

**From Culture to the Individual: Understanding Perceptions of and Reactions to Sexual  
Assault**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

Sexual assault is a social and public health issue in the United States, with far-reaching implications and consequences. While it is generally understood that a combination of situational factors, personality characteristics and pre-existing beliefs have an effect on the perceptions of sexual assault, the majority of the research that has been done has looked at these characteristics from the perspective of sexual assault victims. This study is part of a larger longitudinal study that aims to reduce the gap in sexual assault literature by building from the Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory (EST), as well as previous research by McAuslan and colleagues (2017), to employ a cumulative risk model to examine predictors of perceptions of and reactions to a hypothetical sexual assault victim. The study considers early experiences and individual factors (e.g., religiosity, political conservatism, gender role beliefs, dogmatism) as well as rape myth acceptance and reactions to a hypothetical sexual assault victim. A sample of 447 emerging adults were recruited via mTurk. Results suggest that predominant cultural attitudes facilitate intolerant beliefs, and the degree to which a person ascribes to individual intolerant beliefs influence their acceptance of rape myths and perception of sexual assault. Dogmatism, traditional gender role beliefs, political conservatism and extrinsic religiosity were all positively associated. Results also suggest that having more intolerant belief systems (high levels of extrinsic religiosity, dogmatism, traditional gender role beliefs, and conservative political views) relate to higher levels of RMA and more negative reactions to a hypothetical sexual assault victim. RMA was found to be a mediating factor between intolerant beliefs and

reactions to sexual assault disclosure. The results of this research may provide direction for more targeted sexual assault education and prevention programming.

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Sexual assault is a social and public health issue in the United States, with far-reaching implications and consequences. Awareness is rising, but the prevention programs that have been put in place have done little to decrease the occurrence of assault, or the negative stigma associated. Acceptance of sexual assault is portrayed on many levels, reaching from sociocultural values to individual beliefs. In order for sexual assault prevention to be successful, it is necessary to gain a greater understanding of the factors that are involved in influencing perceptions of sexual assault. While it is generally understood that a combination of situational factors, personality characteristics and pre-existing beliefs all have an effect on the perceptions of sexual assault, research in this area is just beginning to scratch the surface. While there has been much important and necessary research examining experiences and consequences for victims of sexual assault, far less research has examined how bystanders perceive sexual assault, and given the importance of bystanders, both for preventing sexual assault and for responding to victims, increasing understanding of the factors that influence bystander perceptions is critical. It would be beneficial to gain a better understanding about the specificity of these factors and how they influence a bystander's perceptions of sexual assault.

This paper reviews the literature related to the factors that influence people's reactions to disclosure of sexual assault. Initially key concepts related to sexual assault, including definitions, prevalence and consequences will be presented. Theories will be discussed which support the influence of distal and proximal factors on the reactions to and perceptions of sexual assault,

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followed by a thorough review of relevant literature. Finally, the present study, which aims to narrow the gap in the sexual assault literature by exploring the interplay of cultural values and individual beliefs on others' perceptions of sexual assault, will be described.

### **Sexual Assault**

#### **Definition**

When people think of sexual assault, rape is usually the first thing that comes to mind. However, sexual assault is much more comprehensive, and has been defined as a “full range of forced sexual acts, including forced touching or kissing; verbally coerced intercourse; and vaginal, oral, and anal penetration,” (Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan, 2001, p. 272). Tools such as The Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; Koss & Gidycz, 1985) have been used repeatedly by researchers to help refine what constitutes sexual assault, as well as try to accurately measure prevalence rates of sexual assault.

#### **Prevalence**

Research suggests that at least 25% of women will be raped during their lifetimes, with the majority of assaults taking place during the period of emerging adulthood (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Jozkowski, 2015). Sexual assault is so prevalent in this age group, that it has become an epidemic on college campuses, fostering what is known as “rape culture,” with college women being at higher risk than any other population to experience sexual assault (Burnett, Mattern, Herakova, Kahl, Tobela & Bornsen, 2009). Research has found that up to 54% of college females report having experienced some form of sexual assault (Koss & Gidycz, 1985; Abbey, 2002). In an extensive review of studies assessing prevalence rates of sexual assault, it was found that of the women who report being assaulted, 45% of assaults were committed by an acquaintance, and 25% were committed by either a current or former romantic partner (Truman

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& Morgan, 2016). This is in line with research showing that victims of sexual assault are often acquainted with their perpetrators (Abbey et al., 2001; Burnett et al., 2009; Harned, 2005; Jozkowski, 2015). More research has been done on female as opposed to male victims of sexual assault, as the majority of assault victims are female. However, prevalence rates of approximately 5% have been estimated for male victims (Abbey, 2002).

Valid and reliable estimates of both perpetration and victimization of sexual assault are hard to come by. This is due in part to the lack of a concrete definition of what constitutes sexual assault, as well as the use of various definitions by different researchers and organizations. Diverse estimates are also related to the underreporting of sexual assault, which is influenced by stigma and stereotypes, negative consequences of being labeled a victim, rape myths, concern for the perpetrator, distrust in the legal system and negative social reactions following disclosure of sexual assault (Harned, 2005). A study by Rennison (2002) reports that sexual assault, specifically rape, is the most under-reported crime with approximately 63% of sexual assaults not being reported to police.

### **Consequences of Sexual Assault**

Sexual assault of any kind has the potential to affect a victim's overall health, with approximately four out of five victims suffering from chronic physical and/or psychological conditions (Fedina, Holmes & Backes, 2018; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher & Martin, 2007). Among the negative consequences of sexual assault are high levels of depression, anxiety, hyper-activation of the stress response and PTSD (Flack et al., 2007). Research has shown that up to half of rape survivors meet criteria for PTSD (Kilpatrick, Resnick, Ruggiero, Conoscenti & McCauley, 2007). While psychological distress is often very prevalent following sexual assault,

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victims are more likely to seek out medical attention as opposed to psychological treatment (Krebs et al., 2007).

Following sexual assault, victims often report somatic symptoms. This may be due in part to what is known as the somatization hypothesis, in which psychological distress may be interpreted as physical illness by a victim or by others, therefore encouraging the victim to seek the more “socially sanctioned” support of medical services (Kimerling & Calhoun, 1994). Other possible explanations for the increased reports of somatic symptoms could be the weakening of the immune system as a result of psychological stress and hyper-activation of the stress response (Kimerling & Calhoun, 1994). Another reason as to why victims seek medical as opposed to mental health resources following sexual assault could be due to the negative stigma surrounding sexual assault, and the fear of revictimization due to negative responses to disclosure of the assault.

Women who have been sexually assaulted have also been shown to be at increased risk for engaging in risky health behaviors, which can lead to increased risk for revictimization, unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (Turchik & Hassija, 2014). Another noted consequence of sexual assault is sexual dysfunction for both male and female victims (Turchik & Hassija, 2014). With sexual assault being most prevalent in the college population, research has also examined the academic consequences of sexual assault. College students who have experienced sexual assault often show drops in GPA level, as well as increased rate of drop-out (Jordan, Combs & Smith, 2014). While there has been much research on the health consequence for victims of sexual assault, much less is known about what informs perceptions of sexual assault. An area of research which has been studied in this regard is the research of rape myth acceptance (RMA).

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### **Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA)**

Rape myths have been conceptualized as widespread prejudicial and false beliefs regarding sexual assault that serve to justify sexual aggression against women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 2004). They can be understood as beliefs which “deny or reduce the perceived injury of the victim, as well as encourage myth adherents to blame the victim, hold the victim responsible for the abuse, and exonerate the perpetrator” (Jankowski, Johnson, Holtz-Damron & Smischney, 2011, p. 163).

Rape myths are thought to be influenced by and associated with a number of factors. Such factors include aggression, victim-blame, negative affect, adversarial sexual beliefs, violent sexuality and inaccurate perceptions of female arousal (Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Hockett, Saucier, Hoffman, Smith & Craig, 2009; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 2004). On a larger scale, it is found that cultural beliefs that support and perpetuate sexual violence appear to influence the development and acceptance of rape myths. Aosved and Long (2006) suggest that RMA co-occurs with other aspects of intolerance. Specifically, RMA was found to have an association with measures of racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, classism and religious intolerance. It was also found that sexism was the strongest predictor of RMA, but that each intolerant belief collectively added to predict the acceptance of rape myths. In studying the acceptance of both rape and domestic violence myths, Jankowski and colleagues (2011) also suggest there is a relationship between intolerant cultural beliefs and acceptance of these myths. RMA, domestic violence acceptance, dogmatism, negative attitudes toward women and social dominance were all found to be associated with one another.

Understanding the predictors of and influences on RMA is extremely important, as RMA has been found to be predictive of various negative consequences. Much research supports that

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higher RMA is associated with proclivity towards sexual assault perpetration (Bohner, Siebler & Schmelcher, 2006; Malamuth & Check, 1985). This has been found in individuals who report higher RMA personally, as well as individuals who report that attitudes that are accepting of rape are endorsed by their peers.

RMA also has negative consequences for sexual assault victims. A facet of RMA is increased victim-blaming, which is associated with many negative effects on victims. Those who hold higher RMA tend to shift the blame from the perpetrator to the victim (Relyea & Ullman, 2013; Untied et al., 2012). This is especially dangerous as victims who perceive increased blame from others, or who have increased levels of self-blame, have been found to have overall increased levels of psychological distress, decreased recovery prognosis, and decreased levels of self-esteem (Chivers-Wilson, 2006).

Research suggests that individuals who have higher rape myth acceptance also have decreased empathy and negative attitudes toward rape victims (Hockett et al., 2009). In a study where bystanders read a hypothetical sexual assault scenario, and then were asked questions regarding social reactions and perceptions of the assault, male bystanders were more likely to provide the hypothetical victim with negative social responses, as well as place more blame on the victim as compared to female bystanders (Untied & Relyea, 2012). This relationship is believed to be related to males having higher levels of rape myth acceptance than women (Aosved & Long, 2006; Untied & Relyea, 2012).

### **Disclosure/Social Reactions**

The reactions victims receive when they disclose sexual assault is another area of research that seeks understand what informs perceptions of sexual assault. To better understand these reactions, the Social Reactions Questionnaire (SRQ) was developed (Ullman, 2000). The

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SRQ measures both positive and negative social reactions that sexual assault victims receive when they disclose their assault experience; in the SRQ, sexual assault refers to experiences of sexual victimization “ranging from unwanted sexual contact (e.g., fondling, kissing) to attempted or completed rape” (Ullman, 2000, p. 257).

In general, reactions to disclosure of sexual assault have been categorized in the literature as either negative or positive (Relyea & Ullman, 2015; Untied et al., 2012). Positive social reactions (PSR) are reactions which are beneficial to the victim, whereas negative social reactions (NSR) are reactions thought to be harmful to the victim in some way. The SRQ goes beyond simply positive or negative reactions, measuring a broader array of reactions. The different aspects of positive social support encompassed in the SRQ are instrumental support, informational support, emotional support and validating and believing the victim’s experience (Ullman, 2000). Negative social reactions include treating the victim differently, taking control of the victim’s decisions, distraction or discouraging the victim from talking about the sexual assault, victim blame and egocentric reactions (Ullman, 2000).

Based on sexual assault victims’ perceptions of social reactions, as well as victims’ psychological adjustment and coping behaviors, negative social reactions have further been divided in to two factors: turning against (TA) or unsupportive acknowledgment (UA; Relyea & Ullman, 2015). UA reactions contain a mixture of both positive and negative reactions, acknowledging the occurrence of the assault, while at the same time not explicitly providing emotional or tangible support, invalidating the survivor’s experience and desire to disclose. On the other hand, TA reactions are thought to be purely negative reactions, often containing elements of hostility, victim blame and stigmatization.

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It is important to study reactions to disclosure of sexual assault, as negative reactions have been shown to have detrimental consequences. In general, negative social reactions can lead to victims feeling shamed, rejected, or blamed for the experience (Campbell & Martin, 2001). Consequences of NSR are similar to those associated to sexual assault itself: PTSD, depression, anxiety, paranoia, maladaptive coping, problem drinking, interpersonal sensitivity, social withdrawal and overall psychological distress (Relyea & Ullman, 2015). On the other hand, PSRs are thought to help alleviate distress and decrease symptomology.

Most of the past research regarding reactions to sexual assault victims comes from the victims' perspective. Although important, these studies do not provide insight into the types of factors that have influenced the positive and negative social reactions of bystanders. A study by Untied and colleagues (2012) sought to remedy this by examining various influences on observer judgements of sexual assault. An experimental stimulation design in which participants read hypothetical sexual assault scenarios was used to evaluate reactions to and perceptions of sexual assault. Participants reported on victim/perpetrator responsibility, the extent to which they perceived the scenario as rape, and participants answered questions regarding their likelihood of providing positive or negative responses to the victim.

Rather than assessing how often victims personally receive social responses, Untied and colleagues (2012) modified the SRQ (Ullman, 2000) to assess how likely participants would be to provide certain social responses to the female victim depicted in the hypothetical sexual assault scenarios. The items and scales from the original SRQ (Ullman, 2000) were also used in the study by Untied and colleagues (2012), but assessed reactions from a bystander perspective as opposed to a victim perspective. Specifically, the subscales related to negative social reactions included: treating the victim differently; attempting to distract; blaming the woman; egocentric

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reactions; and controlling the victim's decisions (Untied et al., 2012). The subscales related to positive social reactions included: emotional support; and informational/tangible aid. Consistent with the original SRQ (Ullman, 2000), the sub-scales generally demonstrated adequate reliability in the study by Untied and colleagues (2012). Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the standard (Nunnally, 1978) for controlling the victim's decisions (.82), treating the victim differently (.81), emotional support (.82), and information/tangible aid (.83), but were somewhat lower for attempting to distract (.63), blaming the woman (.72), and egocentric reactions (.63).

Results revealed that when victim alcohol use was involved, participants placed higher blame on the victim, and lesser responsibility on the perpetrator. Also, the victim was provided with less emotional support when only the perpetrator was drinking, compared to when both the perpetrator and the victim were consuming alcohol. Untied and colleagues (2012) also reported a gender difference in response to sexual assault victims. Male participants were less likely to label the scenarios as sexual assault, and more likely to provide negative social reactions to victims. Past research demonstrates that males tend to place more blame and show less empathy towards victims of sexual assault than do females (Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Aosved & Long, 2006; White & Kurpius, 2002). This may be in part due to men's tendencies to adhere to more traditional gender role beliefs, as well as a higher adherence to rape myth acceptance (Cowley, 2014; Untied et al., 2012).

### **Theoretical Model**

When attempting to understand predictors of perceptions of and reactions to sexual assault, it is important to explore both distal and proximal factors. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory (EST), which postulates that an individual is influenced by a complex interplay of individual, relationship, community and societal factors, has been used to

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examine a number of social issues. Many studies have developed models using EST as the starting point to better understand rape myth acceptance and perceptions of sexual assault (e.g., Aosved & Long, 2006; Messman-Moore & Long, 2002; White & Koss, 1993).

When this theoretical framework is applied to reactions to sexual assault victims, the individual level consists of biological and personal factors, such as demographics, socioeconomic status and history of abuse. It is believed that these individual factors promote attitudes, beliefs and behaviors related to sexual assault (Campbell et al., 2009). The next level, relationships, contains an individual's social circle, such as family, peers and partners. An individual's relationships contribute to his or her range of experiences and serve as models for various attitudes and behaviors. Supporting this view is the perspective of social learning theory, which postulates that learned rape-supportive attitudes and behaviors may serve as rape motivation (Hockett et al., 2009).

Perceptions of peer attitudes and behaviors, as well as the characteristics of a person's community, are found to be predictive of a person's perceptions of and reactions to sexual assault. The community level encompasses the setting in which social relationships occur, such as work, school or neighborhoods. The most distal level of the EST is societal, which is made up of broad social factors, such as social and cultural norms, and the policies in place which maintain those norms. How a person interprets and internalizes societal norms is found to have an influence on individual beliefs.

A study by Aosved and Long (2006) found that cultural beliefs directly related to a person's rape myth acceptance. More endorsement of traditional gender role beliefs was related to higher levels of rape myth acceptance. At a cultural level, traditional gender roles are valued, with masculinity being depicted as requiring power and portrayed on a social hierarchy as a sign

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of dominance. It seems that individuals who internalize the cultural messages regarding masculinity have greater tendency to endorse the traditional views that women really like rough sex, that women “cry rape,” and that men can’t control their sexual desire.

In relation to and building from ETS is the dimensional approach of understanding rape myth acceptance and perceptions of sexual assault as indicators of the broader construct of intolerance (Aosved & Long, 2006; Jankowski et al., 2011). In today’s society, intolerant and oppressive beliefs are portrayed at a cultural level. Intolerant beliefs can come in many forms, such as religious intolerance, political intolerance and traditional gender role beliefs that reinforce sexism and maintain a gender powered differential. These beliefs can combine to form an overall dogmatic and oppressive belief system.

### **Dogmatism/Intolerant Beliefs**

Dogmatism is understood as a rigid and unjustified certainty of one’s own beliefs (Altmeyer, 1996). This strong ascription to the certainty of one’s own beliefs may lead to intolerance toward others and the dismissal of evidence that is contrary to one’s own belief system (Ajmani & Bursik, 2011; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski & Sulloway 2003). Similar to dogmatism, intolerance has been described as “the state of being unwilling or unable to endure or accept the beliefs, perspectives, or practices of others. It also involves a lack of recognition and respect for the fundamental rights and choices of others” (Guindon, Green, & Hanna, 2003, p. 168). Research has begun to conceptualize intolerance as a set of dogmatic and oppressive beliefs, being made up of such constructs as sexism, racism, homophobia, ageism, classism, and religious intolerance (Aosved & Long, 2006; Jankowski et al., 2011). In general, intolerance consists of stereotypical, prejudicial and discriminatory views of others. Dogmatism has been shown to be related to such things as political conservatism, religiosity, and traditional gender

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role beliefs, all of which have also been shown to relate to the latent construct of intolerance, as well as RMA (Ajmani & Bursik, 2011; Hockett et al., 2009; Jankowski et al., 2011).

### **Religiosity**

Past research on religiosity and perceptions of sexual assault has mainly focused on perceptions of clergy members. In a study by Yuvarajan and Stanford (2016) it was found that clergy members' judgments of sexual assault situations were based more on perceived victim control and overall victim characteristics than on characteristics and actions of the perpetrator. These effects were mediated by characteristics of clergy members themselves, with members who endorsed higher religious fundamentalism as well as sexism placing more blame on victims (Yuvarajan & Stanford, 2016). An earlier study by Sheldon and Parent (2002) showed similar results, with clergy members high in religious fundamentalism and sexism showing increased negative attitudes toward rape victims, engaging in higher rates of victim blaming and endorsing rape myths.

Research on religiosity and perceptions of sexual assault has been growing, building from research on prejudicial attitudes and how religion influences interpersonal violence. In examining how religiosity influences domestic violence myth acceptance, it has been found that religiosity itself is influenced by conventional life values, such as social conformity and traditionalism (Jankowski et al., 2011). In turn, these conventional life values may translate to intolerant belief systems, such as religious fundamentalism and authoritarianism, which may support a higher acceptance of violence in interpersonal relationships.

The relationship between religion and prejudicial views is complex. Past research has indicated that intrinsically oriented religiosity correlates negatively with prejudicial beliefs, whereas extrinsically oriented religiosity has a more positive correlation (Allport, 1966;

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Higginbotham, Ketring, Hibbert, Wright & Guarino, 2007; Jankowski et al., 2011). Intrinsic religiosity is viewed as a deeply personal experience, with religion itself being the end goal, free from the motivations of external forces (Allport, 1966). On the other hand, extrinsic religiosity can be described as a means to an end, motivated by external factors such as social status and group participation, ego defense and protection (Allport, 1966). Further research has broken extrinsic religiosity down to two separate factors, extrinsic-social and extrinsic-personal (Leong & Zachar, 1990; Maltby, 2002). In an extrinsic-social orientation, religion is viewed as a social gain, whereas in an extrinsic-personal orientation, religion is viewed as a source of comfort (Maltby, 2002).

In studying the relationship between religiosity and intolerance, different relationships have been found for the intrinsic and extrinsic forms. Intrinsic religiosity tends to relate to lower acceptance of intolerant beliefs, whereas extrinsic religiosity relates to higher acceptance (Brinkerhoff, Grandin, & Lupris, 1992; Jankowski et al., 2011). Specifically, extrinsic religiosity has been shown to be related to higher levels of racial prejudice (Batson et al., 1993; Donahue, 1985; Hall, Matz, & Wood, 2010), dogmatism, domestic violence myth acceptance and rape myth acceptance (Jankowski et al., 2011) when in comparison to intrinsic religiosity.

### **Political Beliefs**

Political ideology, an individual's attitude toward social change and equality among people, is most frequently measured along a liberalism-conservatism dimension (Ajmani & Bursik, 2011; Jost et al., 2003). Research has shown that different political views relate differently to various attitudes, values, and belief systems. Liberals appear to support equal-rights policies and legislation, whereas conservatives appear to support traditional and conventional life values (Jost et al., 2003).

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Studies have consistently shown that conservatives score higher on measures of right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1998; Jankowski et al., 2011), which has been found to be related to the endorsement of sexual prejudice (Strain, Martens & Saucier, 2016). Sexual prejudice can be described as negative perceptions of others based on their sexual orientation (Strain et al., 2016). Research has also shown that conservatives are more likely than other political group to express prejudice toward ethnic minorities (Ajmani & Bursik, 2011; Rubinstein, 1995) and gays and lesbians (Ajmani & Bursik, 2011; Rowatt, LaBouff, Johnson, Froese, & Tsang, 2009).

Conservatives appear to endorse a belief in a male dominated society, scoring higher on scales of social dominance than other political groups (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Jankowski et al., 2011). Research has shown that a belief in this form of social hierarchy is correlated to the endorsement of rape myth acceptance (Jankowski et al., 2011; Strain et al., 2016). Based on this past research, it seems reasonable to assume that a more conservative political belief system will correlate to higher rape myth acceptance, and negative reactions to sexual assault. This association was supported in a study that examined the relationship between rape myth acceptance and negative attitudes toward rape victims; higher levels of conservatism were associated to higher rape myth acceptance and more negative attitudes toward rape victims. (Hockett et al., 2009).

### **Gender Roles**

Gender roles have been described as “behaviors and attitudes expected from individuals based on their sex that are learned from the socialization process” (Cowley, 2014, p. 1261). In a culture that depicts men as dominant and women as submissive, this has potential dangerous consequences for perceptions of sexual assault and may play a key role in the issue of victim

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blaming. Many of the intolerant belief systems mentioned above tend to value traditional gender roles. These beliefs have the potential to maintain a gender powered differential, and therefore increase tolerance of prejudice.

Gender role beliefs have often been examined in relation to rape myth acceptance, with numerous studies demonstrating that negative stereotypical attitudes and beliefs toward women are associated with greater rape myth acceptance (e.g., Hockett et al., 2009; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). In one study, sexism, over any other form of intolerance, had the greatest overlap with rape myth acceptance (Aosved & Long, 2006). It has been hypothesized that rape myth acceptance may be used to reinforce the traditional gender role belief in a social hierarchy in which men are dominant over women (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005; Hockett et al., 2009).

A study by Anderson and Lyons (2005) associated rape myth acceptance with traditional gender role beliefs, with those who held more traditional attitudes toward women placing more blame on sexual assault victims. Participants were asked to read a hypothetical rape scenario, and then answer questions regarding the scenario. As opposed to female participants, male participants placed higher blame on rape victims. However, this relationship was mediated by attitudes toward gender roles. Men held significantly more traditional attitudes toward gender roles than did women, accounting for the effect of participant gender on attributions of victim blame. These findings suggest that a person's underlying gender role beliefs, more than their actual gender, have more of an influence on attributions of victim blame.

### **Present Study**

Although there has been much research on sexual assault and RMA, there is still little known about the characteristics of people who hold higher RMA, and even less is known about

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how RMA and other factors come to influence people's perceptions of and reactions to sexual assault victims. While the EST postulates that an interplay of societal, communal, relational and individual factors combine to affect the development of RMA, little is known about the specific predictors which influence the development of attitudes accepting of sexual assault. As Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994, p. 148) point out in their review of the RMA literature, much of what is known about supportive beliefs and high acceptance of RMA "appear to reflect simple common sense." It is important to understand the relationship between RMA and other intolerant beliefs more fully, as well as explore the relationship of RMA and social reactions to victims of sexual assault.

The proposed study will build from an ecological approach and employ a cumulative risk model to examine predictors of perceptions of and reactions to a hypothetical sexual assault victim. From this perspective, it is believed that predominant cultural attitudes facilitate intolerant beliefs. It is thought that the degree to which a person ascribes to individual intolerant beliefs will influence their acceptance of rape myths and perception of sexual assault. The interrelationships between intolerant and oppressive beliefs, RMA and reactions to sexual assault will be examined to increase understanding of factors that influence perception of sexual assault. The study will test a number of specific hypotheses:

**Hypotheses** (Figure 1 displays a model of overall proposed hypotheses)

- 1.) **Dogmatism** (as measured by the DOG scale)
  - a. It is hypothesized that increased scores in dogmatism will be positively associated with increased beliefs in traditional values. Specifically, it is anticipated that higher levels of dogmatism will be related to traditional gender roles (as measured by ASI-SF) and political conservatism (as measured by PCM).

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- b. We also anticipate that higher levels of dogmatism will be associated with increased levels of extrinsic religiosity (as measured by AU I-E), with the strongest relationship being between dogmatism and extrinsic-social religiosity.
- c. Having higher levels of dogmatism is expected to indirectly relate to more negative reactions to the hypothetical sexual assault victim (positive associations with negative social reactions and victim blame, negative associations with positive social reactions and perpetrator blame) via traditional values, extrinsic religiosity, and higher levels of rape myth acceptance (as measured by IRMA-SF).

### 2.) **Traditional Values** (as measured by ASI-SF, PCM)

- a. It is hypothesized that higher scores in traditional values, specifically political conservatism and traditional gender role beliefs, will be related to higher levels of extrinsic-social religiosity.
- b. Having higher levels of traditional values is expected to indirectly relate to more negative reactions to the hypothetical sexual assault victim (positive associations with negative social reactions and victim blame, negative associations with positive social reactions and perpetrator blame) via higher levels of rape myth acceptance (as measured by IRMA-SF).

### 3.) **Religiosity** (as measured by AU I-E)

- a. It is hypothesized that higher levels of extrinsic-social religiosity will be related to more traditional values (i.e., political conservatism and traditional gender role beliefs).

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- b. Having higher levels of extrinsic religiosity (particularly extrinsic-social religiosity) is expected to indirectly relate to more negative reactions to the hypothetical sexual assault victim (positive associations with negative social reactions and victim blame, negative associations with positive social reactions and perpetrator blame) via higher levels of rape myth acceptance.
- 4.) **Rape Myth Acceptance** (as measure by IRMA-SF)
  - a. It is hypothesized that higher levels of rape myth acceptance will be positively associated with negative social reactions and victim blame, and negatively associated with positive social reactions and perpetrator blame.
- 5.) **Cumulative Effects.** Research suggests that intolerant beliefs are made up, in part, of religious intolerance, political intolerance, traditional gender roles and dogmatism. Therefore, levels of intolerant beliefs will be measured using the aforementioned religiosity, gender roles, political conservatism and dogmatism scales.
  - a. We anticipate that the more intolerant beliefs a person has, the higher his or her levels of rape myth acceptance will be. It is hypothesized that each intolerant belief accumulates and will be associated with higher levels of rape myth acceptance.
  - b. Having higher levels of intolerance overall is expected to indirectly relate to more negative reactions to the hypothetical sexual assault victim (positive associations with negative social reactions and victim blame, negative associations with positive social reactions and perpetrator blame) via higher levels of rape myth acceptance.

## Chapter II

### Methods

Participants were recruited through the Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk) website. Inclusion/exclusion criteria required that participants be 18 to 29 years old, able to speak and read English, and reside within the United States. This was a two time point study, and a total of 798 Time 1 (T1) surveys were originally downloaded from Qualtrics. Of these cases, 5 were removed due to substantial missing data, resulting in 793 T1 surveys. Of the T1 participants invited to participate in the Time 2 (T2) survey via TurkPrime and their mTurk worker ID, 597 surveys were originally downloaded from Qualtrics. After merging the data based on unique mTurk code (initials + last four digits of phone number), data was not able to be matched for 338 participants, resulting in 455 cases. Of these cases, there were 3 instances in which participants submitted T2 surveys twice; for these cases, the 2<sup>nd</sup> survey was removed, resulting in 452 cases. Five T2 surveys that were able to be matched, but had substantial missing data were also removed, resulting in a final sample size of 447.

### Participants

Of the 447 participants, 52.5% ( $n = 235$ ) were female and 47.5% ( $n = 213$ ) were male. Participants were between the ages of 18 and 29, with the average age being 25.78 ( $SD = 2.57$ ). The majority (64.1%;  $n = 287$ ) were Caucasian/White, 12.5% ( $n = 56$ ) were African American/Black, 10% ( $n = 45$ ) were Asian or Pacific Islander, 8% ( $n = 36$ ) were Hispanic, 1.1% ( $n = 5$ ) were Native American/American Indian, .4% ( $n = 2$ ) were Arab or Middle Eastern and the remaining 3.8% ( $n = 17$ ) were another ethnicity. In terms of relationship status, 40.4% ( $n =$

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181) were not exclusively dating anyone, 26.8% ( $n = 120$ ) were in an exclusive dating relationship, 18.3% ( $n = 82$ ) were married, 9.2% ( $n = 41$ ) were cohabitating, 4.5% ( $n = 20$ ) were engaged and the remaining participants were either divorced (.4%,  $n = 2$ ), separated (.2%,  $n = 1$ ) or asexual (.2%,  $n = 1$ ). The majority of participants were employed (81.9%,  $n = 367$ ), and 25.9% ( $n = 116$ ) were students.

Of the participants, 29.5% ( $n = 132$ ) identified as Atheist or Nonbeliever, 22.8% ( $n = 102$ ) as Protestant, 15.2% ( $n = 68$ ) as No Preference, 13.4% ( $n = 60$ ) as Catholic, 10.3% ( $n = 46$ ) as Other, 4.5% ( $n = 20$ ) as Fundamentalist or Evangelical Christian, 2.2% ( $n = 10$ ) as Jewish and 2.0% ( $n = 9$ ) as Muslim (Islamic). Overall, 44.3% ( $n = 198$ ) of participants responded that religion was “Not at all important,” 55.3% ( $n = 247$ ) “Never” attend religious activities, 44.7% ( $n = 200$ ) “Never” engage in private prayer and 61.3% ( $n = 274$ ) “Never” engage in private scripture reading. Regarding political party affiliation, 21% ( $n = 94$ ) of the participants identified as Strong Democrat, 19.9% ( $n = 89$ ) as Weak Democrat, 20.1% ( $n = 90$ ) as Independent Democrat, 19.2% ( $n = 86$ ) as Independent, 8.1% ( $n = 36$ ) as Weak Republican, 6% ( $n = 27$ ) as Independent Republican and 5.6% ( $n = 25$ ) as Strong Republican.

### **Procedure**

The study was reviewed and approved by the University of Michigan-Dearborn IRB. Participants accessed the study through a description posted on the Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) website requesting participation for those who are eligible and interested. Participants were first required to fill out a screening questionnaire to assess eligibility for the study based on inclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria specified that participants must be living in the U.S. and be between the ages of 18 and 29. Those who did not meet inclusion criteria were exited out of the survey and thanked for their interest in the study. Those who met inclusion criteria were then

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granted access to a link to a Qualtrics survey which began with an informed consent document detailing their rights as a research participant, their potential loss of anonymity, and the purpose of the study. Those who did not consent were thanked for their interest in the study and sent back to the mTurk website. Participants who respond “yes” were then able to continue on to complete the survey.

This thesis is part of a larger project examining rape myth acceptance and reactions to sexual assault victims using the media practice model. During T1, participants completed the demographic questionnaire as well as measures assessing attitudes and beliefs regarding a number of issues. For the purpose of this thesis, these measures included the Political Conservatism Measure (PCM; Kim & Tidwell, 2014), the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance – Short Form (IRMA - SF; Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999), the Dogmatism Scale (DOG; Altemeyer, 1996), the Ambivalent Sexism – Short Form (ASI-SF; Glick & Whitehead, 2010), and the Age-Universal I-E Scale – 12 (AU I E; Maltby, 1999). Upon successful completion of the survey, participants received a confirmation code which they were required to input upon their return to the MTurk site. Participants were compensated \$4.00 for the T1 survey. Funding was received from UM-Dearborn Scholars Grant, the UM-Dearborn Clinical Health Psychology Master’s Program and discretionary funds from Dr. Pam McAuslan, the PI on the larger project.

Participants who successfully completed the initial survey were contacted through MTurk with an invitation to participate in a second survey approximately one month later (average length of time between surveys was 33.08 days;  $SD = 8.59$ ). For the T2 survey, participants provided informed consent and were then presented with three hypothetical scenarios and asked about their reactions to the situations (scenarios, modified SRQ and attributions of responsibility can be found in Appendix I). Participants were asked think about how they would react to a close

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friend under the circumstances and then indicate the response that best reflects their feelings.

Scenario one is a filler scenario which describes the participant's hypothetical friend as having been involved in a car accident after a night of drinking. Both the hypothetical friend and the other driver involved in the accident had been drinking, and are hospitalized with serious, but not life-threatening injuries. The third scenario is another filler scenario and describes a hypothetical robbery. The participant's hypothetical friend discloses that she was robbed in an unattended parking lot following a night spent at the casino. The hypothetical friend was not physically hurt, but discloses that she feels emotionally shaken.

Scenario two was used to assess reactions to and perceptions of a hypothetical sexual assault. The scenario was developed by building from past research assessing perceptions of social reactions to sexual assault from a victim's perspective (Relyea & Ullman, 2015; Ullman, 2000) as well as research which assessed perceptions of and reactions to sexual assault depending on specific victim and perpetrator characteristics (McAuslan, 2005; Untied et al., 2012). The scenario describes the participant's friend as disclosing a sexual assault which took place between her and the man she has been dating for the past two months. The hypothetical victim explains that she repeatedly told the male that she did not want to have sex, but he continued to pressure her until she stopped talking and intercourse occurred. Participants then reported on victim/perpetrator responsibility and their likelihood of providing positive or negative responses to the victim.

Upon successful completion of the survey, participants received a confirmation code which they were required to input upon their return to the MTurk site. Participants were compensated \$1.50 for completion of the T2 survey. Responses were anonymous with no names

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or identifying information linked to the study data. The Qualtrics survey did not associate the surveys with IP addresses.

### Measures

**Demographic Variables** (Appendix A) A demographics questionnaire was completed by all the participants to acquire the basic demographic details and general background information. Relevant information, such as the participants' age, gender, country of residence, ethnicity, relationship status, employment status and education level were included in the questionnaire.

**Dogmatism.** (Appendix B) The Dogmatism (DOG) Scale (Altemeyer, 1996) was used to measure dogmatism, which can be conceptualized as “relatively unchangeable, unjustified certainty about the truth of one’s beliefs” (Altemeyer, 1996, p. 201). The DOG is a 22-item scale, containing 11 pro-dogmatism items and 11 anti-dogmatism items. Responses were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate greater dogmatism. The scale has been found to have strong internal reliability, with an alpha coefficient of around .90 (Crowson, DeBacker & Davis, 2008). Cronbach’s coefficient alpha in the present study was .93.

**Political Views / Political Intolerance.** Participants were asked to identify their political party affiliation using a 7-point scale where 1 = *Strong Democrat*, 2 = *Weak Democrat*, 3 = *Independent Democrat*, 4 = *Independent*, 5 = *Independent Republican*, 6 = *Weak Republican*, and 7 = *Strong Republican* (ICPSR, 2008) (Appendix C). The Political Conservatism Measure (PCM; Kim & Tidwell, 2014) (Appendix D) was used to assess political orientation. The measure consists of four items describing political party preference, political outlook regarding economic issues, political outlook regarding social issues and political outlook regarding foreign policy issues. All items are rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*very liberal*) to 7 (*very*

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*conservative*). Cronbach's alpha for the PCM was .90 in the original study (Kim & Tidwell, 2014). In the present study, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .94. Higher scores on the scale indicate a greater politically conservative orientation.

**Gender Roles.** (Appendix E) The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory – Short Form (ASI-SF; Glick & Whitehead, 2010) was used to measure traditional gender role beliefs, including hostile and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism is conceptualized as an overt form of sexism, characterized by resentment toward women who fail to conform to traditional gender roles (Glick & Fiske, 1996). On the other hand, benevolent sexism is more covert, often being based on stereotypes, and can be understood as a subjectively positive but patronizing attitude toward women who embrace traditional gender roles, (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The ASI-SF consists of 12 items, and responses are measured using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Psychometrics have shown to be adequately reliable in past studies, with benevolent sexism resulting in an alpha level of .77, hostile sexism producing an alpha level of .78 (Glick & Whitehead, 2010) and the overall scale resulting in alphas of up to .92 (Glick & Fiske, 1996). In the current study alpha for the overall scale was .90. Higher scores indicate higher levels of sexism.

**Religiosity / Religious Intolerance.** Participants answered four commonly used items to assess religiosity (Roberts, 1998). First, participants were asked to identify their religious affiliation. They were then asked how important their religion is to them, measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Not at All Important*) to 5 (*Extremely Important*). Next, they were asked to rate how often they engage in worship or attend religious activities, as well as how often they engage in scripture reading; these were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 7 (*Daily*). (Appendix F)

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The Age-Universal Intrinsic-Extrinsic Scale (AU I-E; Maltby, 1999) (Appendix G) was used to measure religious orientation. The scale consists of 12 items measuring three dimensions of religiosity: intrinsic; extrinsic-personal; extrinsic-social. Intrinsic religiosity can be described as someone living their religion, or a religious orientation that is deeply personal to an individual. Extrinsic religiosity-personal is understood as using “religion as a source of comfort,” whereas extrinsic religiosity-social is understood as viewing “religion as a social gain” (Maltby, 1999, p. 408). Responses to items are rated on a 3-point scale: 1 (*Yes*); 2 (*Not Certain*); 3 (*No*). For the purpose of this study, hypotheses focused specifically on extrinsic-social religiosity. Past research has found the scale to be adequately reliable, with an alpha of .73 (Gorsuch and Venable, 1983). Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for the current study for the extrinsic religiosity-social sub-scale was .86. For the purpose of analysis, the scale was recoded for higher scores to indicate greater affiliation with extrinsic religiosity.

**Rape Myth Acceptance.** (Appendix H) The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale – Short Form (IRMA - SF; Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999) was used to assess general rape myth acceptance. The IRMA-SF is a 19-item scale and responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Past psychometric analyses revealed that the IRMA-SF possesses an alpha of .87 (Payne et al., 1999). The current study resulted in an alpha of .94. Higher scores indicate higher levels of rape myth acceptance.

**Social Reactions.** (Appendix I) A modified version of the Social Reactions Questionnaire (SRQ) (Ullman, 2000) was utilized to assess bystander reactions and perceptions. The SRQ was originally designed to assess how often victims of sexual assault personally received various social reactions when disclosing a sexual assault experience. Although the present study uses a similar strategy to Untied and Relyea (2012), the SRQ (Ullman, 2002) and

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an earlier unpublished study by McAuslan (2005) served as the basis for the creation of the modified SRQ. For the purpose of this study, the scale was modified to assess how bystanders might respond to sexual assault disclosure from a hypothetical sexual assault victim.

Consistent with the SRQ (Ullman, 2000), items were used to assess both positive (reactions thought to be beneficial) and negative (reactions thought to be harmful) social reactions to sexual assault, however items were altered to assess a bystander's perspective of a sexual assault scenario, as opposed to a victim's perspective. Past research has divided negative social reactions in to further subscales based on how they are perceived by victims, and how they impact post assault experiences (Ullman, 2000; Relyea & Ullman, 2015; Untied et al., 2012). Negative reactions have been divided in to subscales of Victim Blame (4 items), Treat Differently (7 items), Egocentric Reactions (3 items), Distractions/Discourage Talking (5 items) and Taking Control (4 items), and positive social reactions have been divided in to the subscales of Emotional Support/Belief (15 items) and Tangible Aid/Informational Support (4 items).

Consistent with past research, the current study also utilized two scales to assess positive and negative social reactions. The positive social reaction scale included Emotional Support/Belief (e.g. To what extent would you tell her she is not to blame) and Tangible Aid/Information (e.g. To what extent would you help her find resources) and had an alpha of .95. For the purpose of this study, the negative social reaction scale consisted of Victim Blame (e.g. To what extend would you tell her she wasn't cautious enough), Treat Differently (e.g. To what extend would you stay away from her for a while) and Distractions/Discourage Talking (e.g. To what extent would you tell her to stop thinking about it) and had an alpha of .90. Participants rated the extent to which they believe they would provide the various responses to the hypothetical victim on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*).

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Egocentric Reactions and Taking Control were removed from analyses due to low reliability and factor loadings. The low reliability and factor loadings may be a result of the mixed positive and negative aspects of these two subscales, which is also supported by past research (Relyea & Ullman, 2015; Untied et al., 2012).

**Attributions of Responsibility.** (Appendix I) Six follow-up items measured attributions of responsibility to the hypothetical sexual assault victim or perpetrator. Participants were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Not at All*) to 5 (*Completely*) the extent to which they attribute responsibility to either the hypothetical victim or perpetrator. The items assessing allocation of victim responsibility are: 1.) To what extent do you believe she is responsible for what happened? 2.) To what extent do you believe she should have known better than to trust him? 3.) To what extent do you believe she shouldn't have been alone with him at his apartment? Alpha of the three items was .80. The items assessing of allocation of perpetrator responsibility are: 1.) To what extent do you believe he is responsible for what happened? 2.) To what extent do you believe he took advantage of her? 3.) To what extent do you believe he shouldn't have pushed her to have sex? The three items resulted in alpha of .77.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Results**

Prior to data analysis, data from T1 and T2 was merged based on unique mTurk codes. Cases with substantial missing data were removed, resulting in a total of sample size of 447. For cases in which there were missing scale items, an average score was calculated using the total score of the scale items, divided by number of items answered. Skewness and kurtosis were examined, and no significant issues with the distribution of the data was found. Basic descriptive statistics were run for all variables; Table 1 provides the means, standard deviations and range for all the T1 and T2 variables used for analysis.

#### **Correlations**

Correlations for all T1 and T2 variables can be found in Table 1. As hypothesized, traditional gender role beliefs, political conservatism, extrinsic-social religiosity and dogmatism were all positively correlated with one another; the strongest correlation was between traditional gender role beliefs and political conservatism. As expected, traditional gender role beliefs, political conservatism, extrinsic-social religiosity and dogmatism were all positively correlated with RMA; the strongest correlation was between traditional gender role beliefs and RMA. RMA was positively correlated to NSR, and negatively correlated to PSR, suggesting that higher levels of RMA relate to more NSR and less PSR to sexual assault disclosure. RMA was also positively correlated to victim responsibility and negatively correlated to perpetrator

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responsibility, suggesting that higher levels of RMA are associated with higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame.

### **Examining the Individual Contributions of Dogmatism, Political Conservatism, Traditional Gender Role Beliefs, Extrinsic-Social Religiosity to RMA and Reactions to A Hypothetical Sexual Assault Victim**

To test the direct and indirect effects of dogmatism, political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs and extrinsic religiosity on RMA and reactions to a hypothetical sexual assault victim, mediation analyses using a PROCESS macro were run (Hayes, 2013). Specifically, Hayes' Model 6 was used within the PROCESS macro to run the multiple mediation analyses for dogmatism, and Hayes' Model 4 was used to run the analyses for political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs and extrinsic-social religiosity.

#### **Dogmatism**

To test the hypothesis that dogmatism would have an indirect effect on reactions to sexual assault via traditional gender role beliefs, political conservatism, extrinsic-social religiosity and RMA, four separate mediation analyses were run. For all analyses, dogmatism was input as the predictor variable and the serial mediators were political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs, extrinsic-social religiosity and RMA; the different reaction variables (NSR, PSR, victim blame and perpetrator blame) were input as the respective output variables in the separate analyses. Results confirmed that higher levels of dogmatism were significantly positively related to higher levels of political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs and extrinsic religiosity.

For the NSR analysis, the overall model was found to be significant  $F(5, 441) = 44.91, p < .001; R = .58, R^2 = .34$ . Figure 2 displays significant direct effects and the strength of each

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pathway. There was no direct effect between dogmatism and RMA; however, there is a small but significant direct effect between dogmatism and NSR ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .05$ ), suggesting that higher dogmatism is associated with more NSR. The analysis confirmed that higher levels of political conservatism are directly related to more traditional gender role beliefs ( $\beta = .27$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Higher levels of traditional gender role beliefs were found to be directly related to higher levels of extrinsic religiosity ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ ), greater RMA ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and more NSR ( $\beta = .09$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Higher levels of extrinsic social religiosity were found to be directly related to both higher levels of RMA ( $\beta = .09$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and more NSR ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .001$ ). There was no direct effect found between political conservatism and extrinsic social religiosity, RMA or NSR.

The total indirect effect ( $\beta = .14$ , 95% CI = .09, .19) of the mediating variables between dogmatism and NSR was significant, supporting the hypothesis that dogmatism works first through political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs and extrinsic-social religiosity, and then through RMA to influence negative social reactions to sexual assault. There were ten other pathways through which significant indirect effects were found; interestingly, the two largest pathways both involved the mediating effect of traditional gender role beliefs. One relatively large indirect effect followed the path from dogmatism, to traditional gender role beliefs, to RMA to NSR ( $\beta = .04$ , 95% CI = .02, .06). The second largest indirect effect was from dogmatism, to traditional gender role beliefs, to NSR ( $\beta = .03$ , 95% CI = .00, .06). The results suggest traditional gender role beliefs mediate the relationship between dogmatism and NSR both with and without the mediating effect of RMA.

For the victim blame analysis, the overall model was found to be significant,  $F(5, 440) = 51.91$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $R = .61$ ,  $R^2 = .37$ . Figure 3 displays significant direct effects, as well as the

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strength of each pathway. Consistent with the NSR model, there was no direct effect between dogmatism and RMA, however there is a significant direct effect between dogmatism and victim blame ( $\beta = .11$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that higher dogmatism is associated with higher levels of victim blame. Also consistent with the NSR model, political conservatism was found to have a direct relationship with traditional gender role beliefs ( $\beta = .27$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but not with extrinsic social religiosity, RMA or victim blame. As with the NSR analysis, more traditional gender role beliefs are related to higher levels of extrinsic social religiosity ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ ), RMA ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and victim blame ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Higher levels of extrinsic social religiosity directly relate to higher RMA ( $\beta = .09$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and has a marginally significant positive relationship with victim blame ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p = .06$ ).

The overall indirect effect of dogmatism on victim blame was found to be significant ( $\beta = .20$ , 95% CI = .14, .25), supporting the hypothesis that dogmatism works first through political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs and extrinsic social religiosity, and then through RMA to influence perceptions of victim blame. There were seven additional pathways through which significant indirect effects were found, and consistent with the NSR model, two of the pathways that explained the largest amount of variability contained traditional gender role beliefs. The largest indirect effect followed the path from dogmatism to traditional gender roles to victim blame ( $\beta = .08$ , 95% CI = .05, .13); the second largest followed the path from dogmatism, to traditional gender role beliefs, to RMA, to victim blame ( $\beta = .04$ , 95% CI = .02, .06). The results indicate that traditional gender role beliefs and RMA partially mediate the overall relationship between dogmatism and victim blame, and account for more variance than the other mediating variables.

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The overall models for both PSR,  $F(5, 441) = 23.37, p < .001; R = .46, R^2 = .21$ , and perpetrator blame,  $F(5, 441) = 24.24, p < .001; R = .46, R^2 = .22$ , were also found to be significant. Consistent with NSR and victim blame, neither model showed a direct effect from dogmatism to RMA, however a direct effect was found from dogmatism to PSR ( $\beta = -.12, SE = .04, p < .01$ ); there was no significant direct effect between dogmatism and perpetrator blame. Similar to NSR and victim blame, the most significant indirect effects for the PSR and perpetrator blame models also included traditional gender role beliefs as a mediating variable, suggesting that maintaining traditional views of men and women's roles mediates the relationship between dogmatism and reactions to sexual assault victims.

### **Political Conservatism**

To test the hypothesis that political conservatism would indirectly relate to reactions to sexual assault victims (more negative social reactions, fewer positive social reactions, more victim blame, less perpetrator blame) via higher levels of RMA, four separate analyses were run. For all analyses, political conservatism was input as the predictor variable and RMA was the mediating variable; the different reaction variables (NSR, PSR, victim blame and perpetrator blame) were input as the respective output variables in the separate analyses. In all analyses, a significant direct effect was found between political conservatism and RMA ( $\beta = .11, SE = .02, p < .001$ ).

Figure 4 displays the significant direct effects for PSR. As can be seen in the figure, the overall model was significant  $F(2, 444) = 49.34, p < .001, R = .43, R^2 = .18$ . A significant direct effect was found from political conservatism to PSR ( $\beta = -.06, SE = .02, p < .01$ ), such that higher levels of political conservatism are associated with fewer positive social reactions. A significant direct effect was also found from RMA to PSR ( $\beta = -.49, SE = .06, p < .001$ ). An

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indirect effect was found from political conservatism, to RMA, to PSR ( $\beta = -.05$ , 95% CI =  $-.08, -.03$ ), suggesting that RMA mediates the relationship between political conservatism and PSR.

The overall models for NSR,  $F(2, 444) = 88.74, p < .001, R = .53, R^2 = .29$ , victim blame  $F(2, 443) = 82.55, p < .001, R = .52, R^2 = .27$ , and perpetrator blame,  $F(2, 444) = 56.26, p < .001, R = .45, R^2 = .20$ , were also found to be significant. As with the NSR analysis, significant direct effects were found from both political conservatism and RMA to the different reactions. Results were such that higher levels of political conservatism were associated to more NSR, more victim blame and less perpetrator blame. Each analysis also resulted in a significant indirect effect from political conservatism, to RMA, to the respective reactions. These results confirm that acceptance of rape myths mediates the relationship between political conservatism and reactions to sexual assault.

### **Traditional Gender Role Beliefs**

To test the hypothesis that traditional gender role beliefs would have an indirect effect on reactions to sexual assault via RMA, four separate analyses were run. For all four analyses, traditional gender role beliefs was input as the predictor variable and RMA was the mediating variable; the different reactions to sexual assault (NSR, PSR, victim blame and perpetrator blame) were input as the respective output variables in the separate analyses. A significant direct effect was found between traditional gender role beliefs and RMA in all four analyses ( $\beta = .32, SE = .02, p < .001$ ).

Significant direct effects for NSR are modeled in Figure 5. The overall model was found to be significant  $F(2, 443) = 99.15, p < .001, R = .56, R^2 = .31$ . There was a significant direct effect from traditional gender role beliefs to NSR ( $\beta = .15, SE = .03, p < .001$ ), suggesting that

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higher levels of traditional gender role beliefs are associated with more negative social reactions to sexual assault. Results confirmed that higher levels of RMA are associated with more NSR ( $\beta = .46, SE = .06, p < .001$ ). A significant indirect effect from traditional gender role beliefs, to RMA, to NSR was found ( $\beta = .14, 95\% CI = .09, .20$ ), suggesting that RMA mediates the relationship between traditional gender role beliefs and NSR.

Consistent with the NSR model, the analyses for PSR,  $F(2, 442) = 46.43, p < .001, R = .42, R^2 = .17$ , victim blame,  $F(2, 443) = 121.28, p < .001, R = .59, R^2 = .35$ , and perpetrator blame  $F(2, 444) = 56.91, p < .001, R = .45, R^2 = .20$ , also resulted in overall significant models. Similar to the NSR analysis, direct effects were found from both traditional gender role beliefs and RMA to the different reactions. Overall, results indicate that maintaining traditional gender role beliefs relate to more negative and less positive reactions to sexual assault disclosure. Also, each analysis resulted in an indirect effect from traditional gender role beliefs, to RMA, to the respective reaction, confirming that the acceptance of rape myths mediates the relationship between traditional gender role beliefs and reactions to sexual assault.

### **Extrinsic-Social Religiosity**

To test the hypothesis that extrinsic-social religiosity would have an indirect effect on reactions to sexual assault via RMA, four mediation analyses were run with the respective reactions as the output variables; for each analysis, extrinsic-social religiosity was input as the predictor variable, with RMA as the mediating variable. A significant direct effect was found between extrinsic-social religiosity and RMA in all four analyses ( $\beta = .30, SE = .05, p < .001$ ).

The overall model for victim blame was found to be significant,  $F(2, 443) = 85.85, p < .001, R = .53, R^2 = .28$ . Figure 6 models the significant direct effects found in the analysis. A significant direct effect was found from extrinsic-social religiosity to victim blame ( $\beta = .27, SE =$

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.07,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that higher levels of extrinsic-social religiosity relates to more victim blame. Results also confirmed an association between RMA and victim blame ( $\beta = .71$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ ). There was a significant indirect effect from extrinsic-social religiosity, to RMA, to victim blame ( $\beta = .21$ , 95% CI = .12, .32), suggesting that RMA mediates the relationship between extrinsic-social religiosity and victim blame.

Analyses for PSR,  $F(2, 444) = 48.71$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R = .42$ ,  $R^2 = .18$ , NSR,  $F(2, 444) = 98.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R = .55$ ,  $R^2 = .31$ , and perpetrator blame,  $F(2, 444) = 59.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R = .46$ ,  $R^2 = .21$ , also resulted in overall significant models. Similar patterns as were found in the victim blame analysis were also found for PSR, NSR and perpetrator blame. Each analysis resulted in significant direct effects from both extrinsic-social religiosity and RMA to the respective reactions. Results went in a direction such that higher levels of both extrinsic-social religiosity and RMA were associated with more negative reactions and less positive reactions to sexual assault. Significant indirect effects were also found from extrinsic-social religiosity, to RMA, to the different reactions, suggesting that the acceptance of rape myths mediates the relationship between extrinsic-social religiosity and reactions to sexual assault.

### **Cumulative Effects**

Based on past research which supports that traditional gender role beliefs, political conservatism, extrinsic-social religiosity and dogmatism all relate in part to an intolerant belief system, the measures were combined to create an overall measure of intolerance. Based on their frequency distributions, and range of response options, the PCM, DOG and ASI scales were all recoded in to three different groups, and the AU I-E scale was recoded into two groups to represent levels of intolerance. Higher scores on each scale are associated with higher levels of each respective construct, and therefore hypothesized to be related to higher levels of

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intolerance. A breakdown of the different groups can be found in Table 2. Based on the proposed hypothesis that each intolerant belief accumulates and will be associated with higher levels of rape myth acceptance, the combined measure was used to assess cumulative risk of RMA. As can be seen in Table 3, the hypothesis was supported, and there is a significant positive correlation between the combined cumulative risk measure and RMA, suggesting that the more intolerant beliefs a person holds, the higher their level of RMA.

It was also hypothesized that having higher levels of intolerance will indirectly relate to more negative reactions to the hypothetical sexual assault victim (more negative social reactions, fewer positive social reactions, more victim blame, less perpetrator blame) via higher levels of rape myth acceptance. To test this hypothesis, a series of analyses using the PROCESS macro were run with cumulative risk as the primary predictor, RMA as the mediating variable and the four respective reactions to sexual assault (PSR, NSR, perpetrator blame, victim blame) as the outcome variable (Hayes, 2013). Specifically, Hayes' Model 4 was used within the PROCESS macros to assess whether RMA mediated the relationship between cumulative risk and reactions to sexual assault. Overall, all four models were found to be significant, and results for each analysis confirmed that cumulative risk is directly related to RMA ( $\beta = .16, SE = .01, p < .001$ ).

Significant direct effects for PSR can be found in Figure 7. The analysis predicting PSR found that cumulative risk has a significant direct effect on positive social reactions ( $\beta = -.09, SE = .02, p < .001$ ). It was confirmed that higher levels of RMA relate to lower levels of positive social reactions ( $\beta = -.40, SE = .07, p < .001$ ). An indirect effect from cumulative risk, to RMA, to PSR was found ( $\beta = -.07, 95\% CI = -.09, -.04$ ), suggesting that RMA mediates the relationship between cumulative risk and positive social reactions to sexual assault.

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Significant direct effects for NSR can be found in Figure 8. A significant direct effect was found from cumulative risk to NSR ( $\beta = .10, SE = .02, p < .001$ ). A direct effect between RMA and NSR ( $\beta = .46, SE = .05, p < .001$ ) was found. An indirect effect from cumulative risk, to RMA, to NSR was found ( $\beta = .07, 95\% CI = .05, .10$ ), suggesting that RMA mediates the relationship between cumulative risk and negative social reactions to sexual assault.

Significant direct effects for victim blame are modeled in Figure 9. Analysis resulted in a direct effect from cumulative risk to victim blame ( $\beta = .18, SE = .02, p < .001$ ). Results confirmed that higher levels of RMA significantly related to higher levels of victim blame, and a direct effect between the two variables was found ( $\beta = .51, SE = .07, p < .001$ ). There is an indirect effect from cumulative risk, to RMA, to victim blame ( $\beta = .08, 95\% CI = .05, .11$ ), suggesting that RMA mediates the relationship between cumulative risk and victim blame.

Figure 10 models significant direct effects for perpetrator blame. In the analysis, cumulative risk was found to have a significant direct effect on perpetrator blame ( $\beta = -.04, SE = .02, p < .05$ ). Results confirmed a significant negative association between RMA and perpetrator blame, and a direct effect between the variables was found ( $\beta = -.49, SE = .06, p < .001$ ). An indirect relationship from cumulative risk, to RMA, to perpetrator blame was found ( $\beta = -.08, 95\% CI = -.11, -.05$ ), suggesting that RMA mediates the relationship between cumulative risk and perpetrator blame.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Discussion**

The occurrence of sexual assault is very prevalent in today's society, with research suggesting that up to 25% of women experience rape throughout their lifetimes (Fisher et al., 2000; Jozkowski, 2015). Females in emerging adulthood (ages 18-29), specifically college females, are at a higher risk than other populations, with up to 54% of college females reporting they have experienced some form of sexual assault (Koss & Gidycz, 1985; Abbey, 2002). The high prevalence of sexual assault is a social and public health issue, and has shown to have negative lifelong consequences for victims. (Flack et al., 2007; Krebs et al., 2007; Turchik & Hassija, 2014).

Not only does sexual assault itself have negative consequences, but negative social reactions to sexual assault disclosure have also been shown to have similar consequences for victims as the assault itself (Relyea & Ullman, 2015). The SRQ examines the reactions victims receive after disclosing sexual assault, and differentiates between different categories of positive and negative social reactions (Ullman, 2000; Relyea & Ullman, 2015). While much research has focused on sexual assault victims' perceptions of assault and the social reactions they receive, far less research has examined what informs the stigma regarding sexual assault, and the negative attitudes that coincide. Untied and colleagues (2012) helped to advance research in this area when they modified the SRQ to examine social reactions from a bystander's perceptions.

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In the current sociopolitical climate, where the acceptance of sexual assault is portrayed from a cultural to individual level, it is extremely important to better understand the factors that lead to the development of attitudes accepting of sexual assault, and consequentially to negative reactions to sexual assault disclosure. The present study built from the EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to examine both distal and proximal factors that influence perceptions of and reactions to sexual assault. An ecological systems approach has been employed in past studies seeking to examine rape myth acceptance and perceptions of sexual assault (e.g., Aosved & Long, 2006; Messman-Moore & Long, 2002; White & Koss, 1993). When taking an ecological systems approach, the influence of individual, relationship, community and societal factors are considered.

The present study has a unique focus on the influence of cultural values on individual beliefs regarding sexual assault. Building from research by Aosved and Long (2006), the present study focused on cultural values which have been found to be related to the construct of intolerance. Specifically, dogmatism, political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs, extrinsic-social religiosity and RMA, which have all been found to relate to an overall intolerant and oppressive belief system, were examined (Aosved & Long, 2006; Hockett et al., 2009; Jankowski et al., 2011). The present study sought to further this line of research by examining not only the relationship between intolerance and RMA, but social reactions to sexual assault disclosure as well. Further, the goal of the present study was to build from EST using a cumulative risk approach to examine the relationship and predictive nature of intolerant beliefs on bystanders' perceptions of RMA, and ultimately, social reactions to sexual assault disclosure.

### **Dogmatism**

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It was expected that higher levels of dogmatism would be associated with increased beliefs in traditional values, as measured by political conservatism and traditional gender role beliefs, and increased levels of extrinsic-social religiosity. Consistent with past literature, results of the present study support this hypothesis, with significant positive correlations found between dogmatism and traditional gender role beliefs, political conservatism, and extrinsic-social religiosity. Given that each of the aforementioned beliefs have been found to relate to intolerance individually, results of this study support the assumption that dogmatism is related to an overall oppressive and intolerant belief system (Aosved & Long, 2006; Jankowski et al., 2011). It makes sense that in a climate that is accepting of sexual assault, a person with higher levels of dogmatism and intolerance could more easily ascribe to these beliefs and develop attitudes more accepting of sexual assault.

It was also expected that higher levels of dogmatism would indirectly relate to more negative reactions and less positive reactions to a hypothetical sexual assault victim, with the relationship mediated by political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs, extrinsic-social religiosity and RMA. Results supported the hypothesis, and multiple mediating effects were found between dogmatism and reactions to sexual assault. The results not only strengthen the assumption that dogmatism is directly related to other intolerant beliefs (Ajmani & Bursik, 2011; Aosved & Long, 2006; Jankowski et al., 2011), but are unique in suggesting that these intolerant beliefs interact with one another to affect reactions to sexual assault disclosure. These findings help to better understand what influences a person's perceptions of and reactions to sexual assault. Furthermore, the results of this study suggest that dogmatism may be a stepping stone for intolerance, and a person who holds higher levels of dogmatism could be at a heightened risk for ascribing to values and beliefs that predict negative reactions to sexual assault victims.

### **Traditional Values (Political Conservatism and Traditional Gender Role Beliefs)**

It was expected that higher levels of traditional values (as measured by political conservatism and traditional gender role beliefs) would be associated with higher levels of extrinsic-social religiosity. As predicted, being more politically conservative and having more traditional gender role beliefs was significantly related to greater extrinsic-social religiosity. It should be noted that political conservatism and traditional gender role beliefs were classified as traditional values, as both have been shown to be influenced by conventional life values, such as traditionalism and conformity (Jankowski et al., 2011). While this study did find a large positive correlation between political conservatism and traditional gender role beliefs ( $r = .47$ ), as well as similar relationships to many of the other variables in the study, both the size of the correlation coefficient and the overall results of this study suggest that they are independent constructs. Conventional life values seem to be a common thread between political conservatism and traditional gender role beliefs, it is important to keep in mind that while these concepts have considerable overlap, they are not interchangeable, and traditional gender role beliefs and political conservatism seem to relate to RMA and reactions to sexual assault in distinct ways.

### **Traditional Gender Role Beliefs**

In the present study, the most consistent and strongest pattern of direct and indirect effects predicting more negative and victim blaming responses to the hypothetical victim involved traditional gender role beliefs. Research has suggested that rape myth acceptance may be used to reinforce the traditional gender role belief in a social hierarchy in which men are dominant over women (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005; Hockett et al., 2009). It has also been found that a greater belief in traditional gender roles is related to other negative outcomes for

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females, such as body shame, self-silencing behaviors, hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism (Eliason, Hall, Anderson & Willingham, 2017). When taking a traditional view of gender roles, men are meant to be masculine, dominant, aggressive, while women are meant to be gentle, submissive and subordinate. Being immersed in a culture that values and promotes these traditional gender roles could explain the acceptance of rape myths and victim blame; an individual absorbs the patriarchal assumptions of male dominance that serve to diminish female autonomy – physical aggression is a form of enforcing dominance, and is therefore seen as a patriarchal right (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

Research by Cowley (2014) builds from the idea of gender processes, and explains that gender norms, sex scripts and rape myths all serve to normalize male dominance and violence against women. In the study, college students were interviewed about their conceptualization of unwanted sexual contact, specifically unwanted sexual contact involving alcohol use (Cowley, 2014). The study found that participants ascribed to gender norms and sex scripts, describing women as “sexual gatekeepers,” and men as “sexually aggressive,” and used victim blaming as a means of justifying sexual assault (Cowley, 2014, p. 1266). Findings from the present study are consistent with the past literature, and show that belief in traditional gender roles of men and women predict rape myth acceptance, victim blame and less empathic responses to victims of sexual assault.

### **Political Conservatism**

Similar to the other intolerant beliefs examined in this study, political conservatism was found to be positively associated with higher levels of RMA and more negative reactions to sexual assault disclosure. As mentioned earlier, political conservatism has been associated with the belief in traditional and conventional life values and social dominance orientation, or the

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belief in a social hierarchy (Ajmani & Bursik, 2010; Jost et al., 2003). This belief in a social hierarchy in which men are dominant over women is a common theme found among the intolerant beliefs in the present study, and may suggest that traditional gender role beliefs are predictive of political conservatism.

This is supported by both the social dominance theory and the legitimization hypothesis, which stipulates that within a politically conservative ideology there is a motivation to maintain traditional power differences between dominant and nondominant groups (Lambert & Raichle, 2000). When considering sexual assault as an attempt to establish power and exert dominance, rather than purely a sexual act, it is reasonable to predict that someone who is more motivated to uphold the hierarchical relationship between dominant versus nondominant groups would be more likely to have more negative reactions to victims of sexual assault and hold higher levels of victim blame (Brownmiller, 1975; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

However, to fully understand the complexity of the relationship between political conservatism and RMA and negative reactions to sexual assault disclosure, the construct should be further broken down. Similar to religiosity, political conservatism is composed of different domains which may be influenced by different motivations. For example, within political conservatism are outlooks on social, economic and foreign policy issues, and a person may ascribe more strongly to one or more issues than another. It would be beneficial to examine the relationships between these individual outlooks of political conservatism and RMA and social reactions to gain a better understanding of the associations found in this study. It would also be beneficial to better understand personality characteristics that influence political ideology.

### **Extrinsic-Social Religiosity**

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It was expected that higher levels of extrinsic-social religiosity would be related to more traditional gender role beliefs and higher levels of political conservatism. This hypothesis was supported and a significant relationship between the variables was found. It is important to note that a direction was not predicted, but rather an overall relationship between the variables. Similar to political conservatism and traditional gender role beliefs, extrinsic religiosity has been found to be influenced by conventional life values (Jankowski et al., 2011). Research has also found that there is a relationship between traditional gender roles and religious fundamentalism, and it has been found that increased beliefs in traditional gender roles relates to biblical beliefs about gender, specifically a more hierarchical view of gender in which males are more dominant than females (Eliason et al., 2017).

It was also expected that higher levels of extrinsic-social religiosity would indirectly relate to more negative reactions to sexual assault via higher levels of RMA. Results supported this hypothesis, and RMA was found to play a significant mediating role between extrinsic-social religiosity and social reactions to sexual assault. These findings are important, as they show an association beyond religion and individual beliefs, suggesting that people who have higher levels of extrinsic-social religiosity may be more likely to react to sexual assault victims in ways which have found to have negative consequences. Also, a motivating factor within extrinsic-social religiosity is the social element of fellowship; this strong ascription to fellowship and a desire for group status within a culture that values traditional masculinity may lead to the reinforcement of attitudes accepting of sexual assault and negative social reactions.

Past research has found a complex relationship between religiosity and intolerance. With extrinsic religiosity being related to higher acceptance levels of prejudicial and intolerant views (Batson, Schoenrade & Ventis, 1993; Maltby, Hall, Anderson & Edwards, 2010;

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Jankowski et al., 2011). The findings of this study help to better understand this relationship by suggesting that extrinsic-social religiosity is related to the construct of traditional life values, which have been associated with higher acceptance of intolerance and oppressive beliefs (Aosved & Long, 2006; Jankowski et al., 2011).

### **Rape Myth Acceptance**

It was expected that higher levels of RMA would be associated with more negative reactions to and perceptions of sexual assault victims. Results support this hypothesis, and a significant relationship was found between higher levels of RMA and more negative social reactions and victim blame. These findings support past research that suggests that higher levels of RMA are associated with negative attitudes and decreased empathy toward victims of sexual assault (Hockett et al., 2009). These results suggest that acceptance of rape myths may extend to more than just beliefs, and influence behaviors as well.

RMA was found to be a consistent mediator both in conjunction with the other forms of intolerant beliefs in the serial mediation analyses, as well as a sole mediator in the simple mediation analyses. The strong mediating effect of RMA on reactions to sexual assault makes sense, as beliefs and attitudes influence an individual's behavior. Pathways were found from all intolerant beliefs through RMA to influence reactions to sexual assault, supporting the notion that RMA itself is a form of intolerance. Similar to research by Untied and colleagues (2012), it is important to note that participants response to vignette scenarios signify *intention* to respond to victims in a certain way, as opposed to providing actual social reactions. However, the findings of this study suggest an association between higher levels of RMA and behaviors found to be consequential to sexual assault victims (NSR and victim blame). Past research supports this, as higher RMA has been associated with sexual assault perpetration (e.g. Bohner et al., 2006).

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### **Cumulative Risk Model**

It was anticipated that there would be a cumulative effect between intolerant beliefs and RMA, with more intolerant beliefs relating to higher levels of RMA and more NSR (less PSR, more victim blame, less perpetrator blame). This hypothesis was supported, further suggesting that dogmatism, political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs and extrinsic-social religiosity are all related to one another and share a common thread of intolerance. Results also suggest that the internalization of one form of intolerant belief may put a person more at risk to endorse other forms of intolerance.

Cultural beliefs that support and perpetuate sexual violence have been shown to influence the development and acceptance of rape myths; given this association, the relationship between intolerant beliefs and RMA is not surprising. The found association between intolerant beliefs and RMA help to better understand what influences attitudes and beliefs that lead to the development of RMA. Furthermore, results suggest that the degree to which a person ascribes to individual intolerant beliefs will influence their acceptance of rape myths and perception of sexual assault. These findings help to predict who may be most likely to have higher RMA, which could help to inform prevention programs. Past research by Aosved and Long (2006) used multiple and exploratory stepwise regressions to show the contributing effects of sexism, racism, homophobia, ageism, classism and religious intolerance on RMA. Results from Aosved and Long's (2006) study showed the different levels of variance in RMA accounted for by each predictor variable.

The PROCESS macro analyses used in the present study, in combination with the overall combined measure of intolerant beliefs, help to further show the predictive nature of the cumulative effects of intolerance on RMA. Other studies investigating various constructs have

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also employed cumulative risk models to examine the complex relationships between multiple predictor and outcome variables. For example, a cumulative risk approach was also utilized in a study examining the relationship between pain and depression, and the effects of multiple mediating variables (Wongpakaran et al., 2016). Similar to the present study, Wongpakaran and colleagues (2016) utilized serial multiple mediator models as their chosen form of analyses.

It was also expected that higher levels of intolerance would indirectly relate to more negative reactions to sexual assault, with RMA as a mediating variable. Results support this hypothesis, adding novel information to sexual assault research. The results of this study go beyond just supporting the relationship between intolerance and RMA, but serve to show a unique relationship between intolerance and reactions to sexual assault victims, which has not been fully explored by past research.

Past research on the influences of bystander reactions to sexual assault have focused more on the influence of victim and perpetrator characteristics, as opposed to actual influences of bystander attitudes and beliefs, and consequently social reactions; the present study is one of the first to do so, and the results align with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory. The relationship found between intolerant beliefs, RMA and social reactions support the postulation that individual beliefs and behaviors are influenced by an interplay of systemic factors. Furthermore, the cumulative effect of intolerance on RMA and reactions to sexual assault, suggest that the internalization of cultural values serve to influence individual beliefs about sexual assault.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Present Study**

**Limitations.** While this study produced significant results which both support and add to the sexual assault literature, there are also limitations. Characteristics of the sample participants

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could be a potential limitation of the present study. The majority of participants reported overall low levels of religiosity, and the majority identified as either independent democrat, weak democrat or strong democrat. As this study made specific hypotheses regarding high levels of political conservatism and high levels of extrinsic social religiosity, a sample that identifies more strongly as religious and politically conservative may offer more insight into the relationship between the proposed intolerant beliefs and perceptions of and reactions to sexual assault. It would also be beneficial to examine the association between religious affiliation, political party affiliation and other demographic variables with predictor and outcome variables.

Another limitation may be the use of self-report measures through mTurk. While mTurk has many strengths, control of the sample make-up is limited. Although inclusion criteria were implemented to help with this limitation, online data collection may be skewed toward a certain type of person who seeks out and chooses to answer the survey. Also, although the measures used in this study have shown adequate validity and reliability in past research, online data collection and self-report measures are susceptible to response bias. Steps were taken to counter such things as response bias and inattention; such steps include reverse coding, attention checks and carefully checking for missing data. While the series of mediation analyses used in this study are more sophisticated than those used in past studies examining predictors of RMA and social reactions, they do not fully capture the cumulative effects hypothesized. A more appropriate statistical approach that would simultaneously consider the various direct and indirect relationships between the variables would be structural equation modeling.

As this study was longitudinal, there is the potential for cohort effects, specifically given the timing. The study took place in the midst of the #MeToo movement, as well as other movements which worked to advance the cultural narrative and create a space in which victims

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of sexual assault finally felt safe enough to tell their stories and let their voices be heard. However, there was also backlash to these movements, and negative attitudes toward sexual assault, as well as victim blame were expressed on a very public level. To fully understand how the cultural portrayal of sexual assault influences an individual's beliefs, and ultimately reactions, a much longer term longitudinal study would need to be conducted to examine how these cultural values effect an individual overtime.

Another limitation of the present study is the lack of a peer support measure. The theoretical model of the study builds from EST and social learning theory, and not including a peer support measure misses an important component of the theories. Additionally, RMA and social reactions have been shown to be influenced by peer support (Relyea & Ullman, 2015), therefore including such a measure could have offered valuable information regarding the development of attitudes and behaviors more accepting of sexual assault. However, the AU I-E used to measure religiosity does consider religion motivated by group affiliation and social network, which partially taps into the influence of peer support. It is important to note that this thesis is part of an overall larger study, and within the larger study is a measure of social desirability. Future analyses can include social desirability as a covariate to consider and if necessary, statistically control for the potential effects of social desirability response bias.

**Strengths.** While there has been much important research on sexual assault and RMA from a victim's standpoint, much less is known about what influences a bystander's perceptions of sexual assault. This study is novel in that it helps to better understand the characteristics of people who hold higher RMA, as well as factors that influence people's perceptions of and reactions to sexual assault victims. To this author's knowledge, this study is the first of its kind build from the well-established EST to employ a cumulative risk model to examine multiple

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pathways, extending from cultural values to individual beliefs, which contribute to social reactions to sexual assault disclosure. While past research has examined the association between intolerance and RMA (Aosved & Long, 2006), this study examines a unique combination of beliefs found to influence RMA: dogmatism; political conservatism; traditional gender role beliefs; and religiosity. In addition, this study examines intolerant beliefs as a system (which is in line w/ EST), rather than solely considering each belief individually.

As previously mentioned, although mTurk does have some limitations, there are also a number of strengths in using the online website. By using mTurk, a large sample size was able to be recruited, which allows for greater generalizability. Data was also able to be collected relatively quickly, which allowed for the implementation of a longitudinal design that is usually not possible within the time constraints of a master's program. The use of a longitudinal design in the present study may have helped to reduce priming, and therefore reduced response bias regarding social reactions to sexual assault disclosure. The use of vignettes can be viewed as both a strength and weakness for the design of the study. This study is one of the first of its kind to utilize vignettes and consider multiple factors that influence RMA and reactions to a sexual assault victim. The vignette allowed for participants to answer questions about a hypothetical sexual assault scenario in which a *friend* discloses she was sexually assaulted. This research design may allow for a more personalized and realistic experience than simply using self-report measure that ask general questions regarding RMA and social reactions. However, the use of vignettes also has limitations; they lack external validity, and participants responses reflect what they *intend* to do/say if a friend were to disclose she was sexually assaulted, and it is not clear how well that matches what they would *actually* do in a real-life scenario.

### **Implications and Future Research**

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Developing a greater understanding of factors that lead to the development of attitudes accepting of rape and consequentially to negative reactions to hypothetical sexual assault victims could be very useful for sexual assault education and prevention programming. A number of programs on college campuses focus on encouraging bystanders to question rape myths, to intervene when they see a person at risk of assault, and to provide positive social reactions should someone disclose an assault. For example, as part of a study by Senn and Forrest (2016), undergraduate students participated in a 3-hour bystander intervention workshop “designed to help students understand the importance of speaking out against social norms that support sexual assault and coercion, recognize and safely interrupt situations that could lead to sexual assault, and be an effective and supportive ally to rape survivors,” (Senn & Forrest, 2016, p. 608). This intervention was effective in increasing prosocial bystander behaviors for both male and female college students.

Despite the efforts to employ sexual assault interventions programs on campus, the rates of sexual assault have remained relatively unchanged over the past 30 years, with one in five college-aged women still experiencing sexual assault as an undergraduate student (Fisher et al., 2000; Senn & Forrest, 2016). The results of the present study may provide direction for more targeted education and sexual assault prevention programming. The association between intolerance and both RMA and social reactions reveal a need for programs that target intolerance and promote diversity. While targeting acceptance rape myths is important, it is not enough. Instead, programs need to target attitudes and beliefs that *lead* to the acceptance of rape myths. For example, the strong relationship between traditional gender role beliefs and negative reactions to sexual assault suggest that prevention programs should target negative attitudes toward women and a belief in a male dominated society and that programs should highlight the

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importance of gender equality. Also, given the strong association between dogmatism and intolerant beliefs, it would be of value for prevention programs emphasize the importance critical and flexible thinking, and speak to the negative consequences of rigid and narrow-minded belief systems.

This thesis is part of a larger overall study, and analyses will continue to be conducted; future analyses will be run using structural equation modeling to examine the complex direct and indirect relationships between all of the variables simultaneously. The association between intolerant beliefs, RMA and ultimately social reactions to sexual assault is an area that serves to be further researched. Future sexual assault research may want to examine the idea of a belief in a social hierarchy in which males are dominant over women, as this belief has been found to be strongly related to more traditional gender role beliefs, political conservatism, extrinsic-religiosity and RMA (e.g. Buchwald et al., 2005; Hockett et al., 2009; Jankowski et al., 2011; Strain et al., 2016). Ultimately, the goal of this study is to help educate on how to better support victims of sexual assault, to continue bringing awareness to the issue that is sexual assault, and to get closer to bringing an end to a culture that is accepting of sexual assault on so many levels.

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**Tables**

Table 1  
Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations Between Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. PCM	1								
2. DOG	.23**	1							
3. ASI	.47**	.37**	1						
4. AU-IE	.18**	.22**	.33**	1					
5. RMA	.29**	.26**	.56**	.27**	1				
6. PosSRQ	-.24**	-.26**	-.29**	-.22**	-.41**	1			
7. NegSRQ	.26**	.28**	.45**	.32**	.52**	-.38**	1		
8. VicBlame	.27**	.32**	.54**	.28**	.51**	-.44**	.67**	1	
9. PerBlame	-.16**	-.19**	-.30**	-.22**	-.45**	.63**	-.44**	-.42**	1
<i>M</i>	3.26	3.29	2.87	1.25	1.83	4.20	1.74	1.75	4.51
<i>SD</i>	1.64	0.97	1.08	0.54	0.61	0.81	0.71	.93	.74

*Note.* PCM = Political Conservatism Measure (1 = very liberal – 7 = very conservative); DOG = Dogmatism (1 = strongly disagree – 6 = strongly agree); ASI = Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (0 = strongly disagree – 5 = strongly agree); AU-IE = Extrinsic Religiosity Social (1 = not at all important – 5 = extremely important); RMA = Rape Myth Acceptance (1 = strongly disagree – 5 = strongly agree); PosSRQ = Positive Social Reactions (1 = not at all – 5 = very much); NegSRQ = Negative Social Reactions (1 = not at all – 5 = very much); Victim Responsibility = Victim Blame (1 = not at all – 5 = completely); PerBlame = Perpetrator Responsibility (1 = not at all – 5 = completely)  
\**p* < .05, \*\* *p* < .01

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Table 2  
Breakdown of Cumulative Risk Groups

Scale	Level of Intolerance	Range of Responses	N
DOG	Low	1 – 2.77	148
	Moderate	2.78 – 3.68	148
	High	3.69 – 6.59	151
PCM	Low	1 – 2	148
	Moderate	2.01 – 3.75	133
	High	3.76 – 7	166
ASI	Low	1 – 2.33	147
	Moderate	2.34 – 3.33	145
	High	3.34 – 6	155
AU-IE	Low-Moderate	1 – 2.67	106
	Moderate-High	2.68 – 3	341

*Note.* PCM = Political Conservatism Measure (1 = very liberal – 7 = very conservative); DOG = Dogmatism (1 = strongly disagree – 6 = strongly agree); ASI = Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (0 = strongly disagree – 5 = strongly agree); AU-IE = Extrinsic Religiosity Social (1 = not at all important – 5 = extremely important)

Table 3  
Correlations between Cumulative Risk and Dependent Variables

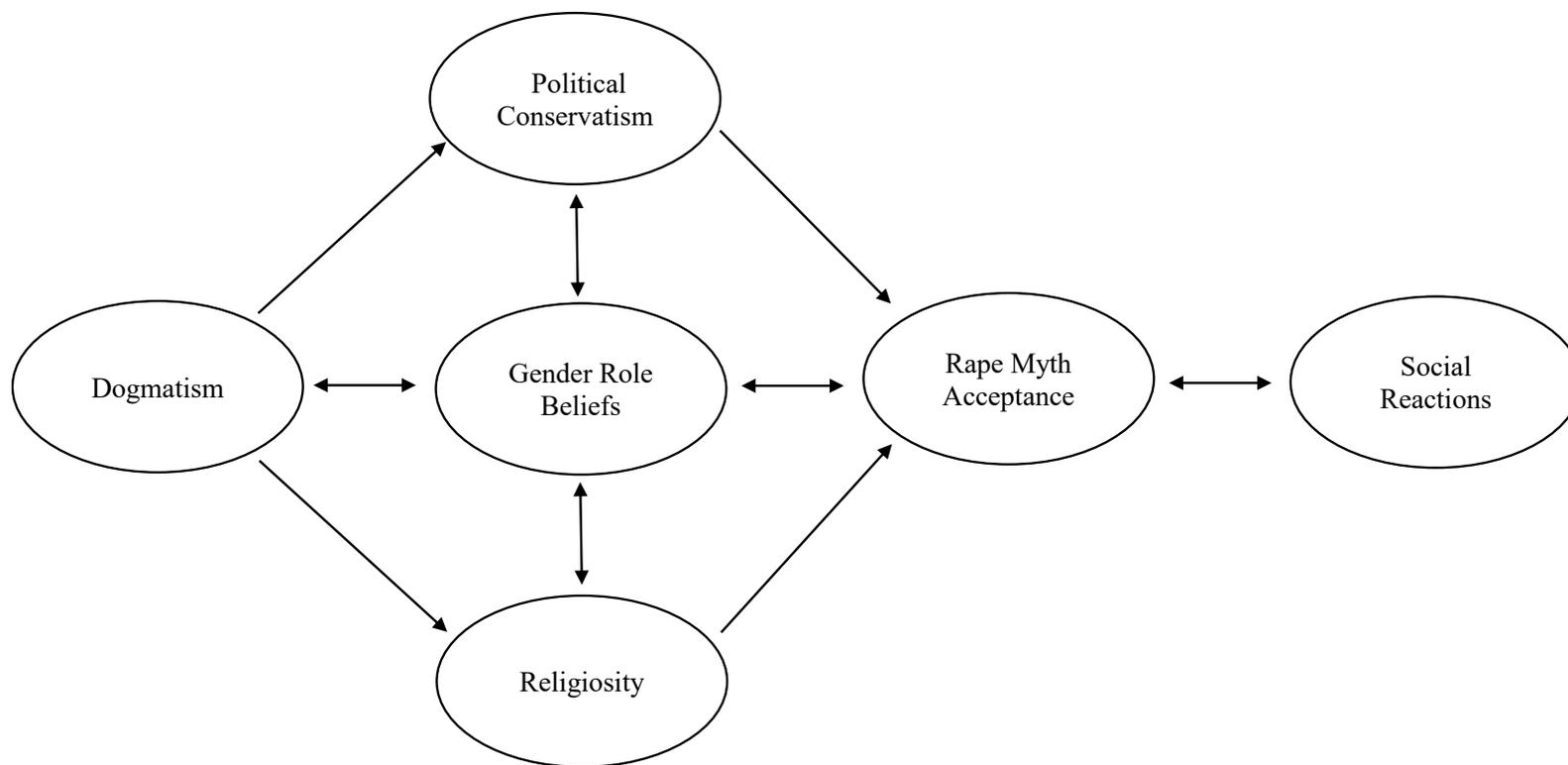
Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Cumulative Risk	1					
2. RMA	.50**	1				
3. PosSRQ	-.36**	-.41**	1			
4. NegSRQ	.45**	.52**	-.38**	1		
5. VicBlame	.52**	.51**	-.44**	.67**	1	
6. PerBlame	-.30**	-.45**	.63**	-.44**	-.42**	1

*Note.* RMA = Rape Myth Acceptance; PosSRQ = Positive Social Reactions; NegSRQ = Negative Social Reactions; VicBlame = Victim Responsibility; PerBlame = Perpetrator Responsibility

\*\*  $p < .001$

Figures

Figure 1  
Model of Proposed Hypotheses



REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Figure 2  
Mediation Model of Intolerant Beliefs to Negative Social Reactions

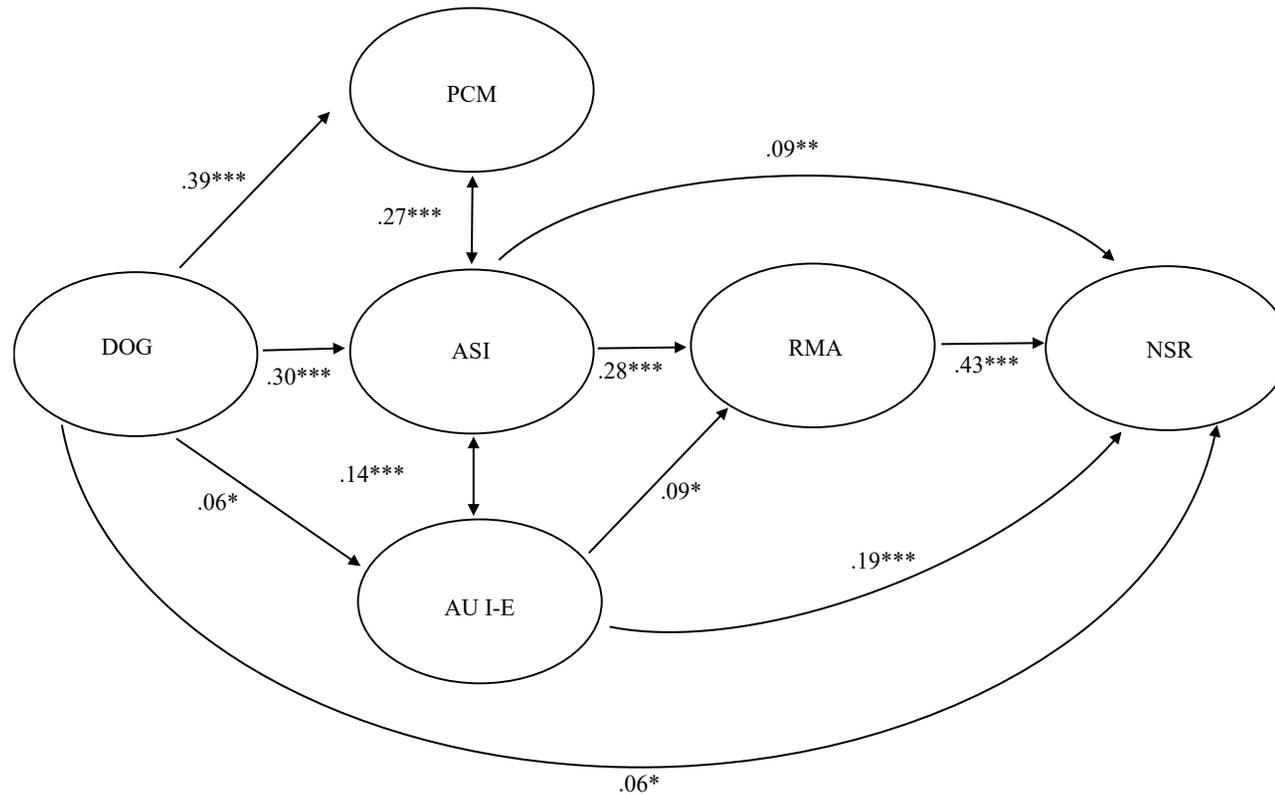


Figure 2 models the direct effects of dogmatism political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs, extrinsic-social religiosity and rape myth acceptance on negative social reactions in hypothetical sexual assault scenario.

Note. DOG = Dogmatism; PCM = Political Conservatism; ASI = Traditional Gender Role Beliefs AU-IE = Extrinsic-Social Religiosity; RMA = Rape Myth Acceptance; NSR = Negative Social Reactions

†p > .05, \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

# REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Figure 3  
Mediation Model of Intolerant Beliefs to Victim Blame

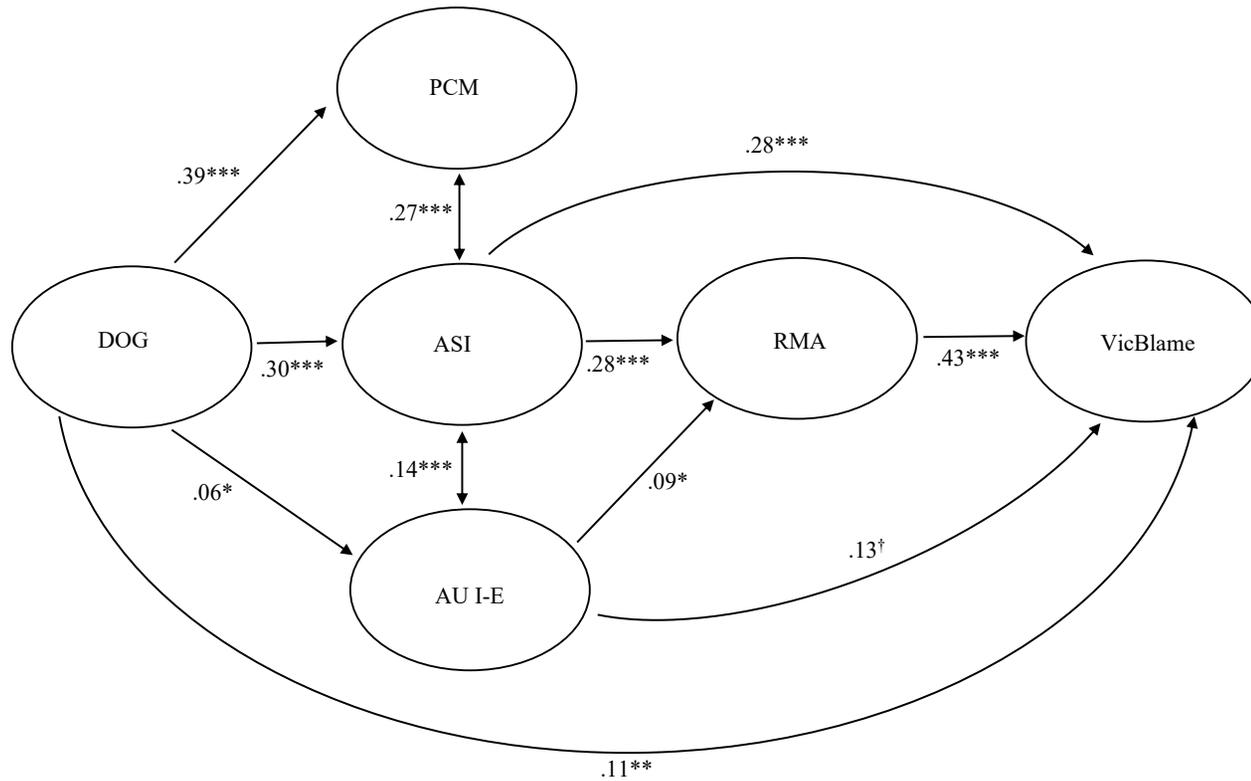


Figure 3 models the direct effects of dogmatism political conservatism, traditional gender role beliefs, extrinsic-social religiosity and rape myth acceptance on victim blame reactions in hypothetical sexual assault scenario.

Note. DOG = Dogmatism; PCM = Political Conservatism; ASI = Traditional Gender Role Beliefs AU-IE = Extrinsic-Social Religiosity; RMA = Rape Myth Acceptance; VicBlame = Victim Blame

† $p > .05$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Figure 4

Mediation Model of Political Conservatism and Rape Myth Acceptance to Positive Social Reactions

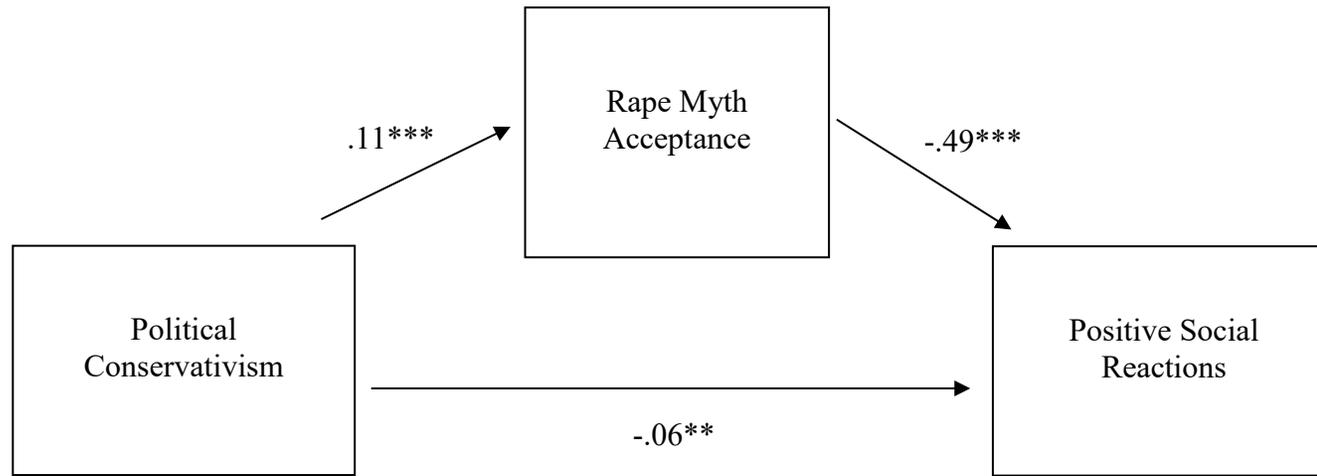


Figure 4 models the significant direct effects between Political Conservatism and Positive Social Reactions, with Rape Myth Acceptance as a mediating variable.

*Note.* The overall model was found to be significant  $F(2, 444) = 49.35, p < .001, R = .43, R^2 = .18$  and a significant indirect effect was found ( $\beta = -.05, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.08, -.03$ ).

\*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Figure 5

Mediation Model of Traditional Gender Role Beliefs and Rape Myth Acceptance to Negative Social Reactions

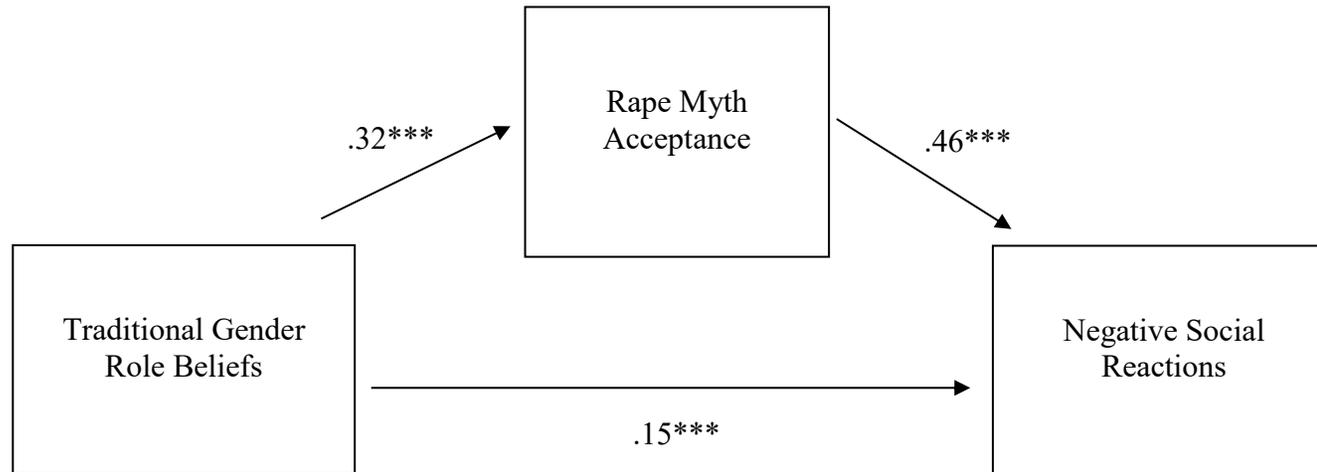


Figure 5 models the significant direct effects between Traditional Gender Role Beliefs and Negative Social Reactions, with Rape Myth Acceptance as a mediating variable.

*Note.* The overall model was found to be significant  $F(2, 444) = 99.15, p < .001, R = .56, R^2 = .31$  and a significant indirect effect was found ( $\beta = .15, 95\% \text{ CI} = .09, .20$ ).

\*\*\* $p < .001$

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Figure 6

Mediation Model of Extrinsic-Social Religiosity and Rape Myth Acceptance to Victim Blame

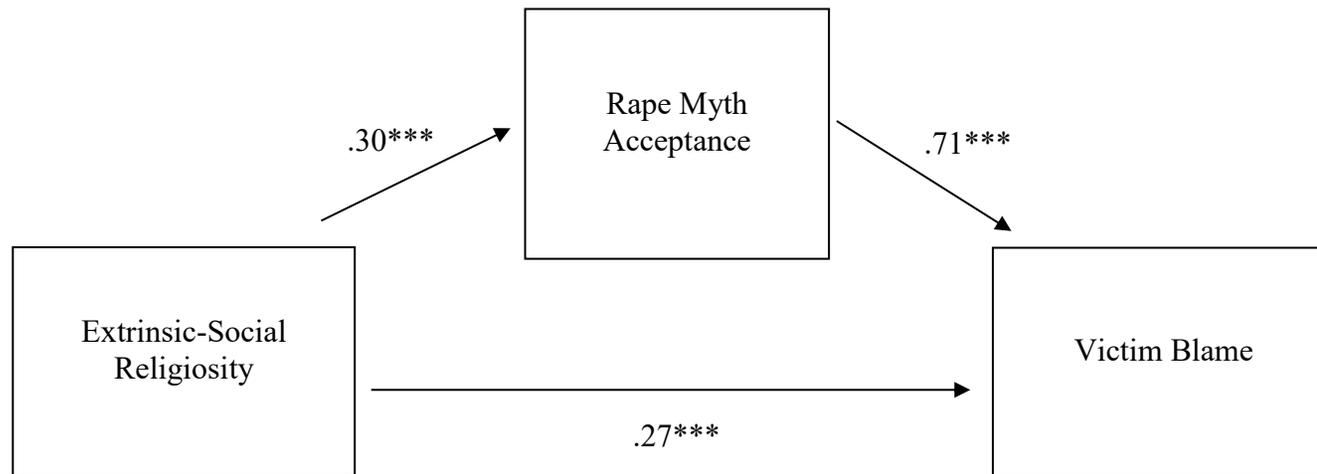


Figure 6 models the significant direct effects between Extrinsic-Social Religiosity and Victim Blame, with Rape Myth Acceptance as a mediating variable.

*Note.* The overall model was found to be significant  $F(2, 443) = 85.85, p < .001, R = .53, R^2 = .28$  and a significant indirect effect was found ( $\beta = .21, 95\% \text{ CI} = .12, .32$ ).

\*\*\* $p < .001$

# REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Figure 7  
Mediation Model of Cumulative Risk and Rape Myth Acceptance to Positive Social Reactions

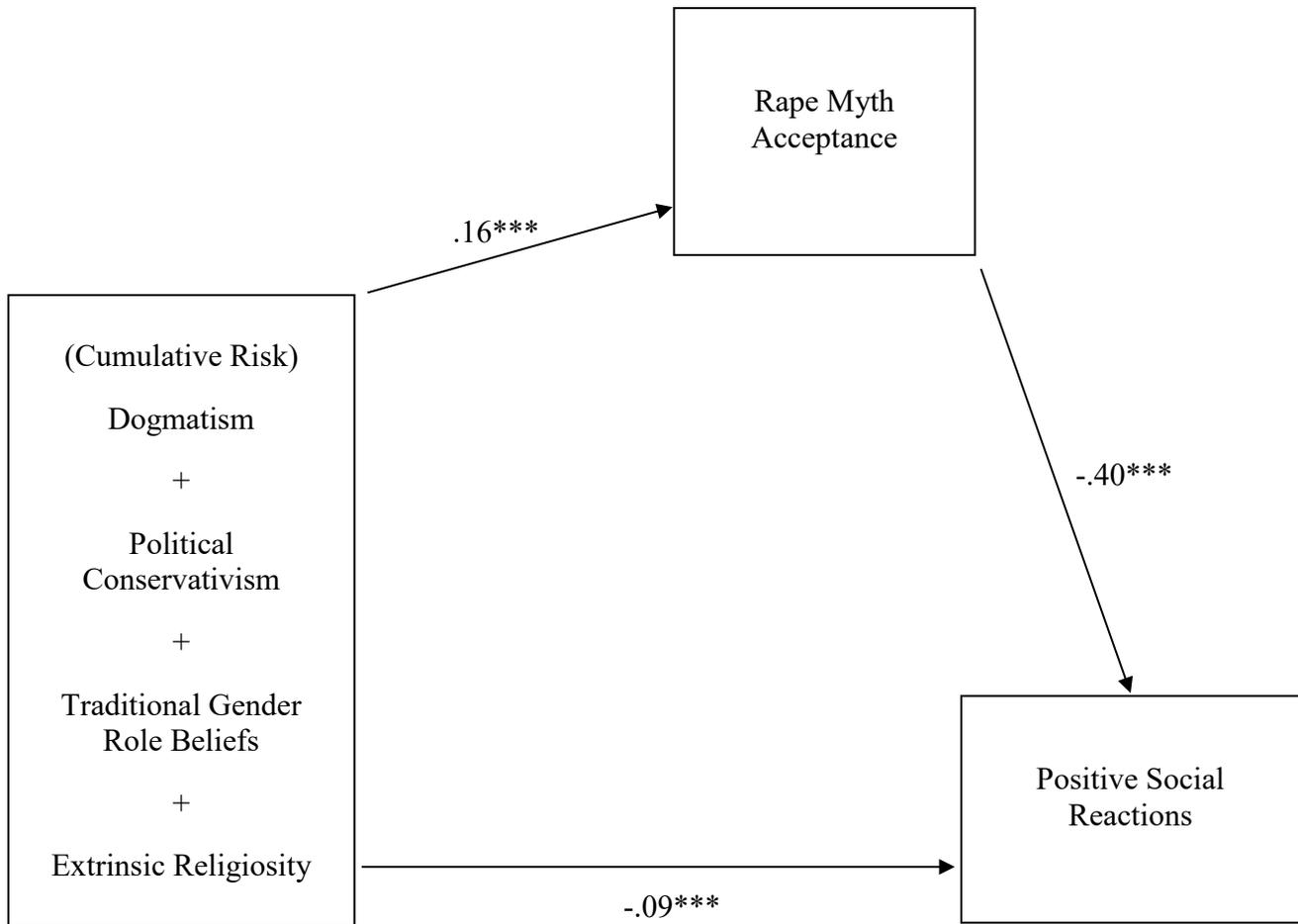


Figure 7 models the significant direct effects between Cumulative Risk and Positive Social Reactions, with Rape Myth Acceptance as a mediating variable.

*Note.* The overall model was found to be significant  $F(2, 444) = 55.7, p < .001, R = .45, R^2 = .20$  and a significant indirect effect was found ( $\beta = -.07, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.09, -.04$ ).

$***p < .001$

# REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Figure 8  
Mediation Model of Cumulative Risk and Rape Myth Acceptance to Negative Social Reactions

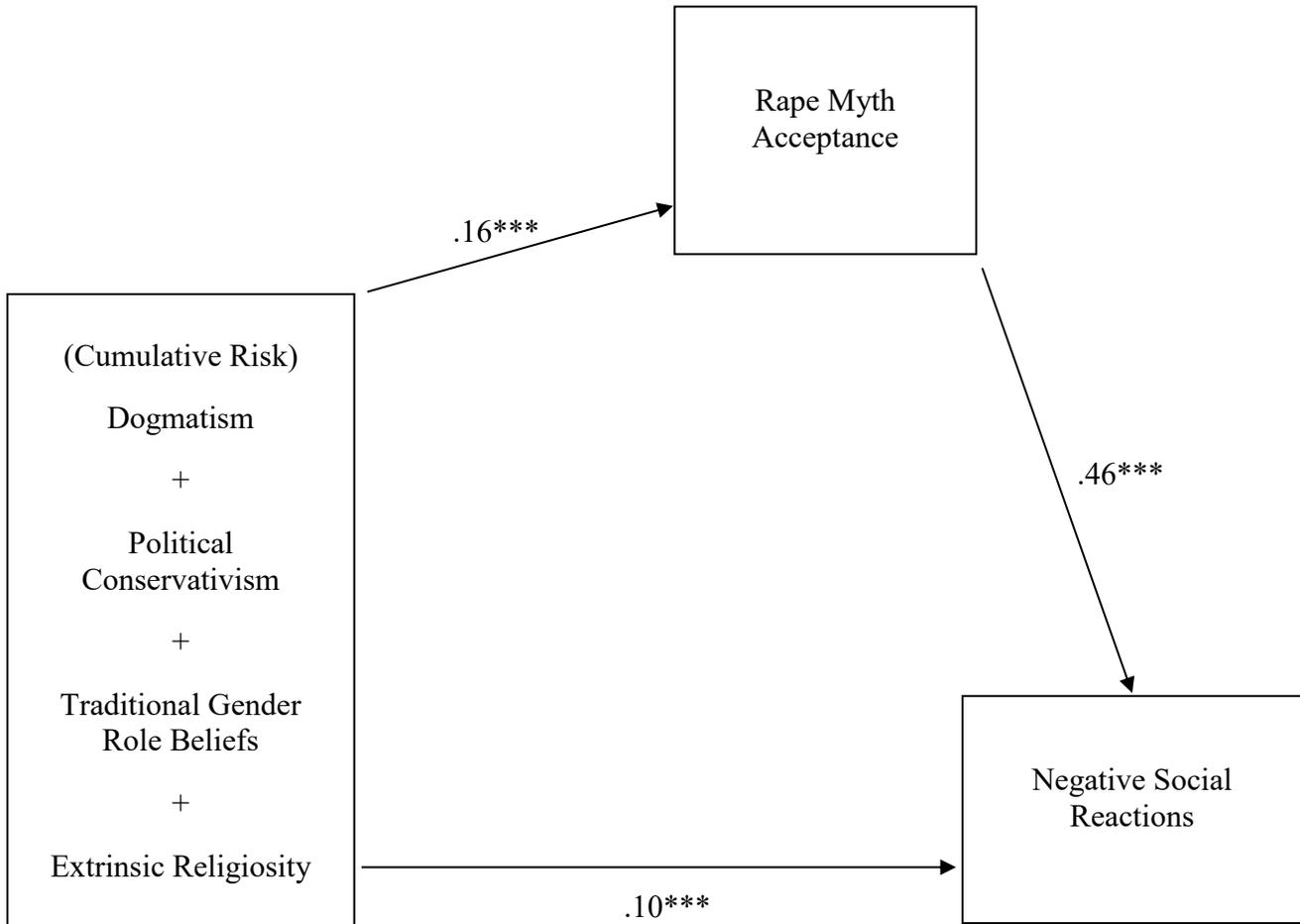


Figure 8 models the significant direct effects between Cumulative Risk and Negative Social Reactions, with Rape Myth Acceptance as a mediating variable.

*Note.* The overall model was found to be significant  $F(2, 444) = 105.64, p < .001, R = .57, R^2 = .32$  and a significant indirect effect was found ( $\beta = -.07, 95\% \text{ CI} = .05, .10$ ).

$***p < .001$

# REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Figure 9  
Mediation Model of Cumulative Risk and Rape Myth Acceptance to Victim Blame

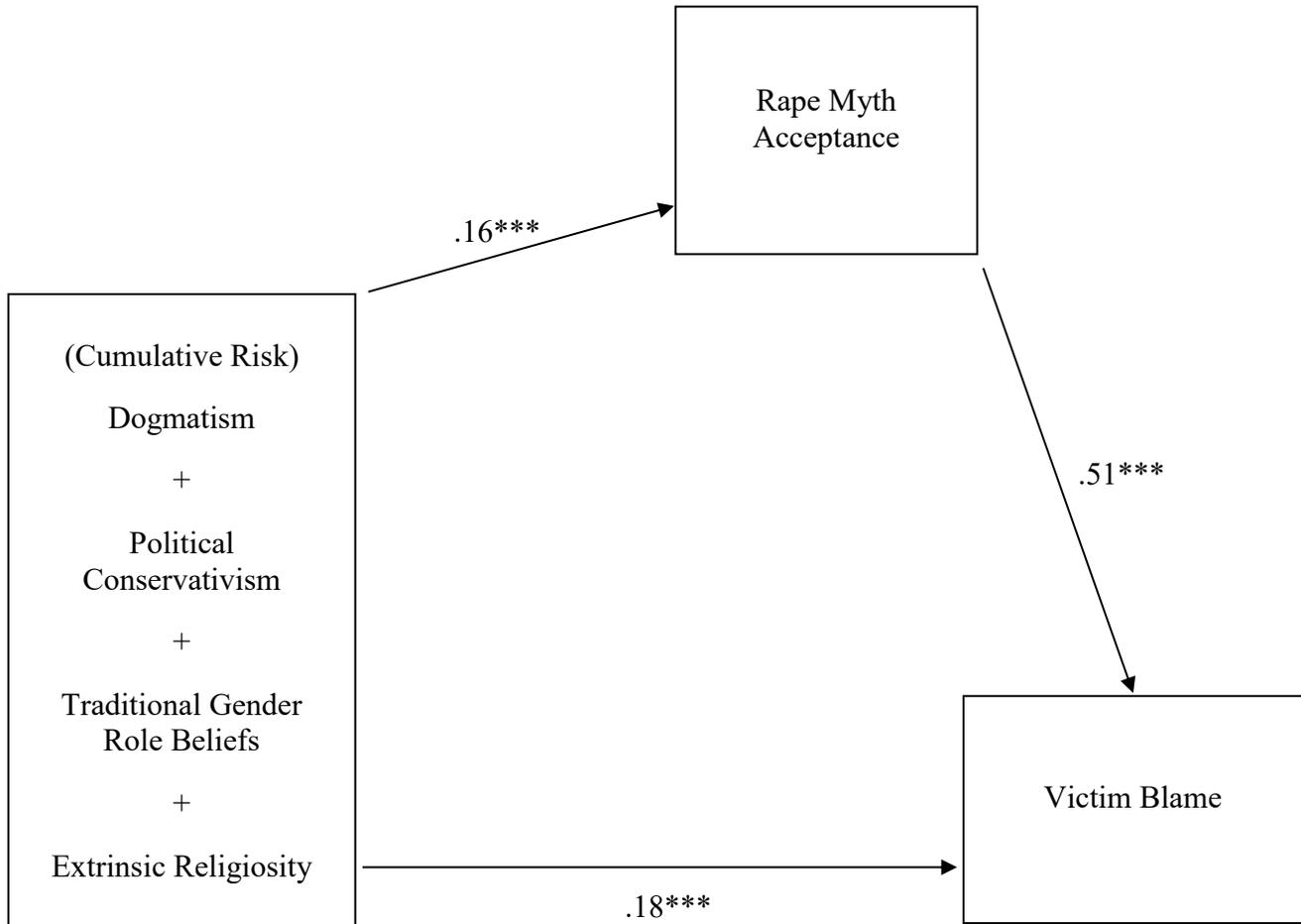


Figure 9 models the significant direct effects between Cumulative Risk and Victim Blame, with Rape Myth Acceptance as a mediating variable.

*Note.* The overall model was found to be significant  $F(2, 443) = 120.46, p < .001, R = .59, R^2 = .35$  and a significant indirect effect was found ( $\beta = .08, 95\% \text{ CI} = .05, .11$ ).

\*\*\* $p < .001$

# REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Figure 10  
Mediation Model of Cumulative Risk and Rape Myth Acceptance to Perpetrator Blame

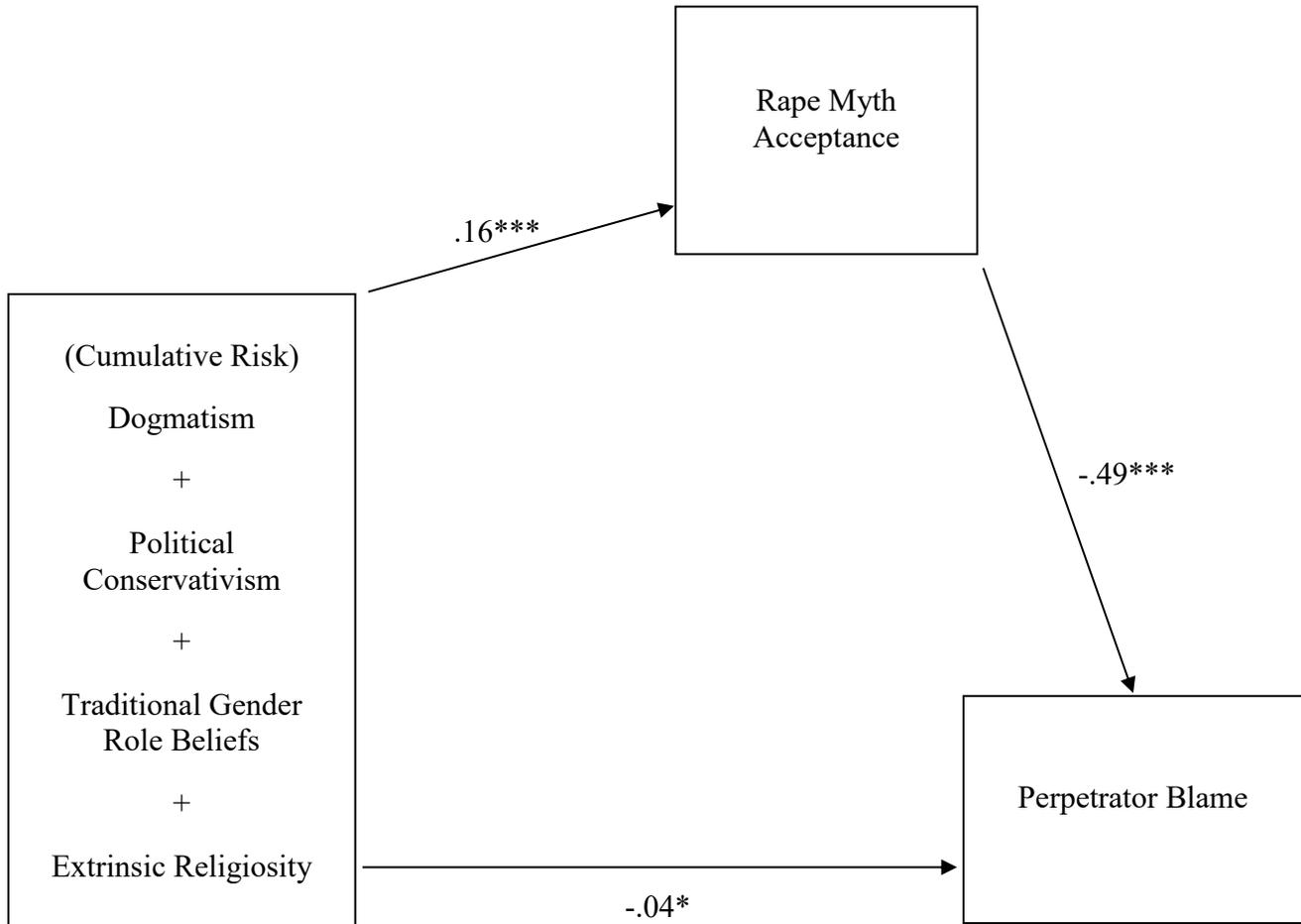


Figure 10 models the significant direct effects between Cumulative Risk and Perpetrator Blame, with Rape Myth Acceptance as a mediating variable.

*Note.* The overall model was found to be significant  $F(2, 444) = 58.37, p < .001, R = .46, R^2 = .21$  and a significant indirect effect was found ( $\beta = .08, 95\% \text{ CI} = .05, .11$ ).

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Appendix A: Demographic Variables**

**General Background** We would like to begin with some general background questions. This helps us to determine if people with different kinds of backgrounds have similar or different attitudes and experiences. Please try to answer all questions. Check the response that best corresponds to your answer. Thank you.

In order to match your responses from this survey to the second survey you will be invited to complete in a few weeks, we'd like you to **create a unique code using your first and last initials followed by the last four digits of your cell phone number**. For example if your name is Janis Smith and your cell is 555 555-3142, your unique code would be JS3142.

Gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

What is your ethnicity?

- African American/Black (1)
- Arab or Middle Eastern (2)
- Asian or Pacific Islander (3)
- Caucasian/White (4)
- Hispanic (5)
- Native American/American Indian (6)
- Other (please describe) (7) \_\_\_\_\_

What year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

In which country do you reside?

- Canada (1)
- United States (2)
- Other (please specify) (3) \_\_\_\_\_

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

What is your current relationship status?

- Single – not exclusively dating anyone (1)
- Single – in an exclusive dating relationship (2)
- Engaged (3)
- Cohabiting (4)
- Married (5)
- Separated (6)
- Divorced (7)
- Widowed (8)
- Other (please describe) (9) \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently employed?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Do you work full-time or part-time?

- Full-time (1)
- Part-time (2)

Are you currently a student?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

What type of school are you currently attending?

- High school (1)
- Community college (2)
- University (3)
- Other (please describe) (4) \_\_\_\_\_

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School (1)

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

- High School / GED (2)
- Some College (3)
- 2-year College Degree (4)
- 4-year College Degree (5)
- Masters Degree (6)
- Doctoral Degree (7)
- Professional Degree (JD, MD) (8)

REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

**Appendix B: The Dogmatism Scale (DOG)**

This section will present you with statements about various attitudes. You will probably find that you agree with some of the statements, and disagree with others to varying extents. Please indicate your reaction to each statement by choosing the point that best fits the extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I may be wrong about some of the little things in life, but I am quite certain I am right about all the BIG issues. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Someday I will probably think that many of my present ideas were wrong. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anyone who is honestly and truly seeking the truth will end up believing what I believe. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are so many things we have not discovered yet, nobody should be absolutely certain his beliefs are right. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The things I believe in are so completely true, I could never doubt them. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have never discovered a system of beliefs that explains everything to my satisfaction. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is best to be open to all possibilities and ready to reevaluate all your beliefs. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

My opinions are right and will stand the test of time. (8)	<input type="radio"/>						
Flexibility is a real virtue in thinking, since you may well be wrong. (9)	<input type="radio"/>						
My opinions and beliefs fit together perfectly to make a crystal-clear “picture” of things. (10)	<input type="radio"/>						
There are no discoveries or facts that could possibly make me change my mind about the things that matter most in life. (11)	<input type="radio"/>						
I am a long way from reaching final conclusions about the central issues in life. (12)	<input type="radio"/>						
The person who is absolutely certain she has the truth will probably never find it. (13)	<input type="radio"/>						
I am absolutely certain that my ideas about the fundamental issues in life are correct. (14)	<input type="radio"/>						
The people who disagree with me may well turn out to be right. (15)	<input type="radio"/>						
I am so sure I am right about the important things in life, there is no evidence that could convince me otherwise. (16)	<input type="radio"/>						
If you are “open-minded” about the most important things in life, you will probably reach the wrong conclusions. (17)	<input type="radio"/>						
Twenty years from now, some of my opinions about the important things in life will probably have changed. (18)	<input type="radio"/>						
“Flexibility in thinking” is another name for being “wishy-washy.” (19)	<input type="radio"/>						
No one knows all the essential truths about the central issues in life. (20)	<input type="radio"/>						

REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Someday I will probably realize my present ideas about the BIG issues are wrong. (21)

People who disagree with me are just plain wrong and often evil as well. (22)

**Appendix C: ICPSR**

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what? If Democrat or Republican, would you call yourself a strong or a weak Democrat or Republican? If independent, are you closer to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?

- Strong Democrat (1)
- Weak Democrat (2)
- Independent Democrat (3)
- Independent (4)
- Independent Republican (5)
- Weak Republican (6)
- Strong Republican (7)

REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

**Appendix D: Political Conservatism Measure (PCM)**

How would you describe yourself on the each of the following:

	Very Liberal (1)	Liberal (2)	Slightly Liberal (3)	Moderate Middle of the Road (4)	Slightly Conservative (5)	Conservative (6)	Very Conservative (7)
Your Political Party Preference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign Policy Issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic Issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Appendix E: Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI-SF)**

Items

1. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.
2. Women should be cherished and protected by men.
3. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.
4. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.
5. Men are incomplete without women.
6. Women exaggerate problems they have at work.
7. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.
8. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.
9. Many women get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.
10. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.
11. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.
12. Feminists are making unreasonable demands of men.

Response Options:

Disagree Strongly (1)	Disagree Somewhat (2)	Disagree Slightly (3)	Agree Slightly (4)	Agree Somewhat (5)	Agree Strongly (6)
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**Appendix F: 4-Item Religiosity Measure**

How important is religion to you?

- Not at All Important (1)
- A Little Important (2)
- Somewhat Important (3)
- Quite Important (4)
- Extremely Important (5)

How often do you attend church, mosque, temple or other religious activities?

- Never (1)
- Less than Once a Month (2)
- Once a Month (3)
- 2-3 Times a Month (4)
- Once a Week (5)
- 2-3 Times a Week (6)
- Daily (7)

How often do you engage in private prayer?

- Never (1)
- Less than Once a Month (2)
- Once a Month (3)
- 2-3 Times a Month (4)
- Once a Week (5)
- 2-3 Times a Week (6)
- Daily (7) a

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

How often do you engage in private scripture reading?

- Never (1)
- Less than Once a Month (2)
- Once a Month (3)
- 2-3 Times a Month (4)
- Once a Week (5)
- 2-3 Times a Week (6)
- Daily (7)

REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

**Appendix G: Age-Universal Intrinsic-Extrinsic Scale (AU I-E)**

The next set of questions concern your views about religion. Please think about each item carefully. Does the attitude or behavior described in the statement apply to you?

	Yes (1)	Not Certain (2)	No (3)
I enjoy reading about my religion. (IE12_1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I go to church, mosque or temple because it helps me make friends. (IE12_2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to me to spend time in private thought and prayer. (IE12_3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have often had a strong sense of God's presence. (IE12_4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I pray mainly to gain relief and protection. (IE12_5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try hard to live all my life according to my religious beliefs. (IE12_6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow. (IE12_7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My religion is important because it answers many questions about the meaning of life. (IE12_8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prayer is for peace and happiness. (IE12_9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I go to temple, mosque or church mostly to spend time with my friends. (IE12_10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My whole approach to life is based on my religion. (IE12_11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I go to mosque, church or temple mainly because I enjoy seeing people I know there. (IE12_12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

**Appendix H: Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance – Short Form (IRMA)**

Please read each of the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn-on." (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Many women secretly desire to be raped. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most rapists are not caught by the police. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman's own familiar neighborhood. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them. (12)	<input type="radio"/>				
A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape. (13)	<input type="radio"/>				
It is preferable that a female police officer conduct the questioning when a woman reports a rape. (14)	<input type="radio"/>				
A woman who "teases" men deserves anything that might happen. (15)	<input type="radio"/>				
When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was ambiguous. (16)	<input type="radio"/>				
Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away. (17)	<input type="radio"/>				
A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex. (18)	<input type="radio"/>				
Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control. (19)	<input type="radio"/>				

**Appendix I: Scenarios, Modified SRQ and Attributions of Responsibility**

Research indicates that people's reactions to others depend on a number of factors including personality characteristics, the characteristics of the other person, and the relationship between the two people. Our reactions to others also depend on the situation. The purpose of this survey is to find out how you believe that you would react to a close friend under various circumstances. There are no right or wrong answers. Please read each situation carefully, think about how you would react to your close friend under that circumstance and then indicate the response that best reflects your feelings.

**Filler Scenario 1:** Imagine that you received a call this morning telling you that your close friend was in the hospital. His injuries are not life threatening but he suffered from a concussion and several broken bones in a car accident. He had gone to a club last night with some other friends. You had not gone along because you had to work early. At the club he had a few drinks before deciding to leave at about 1:00. As he was pulling out of the parking lot he was hit by another car. The other driver had also been drinking and was also quite seriously injured in the accident.

**Social Reactions (Scenario 1):** Please consider this situation and then rate how you believe you would react in this circumstance. *To what extent would you...*

- ... tell him he is not to blame.
- ... treat him differently.
- ... tell him that it will be better if he stops talking about it.
- ... tell him that he did not do anything wrong.
- ... encourage him to seek counseling.
- ... stay away from him for a while.
- ... tell him to stop thinking about it.
- ... do things for him.
- ... help him to find information to help him to cope with this experience.
- ... tell him that it was not his fault.
- ... feel uncomfortable.
- ... tell him to go on with his life.
- ... tell him how upset this makes you feel.
- ... help him to make decisions.
- ... reassure him that he is a good person.
- ... provide a shoulder to cry on.
- ... try to avoid talking about his experience.
- ... tell him that he could have prevented this from occurring.
- ... comfort him by telling him that it will be alright.
- ... withdraw from the relationship

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

- ... spend time with him.
- ... listen to his feelings.
- ... tell him that he wasn't cautious enough.
- ... feel that he is no longer the same.
- ... distract him from thinking about the experience.
- ... try to understand how he is feeling.
- ... feel that he is less desirable as a friend.
- ... tell him that it was the other person's fault.
- ... try to see his side of things.
- ... tell him that you understand even if you don't.
- ... try not to be judgmental.
- ... help him to find resources.
- ... express extreme anger at the other driver.
- ... believe his account of the experience.
- ... tell him that he holds some of the blame for what happened.
- ... tell him how sorry you are.
- ... encourage him not to tell others.
- ... make decisions so that he doesn't have to.
- ... provide him with information and discuss options.
- ... tell him that he is loved.

### Response Options:

Not At All	A Little	Some- what	Quite A Bit	Very Much
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**Attributions of Responsibility (Scenario 1):** Remember, you received a call this morning telling you that your close friend was in the hospital. His injuries are not life threatening but he suffered from a concussion and several broken bones in a car accident. He had gone to a club last night with some other friends. You had not gone along because you had to work early. At the club he had a few drinks before deciding to leave at about 1:00. As he was pulling out of the parking lot he was hit by another car. The other driver had also been drinking and was also quite seriously injured in the accident. Please consider this situation and then rate how you believe you would react in this circumstance.

Now we'd like you to consider a number of questions about this situation. *To what extent do you believe...*

- ... your friend is responsible for what happened.
- ... the other driver is responsible for what happened.
- ... your friend should have known better than to drink and drive.
- ... your friend shouldn't have been out at a bar.
- ... the other driver clearly couldn't handle his alcohol.
- ... pick not at all to show you are paying attention.
- ... your friend should be charged with DUI.
- ... the other driver should be charged with DUI.

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

Response Options:

Not At All    A Little    Somewhat    Quite A Bit    Completely

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**Hypothetical Sexual Assault Scenario (Scenario 2):** You call your close friend and ask her to meet you for coffee. When you get there it's clear that something is bothering her – she has dark circles under her eyes and she is not her usual self. You ask her what is wrong and she starts to cry. She goes on to tell you that she is having problems with the guy that she's been dating for the past two months. The other night they went back to his apartment after going out for dinner. They watched a movie and then started to make out and touch one another. She said that even though she repeatedly told him she didn't want to have sex, he kept pressuring her until she eventually stopped talking and intercourse occurred. She left immediately after and has refused to return his calls since that time.

**Social Reactions (Scenario 2):** Please consider this situation and then rate how you believe you would react in this circumstance. *To what extent would you ...*

- ... tell her that she is not to blame.
- ... treat her differently.
- ... tell her that it will be better if she stops talking about it.
- ... tell her that she did not do anything wrong.
- ... encourage her to seek counseling.
- ... stay away from her for a while.
- ... tell her to stop thinking about it.
- ... do things for her.
- ... think about ways to get revenge on her boyfriend.
- ... help her to find information to help her to cope with this experience.
- ... tell her that it was not her fault.
- ... feel uncomfortable.
- ... tell her to go on with her life.
- ... tell her how upset this makes you feel.
- ... help her to make decisions.
- ... reassure her that she is a good person.
- ... provide a shoulder to cry on.
- ... try to avoid talking about her experience.
- ... tell her that she could have done to prevent this experience from occurring.
- ... comfort her by telling her that it will be alright.
- ... withdraw from the relationship.
- ... spend time with her.
- ... listen to her feelings.
- ... tell her that she wasn't cautious enough.
- ... feel that she is no longer the same.
- ... distract her from thinking about the experience.
- ... try to understand how she is feeling.
- ... tell her that she shouldn't have been alone with him at his apartment.
- ... feel that she is less desirable as a friend.

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

- ... tell her that it was the other person's fault.
- ... try to see her side of things.
- ... tell her that you understand even if you don't.
- ... try not to be judgmental.
- ... help her to find resources.
- ... express extreme anger at her boyfriend.
- ... believe her account of the experience.
- ... tell her that she holds some of the blame for what happened.
- ... tell her how sorry you are.
- ... encourage her not to tell others.
- ... make decisions so that she doesn't have to.
- ... provide her with information and discuss options.
- ... tell her that she is loved.

Response Options:

Not At All	A Little	Some- what	Quite A Bit	Very Much
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**Attributions of Responsibility (Scenario 2):** Remember, you call your close friend and ask her to meet you for coffee. When you get there it's clear that something is bothering her – she has dark circles under her eyes and she is not her usual self. You ask her what is wrong and she starts to cry. She goes on to tell you that she is having problems with the guy that she's been dating for the past two months. The other night they went back to his apartment after going out for dinner. They watched a movie and then started to make out and touch one another. She said that even though she repeatedly told him she didn't want to have sex, he kept pressuring her until she eventually stopped talking and intercourse occurred. She left immediately after and has refused to return his calls since that time.

Now we'd like you to consider a number of questions about this situation. *To what extent do you believe ...*

- ... she is responsible for what happened.
- ... he is responsible for what happened.
- ... she should have known better than to trust him.
- ... she shouldn't have been alone with him at his apartment.
- ... he took advantage of her.
- ... he shouldn't have pushed her to have sex.

Response Options:

Not At All	A Little	Somewhat	Quite A Bit	Completely
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**Filler Scenario (Scenario 3):** You get to school one morning and expect to meet your close female friend. When she doesn't show up you call her and find out that she won't be at school that day because she has to talk to her insurance company. It turns out that she had spent the afternoon and evening the day before at the Casino. Although she had been "up" most of the day,

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

her luck turned and she ended up leaving before she lost all of her money. She had parked in an unattended lot because it was a couple of bucks cheaper. As she approached her car she was grabbed from behind and forced to turn over her purse and car keys. She didn't get a good look at the two men who took her car. She wasn't physically hurt but was very shaken up emotionally.

**Social Reactions (Scenario 3):** Please consider this situation and then rate how you believe you would react in this circumstance. *To what extent would you ...*

- ... tell her she is not to blame.
- ... treat her differently.
- ... tell her that it will be better if she stops talking about it.
- ... to show you're reading the questions pick very much.
- ... tell her that she did not do anything wrong.
- ... encourage her to seek counseling.
- ... stay away from her for a while.
- ... tell her to stop thinking about it.
- ... do things for her.
- ... help her to find information to help her to cope with this experience.
- ... tell her that it was not her fault.
- ... feel uncomfortable.
- ... tell her to go on with her life.
- ... tell her how upset this makes you feel.
- ... help her to make decisions.
- ... reassure her that she is a good person.
- ... provide a shoulder to cry on.
- ... try to avoid talking about her experience.
- ... tell her that she could have prevented this from occurring.
- ... comfort her by telling her that it will be alright.
- ... withdraw from the relationship.
- ... spend time with her.
- ... listen to her feelings.
- ... tell her that she wasn't cautious enough.
- ... feel that she is no longer the same.
- ... distract her from thinking about the experience.
- ... try to understand how she is feeling.
- ... feel that she is less desirable as a friend.
- ... tell her that it was the other person's fault.
- ... try to see her side of things.
- ... tell her that you understand even if you don't.
- ... try not to be judgmental.
- ... help her to find resources.
- ... express extreme anger at the men.
- ... believe her account of the experience.
- ... tell her that she holds some of the blame for what happened.
- ... tell her how sorry you are.

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

- ... encourage her not to tell others.
- ... make decisions so that she doesn't have to.
- ... provide her with information and discuss options.
- ... tell her that she is loved.

Response Options:

Not At All	A Little	Some- what	Quite A Bit	Very Much
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**Attributions of Responsibility:** Remember, you get to school one morning and expect to meet your close female friend. When she doesn't show up you call her and find out that she won't be at school that day because she has to talk to her insurance company. It turns out that she had spent the afternoon and evening the day before at the Casino. Although she had been "up" most of the day, her luck turned and she ended up leaving before she lost all of her money. She had parked in an unattended lot because it was a couple of bucks cheaper. As she approached her car she was grabbed from behind and forced to turn over her purse and car keys. She didn't get a good look at the two men who took her car. She wasn't physically hurt but was very shaken up emotionally.

Now we'd like you to consider a number of questions about this situation. *To what extent do you believe ...*

- ... she is responsible for what happened.
- ... the men are responsible for what happened.
- ... she should have known better than to park her car in an unattended lot.
- ... she shouldn't have been at the Casino in the first place.
- ... the men took advantage of the situation.

Response Options:

Not At All	A Little	Somewhat	Quite A Bit	Completely
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## Appendix J: Informed Consent Part I

### Informed Consent

#### The University of Michigan-Dearborn Life Experiences and Attitudes of Young Adults Part I

**Purpose of the study:** You are invited to participate in a research study about your attitudes and beliefs related to yourself, your family and peer relationships, your media preferences, and your attitudes about various social issues.

**Description of Subject Involvement:** If you agree to be part of the research study you will be directed to a survey today that will take you approximately 45 minutes to complete. In this survey you will be asked to answer a number of questions focused on your beliefs about yourself, past traumatic experiences, your family and peer relationships, your media preferences, and your views regarding a number of social issues including gender, politics, and relationships. Individuals who complete the survey today will be contacted through MTurk with an invitation to participate in a second survey in approximately one month.

**Benefits:** Although you may not directly benefit from being in this study, others may benefit because this research will help the researchers to learn more about how various experiential and individual factors interact to influence attitudes and relationships that can be used to develop future educational programs.

**Risks and Discomforts:** The risks of participating in this study are minimal. However, you may feel some discomfort answering questions about your background, past traumatic experiences, attitudes, and relationships. A resource page will be made available to all participants at the conclusion of the study (or by contacting the PI at [pmcausla@umich.edu](mailto:pmcausla@umich.edu) if you choose not to complete the study).

**Compensation:** You will receive \$4.00 for satisfactory completion of the survey.

**Confidentiality:** Please find a quiet and private location to complete the survey. We plan to contact individuals who satisfactorily complete the initial survey to participate in a second survey in approximately one month. Using your MTurk worker ID we will be able to request that MTurk send you an email with an invitation to participate in the second survey. To keep your information safe, the researchers will not ask you to identify yourself on the survey. Instead your initial survey and follow-up survey responses will be matched by asking you to use a code on each survey based on your initials and the last 4 digits of your cell phone number.

We intend to publish or present the results of these studies, but will not include any information that would identify you. There are some reasons why people other than the researchers may

## REACTIONS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

need to see information you provided as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is done safely and properly such as the University of Michigan-Dearborn IRB. To keep your information safe, after payment occurs the researchers will separate the data generated from any identifying information.

**Storage and future use of data:** The data you provide will be stored in password protected files. The researchers will retain the data for up to three years after the publication of papers associated with this study. After this time period the data files associated with this study will be deleted. These data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study and will not contain information that could identify you.

**Voluntary nature of the study:** Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early the data that you generate will be destroyed.

**Contact Information:** If you have questions about this research, including questions your compensation for participating, you may contact Pam McAuslan ([pmcausla@umich.edu](mailto:pmcausla@umich.edu)).

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss concerns with someone other than the researcher(s), You may contact the Dearborn IRB Administrator at (734) 763-5084. Written questions should be directed to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2066 IAVS, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Evergreen Rd., Dearborn, MI 48128-2406, (313) 593-5468; the Dearborn IRB Administrator at (734) 763-5084, or email [Dearborn-IRB@umich.edu](mailto:Dearborn-IRB@umich.edu).

Since you are enrolling in this research study through the Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) site, we need to let you know that information gathered through Amazon MTurk is not completely anonymous. Any work performed on Amazon MTurk can potentially be linked to information about you on your Amazon public profile page, depending on the settings you have for your Amazon profile. Any linking of data by MTurk to your ID is outside of the control of the researcher for this study. We will not be accessing any identifiable information about you that you may have put on your Amazon public profile page. We will store your MTurk worker ID separately from the other information you provide to us. Amazon Mechanical Turk has privacy policies of its own outlined for you in Amazon's privacy agreement. If you have concerns about how your information will be used by Amazon, you should consult them directly.

Participants in this research study will receive compensation for answering a number of questions that include background demographic information, as well as questions focused on your beliefs about yourself, your past traumatic experiences, your family and peer relationships, your media preferences, and your views regarding a number of social issues including gender, politics, and relationships. Compensation is contingent upon satisfactory completion of this work. I accept the terms of participation and I am at least 18 years old.

- Yes, I agree
- No, I do not agree

## Appendix K: Informed Consent Part 2

### Informed Consent

#### The University of Michigan-Dearborn Life Experiences and Attitudes of Young Adults Part II

**Purpose of the study:** You are invited to participate in the second part of a research study about how your background, attitudes and experience influence your responses to hypothetical scenarios that young people often encounter.

**Description of Subject Involvement:** If you agree to be part of the research study you will be directed to a survey today that will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete. In this survey you will be asked to answer some background questions about yourself and then will continue with questions about how you would respond to three hypothetical scenarios that depict a variety of situations that young people often encounter (e.g., a friend discloses information about relationship struggles).

**Benefits:** Although you may not directly benefit from being in this study, others may benefit because this research will help the researchers to learn more about how various experiential and individual factors interact to influence attitudes and relationships that can be used to develop future educational programs.

**Risks and Discomforts:** The risks of participating in this study are minimal. However, you may feel some discomfort answering questions about difficult situations that young people sometimes encounter. A resource page will be made available to all participants at the conclusion of the study (or by contacting the PI at pmcausla@umich.edu if you choose not to complete the study).

**Compensation:** You will receive \$1.50 for satisfactory completion of the survey.

**Confidentiality:** Please find a quiet and private location to complete the survey. To keep your information safe, the researchers will not ask you to identify yourself on the survey. Instead your initial survey and follow-up survey responses will be matched by asking you to use a code on each survey based on your initials and the last 4 digits of your cell phone number.

We intend to publish or present the results of these studies, but will not include any information that would identify you. There are some reasons why people other than the researchers may need to see information you provided as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is done safely and properly such as the University of Michigan-Dearborn IRB. To keep your information safe, after payment occurs the researchers will separate the data generated from any identifying information.

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**Storage and future use of data:** The data you provide will be stored in password protected files. The researchers will retain the data for up to three years after the publication of papers associated with this study. After this time period the data files associated with this study will be deleted. These data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study and will not contain information that could identify you.

**Voluntary nature of the study:** Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to withdraw early the data that you generate will be destroyed.

**Contact Information:** If you have questions about this research, including questions your compensation for participating, you may contact Pam McAuslan ([pmcausla@umich.edu](mailto:pmcausla@umich.edu)).

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss concerns with someone other than the researcher(s), You may contact the Dearborn IRB Administrator at (734) 763-5084. Written questions should be directed to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2066 IAVS, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Evergreen Rd., Dearborn, MI 48128-2406, (313) 593-5468; the Dearborn IRB Administrator at (734) 763-5084, or email [Dearborn-IRB@umich.edu](mailto:Dearborn-IRB@umich.edu).

Since you are enrolling in this research study through the Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) site, we need to let you know that information gathered through Amazon MTurk is not completely anonymous. Any work performed on Amazon MTurk can potentially be linked to information about you on your Amazon public profile page, depending on the settings you have for your Amazon profile. Any linking of data by MTurk to your ID is outside of the control of the researcher for this study. We will not be accessing any identifiable information about you that you may have put on your Amazon public profile page. We will store your MTurk worker ID separately from the other information you provide to us. Amazon Mechanical Turk has privacy policies of its own outlined for you in Amazon's privacy agreement. If you have concerns about how your information will be used by Amazon, you should consult them directly.

Participants in this research study will receive compensation for answering a number of questions that include background demographic information and questions about how you would respond to three hypothetical scenarios that depict a variety of situations that young people often encounter (e.g., a friend discloses information about relationship struggles). Compensation is contingent upon satisfactory completion of this work.

I accept the terms of participation and I am at least 18 years old.

- Yes, I agree
- No, I do not agree