

VICTIM BLAMING IN RAPE: EFFECTS OF VICTIM AND PERPETRATOR RACE, TYPE OF RAPE, AND PARTICIPANT RACISM

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Stereotypes about Black sexuality fostered hypotheses that racial factors and racism influence rape victim blaming. Predominantly White and Asian college students (170 men, 162 women) completed the Modern Racism Scale and evaluated a rape vignette varying victim race, perpetrator race, and rape type. As predicted, racial factors determined victim blaming. Compared to intraracial rapes, interracial rapes were less uniformly judged as “definitely rape” and were judged as having more culpable and less credible victims, and less culpable perpetrators. For men, racism scores positively predicted victim blaming in all rapes. For women, racism scores moderated victim blaming in interracial acquaintance rapes. In our conclusions, we emphasize the durability of racial stereotypes about rape and their influence on discriminatory adjudication outcomes.

Victim blaming has been implicated in the underreporting of rape (Brownmiller, 1975). Supposedly, a victim who refrains from reporting avoids the potential “secondary victimization” (Campbell, Sefl, Barnes, Ahrens, Wasco, & Zaragoza-Diesfeld, 1999) of being blamed by confidantes or authorities. Victim blaming and consequent underreporting may be especially problematic in acquaintance rape (Koss, 1992; Wyatt, 1992). Race may also influence victim blaming. Disproportionate underreporting of rape by Blacks and commonplace racial stereotypes together foster this possibility.

Rape and Race

Most reported rapes are intraracial, not interracial (Koch, 1995; Wheeler & George, 2001). Thus, at first glance, race would not seem to figure prominently in rape. However,

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race is a powerful variable in social judgments (Hewstone, Hantzi, & Johnson, 1991; Stangor, Lynch, Duan, & Glas, 1992). Furthermore, stereotypes exist about Black sexuality generally and about Black rape victims and Black rapists specifically. Thus, race is likely to affect judgments about all rapes involving a Black person.

Commonplace stereotypes and myths portray Blacks as excessively sexual compared to Whites (e.g., Cowan & Campbell, 1994; Hooks, 1990; Sapp, Farrell, Johnson, & Hitchcock, 1999). Black women have been stereotyped as being more sensuous, permissive, and promiscuous than White women and as having less need or desire for foreplay (McNair & Neville, 1996; West, 1995). They mythically “are ‘unrapeable’ because of their wanton, chronically promiscuous nature” (White, Strube, & Fisher, 1998, p. 159). Black men have been stereotyped as being genitally overendowed, being animalistic in their sexual appetite, and lusting after and desiring to rape White women (Collins, 1990; Davis, 1981; Davis & Cross, 1979; Wyatt, 1982). In sum, Black sexuality stereotypes include (1) the superordinate non-gendered stereotype that Black or African-descended individuals are more sexually desirous, experienced, available, indiscriminate, and skilled than are White or European-descended individuals; and the gender-specific stereotypes of (2) Black women as being promiscuous and unrapeable and (3) Black men as being overendowed and prone to rape White women.

Such stereotypes create a cultural backdrop casting racial factors as influential over informal (e.g., disclosure) and formal (e.g., adjudication and sentencing) perceptions and

judgments about rape. Research has revealed evidence of race-based patterns. First, rape impacts Black and White women differently. Lifetime prevalence data and incidence data indicate equivalent rates of rape for Black and White women (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). However, regarding perceived likelihood of being raped, Black women foresaw greater likelihood than did White women (Riger & Gordon, 1981; Wyatt, 1992). Black women, compared to White women, reported that, if raped, they would be less likely to report it to authorities (Bart & O'Brien, 1985; Feldman-Summers & Ashworth, 1981). Black women's reluctance to report rape has been linked with their perceived lack of social support (Wyatt, 1992). If they do report, Black women are less likely than White women to have a rape case come to trial and lead to conviction (Bart & O'Brien, 1985; Collins, 1990).

Second, race affects the offender's fate. Across all crimes, Black offenders receive harsher sentences than White offenders (e.g., Albonetti, 1991; Blumstein, 1982; Spohn, 1990). There is, however, some evidence of abatement in racially biased sentencing (Klein, Petersilia, & Turner, 1990; Peterson & Hagan, 1984; Pruitt & Wilson, 1983). Regarding rape specifically, racially biased sentencing has been evident (LaFree, 1980a; 1980b). Furthermore, if the rape victim is White, racially biased sentencing is more pronounced (Wolfgang & Riedel, 1975). For example, in one study, rapists of White versus Black women averaged 10- versus 2-year sentences, respectively (described in Crenshaw, 1991). In a meta-analytic review of mock jury studies, Sweeney and Haney (1992) found that perpetrator race biased sentencing decisions of jurors. This bias against the Black rapist varies depending on the ambiguity of jury instructions (Rector, Bagby, & Nicholson, 1993; Hill & Pfeifer, 1992), race of the victim (Field, 1979), race of juror (Rector & Bagby, 1997), and racial match of victim and defendant (Hymes, Leinart, Rowe, & Rogers, 1993; Varelas & Foley, 1998; Willis, 1992).

In sum, research shows that racial factors influence rape aftermath. In rapes involving a Black person, race-based patterns have emerged suggesting that prejudice, discrimination, and stereotypes affect societal and individual perceptions of and reactions to rape.

Hypotheses: Race, Gender, and Rape Type

Few studies have investigated victim blaming based on race. Willis (1992) found that students perceived Black victims as more responsible for date rape than stranger rape; but they did not so distinguish White victims. Foley, Evancic, Karnik, King, and Parks (1995) found that date rape was perceived as less serious for a Black victim. Varelas and Foley (1998) found that White respondents attributed less blame to White than Black victims of a Black rapist. The present study extends this work by considering victim race, perpetrator race, and type of rape, in conjunction with the respondent's own racism.

As noted earlier, the "Blacks are more sexual" general stereotype subsumes two specific rape-related notions: Black women are promiscuous and unrapeable; and Black men are inclined to rape White women. We reasoned that these stereotypes would be evoked more when judging an interracial rape than an intraracial rape. In White-on-White rapes, racial stereotypes should not get evoked at all.¹ In Black-on-Black rapes, stereotypes about the victim and perpetrator—if stereotypes are evoked at all—should be mutually nullifying. However, in interracial rapes, stereotypes should be more starkly in play and therefore should be more determinative of victim blame than in intraracial rapes. Therefore, we hypothesized that victim blame would be determined both by victim race and perpetrator race. The Black woman should be seen as having high responsibility for a White man's rape and her White counterpart should be seen as having low responsibility for a Black man's rape.

Furthermore, we hypothesized a racism interaction effect. In rapes involving a Black person, victim blaming would be correlated with the participants' endorsement of racist attitudes. Prejudiced individuals are more likely to categorize people based on race (Blascovich, Wyer, Swart, & Kibler, 1997) and more likely to utilize Black stereotypes (Lepore & Brown, 1997). St. John and Heald-Moore (1996) found prejudiced participants were more reliant on Black stereotypes in evaluating crime fear. We expected a comparable effect whereby racism would moderate rape blame. That is, participants higher in racism should exhibit stronger victim race and perpetrator race effects on victim blaming than participants lower in racism.

We also hypothesized effects for rape type and participant gender. Pollard (1992) reviewed numerous studies on perceptions of rape victims and noted two distinct and reliable victim blaming patterns. First, acquaintance rape victims were blamed more than stranger rape victims. Accordingly, we hypothesized a rape type effect with more victim blame in acquaintance than stranger rapes. This hypothesis reflects the traditional sex role belief that true rape involves strangers. This widely-held belief fuels the myth that an acquaintance rape victim "brings it upon herself" in some way. Second, women blamed victims less than men did. Women seem to have more sympathy and empathy for the victim's plight, presumably because they themselves could be similarly victimized. This gender difference in victim blaming has been observed in some studies (Caron & Carter, 1997; Stormo, Lang, & Stritzke, 1997; Workman & Freeburg, 1999) subsequent to Pollard's review but not others (Simonson & Subich, 1999). Nevertheless, we hypothesized that women would exhibit less victim blaming than men.

METHOD

Participants

Three hundred sixty-one participants completed measures. Twenty-nine participants were dropped from the data set: 5

were duplicates, 21 were manipulation failures that were replaced, and 3 were dropped because they had too much data missing. There was no difference between the participants dropped and the remaining participants on the following demographic variables: sex, age, ethnicity, and household income. The final data set consisted of responses from 332 (170 men) undergraduates at a large, Western university. They earned credit toward their grade in an introductory psychology course. Almost 60% of the participants were White ($n = 192$) and a third were Asian ($n = 108$). The remaining 10% identified themselves as African American ($n = 5$), Latino ($n = 8$), or other ($n = 19$). The average age of the participants was 20.

Racism Assessment and Vignette Materials

Racism. The 6-item Modern Racism Scale (MRS) was administered. It measures subtle racism toward Blacks expressed as resentment about undeserved benefits (McConahay, 1986): (a) Over the past few years, the government and news media have shown more respect for Blacks than they deserve; (b) It is easy to understand the anger of Black people in the United States (reverse keyed); (c) Discrimination against Blacks is no longer a problem in the United States; (d) Over the past few years, Blacks have received more economically than they deserve; (e) Blacks are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights; (f) Blacks should not push themselves where they are not wanted. The scale showed good internal consistency with this sample (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$).

Vignette. The vignette was developed specifically for this study. The primary setting was a woman alone at home on a pleasant evening. She goes outside to look for her cat and responds to the friendly comment of a man (either a neighbor she recognizes or a stranger) who is walking down the street. Then, she either invites the neighbor inside her home to continue conversing or she is pushed into her own house by the stranger. All levels of physical aggression used by the offender (after the initial push) and resistance of the victim were held constant across both rape conditions.

Dependent Measures

All dependent measures were scored on 10-point Likert scales. There were several constructs measured pertaining to assignment of blame.

Was it rape? The first assessed their perception about whether the depicted events constituted rape. This was measured using the following question taken from Bridges (1991): To what extent would you describe the behavior of the man toward the woman as rape? (1 = *definitely not rape*, 10 = *definitely rape*).

Culpability of the victim and culpability of the perpetrator. There were several items assessing the culpability of both the victim and the perpetrator. These culpability items were developed based on suggestions regarding the different dimensions of cause, responsibility, and blame as recommended by Calhoun and Townsley (1991). The assignment of blame presupposes a judgment of responsibility that, in turn, presupposes an attribution of cause. Cause is defined as bringing about some result without being held accountable. Responsibility subsumes six dimensions: having the capacity to have acted differently, having a choice, having a degree of selfishness, having an understanding that the behavior is wrong, having foresight about potential consequences, and having the intent to cause whatever happened. A total of nine items were used to assess the victim's culpability. These included items for blame, cause, the six dimensions of responsibility indicated above, and a single item explicitly assessing responsibility. The same nine items were used to assess perpetrator culpability. In the current sample, these victim and perpetrator items were winnowed into a 6-item victim culpability scale and a 5-item perpetrator culpability scale; each showed acceptable internal consistency with this sample (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$ and $.68$, respectively).

Credibility of the victim's refusal. Another construct assessed the credibility of the victim's refusal. This measure was developed by Fors (1993). It consists of 10 items. Seven of the items assess the respondent's perception of the victim's refusal (e.g., the extent to which the victim meant "no," the extent to which the victim really wanted to have sex with the perpetrator). The final 6-item credibility of victim refusal scale showed acceptable internal consistency with this sample (Cronbach's $\alpha = .77$). Three items assessed the respondent's judgment about the perpetrator's understanding of the victim's refusal.

Sentencing recommendations. A final construct assessed the severity of the penalty a respondent would recommend for the perpetrator if he were found guilty of rape (If the man were convicted of committing rape, how much time do you believe he should spend in prison? 1 = *no time at all*, 10 = *more than 40 years*). This measure was adapted from a measure used by Szymanski, Devlin, Chrisler, and Vyse (1982).

Design and Procedure

Men and women were randomly assigned to eight vignette conditions. To create vignettes, three bilevel independent variables were factorially crossed: victim race (Black, White), perpetrator race (Black, White), and type of rape (stranger rape, acquaintance rape). These variables were crossed with participant gender to formulate a $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ analysis of variance (ANOVA) data analytic framework. Cell sizes across the 16 cells averaged 20.75 and ranged from 19–22; the mode was 21.

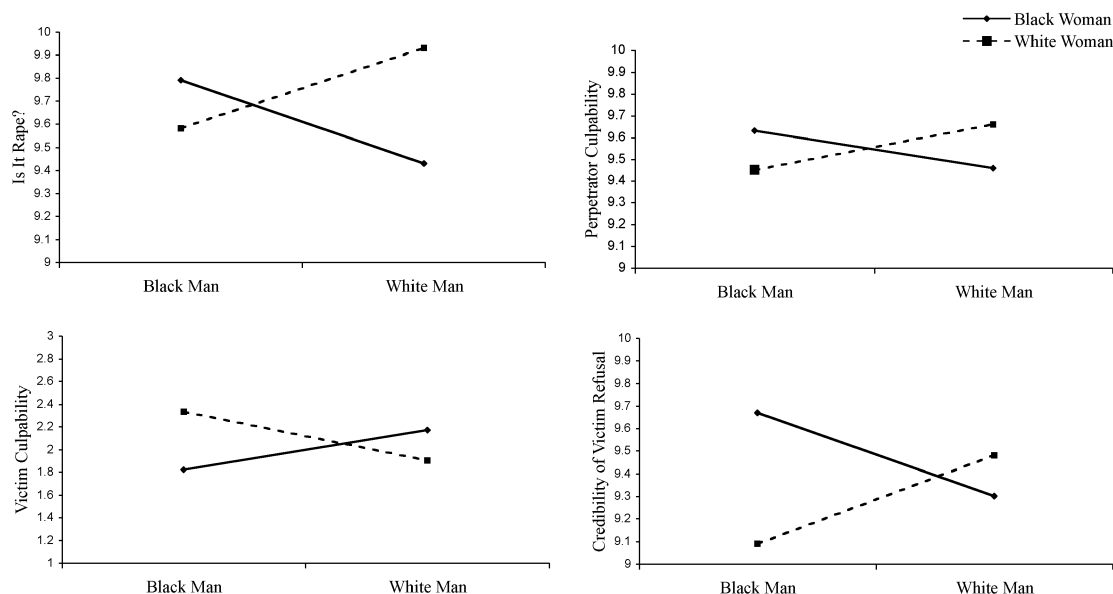


Fig. 1. The interaction effects of victim race and perpetrator race on perceptions of “is it rape,” perpetrator culpability, victim culpability, and credibility of the victim’s refusal.

The participants were administered two separate questionnaire packets which they were led to believe were unrelated. The first contained several individual difference measures, entitled the Student Attitude and Opinion Survey. The second consisted of a written vignette of a sexual interaction. This aspect of the study was entitled the Sexual Interaction Recall Study. Sessions were conducted in same sex groups of 10 to 15 participants with a matched-sex, White experimenter. Participants were given the first packet and provided written and oral directions by the experimenter. After completion, they received the second packet containing a vignette. After reading the vignette and returning it to the envelope, participants received the dependent measures. Finally, participants were debriefed, credited, and released.

RESULTS

Scale scores were developed for all multi-item dependent measure constructs. Scale construction utilized principal component analyses, factor eigenvalues greater than one, an item loading cutoff criterion of .50, unit scoring, and acceptable internal consistency. Preliminary analyses revealed a skewed distribution for each dependent measure. Consequently, all scores were transformed using logarithmic or reflected logarithmic transformations.²

Main Analyses: Victim Race, Perpetrator Race, Rape Type, and Gender

For the main analyses, a $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ (victim race, perpetrator race, type of rape, participant gender) Unique Sums of Square ANOVA was performed on the transformed

scores. A significant interaction between victim race and perpetrator race emerged on each measure except sentencing. As shown in Figure 1, each interaction revealed a crossover pattern suggesting that the essence of the effect was driven by racial composition of the dyad.³ The collapsed means for the interracial and intraracial conditions are shown in Table 1.

Was it rape? Responses on this item were skewed toward rating the vignette as “definitely rape.” The ANOVA on the transformed scores revealed only the victim by perpetrator race interaction, $F(1,311) = 5.55$, $p = .019$. Intraracial rapes were rated higher than interracial rapes (see Figure 1).

Culpability of the victim. Principal component analysis of nine items assessing victim culpability revealed two factors accounting for 54.9% of the variance. Six items loaded on the first factor: cause, blame, having a choice, foresight or awareness of the consequences, intent, and overall responsibility. This created a victim culpability scale ($\alpha = .80$). Factor 2 proved unreliable ($\alpha = -.08$) and was dropped. Scores on the victim culpability scale and its constituent items were skewed positively toward seeing the victim generally as low in culpability.

The victim by perpetrator race interaction, $F(1,316) = 7.95$, $p \leq .005$ (see Figure 1), showed that victims of interracial rapes were blamed more than victims of intraracial rapes. In addition, the ANOVA performed on the transformed scores revealed significant main effects for gender and rape type. Men rated the victim as more culpable than did women, $F(1,316) = 5.26$, $p \leq .022$ ($M = 1.92$ and 1.71 ,

Table 1
Victim Race by Perpetrator Race Interaction Effects: *F* Tests and Untransformed Means (*SDs*)
for Interracial Versus Intraracial Rapes

	<i>Interracial</i>		<i>Interracial Average</i>	<i>Intraracial</i>		<i>Intraracial Average</i>	<i>F</i>
	<i>BV-WP</i>	<i>WV-BP</i>		<i>BV-BP</i>	<i>WV-WP</i>		
Was it Rape?	9.43 (1.74)	9.58 (1.55)	9.50 (1.65)	9.79 (1.05)	9.93 (0.31)	9.86 (0.77)	5.55*
Victim Culpability	2.18 (1.07)	2.31 (1.47)	2.25 (1.29)	1.83 (0.96)	1.92 (0.94)	1.88 (0.93)	7.95**
Perpetrator Culpability	9.46 (0.95)	9.45 (1.10)	9.45 (1.03)	9.63 (0.77)	9.66 (0.62)	9.62 (0.69)	3.87*
Victim Credibility	9.31 (1.27)	9.10 (1.44)	9.21 (1.36)	9.67 (.75)	9.46 (0.93)	9.57 (0.85)	6.85**

Note. BV = Black Victim, WV = White Victim, BP = Black Perpetrator, WP = White Perpetrator.

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

respectively, $SD = 1.12$ and 1.06 , respectively), and all participants rated acquaintance victims as more culpable than stranger victims, $F(1,316) = 23.70$, $p < .001$; ($M = 2.04$ and 1.58 , respectively, $SD = 1.22$ and $.89$, respectively).

Culpability of the perpetrator. Principal component analysis of nine items assessing perpetrator culpability revealed two factors accounting for 45.3% of the variance. Five items loaded on the first factor: cause, blame, capability to have changed what happened, selfishness, and intent. This created a perpetrator culpability scale ($\alpha = .68$). Factor 2 proved unreliable ($\alpha = .23$) and was dropped. Scores on the perpetrator culpability scale and its constituent items were skewed toward seeing the perpetrator generally as high in culpability. The ANOVA performed on the transformed scores revealed only one significant effect: the victim by perpetrator race interaction was significant, $F(1,316) = 3.87$, $p \leq .05$. The perpetrator was rated as more culpable when the rape was intraracial rather than interracial (see Figure 1).

Credibility of the victim's refusal. Principal component analysis of items assessing credibility of the victim's refusal accounted for 57.4% of the variance. Six items loaded on the first factor capturing the participant's perspective on the credibility of the victim's refusal ($\alpha = .77$): Did she mean it when she said no, how much did she really want him to stop, how much did she want to have sex with him, how definite was her refusal, how likely is it that she said no to not seem loose or easy, and how credible was the refusal. Four additional items were dropped from further consideration: Three loaded on a less reliable second factor concerning the perpetrator's perspective and a fourth item failed to load on either factor. Scores on the credibility of refusal scale and its constituent items were skewed toward seeing the victim generally as exhibiting a credible refusal. The ANOVA performed on the transformed scores revealed only the significant victim race by perpetrator race interaction, $F(1,309) = 6.85$, $p \leq .009$ (see Figure 1). Victims of interracial rapes were rated as less credible than victims of intraracial rapes.

Sentencing recommendations. An ANOVA on the transformed scores revealed significant main effects for rape type, $F(1,311) = 17.18$, $p < .001$, and gender, $F(1,311) = 17.14$, $p < .001$. Participants recommended harsher sentences for stranger rapists than acquaintance rapists. Women recommended harsher sentences than did men. A two-way interaction between rape type and perpetrator race, $F(1,311) = 4.28$, $p \leq .039$, was modified by a three-way interaction with gender, $F(1,311) = 4.59$, $p \leq .033$. This led us to evaluate the perpetrator race by type of rape interaction separately for men and women. For women, race was inconsequential and only the rape type effect was significant, $F(1,157) = 14.82$, $p < .001$. For men, rape type and race determined sentencing, $F(1,161) = 8.67$, $p \leq .004$. Post hoc analyses revealed that men recommended relatively equal sentences for the White perpetrators who had raped strangers and acquaintances ($M = 6.52$ and 6.90 , $SD = 2.43$ and 2.48 , respectively); but they recommended significantly longer sentences for Black stranger perpetrators than Black acquaintance perpetrators ($M = 8.00$ and 6.01 , $SD = 2.25$ and 2.51 , respectively). Also, men recommended longer sentences for Black stranger perpetrators than White stranger perpetrators.

Racism Analyses

The mean MRS score was 21.41 ($SD = 11.02$). An ANOVA performed on MRS scores revealed only a significant main effect for gender, $F(1,316) = 8.56$, $p \leq .004$. Men had significantly higher scores than women ($M = 23.08$ and 19.64 , $SD = 11.70$ and 9.99).⁴

We performed hierarchical multiple regression analyses to evaluate our hypothesis that, in rapes involving a Black person, victim blaming will be correlated with the participants' racism. Contrast coding was implemented to designate groups based upon the race and rape variables. The Modern Racism score was entered on the first step, condition assignment information was entered on the second step, and interactions between racism score and condition were entered on the third step. Separate regressions were performed for women and men. For men, there was no

support for the hypothesized interactions, but there were isolated main effects for racism: A higher racism score was associated with seeing the victim as more culpable ($R^2 = .056$, $p < .002$, $\beta = .24$) and less credible in her refusal ($R^2 = .153$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .39$) and seeing the perpetrator as less responsible ($R^2 = .031$, $p \leq .023$, $\beta = .18$). For women, a higher racism score was associated with seeing the victim as more culpable ($R^2 = .024$, $p < .05$, $\beta = .16$) and less credible in her refusal ($R^2 = .03$, $p \leq .028$, $\beta = .17$). A four-way interaction on victim culpability ($R^2 = .039$, $p \leq .009$, $\beta = -.21$) revealed that the victim race by perpetrator race pattern was keenest for women who were one standard deviation above the MRS mean and were evaluating an acquaintance rape. In other words, women high in racism were especially likely to blame an acquaintance victim raped interracially rather than intracially.

DISCUSSION

Race influenced rape victim blaming but not entirely as predicted. We had hypothesized that both victim and perpetrator race would determine victim blame. Indeed we found that Black victims, as hypothesized, were blamed more if assaulted interracially rather than intracially. Surprisingly, however, we found that this was also true for White victims. Thus, our main finding was stark: Victims—whether White or Black—were blamed more if raped interracially.

This pattern of interracial victim blame was robust, yielding crossover interactions on four key measures. First, interracial rapes were less uniformly judged as “definitely rape,” compared to intraracial rapes. Second, victims of interracial rapes were rated higher on culpability (cause, blame, responsible, etc.) than victims of intraracial rapes. Third, participants saw the interracial victim’s refusal as less credible than her intraracial counterpart’s. Finally, perpetrators conversely were judged less culpable if they committed rapes interracially rather than intracially. In sum, when a Black man raped a White woman, she was blamed more and he was blamed less than if a White man had raped her. The opposite was true for a Black woman: When the assailant was White rather than Black, she was blamed more and he was blamed less.

Reasoning from racial stereotypes, we had anticipated this result for Black victims. Specifically, an interracial rape would activate a general stereotype of Blacks as hypersexual and a gendered stereotype of Black women as promiscuous, thereby leading participants to judge the interracial Black victim as more blameworthy, as though her mythic sexuality accounted for the White man’s behavior. We had reasoned that White interracial victims, because of the stereotypes about Black men, would be blamed less than intraracial counterparts. Instead, we found the opposite result: White victims also were blamed more when raped interracially.

Greater blaming of interracial victims—regardless of race—raises four explanatory points that we had not considered at the outset. One possibility is that a stereotype

about White women overrode the Black man stereotype. Scholars (Hernton, 1965; Petroni, 1973) have long identified a stereotypic portrait of White women who fraternize with Black men as being less reputable than counterparts who do not. This notion, of course, is not independent of the Black man stereotype; it reflectively impugns her for having been involved with him. According to this view, the stereotypes we postulated at the outset were indeed active but paradoxically so for White victims. Commenting on a similar effect—although more isolated in her findings—Willis (1992) suggested the operation of “a bias against women who have been in interracial relationships” (p. 224). A second analysis, equally applicable to both White and Black victims, is that blame for interracial sexual contact transferred to blame for rape. Although interracial sexual unions have become more common, only 42% of Americans in a Gallup Poll approved of such marriages (Most in Poll, 1991). Greater victim blaming may have represented disapproval for interracial sex, although it was nonconsenting sex. Third, race may have served as a proxy for stereotypes that are fundamentally gender based. The salience of race in the interracial rapes may have made gender roles more pronounced. This may have amplified the gender double standard about sexuality where women are shamed and men are ennobled by having sex. Relatedly, it may have amplified gendered sexual scripts portraying men as sexual initiators and women as sexual gatekeepers, who are thereby more responsible for sex occurring. Finally, increased blame may have reflected more fundamental personality inferences about the victim. These inferences, while evoked by race, may not be necessarily race-related at their core. For instance, participants may have inferred that an interracial victim possesses traits making her more blameworthy. She might have been seen as more adventuresome, daring, and unconventional for living in a racially integrated milieu. These traits may cast her simply as having more agency in whatever fates befall her. All four points raise intriguing considerations that warrant further research; however, none of the relevant mediating mechanisms were addressed directly by our data and therefore these arguments remain speculative.

Race also affected men’s sentencing recommendations. Men recommended longer sentences for Black strangers than Black acquaintances, but did not so distinguish White perpetrators. They also recommended longer sentences for Black than White strangers. This pattern suggests endorsement of the view that society’s harshest sanctions should be exacted against real rapists—stereotypically, the Black stranger rapist.

A new finding was that participant racism also affected victim blaming. For women, the predictive value of racism depended on victim and perpetrator race. Women’s tendency to blame acquaintance victims raped interracially more than those raped intracially increased as their own endorsement of racist beliefs increased. These data are consistent with the idea that presence of a Black person activated stereotypes differentially in prejudiced respondents

(St. John & Heald-Moore, 1996). Furthermore, this new finding extends previous race-related rape studies (Willis, 1992; Foley et al. 1995; Varelas & Foley, 1998) because it demonstrates that perceivers' susceptibility to assigning rape blame based on victim and perpetrator race is partially a product of anti-Black attitudes these perceivers normally harbor. For men, racism also predicted victim blaming but it did not hinge on victim or perpetrator race. Regardless of race conditions, men with higher racism scores saw victims as more culpable and less credible and saw the rapist as less culpable. That men's racism effects were independent of dyad race suggests some degree of overlap between racism and other rape-supportive constructs such as rape myth acceptance or traditional sex roles. Future work should include measures of these other constructs to better discern racism effects among men.

The hypothesized effects of participant gender were discernable on victim culpability and sentencing. Compared to men, women blamed the victim less and recommended longer sentences. This concurs with trends reviewed by Pollard (1992) and reported in several recent studies (Caron & Carter, 1997; Stormo et al., 1997; Workman & Freeburg, 1999). This pattern seems quite consistent with the notion that women seem to have more sympathy and empathy than men for the victim's plight, presumably because they themselves could be similarly victimized. Conversely, men may feel a tendency to identify with the plight of the same-gender accused. Interestingly, while such a tendency may have heightened victim blame and dampened perpetrator punishment, it did not lead men to see the perpetrator as less culpable than did women. It is as though the increased victim blame perceived by men became a mitigating factor in deciding the perpetrator's fate, but not his guilt.

As with earlier work (Pollard, 1992; Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994), we found the hypothesized rape type effects. It should be noted that, although our vignettes unfolded identically after the rape sequence started, the acquaintance and stranger conditions differed in initial violence: She "invites" him inside or "is pushed" inside, respectively. This is common in experimental comparisons of stranger versus acquaintance rape (Cowan, 2000) because the stranger—unlike the acquaintance—has no initial trust to exploit in transitioning into the attack and must therefore instigate with greater force. Despite this potential confound, our results were congruent not only with previous experimental data but also with actual victim reports (Gidycz & Layman, 1996) and criminal justice findings (McCormick, Maric, Seto, & Barbaree, 1998). We found that, compared to strangers, acquaintance victims were blamed more and acquaintance perpetrators were recommended shorter sentences. These effects reflect the myth of "acquaintance/date rape" as an oxymoron. Compared to stranger victims who may be seen as innocently in the "wrong place at the wrong time," acquaintance victims are mythologized as having elicited his behavior and are deemed guilty of failing to discourage his advances effectively.

Limitations

A number of limitations bear on our findings. One drawback is that endorsement of racial stereotypes about sexuality was not assessed directly. Although we believe that exposure to such stereotypes is near universal, individuals are likely to differ widely in their awareness of the stereotypes and the degree to which they endorse such assertions as true. These differences should yield variations in race-related victim blaming observed here. Furthermore, as we alluded earlier, we did not assess processes indicative of stereotype activation (Devine, 1989), which would have permitted a more direct evaluation of our explanatory analyses.

Sampling issues are also noteworthy. Our sample consisted of college students who were predominantly White and Asian. Generalizability to noncollege samples is uncertain. However, because anti-Black prejudice tends to be higher in less educated individuals and in older generations (von Hippel, Silver, & Lynch, 2000), our findings might intensify with noncollege samples. Generalizability to African American samples is uncertain. Some studies have reported that rape perceptions vary with perceiver-victim racial similarity (Miller & Hewitt, 1978). With only five African American participants in the present study, we were unable to consider this possibility. Moreover, because this campus is situated in a community with low African American representation (4.1% citywide, 3% statewide), generalizability to samples accustomed to more ethnically diverse social surroundings is unknown.

Regarding the racism scale, explicit measures of anti-Black prejudice have been criticized because of the potential for impression management biases (Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997) and construct overlap with conservative values (Monteith & Spicer, 2000). In future efforts to investigate race-based patterns in rape victim blaming, we recommend use of alternative indicators of racism that are less vulnerable to these problems (e.g., the Implicit Association Test; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) and additional measures of race-related predispositional factors (e.g., racial/ethnic self-identity; Phinney, 1996). We also recommend that measures of gender-related factors (e.g., traditional sex roles) and conservative values be employed to better isolate gender effects and to better distinguish the influence of race-based versus gender-based attitudes on rape victim blaming.

Conclusions

In conclusion, racial factors demonstrably influenced rape judgments. In judgments about the certitude of rape, the victim's culpability, the credibility of her refusal, and the perpetrator's culpability, participants judged women raped interracial as more blameworthy than those raped intraracially. Men recommended harsher sentences for Black than White strangers. Racism scores positively predicted men's victim blaming in all rapes. For women, racism scores

moderated victim blaming in interracial acquaintance rapes. Together, these findings support the contention that longstanding racial stereotypes about rape persist and that these are neither dormant nor benign. Strikingly, these stereotypes endure despite refutation of race-based theories of rape and countervailing epidemiological evidence about the infrequency of interracial rapes (Wheeler & George, 2001).

The findings imply that, in the aftermath of real world rapes, crucial social perceptual processes may be vulnerable to undue and under-identified racial bias. The deliberations that shape the criminal justice sequelae to rape can be construed as a cascading sequence of opportunities for racially prejudicial influences and discriminatory outcomes: a victim's decision to report rape, confidantes' willingness to support her decision, witnesses' willingness to testify, authorities' commitment and vigor in pursuing cases and trying perpetrators, a jury's decision to convict, prosecutors' decisions to recommend incarceration, and judges' decisions to impose incarceration penalties. At each of these opportunities, racial stereotypes and racism are likely to operate subtly, thereby potentially escaping detection. But collectively, these opportunities conduce toward patently discriminatory outcomes: Black women are discriminated against when their victimization experiences are minimized relative to those of White victims, and Black men are discriminated against when they are more vigorously pursued and harshly punished for their crimes than are White men.

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NOTES

1. Recent discourse about racial dynamics highlights the racial identity of both Whites and people of color, although those dynamics manifest in very different outcomes. Whites circulating in all-White social spheres are not *unaffected* by racial factors. Instead, they enjoy unacknowledged privileges and protections contingent upon being White in a society that discriminates against non-Whites. Therefore, an argument could be made that even in White-on-White rapes racial factors operate latently.
2. Appreciation is also expressed to anonymous reviewers for recommending this course of action.
3. To further clarify this effect, we conducted an alternative ANOVA $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ configuration crossing victim race, type of rape, and participant gender with dyad racial composition (intra-racial versus inter-racial). In each case, this alternative ANOVA configuration revealed a main effect for dyad racial composition characterized by $F(1,311)$ and p values equivalent to those obtained in the race by race interactions of the original ANOVA configuration. Interracial rapes were judged differently than intra-racial rapes.
4. We explored ethnic differences in MRS scores. Asian students ($n = 108$, $M = 22.46$, $SD = 11.01$) exhibited the highest scores followed by Whites ($n = 192$, $M = 21.67$, $SD = 11.10$), Latino/

Latinas ($n = 8$, $M = 18.38$, $SD = 10.09$), students self-classified as other ($n = 19$, $M = 17.32$, $SD = 9.27$), and Blacks ($n = 5$, $M = 8.60$, $SD = 5.27$). When the latter three groups were combined, they exhibited significantly lower MRS scores than White and Asian students combined, $t(330) = 3.23$, $p < .002$. This pattern of anti-Black prejudice is in keeping with those reported elsewhere (e.g., Bobo, 1999; Dunbar, 1995).

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