The Mosher Sex Guilt scale (Mosher, 1988) is similar to the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory in a number of ways; however, we anticipated that the Mosher Sex Guilt scale would be more highly correlated with the moral standards component of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory than with either the trait or state guilt components, thus indicating both convergent and discriminant validity. In sum, there is likely to be some overlap between the two scales; however, the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory is also likely distinct from the Mosher Sex Guilt scale because of its incorporation of multiple components of guilt (i.e., trait guilt and state guilt) beyond just one's beliefs regarding moral standards.

**Guilt Inventory**

Is sex guilt different than general guilt? Another construct that should be related to a Multidimensional Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory is general guilt, as measured by the Guilt Inventory (Kugler & Jones, 1992). It makes sense that sexual guilt should be related to general guilt, but furthermore these two scales should be related because the Multidimensional Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory is a modification of the original Guilt Inventory. Overall, the two scales should be positively related; however, more importantly, the subscales should be positively correlated, and these positive correlations should be strongest between the similar subscales (i.e., trait guilt with trait sex guilt; state guilt with state sex guilt; and moral standards with moral standards regarding sex). However, the Guilt Inventory is distinct from the Multidimensional Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory because we believe that sexual guilt is a

specific kind of guilt that is related to, yet different from, general guilt. People who experience high levels of guilt in general would likely feel more guilt in sexual contexts; however, there is unique socialization around sex that should also make these constructs unique (Bowleg et al., 2004; Gagnon & Simon, 1973a, 1973b; Hyde & DeLamater, 1999). Therefore, we expect a moderate correlation between these measures, but again believe that the relationship will be small enough to indicate that the Multidimensional Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory represents a unique construct.

**Other Variables of Interest**

Finally, there are a number of other variables that we expect to be related to the Multidimensional Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, but we are unsure of the direction. More specifically, we believe that the trait and state components may have different relationships with certain variables than the moral standards component has. We believe that the trait and state guilt components are related to, yet distinct from, the moral standards component and thus will not look identical in relation to a number of other variables.

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**Participants and Procedure**

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Like Study 1, participants were recruited for an online study by a group of more than 100 student researchers. The researchers posted links to the survey on social networking sites and emailed the link to friends. The sample included 722 women and 214 men, ranging in age from 18 – 80 years old, with a mean age of 23.74 ($SD = 9.29$). This study included men and women because it was important to validate the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory on both men and women. Overall, 84.8% of participants identified as heterosexual, 11.5% as bisexual, and 3.6% as gay or lesbian. The final sample was 73.6% European American/White, 7.9% multi-ethnic,

5.4% Asian American, 2.9% African American, 2.7% Latina, and 1.1% Middle Eastern (with 7.3% declining to answer). (See Table 10 for demographics broken down by gender.)

## Measures and Materials

Study 2 was an online questionnaire that took approximately 30 minutes to complete and could be completed anywhere with a computer and internet access. The survey design used in Study 2 was similar to Study 1, with a few edits discussed below. The main purpose of Study 2 was validation of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, and thus this new measure was added to Study 2. Also like Study 1, in addition to asking participants about their fantasy preferences, we also included a number of personality variables.

### Fantasy Items

In Study 1, we asked participants, *Please rate how appealing you think each of these sexual fantasies is on the scale provided…Just because you find a fantasy to be appealing does NOT mean that you would actually like to play it out in real life, but that you find it to be sexually appealing when you think about it. Unless otherwise specified, when we say "partner" we mean the person who you are having sex with in the fantasy.*

Although we do not think that our phrasing of these instructions is incorrect, we wanted to ask the question differently to determine if the specific phrasing would affect our results. We say this because there were some findings that were unexpected with regards to ratings given to fantasies. Based on the overall averages, the most appealing fantasies were *cuddling* ($M = 5.54$), *lying in bed* ($M = 5.53$), and *running your fingers through your partner's hair,* ($M = 5.46$). Though we do not mean to undermine fantasies about cuddling, or to suggest that it is not possible to have sexual fantasies about cuddling, we are more interested in fantasies that are sexually arousing to people and we are not sure we adequately captured that aspect of fantasy.

Therefore, in order to better capture the type of fantasies that we are interested in for the purposes of this study, we augmented the specific instructions so that it is clearer that we want to know the thoughts and fantasies that people have in order to get physically aroused. Specifically, in addition to asking participants how appealing they found each fantasy, we also asked how likely s/he was to imagine the fantasy when trying to become aroused or orgasm, and how likely s/he was to engage in the fantasy in real life.

Based on findings from Study 1, we modified our list of fantasies and more intentionally focused on fantasies about power, we also omitted most traditional romantic fantasies since these were not the focus of our study. Participants rated the extent to which they found the modified life of 45 fantasies to be appealing, arousing, and engaging on a 5-point scale from *not at all* to *a lot*. In order to compare results from Study 3 and Study 1, we grouped the fantasies into three factors to represent the fantasies of most interest: *Submissive Fantasies*, *Dominant Fantasies*, and *Non-monogamous Fantasies*. See Table 11 for the alpha values and means for each fantasy factor.

**Brief Mosher Sex Guilt Scale**

As in Study 1, participants completed 10 items from an adapted version of the Brief Mosher Sex Guilt scale (Janda & Bazemore, 2011; Mosher, 1988). Again, rather than using a 7-point scale, we eliminated the middle-point and had participants respond on a 6-point scale (1 = not at all true for me; 6 = extremely true for me). Items were averaged and higher scores indicated greater sexual guilt ($\alpha = .82$).

**Appearance of Outer Strength Scale**

The AOS scale was used in Study 2 the same way it was used in Study 1. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), and were

averaged so that higher scores indicated greater investment in appearing strong ($\alpha$ = .80).

**Hurlbert Index of Sexual Assertiveness**

The Hurlbert Index of Sexual Assertiveness (Hurlbert, 1991) was used in Study 2 exactly like it was in Study 1, except we added a not applicable option for participants who may not have engaged in the behaviors specified. Items were averaged and higher scores were indicative of greater sexual assertiveness ($\alpha$ = .88).

**Guilt Inventory**

The Guilt Inventory is a 45-item self-report questionnaire that assesses three components of guilt: state, trait, and moral standards (Jones et al., 2000; Kugler & Jones, 1992). Participants responded using a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher numbers reflecting greater guilt ($\alpha$ = .91). Sample items include *I have never felt remorse or guilt* (reverse scored) and *I have recently done something that I deeply regret*.

**Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory**

The Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory is a new measure that was created to better address the affective components of guilt that are generally hard to assess using the Mosher Sex Guilt scale. A team of three researchers independently modified each item in the Guilt Inventory (Jones et al., 2000; Kugler & Jones, 1992) so that it specifically referred to sex guilt (rather than generalized guilt). After the three researchers independently created a modified sexual version of each item, they met to decide which version of each item was the clearest. Finally, another group of researchers who were unfamiliar with the original Guilt Inventory reviewed the new Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory to make sure that all items were clear when they were modified from the original to the sexual version. Like the original Guilt Inventory, for the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, higher scores indicate higher levels of sexual guilt ($\alpha$ =

.93). Also, like the original Guilt Inventory, the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory was divided into three subscales that measure three components of guilt: trait ($\alpha = .92$), state ($\alpha = .87$), and moral standards ($\alpha = .82$). Sample items include *I have never felt great remorse or guilt for my sexual behaviors* (reverse scored) and *I have made some sexual decisions that I deeply regret. (*See Appendix 1 for the entire set of items that comprise the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory.)

**Feminist Identity and Cardinal Beliefs**

As a result of our nonsignificant findings from Study 1, we included a different scale to measure feminism. The Feminist Identity and Attitudes Index used in Study 1 was a measure of feminist identity and attitudes toward feminists, but did not include any items to address attitudes toward gender equality – a central component of feminism. Therefore, we thought it important to include a measure that evaluated both feminist identity and beliefs to more comprehensively investigate the multidimensionality of feminism and to accurately capture *beliefs of* feminism, not just *attitudes toward* feminists. Thus, in Study 2 we used the Feminist Identity and Cardinal Beliefs scale, a multidimensional measure developed by Zucker (2004) that assesses both feminist beliefs and identity. This scale first required that participants respond to an item indicating whether or not they identified as feminist, and then it displayed three items which required a "yes" or "no" response to evaluate feminist beliefs. The three items included, "Girls and women have not been treated as well as boys and men in our society," "Women and men should be paid equally for the same work," and "Women's unpaid work should be more socially valued." Based on their responses, we created a categorical variable that classified participants as belonging to one of the three categories: 1) full "feminist" women who self-labeled as feminist and endorsed all three beliefs, 2) "egalitarian" women who did not adopt the label but

did endorse all three beliefs, and 3) "nonfeminist" women who did not self-identify as feminists and also did not endorse any of the beliefs (Yoder et al., 2007).

**Sexual Assault History**

As in Study 1 we used a modified version of the sexual assault items from the Life Stressor Checklist-Revised to determine whether or not participants had experienced sexual assault before and/or after age 16 (Wolfe et al., 1996).

**Demographics**

Participants provided basic demographic information, including race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and age.

<p align="center"><strong>Results</strong></p>

**Data Analysis Plan**

Consistent with other studies on scale creation, we conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), zero-order correlations, and hierarchical linear regressions (Chu, Porche, & Tolman, 2005; Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2011; A. J. Thomas, Witherspoon, & Speight, 2004; Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). First, we conducted a CFA on all 45 items of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory to test whether the three factor structure was the same as it was for the Original Guilt Inventory. Next, we ran correlations for all three components with a number of variables to determine discriminant and convergent validity. Finally we ran hierarchical linear regressions to better understand the unique contributions of the individual subcomponents of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory.

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

CFA was used to verify the fit of our 45-item, three-factor solution derived from the original Guilt Inventory using LISREL software. The fit of the model was good; comparative fit

index = .95; root mean square residual = .08; standardized root mean square residual = .0651.

Factor loading are provided in Table 12. The average score for the trait guilt component was 2.27

($SD$ = .76); the average score for state guilt was 2.33 ($SD$ = .78); and the average score for the

moral standards component was 2.56 ($SD$ = .56). Possible scores for all three components ranged

from 1 to 5. The CFA thus provides support for the three subcomponents of the

Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory.

**Convergent and Discriminant Validity**

Evidence for the convergent and discriminant validity of our scale lies in the zero order

correlations between the three components of our Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory and

other measures that assess similar constructs. We report results separately for men and women,

except for the Mosher Sex Guilt scale because results were the same for men and women. As

predicted, the Mosher Sex Guilt scale was positively correlated with all three subcomponents of

the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory; however, it was most strongly correlated with the

moral standards component. Therefore, higher scores on the Mosher Sex Guilt Scale were

correlated with higher scores on all three components of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt

Inventory.

**Internal Consistency**

The Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory demonstrates good internal consistency (state

guilt, α = .87; trait guilt, α = .94; and moral standards, α = .84), thus indicating that the items

within each of the three subcomponents measures the same latent variable.

**Intercorrelations for Women and Men**

Intercorrelations among all study variables, which indicate the extent to which the

different variables are associated with one another, are provided in Tables 13 and 14. For

women, all three of the components of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory were positively correlated with one another, indicating that higher levels of one type of guilt was related to higher levels of both other types of guilt; however, the relationships with the moral standards component were the least strong.

For men, results indicate that within the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, only the trait and state guilt components were positively correlated, meaning that men who were higher in trait guilt were also higher in state guilt. Moral standards was not significantly related to either trait or state guilt. Taken together, the findings for both men and women indicate that the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory has good convergent and discriminant validity, as the measure is correlated but distinguishable from a number of theoretically related constructs, but also distinct from theoretically unrelated variables.

**Regression Analyses using Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory to Predict Fantasy Preferences**

We ran a hierarchical regression to examine the unique contributions of trait and state sex guilt in order to better understand the multidimensionality of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory. Based on the zero order correlations, we determined that it was important to control for moral standards because it was typically more highly correlated (than trait or state guilt) with the outcome variables. Specifically, we wanted to control for moral standards so that we could evaluate the relationships between trait and state guilt with other variables of interest, above and beyond the effects of moral standards. We ran regressions for all of the different fantasy scales (dominant, submissive, and non-monogamous). For each regression, we entered the moral standards subcomponent of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory in the first step because we wanted to understand the relationship between the trait guilt and state guilt components of the

Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory above and beyond the relationship between fantasy preference and the moral standards component. See Tables 15-17 for regression results.

**Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory and submissive fantasy preference.** For women, at Step 1, the moral standards subscale was significantly positively associated with preference for submissive sexual fantasies. At Step 2, regression analysis revealed significant $R^2$ changes, indicating that variables entered in Step 2 were associated with additional submissive sexual fantasy preference variance beyond that predicted by variables in Step 1. In Step 2, all three predictor variables were significantly related to submissive sexual fantasy preference. Women who scored higher on the measure of moral standards and state guilt found submissive sexual fantasies to be less appealing. However, interestingly, women who scored higher on the trait guilt component were more interested in submissive sexual fantasies. Though our data cannot speak directly to the reasons for the direction of this relationship, we suggest that women higher in trait guilt may find submissive sexual fantasies appealing because being sexually dominated may relieve women of the responsibility associated with imagining their active sexual desire (Knafo & Jaffe, 1984), and thus may seem more acceptable to women who are high in trait guilt.

The results were different for men, such that moral standards was the only significant predictor of submissive sexual fantasy preference at both Step 1 and Step 2, men with higher scores on the moral standards subcomponent were less interested in submissive sexual fantasies.

**Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory and dominant fantasy preference.** For women, at Step 1, moral standards was significantly positively associated with preference for dominant sexual fantasies. At Step 2, regression analysis revealed non-significant $R^2$ changes. At Step 2, regression analysis revealed significant $R^2$ changes, indicating that variables entered in

Step 2 were associated with additional dominant sexual fantasy preference variance beyond that predicted by variables in Step 1. Women who scored higher on the measure of moral standards found dominant sexual fantasies to be less appealing. However, again, women who scored higher on the trait guilt component were more interested in dominant sexual fantasies.

Again, the results were different for men, such that moral standards was the only significant predictor of dominant sexual fantasy preference at both Step 1 and Step 2; men with higher scores on the moral standards subcomponent were less interested in dominant sexual fantasies.

**Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory and non-monogamous fantasy preference.** The results for both women and men looked similarly when appeal of non-monogamous fantasies was the outcome variable. At Step 1, moral standards was significantly negatively associated with preference for non-monogamous sexual fantasies. At Step 2, regression analysis revealed non-significant $R^2$ changes and only the moral standards component was a significant predictor of non-monogamous fantasy preference. Participants who scored higher on the measure of moral standards found non-monogamous sexual fantasies to be less appealing.

## Discussion

These results indicate that the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory demonstrates construct validity, because it adequately represents the multidimensionality of sexual guilt by measuring three components of guilt. Because it is modified from a previously validated scale measuring guilt, we are reasonably confident that it represents the important components of guilt and accurately reflects the complexity that is necessary to understand the concept of guilt, as a whole.

The three subcomponents of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory are critical to

understanding the sometimes mixed results researchers have found in previous sexuality research (Cado & Leitenberg, 1990). The original Guilt Inventory theorized three subcomponents of guilt, but considered the different components separately because they are not always related to the construct of interest in the same way. This finding was indeed replicated in our results, as we found that state and trait guilt often operated similarly to one another, but at times differently from the moral standards component. The moral standards component, on the other hand, operated much more like the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, which is unsurprising given that both measures are tapping into one's moral standards. While both the Mosher Sex Guilt scale and the moral standards component operated similarly, there were some important distinctions between the scales. Most notably, the Mosher Sex Guilt scale referred to specific sexual acts or behaviors (e.g., premarital sex, or dirty jokes); whereas, the moral standards component allowed a more open interpretation regarding what constituted moral or immoral behavior, including items such as, *sexual morality is not "black and white" as many people would suggest.* This distinction is important because people can have strict moral standards regarding sexuality, but still may have different attitudes regarding what is and is not moral sexual behavior. Also, because the Mosher Sex Guilt scale includes references to specific behaviors it is more sensitive to cultural and historical contexts. The moral standards component, on the other hand, may be more cross-culturally and cross-historically relevant because of its lack of reference to specific acts and behaviors.

This helps to answer many questions regarding the relationship between guilt and sexuality, and specifically guilt's role in women's sexual fantasy preference. Conflicting findings have emerged in previous studies regarding the direction of the relationship between guilt and sexual fantasies; however, our findings suggest that guilt has a much more nuanced role in

fantasy preference. When we revisit some previously discussed findings from other studies that have investigated sexual guilt and fantasy preference, we find that the results are not as conflicting as previously thought. Indeed, different studies have drawn different conclusions, but these differences seem related to the ways that sex guilt was measured. For example, in studies that used the Mosher Sex Guilt scale to evaluate sexual guilt, a consistent negative relationship between sex guilt and submissive fantasy preference emerged (Follingstad & Kimbrell, 1986; Green, 1985; Pelletier & Herold, 1988; Shulman & Home, 2006); a finding that we replicated in Study 1. Also, Cado and Leitenberg (1990) found that women who felt guilty about having sexual fantasies during intercourse tended to fantasize less overall.

Though a number of psychologists have suggested that high sex guilt would predict greater interest in submissive fantasies (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995), few researchers have found empirical support for this claim, with one exception. Moreault and Follingstad (1978) found that women with high levels of guilt, as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, are more likely to report fantasies that indicate lower levels of responsibility for engaging in sex. In their analyses, participants were divided into two groups based on their scores on the Mosher Sex Guilt scale: low sex guilt and high sex guilt and only the 45 participants with the highest sex guilt scores and the 45 participants with the lowest sex guilt scores were included. These two groups were then compared and it was found that high sex guilt participants responded more frequently to themes related to being dominated sexually. In a review piece on sexual fantasy, Knafo and Jaffe (1984) discuss the relationship between guilt and submissive fantasy preference, but only provide empirical support for the negative relationship between feeling guilty about having fantasies and fantasy frequency.

Using the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, we were able to show how different

components of sex guilt can have different relationships with submissive sexual fantasy preference. Trait, State, and Moral Standards are all components of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, but our results reveal that it is critical to investigate these different elements separately in order to more clearly understand the complex relationship between sex guilt and submissive sexual fantasy preference. These analyses can help us better understand past findings because using one scale (with multiple subcomponents) we were able to demonstrate that sex guilt can be both positively and negatively related to submissive sexual fantasy preference. Given the lack of data investigating the multidimensionality of sex guilt in submissive fantasy preference, our inclusion of trait and state sex guilt is particularly unique and important.

**Future Directions in Validating the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory.**

For future research, we would like to test convergent validity further by comparing a group whom we believe to be high on the trait sex guilt, and a group whom we believe to be lower on the trait sex guilt. For example, given stringent guidelines regarding premarital sex and the importance of abstaining from sexual behavior, it would be informative to give the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory to a group of evangelical Christians and compare their scores to another non-religious group that is comparable on other demographic variables (e.g., age, gender make-up, region). If the evangelical Christians score higher on the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, it would further confirm the validity of our new measure.

Similarly, it would be helpful to conduct future research to examine if participants' scores on the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory can be altered using manipulations in an experimental setting. This would be especially informative for the state guilt component which should vary based on one's current feelings of guilt.

Future studies should also more clearly establish discriminant validity. Measures that

would be important to investigate include a measure of self-esteem, depression scale, and anxiety scale. At face value, our measures appear to be assessing levels of trait and state guilt, but it is possible that they are also evaluating one's feelings toward oneself more generally, which is more closely related to the construct of self-esteem. Additionally, while it is possible that trait and state guilt are correlated with measures of depression and anxiety, we are interested in ensuring that we are specifically evaluating guilt.

Evaluating a behavioral component of sex guilt would also be informative. Presumably, individuals who are higher in sex guilt demonstrate different behaviors than individuals who are lower in sex guilt. We would need to identify specific, measurable behaviors that we could observe to increase confidence in the validity of our measure.

Given more time, it would also be crucial to establish the test-retest reliability of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory. In so doing, it would be especially important to show that the trait and moral standards components are relatively stable, but less important to show that state guilt is stable across time seeing as state guilt is something that may realistically vary across time points as it specifically refers to more recent feelings and events.

**Guilt versus shame.** Finally, we are especially interested in establishing the predictive validity of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory. This interest stems from previous work on generalized guilt that has found distinct outcomes of guilt versus shame, thus, leading us to believe that sex guilt and sex shame are distinct constructs (Tangney, 1991). Though shame and guilt can often result from similar situations, and in lay language are often used interchangeably, researchers have begun to emphasize the importance of looking at these two distinct emotions separately (Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005). One of the important differences between guilt and shame is the focus of the emotion; feelings of shame are directed inward at the self and are a

negative evaluation of one as a person; whereas, guilt is directed outward as a negative evaluation of something one has done (Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005; Tangney, 1991). In other words, people experiencing guilt feel bad about what they have done, but people experiencing shame feel like they are bad people. Given these definitions, one can easily see why shame is considered a more harmful emotion because it is a general evaluation of the self as bad, yet guilt only applies to an action.

Given these distinctions, it is not surprising that shame, though not guilt, is associated with a number of mental health issues, such as, suspiciousness, resentment, irritability, and anger, among others (Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005; Tangney, 1991; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992). Despite guilt being a negative evaluation of one's actions, guilt can actually have positive outcomes and is sometimes viewed as an adaptive and prosocial emotion because it can result in a number of reparative behaviors, including apologies, confessions, perspective-taking, and empathic responsiveness, as well as future avoidance of the guilt-inducing behavior (Abell & Gecas, 1997; Benetti-McQuoid & Bursik, 2005; Bybee & Quiles, 1998; Kugler & Jones, 1992; Tangney, 1991; Tangney et al., 1992). We do not know of any sexuality researchers who distinguish between guilt and shame, but perhaps this distinction is necessary in order to better understand the mixed results regarding the relationship between sex guilt and submissive fantasy preference. Therefore, in the future, we would like to investigate ways to discriminate between sexual shame and sexual guilt in order to determine if they have different sexuality-related outcomes, including implications related to sexual agency, sexual empowerment and safer sex.

**Summary**

In Study 1 we found that sex guilt, as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, was the

biggest predictor of submissive sexual fantasy preference in women. However, after more carefully examining the Mosher Sex Guilt scale we determined that the scale did not fully depict the construct of sex guilt in the way that seemed most fitting for the purposes of our study. Therefore, in Study 2 we aimed to develop a sex guilt scale that more fully captured the nuances and complexities of sex guilt. Based on findings from Study 2 we have begun to establish the validity of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory. Next, we turn to Study 3 to continue our investigation into the predictors of fantasy preference, using the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory in addition to other variables discussed below.

# CHAPTER IV

## STUDY 3

The main goals of Study 3 were to replicate our findings from Study 1, investigate additional variables that might play a role in predicting submissive fantasies, incorporate a more appropriate guilt measure, and modify our methods slightly based on insights gained in Study 1. Study 1 was designed as an exploratory study, but once we examined which variables do and do not play a role in sexual fantasy preference, we were able to more directly investigate the significant predictors of sexual fantasy. Next, Study 2 helped us develop a more appropriate guilt measure, so that we could adequately investigate the role of sexual guilt as it relates to sexual fantasy preferences. As we will discuss in greater detail below, for Study 3 we have a) included variables that were shown to be significantly associated with submissive fantasies in Study 1 (sexual assertiveness, sex guilt, AOS, age, and sexual assault history), b) modified variables that we deduced could be more accurately measured, and c) included additional variables of interest.

### Participants and Procedure

Study 3 analyses were based on the same data that were used in Study 2. Refer to Study 2 Method section for detailed information about procedure, measures and materials. However, analyses for Study 3 were based only on female participants ($N = 716$).

Table 18 presents mean, standard deviation, alpha values, and intercorrelations for all of the measures for Study 3, adjusted from Study 2 because of the use of a subsample. The sample

ranged in age from 18 – 80 years old, with a mean age of 23.70 ($SD = 9.55$). The final sample

was 73.3% European American/White, 7.2% multi-ethnic, 4.7% Asian American, 3.5% African

American, 3.0% Latina, and 1.0% Middle Eastern (with 7.3% declining to answer). The sample

was primarily (84.4%) heterosexual, with 13.3% identifying as bisexual and 2.6% identifying as

lesbian. (See Table 19 for demographic information broken down by age group).

## Results and Discussion

### Data Analysis Plan

We ran a series of hierarchical linear regressions to determine the variables that

significantly contributed to women's interest in submissive sexual fantasies.

Similar to Study 1, preliminary analyses indicated that age was negatively correlated with

submissive fantasy preference, $r(702) = -.16, p < .00,$[7] such that older women found submissive

sexual fantasies less appealing than younger women. Because of this, we decided to run analyses

separately by age group, and thus divided our sample into younger women (24 years old and

younger; $M = 19.80, SD = 1.69$) and older women (25 years old and older; $M = 40.04, SD =$

11.43). The decision to split the sample into these two age groups was based on our desire to

separate college-aged participants from non-college-aged participants, like in Study 1. We also

ran all regression analyses with the entire sample of women and then with only heterosexually

identified women who indicated that they were not a part of the BDSM community (about 80%

of the original sample was heterosexual and not a part of the BDSM community) and found that

there was little difference between the whole sample and the smaller sample of non-BDSM and

heterosexual women. Therefore, we will present the analyses for the entire sample; however, we

have also included the results from the smaller non-BDSM, heterosexual sample in Tables 20

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[7] T-tests confirmed a significant difference in submissive sexual fantasy preference between older women ($M = 2.56, SD = 1.04$) and younger women ($M = 2.84, SD = 1.05$), $t(702) = 2.82, p = .005.$

and 21[8].

Using hierarchical linear regression, we examined the associations between appeal of submissive fantasies[9] and the following predictors: 1) sexual assertiveness, 2) Mosher Sex Guilt, 3) the three components of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory: trait, state, and moral standards, and 4) appearance of outer strength. Age and sexual assault history were preliminary variables entered in the first step of the regression model. Additionally, just as in Study 1, we were interested in controlling for general interest in fantasies, since we know that there are high intercorrelations between fantasies and shared variance amongst fantasy preferences. Thus, we chose the fantasy with the highest mean (indicating that it was on average rated as the most appealing fantasy), *sex with a loved one*[10], to include in the first step of the model.[11]  All variables were centered prior to analyses. In Step 1, we entered age, sexual assault history, and *sex with a loved one* fantasy; at Step 2, we entered sexual assertiveness, Mosher sex guilt, the three subscales of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, and appearance of outer strength.

**Regression Analyses by Age**

**Younger women.**  Variables entered in Step 1 were significantly associated with preference for submissive sexual fantasies. Step 1 β weights indicated that submissive sexual

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[8] A slight difference emerged – the results for the older women remained the same, but for the younger women, SBW became a significant positive predictor.

[9] Additionally, as discussed previously, we asked participants to rate each fantasy on three different dimensions: how appealing they found it (similar to Study 1), how likely they were to think about the fantasy when trying to become aroused or orgasm, and how likely they are to actually engage in this fantasy. We ran analyses separately for all three dimensions, and also averaged the scores across all three dimensions to create one combined variable; however, the regression analyses were very similar regardless of the dimension, and thus we decided to report results for the appealing dimension, since this is most consistent with Study 1. Results for all dimensions are reported in Tables 22-33.

[10] In Study 1, we used the *Traditional Fantasies* index as the variable to control for general interest in fantasies, because it was the fantasy category with the overall highest mean.  In this study we did not include the same traditional fantasies and thus we used the fantasy that was rated as most appealing by participants, *sex with a loved one*.

[11] As in Study 1, we did not include the Feminist Identity and Cardinal Beliefs measure in the regression analyses because ANOVAs revealed that there were no differences between the three groups of feminists (feminists, egalitarians, and non-feminists) on submissive sexual fantasy preference.

fantasy preference was positively related to a) age, b) *sex with a loved one* fantasy, and c) sexual

assault history before the age of 16 (indicating that participants who reported sexual abuse were

more likely to have submissive sexual fantasies).

At Step 2, regression analysis revealed significant $R^2$ changes, indicating that variables

entered in Step 2 were associated with additional submissive sexual fantasy preference variance

beyond that predicted by variables in Step 1.

For younger women, the Mosher Sex Guilt scale and the Moral Standards component of

the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory were negatively related to appeal of submissive sexual

fantasies. For both measures of guilt, women with less sex guilt found submissive sexual

fantasies to be more appealing. Sexual assertiveness, Trait Guilt component of the

Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, and AOS were all significantly positively related to

appeal of submissive fantasies, meaning that higher scores on all three predictor variables was

related to greater interest in submissive sexual fantasies. (See Table 34 for full regression

results.)

**Older women.** Variables entered at Step 1 were significantly associated with preference

for submissive sexual fantasies. Step 1 β weights indicated that submissive sexual fantasy

preference was positively related to experiences of sexual assault before the age of 16. Unlike the

younger women, age was negatively related to appeal of submissive fantasies for older women.

This makes sense and indicates that the younger women in the older group resemble the younger

women group and that, perhaps age was not a significant predictor in the younger group because

of the constrained variance in age (i.e., the age range in the younger sample is from 18-24). At

Step 2, regression analyses revealed significant $R^2$ changes, indicating that variables entered in

Step 2 were associated with additional submissive sexual fantasy preference variance beyond

that predicted by variables in Step 1.

For older women, the Mosher Sex Guilt scale was again one of the biggest predictors of interest in submissive sexual fantasies, such that higher scores on the Mosher sex guilt scale were predictive of lower interest in submissive sexual fantasies. Additionally, sexual assertiveness, and AOS were also significant predictors, such that women higher in sexual assertiveness were more likely to find submissive sexual fantasies to be appealing and women who scored higher on AOS were also more likely to find submissive sexual fantasies to be appealing. Interestingly, unlike the younger women, moral standards was not a significant predictor for older women. (See Table 35 for full regression results.)

**Summary**

In sum, Studies 1 and 3 help shed further light on predictors of submissive sexual fantasy preference amongst women. Both Study 1 and Study 3 provide evidence for the importance of the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, sexual assertiveness, sexual assault history, and AOS in predicting submissive sexual fantasy preference in women. Both studies also indicate that a woman's age plays an integral role in which predictors are significant, as findings were dissimilar for younger women (24 and under) versus older women (25 and older).

On the whole, Study 3 replicated and expanded upon findings from Study 1. Specifically, for younger women and older women, the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, AOS, and sexual assertiveness appear to play a large role in fantasy preference, but for younger women, the Trait Guilt and Moral Standards components of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory are additional significant predictors. In Study 1 we found that conservative sexual attitudes, as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, was the biggest predictor of submissive sexual fantasy preference in women, such that women with lower scores on the Mosher Sex Guilt scale rated

submissive sexual fantasies as more appealing. However, after more carefully examining the Mosher Sex Guilt scale we determined that the scale did not fully depict the construct of sex guilt in the way that seemed most fitting for the purposes of our study, inasmuch as it operationalized guilt as sexual conservatism. As a result, we were curious whether a sex guilt scale with greater face validity would be a predictor of submissive sexual fantasy preference. Therefore, in Study 2 we aimed to develop a sex guilt scale that more fully captured the nuances and complexities of sex guilt. Study 2 helped us establish the validity of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory. Finally, Study 3 provided additional support for the importance of low scores on the Mosher Sex Guilt scale in predicting greater interest in submissive sexual fantasies. However, with the addition of the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory in the regression model, we were also able to determine that trait sex guilt was a significant positive predictor of interest in submissive sexual fantasies.

In addition to sexual conservatism, as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, and the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, we also found evidence for the importance of sexual assertiveness and AOS in predicting interest in submissive sexual fantasies. Both sexual assertiveness and AOS were positive predictors of preference for submissive sexual fantasies. Importantly, as we will discuss in the next chapter, these relationships varied depending on the age of the sample. In the next chapter we will also be further exploring the significant predictors of women's submissive sexual fantasy preference, as well as broader implications of these findings.

# CHAPTER V

# GENERAL DISCUSSION

This project was designed to investigate the factors that contribute to women's interest in submissive sexual fantasies, specifically in relation to women's roles within gendered culture. Overall we found that conservative sexual attitudes (as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale), sexual assertiveness, appearance of outer strength, sexual assault history, age, and trait sex guilt are associated with greater interest in submissive sexual fantasies. Additionally, after identifying shortcomings in the most frequently used sex guilt scale, we were able to develop and test a new measure, the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory. In this chapter we address the implications of the significant predictors, explore some of the unexpectedly nonsignificant predictors, and then discuss potential ways that culture-level factors and patriarchal society may affect sexuality and sexual preferences at the individual level.

## Implications of Significant Predictors of Submissive Sexual Fantasy Preference

Many of our hypotheses were based on a combination of previous empirical work and our belief that women's interest in submissive sexual fantasies reflects gendered scripts and expectations regarding women's greater passivity, lesser social power, higher levels of sexual guilt, and the greater social pressures for women to be sexually conservative (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Ellis & Symons, 1990; Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Rudman & Glick, 2008; Tolman,

2005). However, our findings painted a different picture; one in which women's relationship with submissive sexual fantasy preference is much more complicated and nuanced, and less a direct reflection of social roles and stereotypes. Also, though our studies did not focus on the gender differences in fantasy preference, our findings provide additional support for previous work that has found that women have a significantly greater interest in submissive sexual fantasy than do men. Additionally, however, we found support for the positive relationship between submissive fantasies and dominant fantasies among women, meaning that women who are more interested in submissive fantasies are more likely than women who are not interested in submissive fantasies to also have dominant fantasies.

As a result of our studies, a number of questions have been answered; however, many questions remain. Though more research about correlates of fantasy preference is needed, our results provide support for current discourse on the positive value of sexual fantasies. In general, across our studies, greater interest in fantasies (overall, regardless of type) tended to be correlated primarily with variables that indicate greater levels of sexual functioning, including higher sexual assertiveness and lower conservative sexual attitudes (as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale). Similarly, our results also suggest that submissive fantasy preference amongst women is not a negative or harmful occurrence either. First, women who are more sexually assertive have more submissive fantasies; second, women with fewer conservative sexual attitudes have more submissive fantasies; and finally, women who are higher on AOS have more submissive fantasies. Therefore, based on previous findings about the benefits of greater sexual assertiveness and lower levels of conservative sexual attitudes, our findings suggest that submissive sexual fantasies are related to positive personality traits. Notably, as we will discuss below, the positive or negative value of high scores of AOS is less clear and more nuanced.

**Sexual Assertiveness**

Although we initially hypothesized that sexual assertiveness would be negatively correlated with submissive sexual fantasies, our findings indicate a positive relationship. Studies have repeatedly shown the positive correlates of high levels of sexual assertiveness in women, including greater sexual knowledge, decreased self-objectification, lesser endorsement of the sexual double standard, higher relationship and sexual satisfaction, greater condom use efficacy, and lower levels of self-silencing (Apt et al., 1996; Curtin et al., 2011; Greene & Faulkner, 2005; MacNeil & Byers, 2009; Schooler et al., 2005; Yamamiya et al., 2006), thus indicating multiple reasons why sexual assertiveness is a desirable trait. Although the purpose of our studies was not to evaluate the positive or negative value of submissive fantasy preference, the positive relationship between sexual assertiveness and submissive fantasy preference does suggest that an interest in submissive sexual fantasies may be related to positive sexual outcomes. Furthermore, sexual assertiveness measures the extent to which an individual is able to speak up for her sexual desires, thus implying that women who are more sexually assertive and therefore have a greater interest in submissive sexual fantasies may be actively enacting a submissive role in their sexual fantasies, rather than partaking in a passive role as a result of self-silencing or inability to actively communicate sexual desires.

**Sex Guilt**

Though we were confident that sex guilt would play a role in submissive sexual fantasy preference, we were unsure of the direction of the relationship given that previous studies have demonstrated conflicting results regarding correlates of sex guilt. This relationship was complicated further because of our addition of another measure of sex guilt in Study 3. Across both Studies 1 and 3, we found a negative relationship between conservative sexual attitudes, as

measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, and interest in submissive sexual fantasies. Generally, lower levels of conservative sexual attitudes, as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, are associated with positive sexual outcomes, such as less restricted sexual behavior and interests, greater variety within sexuality, greater sexual satisfaction, and increased sexual functioning (Darling et al., 1992; Moreault & Follingstad, 1978; Morokoff, 1985). Based on these past findings, we suggest that lower levels of conservative sexual attitudes, as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, are generally related to positive sexual outcomes, thus implying that submissive sexual fantasies may also have some positive value, above and beyond a general tendency to fantasize.

On the other hand, Study 3 results provide some support for the positive relationship between Trait Sex Guilt, as measured by the Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory, and submissive sexual fantasy preference. Because this was the first study to use this specific measure of sex guilt, we are unable to conclude whether higher or lower levels of Trait Sex Guilt would be associated with positive outcomes, but suggest that this would be an interesting area for future research. However, this finding does provide support for the potential utility of submissive sexual fantasies to relieve sexual guilt as it allows women to relinquish responsibility for their sexuality by being dominated by a partner.

**AOS**

High scores on AOS indicate that an individual feels a higher amount of stress *and* also feels that it is necessary to conceal outward displays of this stress. Therefore, a positive relationship between AOS and submissive sexual fantasy preference indicates that individuals who have greater responsibilities in life, yet simultaneously demonstrate a calm and collected manner are more likely to find submissive sexual fantasies appealing. This finding implies that it

is not people who appear weak and passive who prefer submissive sexual fantasies, rather, those that display a sense of calm and composure on a day-to-day basis despite sometimes feeling overwhelmed by stressors. In an interview with *Psychology Today*, Baumeister, a researcher who has studied BDSM, discusses the idea that submissive sexual fantasies may be particularly appealing for individuals who have higher levels of power and stress, "'Society's real victims do not seek out masochistic sex. Rather it is often the rich, powerful, and successful, the people with the heaving burdens of selfhood, who need the escape of masochism'" (PT Staff, 1995).

Given previous research that indicates that high scores on measures of Strong Black Woman are primarily associated with more negative outcomes, what are potential implications of the positive association between AOS and submissive sexual fantasy preference?[12] Most of our results suggest that submissive sexual fantasy preference amongst women is likely positive (e.g., positive relationship with sexual assertiveness, negative relationship with conservative sexual attitudes as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale); however, our findings regarding the positive relationship between AOS and submissive sexual fantasy preference questions the positivity of submissive sexual fantasies.

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[12] Although we modified the original SBW scale so that it was more general and could apply to other populations, it is important to think about contextual factors that contributed to the development of this stereotype (and thus the SBW scale) within the African American community. And, consequently, it is important to be mindful of potential differences that embodiment of the SBW might have across different populations. The SBW stereotype is contextually and historically located as a response to the many forms of racism, sexism and oppression that have forced Black women to internalize a number of obligations and responsibilities, thus leading them to internalize the "Superwoman" role (Woods-Giscombé, 2010). Because of these historical and contextual factors, Black women may have different reasons for adopting the SBW persona than other populations, and related, may have greater pressures to embody this persona, including more limited resources and greater challenges in their efforts to preserve their families and communities (e.g., because of high levels of poverty, or greater levels of discrimination).

While embodying attributes of the SBW certainly has some perceived benefits, including self-survival and the preservation of the African American family and community it is also believed to contribute to a number of health issues that disproportionately affect Black women (Woods-Giscombé, 2010). Similarly, endorsement of this stereotype is also associated with overindulging in eating, shopping, and drinking, physical and mental distress (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007).

The original SBW construct has largely been associated with a number of negative outcomes, thus, we are uncertain how to interpret the relationship between submissive fantasies and AOS. More specifically, individuals high in SBW also have high levels of stress, and consequently they often partake in a number of behaviors intended to reduce levels of stress. Researchers have investigated a number of the adverse coping mechanisms that people have used in response to high levels of stress associated with SBW, including smoking, overeating, and drinking (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007). Despite researcher's focus on SBW's relationship with negative coping strategies, perhaps there are also potential positive coping mechanisms that have yet to be investigated (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007; Woods-Giscombé, 2010). Based on the positivity of the other findings in our studies, it is possible that submissive sexual fantasies are used as a positive means of stress reduction. Based on our results, we are unable to definitively ascertain the positive stress reducing potential of submissive sexual fantasies; however, this is certainly an empirical question that should be investigated in future research.

However, this finding also complicates our results and leads us to question the ways in which submissive sexual fantasy preference may not be entirely positive. Though we do not wish to judge women's fantasy preferences negatively, it is important to interrogate the potential meanings behind specific preferences. Additionally, this finding seems to corroborate findings from Fahs' 2011 book in which she explores women's complicated relationship with their submissive fantasy preference. Based on findings from a series of interviews, Fahs discusses how women's preference for submissive fantasies may be an adaptation to social inequalities and may reflect some sort of internalized sexism for women. She continues by saying, "even those women who felt empowered in most or all other aspects of their lives nevertheless eroticized patriarchal and misogynistic messages found in mainstream media and pornography" (p. 260).

This makes sense in light of our findings because high scores on AOS reflects women's feelings of being overwhelmed, which could potentially be related to the amount of pressures that women encounter in daily life, including gender specific pressures. And, although these women may display outer strength despite external challenges, it does not mean that they are not affected by mainstream societal messages about their own powerlessness. Thus, it is possible that submissive sexual fantasy preference may be a manifestation of women's repeated exposure to a society that places great demands on them as women, yet simultaneously devalues them.

**Age**

Based on previous research, we believed that age would be a significant predictor of sexual fantasy preference (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995). Our findings provide additional support for the important role that age plays in women's sexuality and sexual fantasy preference, and are consistent with previous studies that have found that interest in fantasies typically declines after a woman's thirties (Brown & Hart, 1977; Pelletier & Herold, 1988). However, because our studies were not designed to investigate the reasons why age plays a significant role, we can only speculate as to why older women and younger women had significantly different scores on a number of personality and sexuality variables.

To some extent, the findings regarding age are perhaps not surprising. For years, college students have been the main source of research participants for psychologists (for a more in depth discussion, see Henrich et al., 2010). They are generally easily accessible and relatively inexpensive for researchers. Yet we also know that reliance on this population has its limitations due to the lack of representativeness, and thus lack of generalizability. For example, we know that undergraduate students vary from other populations on a range of variables, including measures of individualism, conformity, moral reasoning, susceptibility to attitude change, and

sense of fairness, among others (Henrich et al., 2010).

Furthermore, we also know that much psychological development occurs somewhat linearly throughout much of the life course; thus older people tend to be categorically different on a number of personality variables, including attachment orientation (Chopik, Edelstein, & Fraley, 2013), neuroticism, conscientiousness, and agreeableness (Srivastava, John, Gosling, & Potter, 2003), social dominance, and emotional stability (Roberts, Walton, & Viechtbauer, 2006), to name a few. Sexuality and sexual development are areas that are also greatly affected by age (Beutel, Stöbel-Richter, & Brähler, 2008; Brown & Hart, 1977; Leitenberg & Henning, 1995; Purifoy et al., 1992). Our younger sample has a mean age of 19.8, which means that the younger participants, on average, are newer adults, and likely have only recently attained greater independence from their parents. We also know that college is a period of emotional and psychological growth for many individuals (Bowman, 2010; Magolda, 1992) and it is likely that our younger sample would look quite different if we were to follow them over the course of the next five years (Henrich et al., 2010). For example, at the least, individuals gain more life experiences over the course of five years, including sexual exploration and experimentation (Paul & White, 1990). But, further, studies show that college students develop a number of cognitive skills and cognitive tendencies as a result of an increase in diverse experiences encountered within college environments (Bowman, 2010), which is likely to impact individuals in a number of ways, including their sexual identity and decision making.

Additionally, we consistently found that a number of sexuality-related variables from our studies tend to significantly decline with age. This finding is consistent with literature on older women and sexuality that suggests that the frequency of genital sexual activity decreases for women as they age (Dennerstein, Alexander, & Kotz, 2003; McHugh, 2006). For example, in our

studies older women scored significantly lower on nearly every fantasy, for degree of appeal, ability to arouse, and likelihood of engaging, indicating that older women were less interested in almost all fantasies than younger women. This is not to suggest that sex is not important across the lifespan, rather one's relationship to her sexuality continues to develop throughout the life course. Additionally, our younger sample may be particularly sexually inclined because they are at a point in their life when they are first having the opportunity to explore their sexuality.

Furthermore, there is also ample evidence to suggest that there are stereotypes regarding the asexuality of older women (McHugh, 2006; Schwartz, 2007). Notably, this stereotype does not exist for older men (Banks & Arnold, 2001). Expectations of women's asexuality could potentially be playing a role in some women's decreased interest in sex. Our studies do not address the source of older women's general lesser interest in sex; however, it is possible that it is related to social pressures that classify older women as asexual (Chrisler, Golden, & Rozee, 2012; Stanton, Lobel, Sears, & DeLuca, 2002).

**Intercorrelations between Fantasies**

Previous studies have found that the overlap between different kinds of fantasies is so great, that it is sometimes challenging to investigate unique predictors (Byers, Purdon, & Clark, 1998; Renaud & Byers, 2005; Renaud & Byers, 2006); that is, because different fantasy preferences are so highly correlated, it is challenging to separate specific kinds of fantasy preferences from others. That was definitely a challenge that we faced in both Studies 1 and 3, despite our best efforts to control for submissive fantasy preference above and beyond general interest in fantasies.

The purpose of the studies was to determine predictors of submissive sexual fantasy preference and not just a general interest in fantasies, and therefore it was important to

investigate the high correlations between fantasy ratings in Studies 1 and 3. Therefore, we determined that it was important to control for general interest in fantasies in the prediction of submissive fantasies to help us determine factors that were uniquely related to *submissive* fantasies. However, the intercorrelations amongst all of the fantasies suggest that isolating submissive sexual fantasy preference above and beyond other fantasy preference is challenging. Furthermore, it is meaningful that the fantasies are so highly correlated because it suggests that there is perhaps a greater difference between women who find fantasies appealing in general versus women who do not find fantasies very appealing – as opposed to the difference between women who have a strong preference in submissive fantasies versus those who do not have a preference for submissive fantasies. This result presents an interesting challenge for future research and suggests that it may be beneficial to investigate newer methodologies or statistical techniques to isolate submissive sexual fantasy preference better relative to other fantasy preferences.

We initially underestimated the effect of overall interest in sexual fantasies. When we hypothesized that submissive sexual fantasy preference amongst women may be indicative of women's role in larger society (i.e., their lesser power as compared to men, or subscription to the heterosexual script), we were not accounting for the idea that more extreme gender role internalization may be reflected by more restricted sexualities – and thus the lack of interest in any type of fantasy – be that submissive or otherwise. In other words, we thought that submissive fantasies may be representative of a more restricted sexuality, and thus would be related to a number of variables that predict sexual conservatism or stricter gender role ideology. But in reality (according to our results), it appears that a lack of sexual fantasies may be a better gauge of sexual repression. Even the ability to fantasize and admit (anonymously in our survey) to

enjoying fantasies in general requires a certain level of sexual openness. None of this is to suggest that submissive fantasy preference is not related to gender roles in society, it just appears that there may be a better way to measure women's internalization of a male dominant society that eroticizes female submission.

We previously hypothesized that a number of additional personality variables would be significant predictors of submissive sexual fantasies. Measures that we thought would play an important role in predicting submissive sexual fantasy preference but were not significant include gender role ideology, endorsement of heterosexual scripts, sexual messages received as an adolescent, adversarial sexual beliefs, self-silencing, and feminist identity. However, we now believe that they were not significant predictors largely because submissive sexual fantasies are not representative of greater sexual conservatism or greater endorsement of gender role ideology. Instead, we now suspect that more conservative sexual attitudes and greater endorsement and adherence to gender norms may be related to a lack of interest in sexual fantasies in general.

Additionally, if submissive sexual fantasy preference were a result of greater internalization of gender roles, then one would assume that it would be related to lower sexual assertiveness and greater sexual guilt – when in fact, these relationships were reversed. Women who were more sexually assertive were more likely to be interested in submissive fantasies. Sexual assertiveness is considered a positive trait that is marked by the ability to initiate, refuse, and negotiate sex (Hurlbert, 1991; Morokoff et al., 1997). As such, women with a greater investment in traditional feminine gender roles score lower on sexual assertiveness and similarly, sexually assertive women are considered unfeminine and deviant (e.g., Curtin et al., 2011; Hynie & Lydon, 1995; Wiederman, 2000) – yet greater sexual assertiveness is predictive of a greater interest in submissive sexual fantasies. We originally hypothesized that women who are more

sexually assertive would have less interest in fantasies in which they play a submissive and passive role, since assertiveness and passivity seem to be opposites. However, our findings indicate the exact opposite relationship. Apparently women who prefer submissive fantasies are not actually submissive in their sex lives, as indicated by higher scores on the sexual assertiveness scale.

The finding that higher levels of AOS positively predict submissive fantasy preference further supports the idea that submissive fantasy preference is not representative of one actually being submissive in day-to-day life. Women who score higher on AOS and thus portray themselves as strong and capable are also more interested in submissive sexual fantasies, again suggesting that an interest in submissive fantasies does not mean that someone is actually submissive or prefers to be submissive in everyday life.

**Feminist Identity**

Interestingly, another finding that was consistent across both Studies 1 and 3 was that feminist identity was not a significant predictor of submissive fantasy preference. We had originally hypothesized that feminism would be a predictor of fantasy preference because one's feminism and beliefs regarding gender equality are related to their sexual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Rudman & Phelan, 2007). Additionally, the existence of this relationship made theoretical sense given that we investigated power-themed fantasies; and feminism, by definition, is based on one's beliefs regarding power relations between men and women.

In Study 1 we used a straightforward scale to measure feminism and did not find a significant relationship between feminism and fantasy preference. Therefore, in Study 2 we chose to use a different feminist scale, thinking that perhaps the lack of relationship was a result of our feminist scale choice and not because a relationship does not exist. However, Study 2

replicated the findings from Study 1 using a different measure of feminism, and again did not find a significant relationship between feminist identity and submissive sexual fantasy preference.

Although we were surprised by these findings, the consistency across Studies 1 and 3 tends to indicate that there is no relationship between feminist identity and submissive fantasy preference for women, regardless of how we measure feminist identity. Similarly, Fahs (2012) found that a number of women who identified as feminist felt worse about their interest in submissive fantasies because of their beliefs regarding gender equality; however, they still enjoyed fantasizing about their own submission. Fahs' findings were based on qualitative data; we ran quantitative analyses to attempt to corroborate these findings by running regression analyses using the interaction between sexual guilt and feminist identity as a predictor of submissive sexual fantasy preference, but this analysis was not significant. Clearly, our findings do not allow us to make definitive conclusions about the relationship between feminism and fantasy preference, they suggest that if there is a relationship between feminist identity and fantasy preference, it is much more complicated and nuanced than we initially hypothesized.

**Social Scripts**

Our findings did not provide any direct support for the idea that women's submissive sexual fantasy preferences are related to their endorsement of the heterosexual script. However, as we discuss below, it is still possible that male dominance across multiple domains is indeed so deeply engrained that female sexual submissiveness in fantasies is potentially an extension of this broader male dominance. Further, if this relationship is occurring on a cultural or interpersonal level it may provide some insight as to why we did not find a positive relationship

between submissive sexual fantasy preference with endorsement of either gender roles or the heterosexual script, which are more likely to function on the intrapsychic-level.

**Sexual Assault History**

A history of sexual assault was positively related to interest in submissive sexual fantasies. For women with a history of sexual assault before the age of 16, submissive sexual fantasies were more appealing. Sexual assault is one of the more extreme and devastating results of a rape culture, and affects at least 1 in 5 adult women throughout her life (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006; Black et al., 2011); however, there are many additional examples of threats to women's safety and well-being, including everyday harassment that affect a greater number of women and occur on a more regular basis as a result of rape culture (e.g., Crabtree & Nsubuga, 2012; Smolak & Murnen, 2011).

Our findings indicate a positive association between sexual assault history and submissive sexual fantasy preference, suggesting that it is possible that other (less devastating) forms of sexual harassment could also be related to fantasy preferences. Our studies did not specifically evaluate everyday encounters with harassment; however, given the high prevalence rates of sexual harassment experienced by women, it seems likely that most women are familiar with these more normalized forms of harassment, including cat calling and blatantly sexual comments. Though most women have some experience with sexual harassment (see Bryant, 1993; Crabtree & Nsubuga, 2012; Smolak & Murnen, 2011), it is possible that there are individual differences amongst women related to degree of exposure to sexual harassment and this might be related to submissive sexual fantasy preference. Furthermore, because women are more likely than men to experience sexual harassment (again, see Bryant, 1993; Crabtree & Nsubuga, 2012; Smolak & Murnen, 2011), it is possible that experiences with sexual harassment

might help explain women's greater interest in submissive sexual fantasies (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995). There are a number of measures used to evaluate experiences with sexual harassment. For example, the Interpersonal Sexual Objectification scale (ISOS; Kozee, Tylka, Augustus-Horvath, & Denchik, 2007) measures both body evaluation and explicit sexual advances and it would be interesting for future research to investigate the association between one's experience with harassment, as measured by the ISOS or another similar measure, and fantasy preferences.

## Culture Level Factors

Now that we have discussed a number of individual-level variables, we shift the discussion to focus on cultural level factors, and the ways that the sociocultural context may shape an individual's sexuality, including fantasy preferences. Specifically, in the next section, we argue that women's greater interest in submissive sexual fantasies may be a result of the socialization and heterosexualization that occurs within a rape culture and patriarchal society.

Within the framework of heterosexualization within a patriarchal culture, we will discuss 1) why women subscribe to heterosexuality even though it puts them in positions of limited power; 2) why women enjoy sexualization even though it treats them like objects; and 3) why women strive for sexiness and think of it as empowerment, even though its narrow definition is often unattainable and harmful to women. Finally, we will discuss how submissive sexual fantasy preference may arise from these multiple pressures because they may provide one way to walk this narrow line: It allows them to be sexy and sexually active, but still stay in the confines of femininity as defined by the heterosexual script.

**Gendered Power Differentials.**

Though our studies provide insight into specific personality variables that are related to women's interest in submissive sexual fantasy, we were unable to account fully for women's submissive sexual fantasy preference. Although we can only speculate about reasons that were not directly measured in our studies, we suggest that the answers may be related to the current cultural climate. As a result, it is possible that the variables that account for the gender differences are not measurable at the intrapsychic-level, but require researchers to take a step back and examine cultural or interpersonal level variables instead. It is possible that certain beliefs and scripts, such as culturally held beliefs about sexuality or hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity, are so ubiquitous as to be invisible when investigated at the individual level with personality-related variables. For example, in a review article that discusses her previous research, Muehlenhard (2011) explores potential reasons why she did not find a difference in acceptance of traditional gender roles between women who had engaged in token resistance (the act of saying no to sexual advances despite intentions to engage in sexual intercourse) and those who had not. She reasoned that perhaps acceptance of traditional gender roles was not related to engaging in token resistance because "her perceptions of the attitudes held by the culture in general and the man she is with in particular" (Muehlenhard & Hollabaugh, 1988, p. 878, as cited in Muehlenhard, 2011, p. 677) are more important. Our studies did not have any variables that assessed women's perceptions of the attitudes held by the culture or their partner; however, we suggest that cultural or interpersonal level variables may play a role in women's submissive fantasy preference, similar to the ways that cultural and

interpersonal level variables were significant predictors in Muehlenhard's research, and thus, may be an interesting area for future research.

In particular, these cultural level beliefs may not affect an individual's beliefs in a way that is measurable by personality variables, but are still present and impact opinions and attitudes on a larger scale. In Study 1 we were surprised to find that endorsement of the heterosexual script was unrelated to interest in submissive sexual fantasies. Future studies should specifically examine participants' perceptions of their partner or culture's attitudes toward the heterosexual script to determine if, as Muehlenhard (2011) suggests, perceptions of others' attitudes is a more important predictor than one's own personal attitudes.

**(Hetero)sexualization**

As a social norm, (hetero)sexualization convinces women that appearing sexy is necessary for success, both within sexual relationships, but also beyond. According to McHugh, "femininity as a cultural practice of performance is necessary to maintain the institution of heterosexuality, and ultimately works to maintain the patriarchy" (2006, p. 365). Additionally, women have a stake in the system, and receive material rewards, such as greater financial and personal security, as a result of successfully buying into the system that continuously recreates their own lack of power (Douglas, 2010; Rich, 1980). Furthermore, attractive women fare better than less attractive women in a number of domains, including their careers – thus demonstrating to women the multiple advantages to presenting themselves in an attractive (and often sexy) manner (Douglas, 2010; Smolak & Murnen, 2011). The ubiquity of heterosexualization may help explain why we did not find endorsement of heterosexual scripts or gender role conformity to be significant predictors of submissive sexual fantasies. At the individual level, it may not matter whether or not a woman explicitly holds specific attitudes, when she is living within a world

with such a clearly defined norm of heterosexuality. It may also explain why feminist identity was not a predictor of submissive sexual fantasy preference either – this norm of heterosexuality is so prevalent that even women who actively disassociate from mainstream culture's endorsement of heterosexualization are not able to entirely escape all effects of this dominant culture.

**Sex as a Commodity**

As a result of patriarchy and sexualization, women receive multiple conflicting pressures and mixed messages regarding their sexuality (Gavey, 2012). On one end, women are taught that their sexuality is valuable to the extent that it attracts men and helps secure their access to jobs and power, yet on the other end, more conservative cultural messages (including many sex education programs in high schools; McClelland, 2010) promote abstinence and the value of sexual prudence. Together, these seemingly opposite beliefs present a conundrum that sex is sacred and also a source of exploitation. In turn, this conundrum promotes the idea that sex is a commodity and the notion that one's virginity and sexuality are limited and nonrenewable resources. This "commodity" model of sexuality is a dominant discourse that "reinforces patriarchal sex roles, and it allows for the construction of the concept of sluthood which is key to at least one family of rape-supportive ideas" (Millar, 2008, p. 35), thus transforming sex from an act into "a substance that can be given, bought, sold, or stolen, that has a value and a supply-and-demand curve" (p. 30).

There is perhaps no analogy that better captures the sex as commodity model than the saying, "who will buy the cow if you're giving the milk away for free." This phrase equates women to cows and sex to milk (Millar, 2008, p. 31). Because women are presumably not actually being encouraged to exchange sex for money, this saying is emphasizing the importance

of the transaction that involves exchanging one's goods (i.e., sex) only within the confines of a

secure and committed relationship. Women "give" sex in order to "receive" relational support

and commitment from men.  This model is not independent from the heterosexual script and

reinforces men's role as pursuer and women's role as "gatekeeper."  A woman must protect her

worth, which is higher the fewer sexual partners she has, while a man must try to increase his

value by increasing the number of sexual partners he has.

In a culture in which sex is perceived as a commodity, women learn from a young age

that their value is a direct result of their perceived attractiveness and desirability by men.

According to McHugh:

> Girls are introduced to fairy tales and romances at an early age, and the emphasis on
> idealized romantic relationships grows stronger as girls develop. We teach girls how to
> put on makeup and how to make themselves attractive to men. We do not teach them how
> to recognize their own desires or what to do about them. We socialize girls into the
> practice of femininity that writes their sexual desire out of existence. Girls are being
> taught that they need to attract male approval to make it in this culture, and are also
> taught that attracting males is a dangerous practice. Femininity as a cultural practice of
> performance is necessary to maintain the institution of heterosexuality, and ultimately
> works to maintain the patriarchy (McHugh, 2006, p. 365).

Socialization of girls begins at a young age as they are encouraged to internalize romance

as portrayed in fairy tales, which requires their acceptance and enactment of femininity, a

femininity that serves to attract men, but often erases girls' own sexual desires (McHugh, 2006;

Tolman, 2005). Tolman further argues that the missing discourse of desire for adolescent girls

demonstrates the danger of erasing women's own sense of desire by prioritizing being sexually

appealing over being sexually self-aware or knowledgeable.

This commodity model that defines sex as a precious and limited resource,

simultaneously positions one's sexuality and sexiness as powerful, things that can be used to

purchase power. If women are taught that sex is a commodity and is something of value – then

logically, women will want to be wanted because it validates their value. Beyond its potential to provide material gains, being desired is validating, particularly in a society in which value is placed on women's bodies as objects. The commodity model, then, touts sex and sexuality as valuable, and consequently contributes to the objectification, sexualization, and self-objectification of women.

Furthermore, if sex is a commodity that is non-renewable, then women should not want to give sex away freely because that would depreciate its value. However, if as in submissive fantasies, women are so irresistible that their sex is taken from them forcibly, then they are relieved of some of the responsibility that would come with "giving away" their sex. Discourse around "saving oneself" and "giving" sex removes room for women to have desires of their own. Within this discourse, women can't just want sex to want sex, especially because withholding sex increases a woman's value. Therefore, women can conceal their desire through fantasies in which they are not actively seeking pleasure, but rather, are the object of someone else's desire.

Our study did not include any variables that accurately capture women's conflicting feelings about their sexuality and the challenges they encounter in trying to balance being sexy enough without being too sexy. However, this would be an important area for future research that may help us better understand predictors of women's interest in submissive sexual fantasies. One way to investigate this empirically would be to include a measure of one's attitudes toward or endorsement of the sexual double standard, since the sexual double standard reflects gendered notions of sexuality, and the ways in which women's sexuality is uniquely restricted. In research investigating the gendered nature of sexual economics, Rudman and colleagues developed a number of measures that addressed the endorsement of sexual double standards, including *Sexual Double Standard Beliefs, Sexual Double Standard Attitudes, Sexual Advice* [regarding casual

sex], *Male Control Motives,* and *Female Control Motives* (Rudman, Fetterolf, & Sanchez, 2013). These scales capture gender specific sexual scripts and may help shed light on the ways in which women feel their expressions of sexuality are restricted by their sociocultural context.

The Romantic Love Scale assesses beliefs regarding stereotypic views of romantic love and contains items that represent culturally relevant messages regarding what romantic love is (Thompson & Borrello, 1987). The items are not explicitly gendered nor heterosexual, though they address a number of romantic ideals that are seemingly problematic and highly related to mainstream notions of romantic love as life-changing and all encompassing – messages that are often targeted to women and are essential to the process of heterosexualization. Because this scale measures one's beliefs regarding romance, it would be informative to investigate its relationship with submissive sexual fantasy preference to determine if messages regarding romantic love are related to fantasy preference.

**(Dis)empowerment Potential of Sexuality**

In order for heterosexualization to reinforce patriarchy successfully, it requires that women also internalize it. More recently, a newer discourse has developed, sometimes referred to as postfeminism (McRobbie, 1994) or enlightened sexism (Douglas, 2010), wherein women believe that displaying their sexuality, being sexual, and self-objectification are all proactive decisions; and accordingly their sexualization and self-objectification are decisions that they have actively and knowingly chosen. Although we do not wish to criticize a woman's decision to display sexuality and behave in a sexy manner, we do wish to complicate this relationship.

This postfeminist discourse or enlightened sexism allows women to fantasize about their own sexual submission while simultaneously maintaining the belief that they are in control of this decision, and thus in control of their own submission (Douglas, 2010; Gill, 2008). It can be

viewed as "topping from the bottom" (a term used within the BDSM community; the top being the dominant role, and bottom being the submissive role) in the sense that women are controlling men with their irresistibility – men cannot resist and they cannot help themselves because the woman is that sexy. There is value for women in being wanted – and value for men in getting women, thus contributing to the idea that a man must convince a woman, pursue her, overtake her as part of the story about her desirability and irresistibility. Furthermore, this postfeminist discourse implies that women see their own sexual submission as an active choice and a true representation of their authentic sexual selves. This particular logic ignores the impact of socialization and does not account for how social constructions of attractiveness and beauty are internalized (Gill, 2008).

Similarly, there is evidence that women have internalized a "masculinized view of sex that legitimates their role as sex objects" (Smolak & Murnen, 2011, p. 55). Women have been sold the notion that their sexuality can be empowering (which indeed, it can and should be) and they have taken this message and applied it oftentimes uncritically (Gill, 2008). So, not only are women being sold the message that their sexuality is an essential part of their identity, but then they are also being convinced that their sexualization is their own decision, something that they have willingly chosen – and thus their sexualization and accompanying self-objectification is perceived as empowering because it is self-determined (Liss et al., 2011; McRobbie, 1994). This message is widespread and advertisers have even invested in creating images (sometimes in advertisements of lingerie) that marry feminism and femininity unproblematically, thus implying that it is a woman's choice to be feminine (Douglas, 2010; McRobbie, 1994). Theoretically, scholars have debated the potential positive and negative effects of enjoyment of sexualization; however, more recently researchers have begun exploring this concept empirically. The

Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale was created to evaluate the extent to which women enjoy their own sexualization (Liss et al., 2011) and would be an interesting measure to use in future research on fantasy preference. Previous research has not found support for many positive outcomes of enjoying sexualization (Erchull & Liss, 2014) and thus it would be interesting to explore if enjoyment of sexualization is positively related to submissive sexual fantasy preference in women.

Of course, not all women find this model of sexuality entirely unproblematic. Given these two dominant discourses: one that promotes "raunch" culture and the sexualization of women, the other that condemns almost all expressions of sexuality, is it any surprise that many women are conflicted about their sexuality and their desired display of their sexuality? Or as Susan Douglas says in her 2010 book, *Enlightened Sexism,* "a culture that is prudish *and* pornographic – how's that for a contradiction to navigate?" (p. 155). Statistics regarding access to information and sexual content on television paint a grim picture of recent trends, as portrayals of sex (with an emphasis on the sexualization of girls and women) has increased, access to comprehensive sexual education has decreased (Douglas, 2010). Even feminist women that appear to be critical of both types of messages can only resist the effects of their socialization so much, and have been described as experiencing "double consciousness," in that they are aware of the harmful effects of sexual objectification, yet are unable to resist the pressures of socialization entirely (Martin, 2007 as cited in Smolak & Murnen, 2011). In other words, even when women are provided the tools necessary to critically examine cultural messages about their sexuality, complete rejection of these messages is still challenging and often unattainable.

In sum, we are unable to directly comment on the potential for female sexual fantasies to provide a space for female sexual empowerment. We did not directly examine if sexual fantasies

can liberate women and instill them with a sense of empowerment; however, a number of the variables in our studies explored the relationship between sexual fantasy preferences and sexual assertiveness and found a positive relationship between submissive sexual fantasy preference and sexual assertiveness in women. Due to our survey methodology, we are unable to determine the direction of this relationship and thus can only speculate as to the empowerment potential of submissive sexual fantasies.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

Sexual fantasies are generally accepted as a normal and healthy expression of human sexuality, and, based on our findings from Studies 1 and 3, submissive sexual fantasies are no exception. High levels of sexual assertiveness and low levels of sex guilt have both been associated with greater levels of sexual functioning and satisfaction. As a result, the positive relationship between sexual assertiveness and submissive sexual fantasy preference, and the negative relationship between sexual conservatism, as measured by the Mosher Sex Guilt scale, and submissive sexual fantasy preference suggests that submissive sexual fantasy preference is indicative of greater sexual functioning. However, this finding is somewhat speculative given that our studies were not designed to address outcomes associated with fantasy preference. As a result, we suggest that additional research is needed to further explore the positivity of submissive sexual fantasies by investigating specific outcomes associated with submissive sexual fantasy preference, including measures to evaluate sexual satisfaction or safe sex behaviors.

Additionally, because all of our studies were based on self-report measures, it would strengthen our findings if other types of methods were used. While the surveys were entirely anonymous, sexuality can be a sensitive topic to many individuals, and thus our research would benefit from the use of more implicit measures. Overall, we do not anticipate that our findings

would significantly vary if other types of measures were used; however, our current findings could be strengthened by the use of more diverse measures. It would also be interesting to see if other types of measures, such as measures designed to assess the sexual double standard, could better investigate some of the culture-level variables that we discussed previously.

Further, to understand the findings regarding age differences better in Studies 1 and 3, it would be helpful to conduct studies to tease apart whether the differences are indeed based on age, or instead if they are the result of cohort effects. For example, a longitudinal approach that followed the same participants across several years could help us determine if the changes in sexuality and sexual preferences are specifically the result of developmental shifts, or if perhaps cohort effects are also playing a role.

In Study 1, the most appealing fantasy was *cuddling with your partner*, which led to a revision in our methods for Studies 2 and 3 in an attempt to narrow our definition of sexual fantasy in hopes that participants would think more specifically about fantasies as things that are sexually appealing/arousing, and not just affectionate acts that are appealing more generally. However, even with this methodological alteration, respondents still rated fantasies that were more affectionate, and less explicitly sexual as the most appealing and most arousing. This finding is somewhat puzzling and suggests the need for additional research aimed at better understanding the ways in which individuals define sexual fantasy. A follow-up study using qualitative methods could potentially help inform current understanding of sexual fantasies and the ways in which people conceive of their fantasies, as well as the potential utility of sexual fantasies in people's everyday lives.

Finally, it would be useful to replicate these findings with a representative sample and to address potential differences amongst sexual and ethnic minorities in sexual fantasy preferences

and sexual guilt. Because one of the primary goals of the current research was to investigate how sociocultural contexts affect sexual fantasy preferences, it would be beneficial to specifically explore this phenomenon amongst populations that may experience different socialization as a result of their diverse identities. Though are sample was relatively large, our recruitment method resulted in a less diverse sample in terms of race/ethnicity, age, and level of education. Therefore, future studies should aim to specifically recruit underrepresented minorities in order to increase our understanding of sexual fantasy preferences and sex guilt and also to extend our findings beyond our somewhat homogenous sample.

## Conclusion

Though previous research has investigated sexual fantasy preferences and frequencies amongst women, few have identified underlying mechanisms that explain women's interest in submissive sexual fantasies. As a result, this dissertation contributes to the literature and has identified a number of important factors that contribute to women's sexual fantasy preferences. Specifically, Studies 1 and 3 provide support for the importance of sexual assertiveness, sex guilt, sexual conservatism, strong outer appearance, and age in predicting women's submissive sexual fantasy preferences. However, the importance of these factors varied slightly across the two studies and also across age groups, thus suggesting the need for future research and perhaps the inclusion of additional variables to more comprehensively predict women's submissive sexual fantasy preference.

Additionally, although the Mosher Sex Guilt scale has been the most frequently used measure of sex guilt, we hope that future researchers will more critically examine this measure before concluding that it has high face validity and is a representative measure of sex guilt. The reliance on this measure in past research has potentially led to flawed conclusions about the

relationship between sex guilt and other sexuality-related variables.  Moreover, as discussed in

Study 2, further research is needed to establish the validity and reliability of the

Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory.

Table 1

*Study 1 Sexual Fantasy Items*

| Description | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 1.You cuddle with your partner | 5.54 | .837 |
| 2.You lie in bed with your partner | 5.53 | .885 |
| 3.You run your hand through your partner's hair | 5.46 | .974 |
| 4. Honeymoon sex | 5.29 | 1.071 |
| 5. Wedding night sex | 5.27 | 1.095 |
| 6. Sex with someone of the opposite sex | 5.24 | 1.333 |
| 7. A partner manually stimulates your genitals | 4.92 | 1.348 |
| 8. Sex with a drop-dead gorgeous lover with the perfect body | 4.88 | 1.295 |
| 9. In a bathtub with candles and bubbles | 4.86 | 1.270 |
| 10. A partner stimulates your genitals with mouth or tongue | 4.83 | 1.524 |
| 11. You stimulate your partner's genitals with your mouth or tongue | 4.38 | 1.566 |
| 12. You manually stimulate your partner's genitals. | 4.37 | 1.463 |
| 13. Rough sex | 4.00 | 1.600 |
| 14. Playing a submissive role or a role with less power* | 3.78 | 1.648 |
| 15. Your partner using sex toys on you | 3.55 | 1.768 |
| 16. Sex with a famous person | 3.54 | 1.761 |
| 17. Sex with a hero who saves you from danger | 3.53 | 1.719 |
| 18. Having sex for the first time (i.e. losing your virginity) | 3.39 | 1.730 |
| 19. Being held down* | 3.28 | 1.909 |
| 20. Being blindfolded* | 3.28 | 1.760 |

| Description | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 21. Being tied up* | 3.23 | 1.816 |
| 22. Sex in a public place with the risk of getting caught | 3.22 | 1.636 |
| 23. Playing a dominant role, or a role with more power | 3.18 | 1.58 |
| 24. Blindfolding your partner | 3.17 | 1.75 |
| 25. Being spanked* | 3.07 | 1.83 |
| 26. Tying up your partner | 2.97 | 1.69 |
| 27. Using sex toys on your partner | 2.94 | 1.66 |
| 28. Holding your partner down | 2.84 | 1.76 |
| 29. Being handcuffed* | 2.80 | 1.77 |
| 30. You watch a partner masturbate | 2.73 | 1.69 |
| 31. Handcuffing my partner | 2.63 | 1.75 |
| 32. A partner watches you masturbate | 2.57 | 1.62 |
| 33. Having sex with a virgin | 2.44 | 1.56 |
| 34. Sex with 2 people of the opposite sex | 2.40 | 1.62 |
| 35. Spanking your partner | 2.37 | 1.55 |
| 36. Sex with 2 people- one man and one woman | 2.36 | 1.66 |
| 37. Sex with a stranger | 2.35 | 1.52 |
| 38. Sex with someone of the same sex | 2.10 | 1.47 |
| 39. Sex with 2 people of the same sex | 1.94 | 1.37 |
| 40. Cyber sex | 1.77 | 1.24 |
| 41. You have sex with a partner while others watch | 1.73 | 1.33 |
| 42. Making porn | 1.72 | 1.24 |
| 43. Having pain inflicted on you* | 1.68 | 1.20 |
| 44. Sex in front of an audience | 1.55 | 1.03 |

| Description | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 45. Being the other man/woman to someone who is cheating on his/her partner | 1.55 | 1.09 |
| 46. Cheating on your partner | 1.54 | .98 |
| 47. Inflicting pain on your partner | 1.54 | 1.07 |
| 48. Imagining that you are being raped | 1.52 | 1.13 |
| 49. Being strangled* | 1.42 | 1.04 |
| 50. Watching my significant other have sex with someone else | 1.36 | .92 |
| 51. Being humiliated/degraded | 1.31 | .79 |
| 52. Strangling your partner | 1.29 | .82 |
| 53. Humiliating/degrading your partner | 1.27 | .76 |
| 54. Pretending to be a young child | 1.20 | .57 |
| 55. Imagining that you are raping someone | 1.20 | .62 |

*Note.* * indicates submissive fantasies

Table 2

*Studies 2 and 3 Sexual Fantasy Items*

| Description | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Having sex with a loved one. | 4.84 | .64 |
| 2. Rough sex | 3.77 | 1.32 |
| 3. Being held down* | 3.44 | 1.56 |
| 4. Playing a submissive role or a role with less power* | 3.42 | 1.49 |
| 5. Being tied up* | 3.18 | 1.58 |
| 6. Being blindfolded* | 3.17 | 1.50 |
| 7. Sex in a public place with the risk of being caught | 3.15 | 1.39 |
| 8. Being spanked* | 3.15 | 1.52 |
| 9. Being handcuffed* | 3.15 | 1.56 |
| 10. Being bossed around* | 2.96 | 1.56 |
| 11. Blindfolding your partner | 2.89 | 1.47 |
| 12. Looking at obscene pictures or films | 2.88 | 1.48 |
| 13. Watching other people have sex | 2.54 | 1.43 |
| 14. Having sex with someone much older | 2.43 | 1.40 |
| 15. Bossing around your partner | 2.43 | 1.33 |
| 16. Sex with a stranger | 2.15 | 1.34 |
| 17. Being pushed | 2.09 | 1.38 |
| 18. Participating in an orgy | 2.08 | 1.39 |
| 19. Being called a name | 2.07 | 1.43 |
| 20. Spanking partner | 2.04 | 1.27 |
| 21. Have pain inflicted on you | 2.02 | 1.40 |
| 22. Pushing your partner | 1.77 | 1.16 |

| Description | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 23. Being strangled* | 1.73 | 1.33 |
| 24. Being raped | 1.69 | 1.26 |
| 25. Calling your partner names | 1.64 | 1.07 |
| 26. Inflicting pain on your partner | 1.51 | .99 |
| 27. Sex with a much younger partner | 1.47 | .93 |
| 28. Being humiliated* | 1.42 | 1.03 |
| 29. Strangling your partner | 1.31 | .85 |
| 30. Humiliating your partner | 1.18 | .61 |
| 31. Raping someone | 1.11 | .51 |

*Note.* * indicates submissive fantasies

Table 3

*Study 1 Demographics by Age Group*

| Measure | Level | Percentages for All | Percentages for Old | Percentages for Young |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education | Less than high school | .8 | 1.2 | .7 |
| | High school/GED | 16.1 | 4.9 | 19.3 |
| | Some college | 53.5 | 24.4 | 62.2 |
| | 2-year college | 3.9 | 4.9 | 3.7 |
| | 4-year college | 18.6 | 36.6 | 13.3 |
| | Graduate | 7.1 | 28.0 | .8 |
| Relationship Status | Single | 49.3 | 22.0 | 58.1 |
| | In a relationship | 50.7 | 78.0 | 41.9 |
| Sexual Orientation | Straight | 91.5 | 95.1 | 90.7 |
| | Lesbian | 1.7 | 2.4 | 2.5 |
| | Bisexual | 6.8 | 1.4 | 7.8 |
| Ethnicity | African American | 2.5 | 2.4 | 2.6 |
| | Asian American | 12.1 | 6.1 | 13.7 |
| | White | 68.5 | 68.3 | 68.5 |
| | Latina | 4.5 | 1.2 | 5.6 |
| | Middle Eastern / Arab | 1.4 | 0 | 1.9 |
| | Multi | 5.9 | 7.3 | 5.6 |
| | No Answer | 18 | 14.6 | 2.2 |

Table 4

*Study 1 Alpha Values and Means for Fantasy Scales*

| Description | Mean | Standard Deviation | Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| Submissive Fantasies | 3.02 | 1.36 | .90 |
| Dominant Fantasies | 2.67 | 1.24 | .89 |
| Traditional Fantasies | 5.32 | .84 | .89 |
| Non-monogamous Fantasies | 2.00 | .89 | .85 |

Table 5

*Study 1 Correlations between Variables*

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Submissive Fantasy | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Traditional Fantasy | .18** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 3. Age | -.23** | -.11* | 1 | | | | | | |
| 4. Sexual Orientation | .14** | -.08 | -.06 | 1 | | | | | |
| 5. Sexual Abuse History | .15** | .03 | .03 | .09 | 1 | | | | |
| 6. Sexual Assertiveness | .25** | .24** | -.11 | .03 | .04 | 1 | | | |
| 7. AOS | .13* | .04 | -.19** | .15** | .12* | -.16 | 1 | | |
| 8. Feminist Identity | .00 | -.05 | .02 | .13* | .12* | .11 | .06 | 1 | |
| 9. Mosher Sex Guilt | -.53** | -.12* | .05 | -.21** | -.19** | -.44** | -.04 | -.26** | 1 |

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

Table 6

*Study 1 Regression Analyses for Submissive Sexual Fantasies, Younger Heterosexual Women Only*

|  | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | *B* | *SE B* | *β* | *B* | *SE B* | *β* |
| Sex Loved One | .15 | .23 | .07 | .05 | .22 | .026 |
| Age | -.02 | .10 | -.02 | .008 | .10 | .01 |
| Abuse | .77 | .44 | .19† | .37 | .44 | .09 |
| Mosher Sex Guilt |  |  |  | -.71 | .23 | -.38** |
| AOS |  |  |  | .17 | .22 | .08 |
| Sexual Assertiveness |  |  |  | .03 | .36 | .01 |
| $R^2$ |  | .04 |  |  | .19 |  |
| *F* for change in $R^2$ |  | 1.21 |  |  | 4.61** |  |

†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$

Table 7

*Study 1 Regression Analyses for Submissive Sexual Fantasies, Older Heterosexual Women Only*

| Variable | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $B$ | $SE\ B$ | $\beta$ | $B$ | $SE\ B$ | $\beta$ |
| Sex Loved One | -.21 | .19 | -.17 | -.18 | .13 | -.14 |
| Age | -.02 | .01 | -.26[†] | -.02 | .01 | -.25 |
| Abuse | 1.34 | .47 | .42** | .10 | .37 | .03 |
| Mosher Sex Guilt | | | | -.83 | .15 | -.64*** |
| AOS | | | | .70 | .18 | .44*** |
| Sexual Assertiveness | | | | .57 | .36 | .19 |
| $R^2$ | | .25 | | | .68 | |
| $F$ for change in $R^2$ | | 3.90* | | | 14.92*** | |

[†] $p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 8

*Study 1 Regression Analyses for Submissive Sexual Fantasies, All Younger Women*

| Variable | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *SE B* | *β* | *B* | *SE B* | *β* |
| Sex Loved One | .33 | .18 | .19 | .24 | .17 | .14 |
| Age | .05 | .09 | .05 | .05 | .09 | .06 |
| Abuse | .45 | .37 | .12 | .01 | .38 | .002 |
| Mosher Sex Guilt | | | | -.77 | .22 | -.41*** |
| AOS | | | | .03 | .20 | .02 |
| Sexual Assertiveness | | | | .01 | .36 | .00 |
| $R^2$ | | .05 | | | .20 | |
| *F* for change in $R^2$ | | 1.60 | | | 5.69*** | |

†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 9

*Study 1 Regression Analyses for Submissive Sexual Fantasies, All Older Women*

| Variable | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *SE B* | *β* | *B* | *SE B* | *β* |
| Sex Loved One | -.20 | .19 | -.16 | -.18 | .13 | -.14 |
| Age | -.02 | .01 | -.27† | -.02 | .01 | -.27* |
| Abuse | 1.35 | .47 | .42** | .14 | .37 | .04 |
| Mosher Sex Guilt | | | | -.81 | .15 | -.61*** |
| AOS | | | | .69 | .18 | .42*** |
| Sexual | | | | .61 | .36 | .20† |
| Assertiveness | | | | | | |
| $R^2$ | | .26 | | | .68 | |
| *F* for change in $R^2$ | | 4.2† | | | 14.00*** | |

†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 10

*Study 2 Demographics by Gender*

| Measure | Level | Percentages for All | Percentages for Women | Percentages for Men |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education | Less than high school | 1.8 | 2.1 | .9 |
| | High school/GED | 13.7 | 13.6 | 14.0 |
| | Some college | 52.7 | 53.9 | 47.7 |
| | 2-year college | 4.8 | 5.1 | 3.7 |
| | 4-year college | 18.9 | 17.2 | 24.3 |
| | Graduate | 8.0 | 7.6 | 9.3 |
| Relationship Status | Single | 46.4 | 45.4 | 49.5 |
| | In a relationship | 53.6 | 54.6 | 50.5 |
| Sexual Orientation | Straight | 84.8 | 84.1 | 87.4 |
| | Lesbian/Gay | 3.6 | 2.6 | 7.0 |
| | Bisexual | 11.5 | 13.3 | 5.6 |
| Ethnicity | African American | 2.9 | 3.5 | .9 |
| | Asian American | 5.4 | 4.7 | 7.9 |
| | White | 73.6 | 73.3 | 74.8 |
| | Latina | 2.7 | 3.0 | 1.4 |
| | Middle Eastern / Arab | 1.1 | 1.0 | 1.4 |
| | Multi | 6.4 | 7.2 | 3.7 |
| | No Answer | 7.9 | 7.3 | 9.8 |

Table 11

*Studies 2 and 3 Alpha Values, Mean, Standard Deviations for Sexual Fantasy Factors*

| Description | Mean | Standard Deviation | Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| Study 2 | | | |
| Submissive Fantasies | 2.72 | 1.03 | .91 |
| Dominant Fantasies | 2.28 | .88 | .88 |
| Non-monogamous Fantasies | 2.57 | .94 | .81 |
| Study 3 | | | |
| Submissive Fantasies | 2.78 | 1.05 | .91 |
| Dominant Fantasies | 2.16 | .81 | .86 |
| Non-monogamous Fantasies | 2.42 | .89 | .80 |

Table 12

Study 2 – Factor Loadings for Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory Confirmatory Factor Analysis

| Variable | State Guilt | Trait Guilt | Moral Standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lately, when I think about my sexual history, I feel good about myself and what I have done. (R) | .638 | | |
| Lately, I have been relaxed and worry-free when it comes to sex. (R) | .345 | | |
| If I could relive the last few weeks or months, I would not change any of my sexual decisions. (R) | .618 | | |
| At the moment, I don't feel particularly guilty about any sexual experiences I have had. (R) | .726 | | |
| I have recently done something sexual that I deeply regret. | .677 | | |
| Lately, it hasn't been easy for me to feel comfortable during sexual experiences. | .475 | | |
| I would give anything if, somehow, I could go back and correct some things that I have recently done wrong in my sex life. | .743 | | |
| There is at least one sexual behavior in my recent past that I would like to change. | .658 | | |
| Recently, I feel that my life would be much better if I hadn't committed certain sexual acts. | .752 | | |
| Lately, I have been worried and distressed about my sex life. | .493 | | |
| I have never felt great remorse or guilt for my sexual behaviors. (R) | | .551 | |
| I never have trouble sleeping because of a sexual experience. (R) | | .354 | |
| Guilt concerning my sexual behavior is not a particular problem for me. (R) | | .621 | |

| Variable | State Guilt | Trait Guilt | Moral Standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| There aren't any sexual experiences in my past that I deeply regret. (R) | | .695 | |
| If I got the chance to relive my sexual experience, I would change very little (if anything) about them. (R) | | .682 | |
| There are not many sexual experiences in my life that I regret having done. (R) | | .412 | |
| I have made a lot of mistakes in my past sexual behavior. | | .760 | |
| If I could redo certain sexual encounters, a great burden would be lifted from my shoulders. | | .742 | |
| I have made some sexual decisions that I deeply regret. | | .758 | |
| Frequently, I hate myself for my previous sexual behaviors. | | .802 | |
| I often feel "not right" about myself because of something sexual I have done. | | .798 | |
| If I could live my life over again, there are a lot of things I would change about my sexual history. | | .742 | |
| Guilt and remorse have been a part of my sex life for as long as I can recall. | | .722 | |
| Sometimes I almost get sick when I think about certain sexual things I have done. | | .748 | |
| I believe I have made a lot of mistakes in my sex life. | | .812 | |
| I worry a lot about my sexual history. | | .745 | |
| I often feel a strong sense of regret when I think about the sexual things I have done. | | .897 | |

| Variable | State Guilt | Trait Guilt | Moral Standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sometimes, I can't stop myself from thinking about sexual decisions I have made. | | .590 | |
| If my parents knew about my sexual behavior, I think they would be disappointed. | | .407 | |
| I sometimes have trouble eating because of my past sexual behavior. | | .547 | |
| I believe that moral values in sex are absolute. | | | .728 |
| My goal for my sex life is to enjoy it rather than live up to some abstract set of moral principles. (R) | | | .561 |
| There are only a few things I would never do sexually. (R) | | | .305 |
| My ideas of what are right and wrong sexual behaviors are quite flexible. (R) | | | .657 |
| Sexual morality is not 'black and white' as many people would suggest. (R) | | | .612 |
| In certain sexual circumstances, there is almost nothing I wouldn't do. (R) | | | .436 |
| I believe that you can't judge whether certain sexual acts are right or wrong without knowing motives. (R) | | | .566 |
| I never worry about my sexual experiences because I believe any issues that may arise from my sexual behavior will work themselves out. (R) | | | .240 |
| What is right or wrong during sexual experiences depends on the situation. (R) | | | .570 |
| I believe there is only good or bad sexual behavior and nothing in between. | | | .481 |
| I have always believed strongly in a firm set of moral and ethical principles regarding sex. | | | .569 |

| Variable | State Guilt | Trait Guilt | Moral Standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| There are many sexual acts I would never do because I believe they are wrong. | | | .605 |
| I would rather die than engage in seriously immoral sexual behavior. | | | .542 |
| I feel a strong need to live up to my sexual values. | | | .398 |
| I am immediately aware when I have done something sexual that I believe to be morally wrong. | | | .323 |

Table 13

*Study 2 Correlations between Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory Components for Women*

|  | Trait Guilt | Moral Standards | State Guilt |
|---|---|---|---|
| Trait Guilt | 1 | .21** | .74** |
| Moral Standards | .21** | 1 | .14** |
| State Guilt | .74** | .15** | 1 |
| Mosher Sex Guilt | .15** | .62** | .16** |
| Last Masturbation | -.04 | .17** | .02 |
| Age Fantasy | .04 | .18** | .03 |
| Last Fantasy | .04 | .23** | .04 |
| Appearance of Outer Strength | .26** | -.03 | .25** |
| Sexual Assertiveness | -.17** | -.29** | -.27** |
| Age | -.07 | .10* | -.10* |
| Fantasy Appeal – Submissive | .000 | -.40** | -.05 |
| Fantasy Appeal – Dominant | -.01 | -.22** | -.05 |
| Fantasy Arouse-Submissive | .02 | -.37** | -.03 |
| Fantasy Arouse – Dominant | .00 | -.18** | -.03 |
| Fantasy Engage – Submissive | .00 | -.37** | -.05 |
| Engage – Dominant | -.06 | -.25** | -.08 |
| All – Submissive | .01 | -.40** | -.04 |
| All – Dominant | -.02 | -.23** | -.05 |
| Non-Monogamous – Appeal | -.03 | -.35** | .00 |
| Non-Monogamous – Arouse | -.01 | -.27** | .00 |
| Non-Monogamous – Engage | -.03 | -.32** | .00 |

|                                     | Trait Guilt | Moral Standards | State Guilt |
| ----------------------------------- | ----------- | --------------- | ----------- |
| Feminism Total                      | -.04        | -.028           | -.03        |
| Guilt Inventory – Trait Guilt       | .57**       | .10**           | .48**       |
| Guilt Inventory – Moral Standards   | .10*        | .68***          | .01         |
| Guilt Inventory – State Guilt       | .51**       | .03             | .56         |

†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 14

*Study 2 Correlations between Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory Components for Men*

|  | Trait Guilt | Moral Standards | State Guilt |
|---|---|---|---|
| Trait Guilt | 1 | .12[†] | .76** |
| Moral Standards | .12[†] | 1 | .11 |
| State Guilt | .76** | .11 | 1 |
| Mosher Sex Guilt | ..21** | .55** | .20** |
| Last Masturbation | -.01 | .12[†] | .00 |
| Age Fantasy | .00 | .22** | .07 |
| Last Fantasy | -.04 | .15* | -.01 |
| Appearance of Outer Strength | .25** | .14* | .28* |
| Sexual Assertiveness | -.28** | -.30** | -.36** |
| Age | -.04 | -.08 | -.08 |
| Fantasy Appeal – Submissive | -.13[†] | -.34** | -.17* |
| Fantasy Appeal – Dominant | -.18** | -.34** | -.17* |
| Fantasy Arouse-Submissive | -.09 | -.30** | -.12 |
| Fantasy Arouse – Dominant | -.12[†] | -.31** | -.11 |
| Fantasy Engage – Submissive | -.12[†] | -.42** | -.16* |
| Engage – Dominant | -.12[†] | -.42** | -.15* |
| All – Submissive | -.12[†] | -.38** | -.16* |
| All – Dominant | -.15* | -.40** | -.16* |
| Non-Monogamous – Appeal | .057 | -.38** | .02 |
| Non-Monogamous – Arouse | -.06 | -.33** | .01 |

|                                      | Trait Guilt | Moral Standards | State Guilt |
| ------------------------------------ | ----------- | --------------- | ----------- |
| Non-Monogamous – Engage              | -.07        | -.40**          | .09         |
| Feminism Total                       | -.02        | -.05            | -.07        |
| Guilt Inventory – Trait Guilt        | .58**       | .20**           | .46**       |
| Guilt Inventory – Moral Standards    | .11         | .66***          | .09         |
| Guilt Inventory – State Guilt        | .59**       | .183**          | .61**       |

†*p* < .10. \**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

Table 15

*Study 2 Regression with Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory as Predictor of Submissive Fantasy Appeal for Women and Men*

|  | Men | | | Women | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | *B* | *SE B* | *B* | *B* | *SE B* | *B* |
| Trait | .03 | .12 | .03 | -.24 | .07 | .17*** |
| State | -.18 | .12 | -.15 | -.15 | .07 | -.11* |
| Moral Standards | -.53 | .11 | -.33*** | -.78 | .07 | -.42*** |
| $R^2$ | | .14*** | | | .18*** | |

† *p* < .10. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

Table 16

*Study 2 Regression with Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory as Predictor of Dominant Fantasy Appeal for Women and Men*

|  | Men | | | Women | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | *B* | *SE B* | *B* | *B* | *SE B* | *B* |
| Trait | -.06 | .12 | -.05 | .12 | .06 | .11* |
| State | -.15 | .12 | -.12 | -.10 | .06 | -.10<sup>†</sup> |
| Moral Standards | -.66 | .11 | -.38*** | -.33 | .05 | -.23*** |
| $R^2$ | | .18*** | | | .05*** | |

<sup>†</sup>*p* < .10. *\*p* < .05. *\*\*p* < .01. *\*\*\*p* < .001.

Table 17

*Study 2 Regression with Multidimensional Sex Guilt Inventory as Predictor of Non-Monogamous Fantasy Appeal for Women and Men*

| | Men | | | Women | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | *B* | *SE B* | *B* | *B* | *SE B* | *B* |
| Trait | .16 | .12 | .14 | .02 | .06 | .02 |
| State | -.05 | .12 | -.04 | .05 | .06 | .04 |
| Moral Standards | -.65 | .11 | -.39*** | -.56 | .06 | -.36*** |
| $R^2$ | | .15*** | .12*** | | .05*** | |

[†] *p* < .10. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001.