Evaluating Rape Myths at a Midwestern University

A thesis presented to
the faculty of
the College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

Brittany Moore
December 2016
© 2016 Brittany Moore. All Rights Reserved.
This thesis titled
Evaluating Rape Myths at a Midwestern University

by
BRITTANY MOORE

has been approved for
the Department of Sociology and Anthropology
and the College of Arts and Sciences by

Cynthia Anderson
Professor of Sociology and Anthropology

Christine Mattley
Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology

Robert Frank
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
MOORE, BRITTANY, M.A., December 2016, Sociology

Evaluating Rape Myths at a Midwestern University

Directors of Thesis: Cynthia Anderson and Christine Mattley

This research draws on survey data gathered from 234 undergraduate students to understand if rape myths are still endorsed. Previous research shows that students in general are prone to endorse rape myths. The current study uses the theoretical framework of radical feminist theory to evaluate the extent to which students, both women and men, endorse rape myths, as well as to see if fraternity members and male intercollegiate athletes have higher endorsement rates of rape myth acceptance. The findings indicate that there is an overall disagreement with rape myths, but certain subscales and myths were more likely to be endorsed than others. Additionally, men were prone to higher endorsement rates than women. However, there was no significant difference in fraternity members’ rape myth acceptance rates when compared to men who weren’t fraternity members. Furthermore, there was not large enough of a sample to make a conclusion comparing male college athletes’ myth acceptance rates to male non-athletes.
DEDICATION

To my family.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mom, Dad, and Brandon: As always, you three are the reason why I am able to do anything of particular importance or difficulty. Thank you so much for being there for me whenever I needed you, and giving me the support I need. I love you more than I can say. I would write more, but some forms of gratitude are impossible to articulate.

To my committee: Thank you for continuing to be there for me even when it got hard. Dr. Anderson, thank you for agreeing to become my co-advisor. I know you had many other things to do and many other people to take care of, so thank you for still making time to guide my thesis. You along with Dr. Mattley took me on at a time when I truly needed it, and I truly appreciate it. Dr. Mattley, thank you as well for becoming my co-advisor despite your busy schedule. I would not have been able to finish without your help. Dr. Vander Ven, thank you for being on my committee, and for being one of the first professors whose lessons helped me realize how passionate I am about sociology.

Special thanks to Dr. Henderson.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Introduction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Literature Review</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Feminist Theory</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Myths</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myth One: Bad Reputation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myth Two: Sexual Fantasies</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myth Three: Appearance</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myth Four: False Claims</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Myths About Rape</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Context and Support of Rape Myths</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Research</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Methodology</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She Asked For It</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Didn’t Mean To</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It Wasn’t Really Rape</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She Lied</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Data Analysis</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Myth Endorsement</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraternity Members</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Male Athletes</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Discussion</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis One: Rape Myths Being Prevalent</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis Two: Men Have Higher Rape Myth Acceptance</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis Three: Fraternity Members Will Have Higher Rape Myth Acceptance</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis Four: Male Athletes Will Have Higher Rape Myth Acceptance</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6: Conclusion</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths and Limitations</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Research and Policy Recommendations</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Survey</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Sample Demographics</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Overall Rape Myths by Demographics</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Overall Rape Myth Averages</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Rape Myth Agreement Percentage for Each Statement</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Rape Myth Scale Between Gender Using T-tests</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Rape Myth Scale Between Fraternity Members and Men Using T-tests</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study aims to understand the endorsement of rape myths by students at a large Midwestern University. Sexual assault on college campuses has become an important topic for research and discussion over the recent years. Research shows that women are at higher risk of sexual assault while on a college campus (Kilpatrick, Resnick, Ruggiero, Conoscenti & McCauley 2007). Rape is defined on the “U.S. Department of Justice” website as “the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim (U.S. Department of Justice 2012).” Around 3% of college women are raped (this does not include all forms of sexual assault) in a given nine month academic year, which means that 350 women on a campus with 10,000 women students are raped (Sampson 2003). Individuals prone to endorsement of rape myths are more likely to commit sexual violence or coercion (Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White 2006; Schwartz and NoGrady 1996; Kingree and Thompson 2013). By the same token, research finds that rape myths endorsement correlates with higher acceptance of interpersonal violence (Gavey 2005; Hocket 2016). 18-25% of U.S. women report experiencing rape or attempted rape in their lifetime (Fischer et al. 2000, CDC 2010).

Although it has been found that both men and women endorse rape myths (Burt 1980; McMahon 2010; Cowan 2000; Aronowitz, Lamert and Davidoff 2012), men have been shown to endorse them at a higher level (Cota 2016; McMahon 2010; Suarez & Gadalla 2010). Men are also prone to commit sexual assault when they have routine activities with peers who hold patriarchal beliefs, which are beliefs that men should have
power over women (Suarez & Gadalla 2010; Schwartz, Deseseredy, Tait, and Alvi 2001; Schwartz and Dekeseredy 1997). Additionally, fraternity members and male intercollegiate athletes are more likely to endorse rape myths, sexual coercion, and sexual assault than the general student body (Kingree and Thompson 2013; Humphrey & Kahn 2000; Crosset, Benedict, & McDonald 1995; Sawyer et al 2002; Foubert, Garner & Thaxter 2006).

It is important to continuously update research on the endorsement of rape myths, especially on college campuses. Campuses often have sexual assault risk reduction programs, which continuously need to be evaluated. This current study serves to continue research on rape myths to examine the current state of rape myths and to assess differences in support across campus groups.

In order to analyze the endorsement of rape myths, the updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA) was distributed to participants (Appendix A). Data was collected from 234 students. All students were in sociology classes and the majority were white and freshmen. The study provides beneficial information for future research on the endorsement of rape myths, as well as valuable information for sexual assault risk reduction programs.

There is a societal perception that rape is only committed by deviants and strangers. Thus, narrow and constrained ideas of what constitutes real rape are formed. These perceptions result in rape myths and the legitimation of rape (Burt 1980; Gavey 2005; Carmody & Washington 2001). Rape myths exist within a rape culture, which is defined as “a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women” (Buchwald, Fletcher & Roth 1993: iix). Women in a rape
culture who come forth about their rape are often blamed or not believed (Gavey 2005; Carmody & Washington 2001; Burt 1980). Radical feminist theory is the guiding theoretical framework for this research. Radical feminist theory asserts that sexual assault is an act of violence used for domination and control, and is not an act of primal lust or want (Gunew 2013; Gavey 2005; Burt 1980; Kolmar and Bartowski 2005). Radical Feminist Theory also asserts that sexual assault and violence are not individual acts only performed by societal deviants. Instead, the acts are a normal part of a patriarchal system that contains oppressive gender norms, rape myth supportive attitudes, and repressive institutions (Gavey 2005; Gunew 2013). Furthermore, radical feminism informs the study by framing sexual assault as a gendered act of violence done to maintain power, instead of an act committed due to overpowering lust.

In the following chapters, the endorsement of rape myths at a large Midwestern University will be evaluated. In Chapter Two, previous research and literature on rape myths will be presented. Radical feminist theory, the framework of this research, will be used to frame this discussion. Top rape myths will be explained, which include (1) women who are raped have bad reputations (2) women have sexual fantasies and unconsciously desire to be raped (3) women precipitate rape by their appearance and (4) most rape accusations are false. Additionally, other prominent myths will be explored including the myths that only strangers rape and that it is only rape if physical resistance is evident. The main supporters of rape myths will be examined, as well as the effects rape myths have on victims. The literature review will provide the basic grounds for understanding what rape myths are and how they influence and effect society and rape victims.
The research methodology will be discussed in Chapter Three, including data collection, survey implementation, sample, and demographics. The purpose of current research is to answer the following question: is there rape myth endorsement on college campus? The hypotheses to these research questions will be as following: (1) rape myths are still endorsed (2) men are more likely to endorse rape myths than women (3) college male athletes will be more prone to endorsing rape myths at a higher rate than men who are not athletes (4) fraternity members will be more prone to endorsing rape myths than non-fraternity men.

The results will be discussed in Chapter Four, and rates of rape myth endorsement will be analyzed. Additionally, Chapter Four will discuss which demographics are correlated with higher rape myth endorsement. Chapter four will evaluate whether current research findings support or refute the current hypotheses. Furthermore, Chapter Four will analyze whether results parallel previously done research on rape myth endorsement.

Chapter Five will discuss the overall results of study and frame it in radical feminist theory. Chapter Six will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the study, and offer suggestions for future research. Finally, policy implications will be addressed.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Rape myths are defined by the “Women Against Violence Against Women” website as “widely held, inaccurate beliefs about rape” (2014). Accepting rape myths and rape culture leads to an acceptance of interpersonal violence in itself, including rape (Gavey, 2005), which is defined by the “U.S. Department of Justice” website as “the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim” (2012). In 2006, it was found that 17.7 million women in the U.S. were raped at some point in their lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). Around three percent of college women are raped (this does not include all forms of sexual assault) in a given 9-month academic year, which means that 350 of 10,000 female students on campus are raped (Sampson 2003).

When looking at rape historically, different theories and conceptualizations can be found. During the 20th century, rape was generally framed in a psychoanalytic perspective, which viewed rape as a mainly sexually motivated act. Due to this, rapists were viewed more as “psychological deviants rather than criminals” (McPhail 2016:315). Furthermore, since rape was seen as a sexual act, it was conceptualized that a rape victim was often complicit in her own rape because she secretly wanted the rape to occur. In support of this notion, a rape victim’s sexual history was often reviewed to see if she was promiscuous, and thus more likely to secretly have wanted sex while falsely presenting it as rape (McPhail 2016:315). Such ideas led to the focus being on the victim rather than the perpetrator when a rape case was brought to court.
However, many women felt that the psychoanalytic viewpoint of rape was flawed, causing feminist theories on rape to rise along with the second wave of the women’s movement (McPhail 2016). Feminist theories are grounded in feminism, which is a way of “recognizing the need to understand the specific nature and conditions of women’s oppression in different, cultures, societies, and economies” (Jill Lewis 1981; quoted in Kolar & Bartowski 2005:10). Feminism is a philosophy “based on the recognition that we live in a male-dominated culture in which women remain unacknowledged, and where women are forced into sex roles…men too assume sex roles [but these] are not nearly as crippling as women’s (Banshee: Journal of Irishwomen United 1981, 8:10, quoted in Kolmar and Bartkowski 2005:9). Radical feminist theory in particular rose as a major theoretical form used to explain rape.

Radical Feminist Theory

Radical Feminist Theory is a form of feminism that attempts to “challenge philosophy’s phallocentrism, and to question the underlying ontological, epistemological, and methodological norms by which it functions” (Gunew 2013:6). Radical feminism sees women’s’ oppression as universal and as the primary form of oppression. Additionally, radical feminism “maintains that men oppress women through patriarchy, a system of structures, institutions, and ideology created by men in order to sustain and recreate male power and female subordination” (Gunew 2013:8). As further stated by Gunew, radical feminism is the only theory that is “created from, by, and for women” (2013:9).

When looking at the reason for rape, radical feminist theory does not analyze it as something that occurs due to lust or primal want. Instead, radical feminist theory asserts
that rape happens due to a need for man to feel dominant, and frames it as an act of
violence instead of a sexual act. As written by Susan Griffin, “Rape is an act of
aggression in which the victim is denied her self-determination. It is an act of violence”
(Griffin 1977:66; quoted in Gavey 2005:30).

Radical feminism reframes rape as a political matter that oppresses woman, so
frames it as a societal tool to maintain gender hierarchy or power instead of an act done
by outcasts (McPhail 2016:315). Feminism and radical feminism theorists soon replaced
psychologists as the “recognized experts” on rape and its cause (McPhail 2016:316),
making it so rape was no longer seen as an individual sexualized act. As stated by
McPhail, “rape was no longer viewed as an outcome of an individual deviant, but a
product of a larger rape culture that condoned and excused male violence” (2016:315).

One of the leaders of this change was Susan Brownmiller, whose book Against
Our Will, Men, Women, and Rape (1975) pulled larger society to see rape as a political
act done to maintain male domination (McPhail 2016). By doing so, Brownmiller helped
introduce the idea of rape culture. In other words, Brownmiller and radical feminism
asserted that violence against women and rape is a result of cultural norms that support
male privilege. Rape was explained as a gendered act of violence that results from the
hierarchy of gender, and from men needing to remain more powerful than women
(Kolmar and Bartowski 2005; Gunew 2013). Additionally, gender norms enhance the
issue of rape by making women sexual objects needing male domination (Kolmar and
Bartowski 2005; Gunew 2013). Overall, radical feminism asserts there is a strong link
between gender norms supporting male advantage and rape (Martin, Vieraitis and Britto
2006).
When looking at the link between gender norms and rape, radical feminists have two main hypotheses – the ameliorative hypothesis and the backlash hypothesis (Martin, Vieraitis and Britto 2006). The majority of radical feminist literature supports the ameliorative hypothesis. The ameliorative hypothesis asserts that places with higher amounts of gender equality are likely to have lower rape rates than places with lower amounts of gender equality. As explained by Martin et al. (2006), the ameliorative hypothesis is when “gender equality is expected to ease levels of rape victimization” (2006: 322; Whaley and Messner 2002). As stated by Martin et al, “Radical and liberal feminists contend that when women achieve economic, educational, political and/or legal parity with men, the stratification system is weakened, and in turn, so are the social supports for rape” (Martin, Vieraitis and Britto 2006:325). In other words, in the ameliorative hypothesis radical and liberal feminists assert that the more power women achieve in society, the more the patriarchal system is damaged by shrinking the gap of power between men and women, and due to this rape supportive attitudes will diminish.

The other common hypothesis radical feminists discuss is the backlash hypothesis (Martin, Vieraitis and Britto 2006), although not to the same extent as the ameliorative hypothesis. The backlash hypothesis predicts a positive correlation between gender equality and rape rates, and “predicts that as gender equality increases, so will rape rates…in essence, the backlash hypothesis suggests that if women remain in their subordinate position, men are less threatened and less likely to rape women” (Martin, Vieraitis and Britto 2006: 322). Put simply, the backlash hypothesis contends that as gender equality increases, sexual assault will as well. With both hypotheses, radical
feminisms still assert that rape is a tool used to maintain an overall patriarchal system (Martin, Vieraitis and Britto 2006; Escholz & Vieraitis, 2004). In general:

The radical feminist movement focuses on rape and violence against women (Brownmiller, 1975; Griffin, 1979; Mackinnon, 1989; Russell, 1975) by emphasizing patriarchy as the primary stratification system that keeps women from equal access to resources and dependent on men for protection both physically and financially. Gender norms emphasize women as property, and objects of sexual objectification create a culture more accepting of sexual intimidation, aggression, and violence...both radical and, to a lesser extent, liberal feminists theories focus on the structural position of women in recognizing the gendered nature of rape and may help to explain stranger rape, acquaintance rape, and date rape (Martin, Vieraitis and Britto 2006: 325).

Radical feminist movement transforms how rape is understood by focusing on the resources and power that women don’t get enough access to in comparison to men. With women holding less power, men maintain hierarchical status above them, so they remain vulnerable to men objectifying them. Furthermore, such objectification becomes intertwined with gender norms, creating a culture where objectification, aggression, and violence in accepted and considered natural.

Patriarchal cultural norms are what make it possible for rape myths to form (Burt 1980). The term “rape myth” originated in the 1980’s, when Martha R. Burt developed a survey where she listed rape myth statements that were “prejudicial, stereotyped or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists” (Burt 1980: 217). These beliefs are connected to interpersonal violence and rape due to it normalizing “coercive and brutal sexuality” (Burt 1980: 217). When looking at the results, Burt found that the higher the “sex role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs, and acceptance of interpersonal violence, the greater a respondent’s acceptance of rape myths” (1980:217), along with the fact that younger, more educated people were less likely to believe the myths (Burt
This correlates with radical feminist theory, which asserts that gender norms perpetrate a rape culture. Burt’s findings that sex role stereotypes correlate with higher rape myth acceptance shows that constructed gender norms do cause higher endorsement in rape myths and rape culture.

Despite statistics on rape myths and the continued endorsement of rape, the research and discussion on rape culture and rape as a whole has diminished over time. When applying radical feminist theory ameliorative hypothesis, it can be asserted that such diminishing focus in sexual assault allows for a rape supportive culture to prevail, which furthermore allows rape and sexual assault to continue. One of the explanations Martin (2015) suggests for the lack of sexual assault research is that feminists may find the topic of rape too grievous to focus on. Martin’s second explanation supports Anastasia Prokos’ proposal that the National Science Foundation’s (NSF’s) ADVANCE program encourages feminist sociologists to pursue other interests, such as intersectionality. Furthermore, the difficulty of getting the institutional review board’s (IRB) approval while researching rape may also discourage feminist sociologists from focusing on sexual assault. As noted by Martin, “the restraining effects of IRBs may be why research on fraternities, athletics, and rape is dominated today by pencil-and-paper questionnaires rather than observation, in-depth interviews, and/or field work” (2015:38). If feminists suspect research proposals focusing on rape have a harder time getting approved, they may choose other topics in order to get through IRB easier.

In addition, Martin proposes that sociologists may be hesitant to focus on rape because both rape and gender is less valued in academia, and this can affect future opportunities for employment or promotion. Finally, Martin supports Ruth Corrigan’s
suggestion that feminist sociologists figure that by having already done substantial
research on rape and the culture around it, they have finished playing their part in solving
the issue. They may assume that since there is already research supporting the assertion
that rape is a societal issue, the legal system would take over and put extensive effort into
systematic reform. However, this has yet to be seen. Martin discusses how this correlates
with Corrigan’s assertion that legal systems “co-opts rather than corrects” (2015:37).

Perhaps rape and rape culture has not been focused on and corrected because it is
still disputed whether or not the prevalence of rape culture and rape myths is exaggerated.
Recently, it has been argued that rape myths are not as common as proposed, particularly
by scholar Helen Reece (2013) in an article published by the Oxford Journal of Legal
Studies. In it, Reece asserts that effects of rape myths are overstated by saying that (1)
although there is an idea that rape is only real if it happens with a stranger in an alley,
“real rape” ideas are not incredibly influential or believed (2) the myth that women cry
rape is not a myth because there is a lack of empirical evidence proving it false (3) the
“coffee myth” (aka the myth that a coffee invitation after a date means a woman is
consenting to sex) is more of a sex myth than a rape myth, and thus does not cause a rape
culture. However, other scholars such as Conaghan and Russell assert that Reece’s
analysis is “methodological flawed, crudely reductionist and rhetorically unyielding”
(2014:25). Conaghan and Russell also note that Reece works to frame rape researchers
as “ideological extremists driven by puritanical zeal” while she frames herself as “the
epitome of reason and balance” (2014:32). Furthermore, Conaghan and Russell contend
that “Reece’s failure to engage with feminist research on rape except in her own narrowly
constructed and highly selective terms is aided by a methodology that constricts and
contains her discursive framework in order to yield the reductionist conclusions she promotes” (2014: 46).

Overall, research finds rape myths to be common in society (Ardovini-Brooker & Caringella-MacDonald 2002; Burt 1980; Cowan, 2000; De Judicibus & McCabe 2001). In order to understand the importance of rape myths, first rape myths in themselves need to be discussed more in depth.

Rape Myths

The term rape myth refers to beliefs that “‘deny or minimize victim injury or blame the victims for their own victimization’” (Carmody & Washington 2001:424). Rape myths generally are ideas or beliefs that are held by society as a whole (Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; McMahon 2010). Research shows that these beliefs are statistically untrue, and furthermore, cause responsibility and blame to be placed on the victim and not the perpetrator (Grubb & Turner 2012; Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; McMahon 2010).

Rape myths are formed and held within a rape culture. Rape culture is defined as a society with an overall constrained idea of what rape is (Burt 1980, Carmody & Washington, 2001). Societies with rape culture are more likely to hold the victim responsible for rape instead of the perpetrator, or assume that the victim is lying (Burt 1980; Carmody & Washington 2001; Franuik, Seefelt, & Vandello, 2008; Grubb & Turner, 2012). In rape culture, very few forms of rape are seen criminal and condemned, while all other forms of rape are seen as legitimate forms of sexual encounters, and thus are perceived to be wanted/caused by the victim (Gavey 2005). As further discussed by Gavey;
Rape has historically been carefully policed and deployed in ways that allowed strict societal condemnation for certain types of rapes (violent attacks by strangers) committed on certain kinds of women (white, ‘respectable,’ and sexually chaste) by certain kinds of men (Black, working-class, deviant) {Lafree 1989}. Reports of rape that fell outside these parameters were more vulnerable to being dismissed by police and others as instances of sex rather than rape, or as simply untrue (Gavey 2005:18).

In other words, unless a rape is perpetrated by someone meeting a specific profile (black, male, outcast, and working class), and committed against a victim meeting another specific profile (white woman), it is less likely that police and society with classify the situation as rape. Feminist and radical feminist theory assert there are many different forms and types of rape myths (Burt 1980). The myths most prominent and widely believed in rape cultures have been sorted into four different categories by researchers (Burt 1980; Torrey 1990), including (1) only women with bad reputations are raped, (2) women are prone to sexual fantasies about being raped, (3) women precipitate rape by their appearances/behavior, (4) women make false claims about rape (Torrey 1990). These four categories will be further explained in the following sections. These rape myths are often accepted as fact (Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994). However, once the facts behind these myths are closely examined, research denies their accuracy, which will be seen in the following sections.

**Myth One: Bad Reputation**

The first myth assumes that women who are assaulted have bad reputations; meaning that they tend to be more promiscuous and have a tendency to cause trouble (Burt 1980; Torrey 1990). It is hypothesized that the continuation of this belief is due to an overall belief in meritocracy and that individuals get what they deserve, and thus a virtuous or respectful woman wouldn’t get raped (Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell 2013;
Vonderhaar & Carmody 2015). However, Torrey’s (1990) research found that over 82% of victims had a good reputation, meaning they are seen as non-promiscuous and unlikely to cause trouble (Torrey 1990).

The bad reputation myth can be rooted in the use of women’s sexual history to determine the validity of their rape accusations can be seen in court history (Capers 2013). As stated by Capers:

The common law allowed defendants to cross-examine a complainant about her sexual history, to introduce testimony regarding the complainant’s reputation for chastity, and in some cases, even to call a complainant’s prior sexual partners as witnesses. In effect, these common law evidentiary rules allowed defendants to turn the tables. No longer was the defendant the only one on trial. Also on trial was the complainant, to determine whether she was the type of woman who consents, the type of woman to lie about it, and hence the type of woman who should not be protected by the law, at least not at the expense of a presumptively good man. These rules, which harken back to Biblical distinctions between the rape of a virgin and the rape of a non-virgin, served to put the complainant on trial (2013:835).

Rulings by courts in the past revolved around the social idea that women with a sexual past were more likely to consent to sex, and thus had not actually been raped (Capers 2013). However, feminists asserted that deciding a rape case off a woman’s sexual history were prejudiced and unfair. Rape shield laws were than created, which are laws that prevent using a woman’s sexual history against her in a rape trial. However, it is argued that these laws enhance problematic cultural norms on female chastity, by making it a norm that a victim must protect the idea that she is “chaste” to prove she was raped (Capers 2013). In order to be worthy of sympathy, victims have to make sure society and jurors “assume that the complainant is a virgin, or if not a virgin, at least a good girl deserving of the law’s protection” (Capers 2013:856). As further pointed out by Capers, just because society and jurors are told nothing, this does not mean they don’t assume
anything, and they will use the victims appearance to determine whether she is a “good
girl or bad girl” (Capers 2013:857).

*Myth Two: Sexual Fantasies*

The second myth suggests that women secretly fantasize about being raped
(Torrey 1990), or that women unconsciously wish to be raped (Weis and Borges 1973). This myth is formed from the idea that societal constraints causes women to not be able to express their sexuality freely, so they can only allow it to be released by force if they want to keep their virtue and stay respected by society (Gavey 2005). The theory of women secretly longing to be raped can be cited back to the early twentieth century, when psychoanalysis asserted that such sexual fantasies and desires were classic features of femininity (Gavey 2005; Edwards 1981). Helene Deutsch, a psychoanalyst, has been cited as having writings particularly prone to discussing the commonality of women’s rape fantasies, explaining that “rape fantasies often have such irresistible verisimilitude that even the most experienced judges are misled in trials of innocent men accused of rape by hysterical women” (Deutsch 1944: 254, quoted in Brownmiller 1975:229-30, quoted in Gavey 2005: 22).

However, when analyzed, it is found that the situations women fantasize about are not truly rape fantasies (Kanin 1982). As discussed by Kanin, the rape scenarios women fantasize about have “low to moderate levels of fear with no realistic violence” (Kanin 1982, as quoted in Critelli and Bivona, 2008:61). The fantasies tend to have attractive men who dominate women after women give minimal resistance, and are interpreted as more “seduction fantasies” with a “token no” than real rape fantasies (Kanin 1982, as quoted in Critelli and Bivona, 2008: 61). As pointed out by Massaro,
“although some women may fantasize about aggressive sex, even with strangers, they
do not dream of violence and threats of death or injury” (2015:402). Furthermore, when
Kanin looked at women who fantasized about realistic rape scenarios, these fantasies
were found to be “aversive rape fantasies”, after finding that women with such fantasies
were more fearful/anxious about rape than those who did not have realistic fantasies
(Kanin 1982, as quoted in Critelli and Bivona, 2008:62). Moreover, it has been
hypothesized that such aversive rape fantasies are developed as an attempt to deal with
fear of rape by gaining a sense of control over it, and not due to an unconscious desire to

When researched, it is found that women in general do not enjoy real life rape
scenarios (Bond and Mosher 1986; Gold et al., 1991; Resnick & Acierno 1997). When
Bond and Mosher (1986) gave women realistic rape scenarios, the majority were not
aroused by them, and preferred unrealistic rape scenarios with little to no pain or
discomfort. Another study (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994) found that
99% of women would not want to be raped in reality. Additionally, studies overall
support that women would be disgusted and traumatized by rape in real life (Bond &

The idea that hidden rape fantasies are due to women wanting to be raped in real
life is one reason why just saying “no” is not enough to stop rape, nor enough to view the
assailant as perpetrators and in the wrong when they continue, since that “no” may
secretly mean “yes” (Gavey 2005). Beliefs in women fantasizing about rape can also be
seen hurting the victim in cases like U.S. Berkowitz court case (Kahan 2010), where the
victim and perpetrator both said in court that the victim verbally protested against the act
several times, only for the perpetrator to continue. Although the perpetrator was
originally convicted of rape, it was later appealed and changed due to no physical force
(Kahan 2010).

Myth Three: Appearance

The third myth is that women’s dress precipitates rape by their
appearance/behavior (Torrey 1990). If women are dressed in a way that is deemed
provocative or less conservative, it is presumed that they are dressed to get mens’ sexual
attention (Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; Koss & Harvey 1991). The continued
endorsement of the belief that a woman’s appearance causes her assault is one well
documented, as studies find that rape victims dressed in ways deemed provocative are
more likely to be blamed than those deemed modestly dressed (Edmonds & Cahoon

Belief that a woman’s dress makes her responsible for rape has been found to
affect trials in court as well (Beiner 2007; Shen 2003). For example, the Supreme Court
stated the following in the case of Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson:

While ‘voluntariness’ in the sense of consent is not a defense to such a claim, it
does not follow that a complainant’s sexually provocative speech or dress is
irrelevant as a matter of law in determining whether he or she found particular
sexual advances unwelcome. To the contrary, such evidence is obviously
relevant (Beiner 2007:128).

In the case of Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson, the Supreme Court felt that the
victim’s dress and speech at the time of the incident was a key component to deciding
whether or not a rape actually occurred. Carol Smith argued that the law treats women’s
bodies as the inherent issue in cases of sexual assault and rape, because society believes
their bodies naturally invite trouble (Gavey 2005). As pointed out by Gavey “within a
rape trial the constant scrutiny has been on the woman and her body; it was her that must be interrogated in order to see whether she invited that trouble – the rape – upon herself” (2005:24).

Belief that women dress to invite sex and/or trouble is in contrast to research. As shown in Moor’s study, 82.1% of women indicated they simply liked the look of revealing clothes. Furthermore, 72% stated they wore revealing clothing to feel beautiful. Interestingly, only 5.3% stated they wore revealing cloth to seduce men, and only 3.2% indicated they wore revealing clothes to attract men (2010). Several other studies find that women dress provocatively so that they can feel they meet society’s standards of beauty, and thus so they can feel good about themselves in a society where external looks matter more than the internal self (Crane 2000; Engeln-Maddox, 2006; Fredrickson & Roberts 1997; Noll & Fredrickson 1998; Peter & Valkenburg 2007; Moor 2010). When women do dress with the male gaze in mind, it has been found that it is more likely due to seeing such behavior as a commodity that can be used to gain power in a patriarchal world, and not as a way to show interest in sex (Ward 2003; Muehlenkamp & Saris-Baglama 2002; Fredrickson & Roberts 1997; Moor 2010).

Myth Four: False Claims

The fourth myth is that women are likely to lie about their assault in order to cover cheating or to protect their good name (Torrey 1990), which makes it possible for society to be biased when deciding who is lying and who is telling the truth. However, it is found that false rape accusations are particularly rare. Indeed, research studies have shown that as little as 3-7% of rape accusations are false (Rumney 2006), with FBI statistics consistently putting it at less than 10% (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1991,
These percentages shrink even more once rape allegations that are deemed “unfounded” allegations – meaning that there was not enough evidence to establish the truth – are taken out of false allegation percentage figures (Rumney 2006). Yet it is the fear of false allegations that cause victim blaming, as well as doubting victims in court, due to the fact that there are still widely held views that women easily and often lie about rape (Rumney 2006). Franiuk, Seefelt, and Vandello (2008) found the statement that women lie about rape was the most endorsed rape myth statement when doing research.

The prevailing belief of false accusations being common is partially due to society, researchers, and even police labeling accusations as “false” for inappropriate reasons (Rumney 2006). These reason include a delay in reporting, the alleged rape being committed by a marriage partner, or allegations being withdrawn (Rumney 2006). While these situations means that the allegation was never proven to be true, the label “false” implies that the victim was proven to be lying, which is often not the case (Rumney 2006). As further pointed out by Rumney, there are times when victims will withdraw their allegations or statements in the middle of a case. Although it is often assumed such withdrawal of allegation is proof towards the idea that the victim was lying the whole time, it has been found that the dropping of allegations or cases can happen for many different reasons (Rumney 2006). For example, another study found that 50% of the time it was suspected by police that the victim withdrew due to issues of intimidation (Lea 2003).

Police have also been found to label cases “false” inappropriately due to viewing the victim as “unstable” (Rumney 2006). While an “unstable” victim may be seen as a
sign of an overall unstable mind that would be more likely to lie, a victim may also come off as “unstable” because they have experienced an assault, and the trauma of it may affect how they act when speaking to the police (Rumney 2006).

Other Myths About Rape

Although the four previously discussed rape myths are the most prevalent types of rape myths (Torrey 1990, Burt 1980, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), other myths also exist. As pointed out by Gavey (2005), rape myths include assumptions about where a location needs to be, who the victim needs to be, and who the perpetrator needs to be for the case to be seen as rape. The common scenario often forms is that of a stranger in an alleyway abducting a small woman and brutally raping her (Gavey 2005). It is due to this scenario that prior research has shown that another popular myth is that rapists are usually strangers, instead of someone the victim knows (Gavey 2005).

However, studies show that the victim knows their assailant 80-90% of the time (Gonzales, Schmitt & Schofield 2005, Black et al. 2011; Frazier & Seales 1997; Koss & Cook 1998; Langton and Siznocich 2014). As pointed out by Martin (2015), the high rate of acquaintance rape “suggests that rape often is not a random event but, in most cases, a planned one” (31). Despite this, research shows that rape victims are more likely to be blamed if they are raped by an acquaintance instead of a stranger (Bell et al. 1994; Frese, Moya and Megías 2004). McCormick, Maric, Seto, and Barbaree (1998) found that rapists who knew their victims got shorter sentences than rapists who were strangers to the victim. However, even if a stranger rapes the victim, this still is not enough for society not to blame the victim (Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994). Proof of
physical resistance is also needed to prove that a “real” rape occurred (Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994).

As seen in the Berkowitz court case (Kahan 2010), one of the ways societies tend to judge a “real” rape is by how much the victim physically resists. This idea is so prominent that it forms its own myth – which is that it’s only rape if there’s physical resistance (Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994). Early research by Barnett and Field (1977) found that 18% of college women and 40% of college men agreed that the amount a woman resists should be a major component in deciding if a rape occurred. “As shown by more current research, such beliefs continue to exist (Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; McMahon 2010). Physical resistance is crucial for an assault to be seen as rape (Gavey 2005). As pointed out by Weis and Borges “it is deemed a rape only if the assailant is a violent stranger, if the victim reports the rape immediately after it occurred, and if she can provide evidence of the attack and of her active resistance” (1973:71-2).

The need to see evidence of physical resistance is enforced by a loose idea of what should be considered consent in rape culture societies (Gavey 2005). This can be seen in the following statement made by a judge:

Consent may be words, may be actions or even inactions…it may be hesitant, it may be reluctant, it may be grudging, it may even be tearful, but if the complainant in this case consciously permitted the act of sexual intercourse that you find occurred, if you do, provided her permission or consent is not obtained by terror, force or fear, it is still consent (Quoted in Gavey 2005: 23, van de Zandt 1998:138).

The idea that consent can be concluded even when it comes through inaction, tears, or reluctance exemplifies the vague ideas rape supportive societies generally have for consent. Society seeing consent as opaque is partially due to, once again, the idea that
women easily lie about rape or secretly want it, making it possible for them to want to
be assaulted (Torrey 1990). Due to this, signs of physical resistance are seen as the only
legitimate proof of rape occurring (Gavey 2005; Capers 2013). A lack of physical
resistance shows illegitimate rape, or as one U.S. court put it, “[I]f a woman, aware that it
will be done unless she does resist, does not resist to the extent of her ability on the
occasion, must it not be that she is not entirely reluctant?”(Brown v. State, quoted in
Capers 2013: 834).

As pointed out by Capers (2013), the need for physical resistance also may work
as a “gatekeeping function” to determine “good women” from “bad”, because good
women would instinctually resist rape “until exhausted or overpowered” (834). Or as
another court put it, a good woman would ‘resist the attack in every way possible until
she was overcome by force, was insensible through fright, or ceased resistance from
exhaustion, fear of death or great bodily harm’ (Capers 2013:834).” Put simple, a good
woman who truly does not want to be raped would fight as hard as she could to get away,
and any other reaction shows she secretly wanted it and is therefore a bad woman (Capers
2013).

Need for physical resistance may also be due to idea that any victim would either
go into “fight” or “flight”. However, according to Lodrick and Mason (2013) the human
system has five different ways to react to perceived danger, the top being “fight or
flight”, and “freeze”, but also having “friend” -calling someone to one’s aid when in
danger- or “flop”, which is when the instinct freeze fails so body and mind loosens and
becomes malleable (2013). Not resisting and being immobile, while traditionally thought
of as a sign of compliance, can actually be a sign that the potential victim does not want
to continue with the act, but can’t react in an obvious manner due to a primal instinct, making it so a lack of physical resistance does not reveal a hidden longing to be assaulted. The instinct to “freeze” while in danger, while seemingly contradicting, may be linked to a documented involuntary response called “tonic immobility” (Suarez & Gallup 1979). In other words, using a woman’s lack of resistance to prove her compliance goes against scientific research on basic instincts.

The idea that it is women’s job to not be raped in contrary to it being men’s job to obtain consent is one argued against by many researchers and feminists (Gavey 2005; Burt 1980; Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 1993; Lodrick and Mason 2013; Capers 2013). As stated by Lodrick and Mason (2013), consent can only be given actively and actively reinforced, yet people believe in passive consent to the point that a lack of struggle translates to no assault. It is due a need for physical struggle that many still see victims as being somehow responsible for their rape or sexual assault. This can be seen in things such as the 2012 survey of U.S. college students at a northeastern university, where 41% of people felt that a woman raped while drunk was partially responsible for her rape (Aronowitz, Lamert and Davidoff 2012).

Studies find that those who accept rape myths are less likely to believe the victim, and will sympathize with the perpetrator because they don’t define it as legitimate rape (Burt 1980, McMahon and Farmer 2011, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). As discussed earlier, raped women that fit within rape myths usually have their cases minimized or dismissed by people who believe rape myths, due to their cases not being seen as legitimate rape (Gavey 2005). When all the myths are combined the argument would be that legitimate rape only happens when the attacker is a stranger, when it happens in an
isolated but public location, and when it results in serious physical injury to the victim (Gavey 2005; Maier 2008; Hockett 2015). The idea of legitimate rape tends to deny many forms of rape that actually occurs (Gavey 2005; Burt 1980; McMahon and Farmer 2011). Due to this, it is important to discuss who is more likely to endorse rape myths.

Overall, the various societal constraints on what a real rape is connect back to radical feminist theory. The myths discussed in this section all help to enforce constrained ideas of rape by continuing assumptions that certain women precipitate or ask for their rape, whether it be through their appearance, or because they didn’t do enough to prove they weren’t secretly longing to be raped. For example, radical feminism’s assertion that gender norms enhance rape culture is demonstrated through the myth of bad reputations and fantasy.

The gender norm that women need to be chaste causes a culture that assumes a promiscuous woman will always want sex and so won’t truly be raped (Burt 1980, Torrey 1990). The norm of women having to be chaste also lends to rape culture by causing the belief that women have to cry rape to maintain their status if they want to simultaneously indulge in sexual acts. Furthermore, the idea of women wanting to seem chaste contributes to the idea that hesitance or resistance is all done to protect one’s reputation and therefore does not show a lack of consent. As discussed earlier, this causes more loose views on what can be considered consent, and additionally causes a more constrained idea of what constitutes as rape.

Radical feminist theory asserts the gender norm for women to be chaste in order to be valuable or trusted is used to strengthen rape culture and the gender hierarchy by making it so any woman deemed more promiscuous will not be believed when she is
raped (Gavey 2005). Radical feminist theory also asserts that these gender norms result in raped women feeling more ashamed for their rape than their perpetrators, due to the male perpetrators staying within their gender norms by being dominant and sexual, while the woman fails to meet the gender norm of being a virgin or chaste due to rape.

*Social Context and Support of Rape Myths*

When looking at gender, men and women have both been found to support rape myths (Burt 1980, McMahon and Farmer 2011, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Additionally, peers of rape victims have been found to carry them as well. One study found that 46% of peers gave negative reactions to victims of assault, making them feel unsupported (Fehler-Cabral, Giannina, and Campbell 2013). Although people in a rape culture overall tend to endorse rape myths (Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; McMahon & Farmer 2011), the following sections will look into which demographics and social groups in particular tend to carry a higher levels of rape supportive attitudes.

Rape myth supportive attitudes have been found to be higher in men than women in general, making men more likely to blame women for their assault (Cota 2016; Cowan 2000; Mahon 2010; Suarez & Gadalla 2010). When evaluating the effect of peer support on sexual assault, it has been found that men tend have peer support groups that pressure them to assault women (Schwartz 2001). The amount of time men spend with male patriarchal peers increase their likelihood of victimizing women (Schwartz and Dekeseredy 1997), with empirical evidence showing that routine activities with patriarchal peers enhances the ease and tendency to commit sexual assault on women (Schwartz, Dekeseredy, Tait, and Alvi 2001; Schwartz and Dekeseredy 1997). This is said to be partially due to men feeling especially obligated to have sex so they can brag
about it to their friends (Wilson 1996; Schwartz 2001), as well as a way to show dominance and control (Kolmar and Bartowski 2005).

Such suggestion connects back to Radical Feminist Theory. As stated earlier, Radical Feminist Theory asserts that gender norms are intertwined with oppressive and rape supportive attitudes. Men using sexual assault or sexual coercion to prove their masculinity further exemplify this by showing how violence against women can increase status and masculinity instead of decrease it, making it so rape helps maintain the gender hierarchy. Although rape supportive attitudes are found to be higher in men in general (Cowan 2000), the disparity increases when looking at men in athletics and fraternities (Bleecker & Murnen, 2005; Boeringer, 1999; Sawyer et al., 2002). Martin (2015) contends that although some individual men may be more likely to rape, there are also certain social contexts that make rape more likely.

In fact, Martin discusses how there are “two levels of contexts” that contribute to the issue of rape/sexual assault on campus (Martin 2015:32). The first level or “external environment” of this is the academic institution itself. The second level or “internal environment” is fraternities and athletic teams. Both fraternities and athletics emphasize “competition aggression, and sexual exploitation of women” (2015:32), which connects to why studies find that fraternities and intercollegiate athletic programs are specifically more likely to encourage sexual assault (Martin 2015; Bleecker & Murnen, 2005). The homogeneity of these groups may also influence oppressive behavior. As Martin notes, fraternity and athletic members tend to be around the same age and the same race or ethnicity, which makes it so “people with different qualities become fodder for scapegoating and ridicule” (2015:34). In terms of gender homogeneity, being in an all
male group makes it easy to objectify or sexual assault women, especially when it helps prove one’s masculinity and worth in the group (Martin 2015; Schwartz 2001). Radical feminist theory asserts that the culture within fraternities and intercollegiate male athletes supports rape culture by making objectification of women a part of bonding (Martin 2015, Bleecker and Murnen 2005). Since the objectification of women is connected to sexual assault (Burt 1980; Martin, Vieraitis and Britto 2006), fraternities and intercollegiate athletes using such objectification as bonding supports the radical feminist assertion that rape is supported by a rape culture, and therefore is not an isolated act. Furthermore, rape culture supports the patriarchy by using rape to maintain the gender hierarchy.

Because fraternities and athletes attract students, donations, and support, academic institutions value both organizations, and thus accept the oppressive cultures that come with them. Furthermore, university officials are often discouraged from taking action against fraternity and athletic members, even when rape or sexual assault has been proven and the fraternity or athletic member has been found guilty (Martin 2015). As pointed out by Martin (2015), judges, attorneys, and police may oppose charging intercollegiate athletes and fraternity members. Some are so determined to stop charges that they will go as far as “dragging their feet when investigating” or “framing an alleged rape in ways that fail to justify criminal charges” (Martin 2015:32). Such hesitation makes it so rape supportive actions and attitudes can continue within fraternities and intercollegiate athletes. The next two sections are going to look specifically at sexual assault and rape supportive attitudes among fraternities and male athletes.
Studies that specifically examine fraternities and sexual assault have found several results that show fraternity members tend to lean towards rape supportive attitudes (Boeringer, 1999; Kalof & Cargill, 1991; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1994; Schaeffer & Nelson 1993; Bleecker 2005). Murnen (2000) found that not only were fraternity members more likely to participate in rape supportive attitudes and degrading sexual language, but also that the women they targeted were deemed as less intelligent and likeable.

Qualitative studies show that cultures within fraternities tend to be rape supportive, and those fraternity members are more prone to engage in sexual coercion than obtain consent (Foubert, Garner & Thaxter 2006; Boswell & Spade 1996). One study found that fraternity men tended to believe that asking for consent would kill the mood, and as a result they avoided verbal consent in the first place (Foubert, Garner & Thaxter 2006). The men nursed the fear of being rejected if they asked directly for consent, and thus decided that their perception of body language was enough to obtain consent (Fouber, Garner, & Thaxter 2006). Apart from this, they also admitted that drinking women who were strangers were riskier in terms of asking for consent due to difficulty reading how intoxicated or capable of consent she was. Kingree and Thompson (2013) found that fraternity members were more likely than non-fraternity members to have peer approval for forced sex, peer pressure to have sex, and were positively associated with the occurrence of sexual aggression. Kingree and Thompson (2013) also found that perceived peer approval of forced sex increased the likeliness of sexual aggression when tested again a year later.
Fraternity members have been shown to have a tendency to believe in many different rape myths - such as women enjoying being roughly handled; that women secretly want to be forced into sex; that women often pretend to not want sex when they do; that promiscuous women want to have sex with anyone; and that women fantasize about being raped (Fouber, Garner & Thaxter 2006; Boeringer 1999). It has been found that belief in rape myths causes sexual aggression, due to rape myths forming the idea that some women are acceptable targets of sexual assault (Schwartz and NoGrady 1996).

Studies find that fraternities objectify women in order to achieve bonding (Bleecker and Murnen 2005). For example, one study found that speaking in a hostile or degrading manner about women while with male peers increased bonding and acceptance (Capaldi et al. 2001). Fraternity members have also been found to have more degrading images of women in their rooms as well, which can reinforce beliefs of male dominance over women (Bleecker and Murnen 2005). Bleecker and Murnen (2005) also found that the possession of degrading images correlated with a higher belief in rape myths.

Due to the belief in fraternities that members have to stick together, it has also been found that there are rarely interventions or reports to authorities of sexual assault and rape, even when members disagree with what is occurring (Boswell & Spade 1996). Boswell and Spade found that members went so far to protect another member against a rape case that they would break appointments with law officials as well as refuse to cooperate with the police (1996). Fraternity alumni may also work to protect members who commit rape. As pointed out by Martin, powerful fraternity alumni who believe that boys have ‘a right to be boys’ (2015:32) will see excess drinking and having “sex with as many girls as possible” (2015:32) as acceptable behavior, and will push presidents to
excuse fraternity members for such actions. General public will often do this as well (Martin 2015). As Martin points out, “public opinion often sides with alleged rapists over victims (Chancer 1987), thus giving administration an out if they want one. Letters to the newspaper often urge administrators to ‘go easy’ on accused ‘bad boys’” (2015:32). Radical feminist theory asserts that general public supporting such behavior shows support of patriarchy and keeping men in hierarchy over women. By insisting that boys have a right to make mistakes in the form of assaulting women, or that they have the right to the objectify them, radical feminist theory asserts that society is shows a belief that men’s right to women is more important than women’s right to equal treatment.

It has been found that unlike sober men, men under the influence of alcohol are less likely to view potential rape victims as distressed, upset, or not wanting their advances (Norris, George, Davis, Martell, & Heiman 1999). Alcohol also makes the victims more vulnerable and less able to protest or defend themselves, which is part of the reason why women who have been sexually assaulted are shown to have higher alcohol consumption tendencies than women who have not been assaulted (Larimer, Lydum, Anderson, and Turner 1999). Overall, men with male peer support for sexual assault have been shown to be more likely to report assaulting women, especially when the females are drinking or consuming drugs (Schwartz 2001).

Some fraternity members deliberately use alcohol to obtain sex from an individual who they know wouldn’t usually be willing (Boswell & Spade 1996). Boswell and Spade (1996) found that one fraternity used abnormally strong alcohol purpose in order to get proper sorority women drunk enough to take advantage of. This issue is strengthened by the lack of supervision over fraternity houses (Martin 2015). House
mothers quit when fraternities become too disorderly, house managers tend to be fraternity alumni barely older than the current members, and police can’t enter without permission or warrant, making it difficult to check for underage drinking or sexual assault (Martin 2015).

Another group shown to have strong beliefs in rape supportive myths in comparison to other college students is intercollegiate male athletes (Humphrey 2000). It has been found that male athletes in college tend to foster a rape culture due to athletics focusing on the need to dominate, making it so male athletes especially gain respect by being physically forceful and aggressive (Humphrey 2000; Crosset, Benedict & McDonald 1995). It was also found that male athletes were more likely to be reported to student judicial boards for sexual assault than any other students in NCAA Division 1 schools (Crosset et al. 1995). This connects back to the allegations of radical feminist theory, which asserts that rape is used as a tool in rape culture. Men use rape to show domination over women and to prove their masculinity, and radical feminism states this continues the gender hierarchy.

However, there are a growing number of studies showing that athletes are more likely to participate in rape and sexual assault, as well as rape supportive attitudes (Sawyer et al 2002; Boeringer 1999, Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White 2006; Gray 2012). Sawyer (2002) found that freshmen and sophomore university men on team sports were particularly likely to believe in rape myths. When Sawyer looked at the male athletes overall, it was found that a significant amount believed that 50% of rape accusations were lies made up by women (Sawyer et al. 2002). Boeringer (1999) found that athletes had a 56% positivity rate towards rape supportive statements, while non-
athletic men had only an 8% positivity rate. When looking at college men who played sports back in high school, another study found that the men were not only more likely to accept rape myths, but they were also more likely to use sexual coercion in comparison to other college men (Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White 2006). Koss and Gaines (1993) also found athletes to be more willing to use force to coerce women to perform a sexual act. Furthermore, members who are against rape supportive attitudes may be pressured to keep silent. As pointed out by Martin, loyalty is emphasized in ways that prevent scandals from being shared, and intercollegiate athletic members are “told to keep negative comments to themselves” to avoid making the athletic program look bad or to avoid losing their scholarship or position (2015:36).

The high status given to intercollegiate men may also influence rape supportive attitudes (Martin 2015). As Martin contends, “because of special treatment, they may come to believe that the rules of ordinary social intercourse do not apply to them. Women (and girls) may flock to them and make themselves available for sex. In such a context, any woman’s refusal to have sex may be interpreted as an affront to the man’s ‘right’ to her sexual compliance” (2015:36). The idea that men have a right to a woman’s body correlates to the gender hierarchy discussed by radical feminist theory, and how men are seen as above women and deserving dominance. Radical feminist theory asserts that it is due to patriarchy that men feel they have a right to women’s bodies, as well as a right to control them if they refuse, just as Martin (2015) discusses.

Research also indicates that when analyzing rape myth acceptance amongst athletes, the informal world of athletes is the one that needs critical attention (Crosset 1999). When looking at athletes individually versus in a group, it has also been found that
when questioned alone, athletes had less rape supportive attitudes and answers, but once their fellow teammates were around them, the attitudes/answers changed to being more rape supportive (McMahon 2007). Similar to fraternity members, male athletes are more likely to commit violence against women if they have peer support (Schwartz and Nogrady 1996). Such peer support can be seen in studies such as Harvey’s (1996), where men on a college volleyball team were found to encourage shy members to say “misogynistic obscenities” (Quoted in Crosset 1999: 252, van de Harvey 1996:140). As discussed earlier, institutional support may also influence male athletes’ violence against women by excusing violent behavior of male athletes (Crosset 1999, Martin 2015). Such institutional support can be seen in university systems as well as in court systems (Crosset 1999; Benedict and Klein 1997). An example of this would be the court case for Stanford swimmer Brock Turner, who was given a 3-6 month in county for raping a girl because the judge felt that any longer would impact him (Koren 2016).

The correlation between rates of rape myth supportive attitudes and fraternities and intercollegiate athletes connects back to Radical Feminist Theory. As stated previously, radical feminism asserts that gender norms enhance the issue of rape by making women sexual objects needing male domination (Kolmar and Bartowski 2005). This can be seen in rape myths and the development of the ideal rape victim as discussed earlier, as well as how perpetrators are perceived. Unless the perpetrator is a stranger, social outlier, or deviant individual, society is less likely to view the perpetrator as someone who committed rape (Gavey 2005). This makes it so the cultures found in fraternities and athletics that correlate with rape supportive attitudes go unchallenged, and instead are often supported by institutions around them (Martin 2015). Fraternity
members and intercollegiate athletes remain in homogenous groups that allow them to use women to further prove their status and male dominance (Martin 2015). Athletes in particular are taught to use aggression to show dominance and are rewarded for such behavior, and this can continue on to them using sexual assault to show male dominance (Humphrey 2000; Crosset, Benedict & McDonald 1995). The allowance of this behavior furthermore perpetuates social and gender norms that support rape culture, just as Radical Feminist Theory asserts. Furthermore, the excusing violence against women supports radical feminist theory’s allegation of male privilege, because it shows the idea that men deserve access to women and the ability to control them.

Summary

Overall, the literature indicates that rape myths exist, resulting in an overall idea of legitimate rape. This is turn causes a culture labeled rape culture, which is once again “a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women” (Kolmar and Bartowski 2005:iix). Furthermore, this allows an acceptance of interpersonal violence to occur; due to disbelief that many forms of sexual assault or rape are legitimate or real (Capers 2013; Gavey 2005). This has a variety of effects on the victims, ranging from hesitance in reporting to self-blame and depression.

General research on the endorsement of rape myths confirms a prevailing endorsement in rape myths (Burt 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald 1994; McMahon and Farmer 2011). That being said, it is important to continuously update this research, especially in places like universities, where sexual assault rates are higher (Kilpatrick et al. 2007). Additionally, at universities there is a continuous change in student population, as well as changes in implementations and updates on sexual assault risk reduction.
programs, making updated research essential. Since different generations of students may have different ideas and levels of understanding concerning sexual assault, it is important to know where each generation’s average understanding is in order to properly build a sexual assault program addressing them.

Radical feminist theory asserts that rape is not due to deviants in society but instead due to an overall rape culture that perpetuates male domination (Gavey 2005; Gunew 2013). Rape myths cause a constrained idea of what constitutes as a real rape or real rape victim (Burt 1980; Torrey 1990), which contributes to an overall rape culture by causing society to view only a small percentage of sexual assault as rape (Burt 1980; Torrey 1990). Gender norms that emphasize women remaining chaste and male dominance also contribute to rape culture (Gunew 2013; McPhail 2016; Gavey 2005; Kolmar and Bartowski 2005). Such norms make it so women are often accused of claiming rape to protect their reputation, and makes it so promiscuous women are often assumed to have wanted their rape or assault (Torrey 1990).

When looking at men, using aggression and domination to prove masculinity makes it so sexual violence is used as a tool to maintain status as well as keep a gender hierarchy (McPhail 2016). Such issues increase in places like fraternities and intercollegiate athletic teams due to the homogenous nature of the clubs, making it easier to oppress and use women to prove one’s worth (Humphrey 2000; Crosset, Benedict & McDonald 1995). Furthermore, institutions often support such cultures within fraternity members and intercollegiate athletes instead of scrutinizing them since such organizations bring in profit and incoming students. Additionally, people in power may discourage institutions from punishing athletes at fraternity members (Martin 2015). The
combination of all these aspects create a culture that is more likely to have rape myth supportive attitudes and dismiss forms of rape, thus creating the rape culture and societal issue that radical feminism discusses. Due to this, this literature review emphasizes the importance of continuing to study rape myths and its endorsement in universities, as well as continuing to analyze which demographics are likely to have higher endorsement rates for rape myths.

Current Research

Based on the literature, the goal of this research is to analyze the endorsement of rape myths at a large Midwestern University. Much of the literature analyzes rape myths and the affects it has on rape allegations, as well who are more likely to endorse these myths. To this end, this study investigates these questions using the updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA), by McMahon and Farmer (2011). In line with this goal, this study will ask the following research questions: (1) are rape myths still endorsed? (2) Are men more likely to endorse rape myths than women? (3) Are intercollegiate male athletes prone to endorse rape myths more than male non-athletes? (4) Are fraternity members prone to endorse rape myths more than non-fraternity members? Furthermore, this study will test the following hypotheses:

1. rape myths are still endorsed
2. men are more likely to endorse rape myths than women
3. college male athletes will be more prone to endorsing rape myths at a higher rate than men who are not athletes
4. fraternity members will be more prone to endorsing rape myths than non-fraternity men.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to investigate the endorsement of rape myths at a college campus of a large Midwestern University. In order to examine the hypotheses, the updated rape myth survey (McMahon and Farmer 2011) was used to evaluate the endorsement of rape myths among the student sample. Additionally, this research further analyzes rape myth trends using subscales and demographics like gender, age, race, the social circles and peers of the respondents.

Sample

The 234 participants for this study were recruited from sociology classes at a Midwestern University. Five classes were used in total, four of which were introductory to sociology classes, and one dual listed gender class. All participants had to be enrolled at the university and at least 18 years old. When looking at the university as a whole, it is comprised of 79% Caucasian students, 5% African American, 3% Hispanic, 1% Asian American, less than 1% Native American, less than 1% Hawaiian Pacific, 7% International, and 3% two or more races. It had over 20,000 enrolled students at the time of the study. When analyzing gender demographics 51% of the students were female, and 49% were male.

All available data was included and analyzed, and cases with missing variables were thrown out only when the missing variable was one of the variables being analyzed in the t-test. This means that missing data was dealt with on a case by case basis, and no cases were thrown out completely. As shown in Table one, the age ranged from 18 to 34, with the average age being 18 years old (48%). Ninety of the participants were male (38%), 143 were female (62%), and one respondent was unidentified. When race was
evaluated, 89% were white/Caucasian, 5% were black/African American, 1% were Asian, 4% were other, less than 1% was American Indian and one was unidentified. Additionally, fifty-five of the participants were in a sorority or fraternity (24%), and twenty-six were in club sports (11%). Finally, two participants were international students (.008%). This differs from the statistics mentioned previously of the overall campus, where 51% were female and 79% were Caucasian. Additionally, only 12% of campus was 18 while 48% of the sample was 18. Additionally, less than 1% of the sample was an international student, while 8% of the campus was an international student. The campus and sample were similar statistically by both having 5% of the population African American/black, 1% of the population Asian, and less than 1% American Indian.
TABLE 1. Sample Demographics (N = 234)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 years and up</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Caucasian</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, African American</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraternity Or Sorority Member</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraternity Member</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Athlete</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Sports</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedure

The procedures for this study were approved by the Institutional Review Board.

Once approval was given, professors who taught undergraduate or dual listed classes in
sociology at the Midwestern University were emailed for permission to enter their classes and ask their students to take the survey and participate in research.

Once permission was given, classrooms were visited at the beginning of each class to give the survey to students. Before the survey was distributed, a brief introduction was given that explained the purpose of the study. When asking for participation it was emphasized that participation was voluntary and anonymous, making clear that there were no punishments or rewards for taking the survey. In order to participate, students had to be over 18, and currently enrolled at the university. Overall, five classes were visited, four of which were introductory sociology classes.

The survey questionnaire, which included the updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA) and demographic questions was distributed (see Appendix A). Respondents were given about 10-15 minutes to complete the survey. Once completed, students were instructed to fold the survey in half with the answers inside, and drop it off in a box. To ensure privacy, no student was allowed to hand in or look at another student’s survey.

Once the data was collected, it was entered into a computer for analysis. To find and compare endorsements rates of rape myths, the data was analyzed using T-tests in the program SPSS.

Measures

The instrument used for this research was the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (McMahon and Farmer 2011), which was an updated version of the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale first developed by Burt (1980). McMahon and Farmer’s survey was used because it was one of the most recently updated rape myth survey, and was a
standard one used by other researchers. The survey questions focus on participants’
perceptions of rape myths by having them respond to a set of statements and rate their
agreement or disagreement based on the Likert scale, with (1) being strongly agree, (2)
being agree, (3) being neither agree or disagree, (4) being disagree, and (5) being
strongly disagree. The statements on the scale are separated into four subscales based on
common categories that rape myths. These scales are labeled– she asked for it, he didn’t
mean to, it wasn’t really rape, and she lied.

Subscale 1: She Asked For It

The first six questions (1-6) of the survey evaluate whether or not the participant
believes that a woman deserves to be raped or should have expected it due to her
behaviors that are deemed as faulty, irresponsible, or misleading. This includes getting
drunk, wearing “slutty clothes”, going to a room alone with a guy at a party, acting
promiscuous, not being clear when she said no, and initiating kissing/hooking up.

Subscale 2: He Didn’t Mean To

The second subscale included six questions (7-12) determining how much a
participant is likely to agree that a male may have raped someone unintentionally, in a
non-malicious manner, or that the act may not have been a rape because he did not have
enough control. These ideas were based on the man having a strong desire for sex, thus
his drive was uncontrollable, he got carried away, or alcohol was consumed making the
rape was either unintentional or not rape at all.
Subscale 3: It Wasn’t Really Rape

The third subscale (questions 13-18) focused on the role of the woman’s behavior and the assumption that what happened was not rape because she either did not give enough resistance or was not seriously threatened. The questions asked if a situation could be rape if 1) there is a lack of physical resistance (even if she verbally protested), 2) she didn’t fight back, 3) there were no bruises/marks, 4) there was no weapon, and 5) she did not say “no”.

Subscale 4: She Lied

The last subscale (questions 19-24) evaluated the assumption that women tend to lie about rape, and the situation in which it occurs. Questions focused on women lying because they regretted agreeing to sex, lying for revenge, leading the man on and having regrets, having emotional issues, and having to lie to cover up cheating.

Demographics

Demographic information was collected using questions that asked about the participants’ gender, age, race, ethnicity, if they were an international student, sorority or fraternity membership, whether they planned to join a sorority or fraternity, if they were student athletes at the university, and if they participated in club sports.
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

In order to analyze the endorsement of rape myths using the IRMS, SPSS was used. First descriptive statistics were run on all demographic variables (gender, race, fraternity membership, intercollegiate athlete status at the university) which also revealed any missing values, the mean, and standard deviation (Table 2). Second, independent t-tests were used to measure the relationship between the predictor variables and rape myth acceptance. Third, Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances was used to assess whether equal variances could be assumed, and t-tests were adjusted where equal variances were not found. For subscales with significance over .05, variability was the same, and the corresponding results of the significance (2-tailed) values for the t-test for equality of means was used. This applied to subscales *She Asked For it* (F = 1.5, Sig = .221), *It Wasn’t Really Rape* (F = 1.2, Sig = .273) and *She Lied* (F = .629, Sig = .429). Subscale *He Didn’t Mean To* had a significance under .05, and the corresponding results of sig. (2-tailed) values for the t-test for equality of means was used.

In other words, Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances was used to see if the assumption that there were equal variances in both tested groups was correct. Once tested, equal variances could be assumed in subscales *She Asked For it, It Wasn’t Really Rape*, and *She Lied*, and so the corresponding results for equal variances was used. However, there were not equal variances for *He Didn’t Mean To*, and the program automatically made the adjustment and reported the results based on the corresponding results for unequal variances.

After this was done, the means of the rape myth surveys of fraternity members, men, women, and intercollegiate athletes were analyzed and tested to see if there was a
significant difference. Table 2 looks at whether or not any of these variables had a significant difference when compared to their counterpart on the overall survey.

**TABLE 2. Overall Rape Myths by Demographic Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>-5.82</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraternity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>-884</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>.327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>-309</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: all athletes are male intercollegiate athletes.

As shown in Table 2, when analyzing the means of men compared to women on the overall rape survey, a significant difference was found (p<.001***). However, no significant difference was found when comparing fraternity members to non-fraternity members when looking at the overall survey. The sample size of male intercollegiate athletes was too small to make an analysis (N = 4).

The means of subscales were used to determine endorsement of rape myths, and the average mean of each of the four subscales was analyzed (Table 3). Furthermore, the percent of students who strongly disagreed, disagreed, were neutral, agreed, and strongly agreed to each individual rape myth was analyzed to determine endorsement (Table 4).
Based on previous literature, it would be expected that women would score higher on the Likert scale (and therefore have a lower endorsement of rape myths) than men. This was analyzed using Likert scoring procedure, which was by adding together each Likert scale score on the rape myth statements until the sum of all 4 subscales was known for each participant. Finally, the average score of both men and women was analyzed and compared. Additionally, fraternity members and intercollegiate male athletes were expected to score lower on the Likert scale (and therefore have a higher endorsement of rape myths) when compared to men. Furthermore, it would be expected that endorsement of rape myths would still be occurring, which was analyzed by seeing if the mean score on the full survey (full survey meaning the sum of all the questions/subscales) was less than three (meaning students overall agreed with rape myths). The average of each subscale was also analyzed, as well as each rape myth to see if certain myths were more endorsed than others.

Rape Myth Endorsement

The first hypothesis analyzed was whether or not rape myths were still endorsed amongst a large Midwestern University. Research argues that rape myth endorsement is still occurring in society (Burt 1980; McMahon 2010; Cowan 2000; Aronowitz, Lamert and Davidoff 2012). In order to determine if the hypothesis was supported, the average of the sum of each Likert scale answer of all 24 statements (and thus all four subscales) on the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale was analyzed, as well as the percent of students that agreed with each question and subscale (subscale one being question 1-6, subscale 2 questions 7-12, subscale 3 questions 13-18, and subscale 4 questions 19-24). As stated
before, the students showed their agreement or disagreement to each statement using the Likert scale.

When looking at averages (Table 3), students tended to be in disagreement when looking at the Likert scale means of each subscale with She Asked For it (M = 4.2, SD = .72), for He Didn’t Mean To (M = 3.8, SD = .74), It Wasn’t Really Rape (M =4.7, SD = .45) and She Lied (M = 3.6, SD = 1.01). For the total survey (M = 4.1, SD = .6).

**TABLE 3. Overall Rape Myth Averages (N = 234)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She Asked For It</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Didn’t Mean To</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It Wasn’t Really Rape</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She Lied</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Survey</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As stated before, endorsement of rape myth acceptance was also analyzed by looking at the percentage of students who strongly disagreed or disagreed with each rape myth statement, in contrast to those who agreed or remained neutral (Table 4). 91.9% of students strongly disagreed with the statement that it wasn’t really rape if the girl had no bruises, and 91.5% strongly disagreed that it wasn’t really rape if no weapons were used. However, only 24.4% strongly disagreed that rape happens because a man gets too carried away or because he had a strong desire. While 98.8% of students disagreed or
strongly disagreed with the statement that it’s not really rape if a weapon is used,
25.6% strongly agreed or agreed that rape often happens due to man having too strong of
a desire. Overall, students were most likely to strongly disagree or disagree with
statements in subscale 1 (She Asked for It) and subscale 3 (It Wasn’t Really Rape), while
they were less likely to disagree with statements under subscale 2 (He Didn’t Mean To)
and subscale 4 (She Lied). However, means still stayed in a neutral range for subscale 2
and 4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>She Asked for It</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raped While Drunk</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slutty Clothes</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Alone</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts Like A Slut</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiates Kissing</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>He Didn’t Mean To</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Desire</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carried Away</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of Control</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunk Accident</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t Realize</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Drunk</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>It Wasn’t Really Rape</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Physical Resistance</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Fight</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>81.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Bruises</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Weapon</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t say “no”</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>She Lied</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regret</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Led Him On</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Issues</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caught Cheating</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender

The second research question analyzed was whether or not gender affected acceptance of rape myths, with the hypothesis being that men would endorse rape myths at a higher rate than women. As discussed in Chapter 2, although both genders have been
shown to endorse rape myths (Burt 1980, McMahon and Farmer 2011, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), men have been shown to endorse them at a higher level (Cowan 2000).

To analyze whether this was demonstrated in this study, the averages of subscale scores were analyzed by gender and compared using t-tests (Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/Characteristics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She Asked For it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>-6.97</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>&lt;.0001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Didn’t Mean To</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>-4.96</td>
<td>181.65</td>
<td>&lt;.0001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It Wasn’t Really Rape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>-.432</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>&lt;.0001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She Lied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>-5.82</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>&lt;.0001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>-5.82</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>&lt;.0001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Male N = 90, Female N = 143. Statistical significance (p < .0001*** ) was found on each subscale.

As shown in table 5, when analyzing the results of the sample a high statistical significance was found on each subscale, with women consistently scoring higher on the Likert scale than men, thus showing that men endorsed rape myths at higher rates than women. Furthermore, a high statistical significance was found when looking at the overall survey, or when the mean of the sum of all 24 Likert scale scores was analyzed. The results of the subscales were as follows: She Asked For it t(231) = -6.969, p <
.0001***; He Didn’t Mean To (t-test adjusted due to inability to assume equality of
variances) t(181.651) = -4.967, p = <.0001***; It Wasn’t Really Rape t(231) = -4.327, p
= <.0001***; and She Lied t(231) = -5.820, p = <.0001***. Finally, when looking at the
overall survey t(231) =-5.820, p = <.0001***.

Fraternity Members

The third hypothesis analyzed was whether or not fraternity members had higher
derendorsement rates than men not in a fraternity. Previous research supports the
suggestions that fraternity members do have higher endorsement rates than other men
(Boeringer, 1999; Kalof & Cargill, 1991; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1994; Schaeffer & Nelson
1993; Bleecker 2005. T-tests were used to analyze this question, with the means of
fraternity members and non-fraternity members on each subscale compared to one
another (Table 6).
As shown in Table 6, when analyzing the means fraternity members compared to male non-fraternity members in the sample the averages of fraternity members (M = 3.0, SD = 0.95) did not differ from the averages of non-fraternity members (M = 3.24, SD = 0.96) on any of the subscales, so there was no significant difference on any of the subscales. Additionally, there was no significant difference when analyzing the mean of the total instrument, with t(87) = -0.884, p = 0.379. Therefore, there was no difference between fraternity members and male non-fraternity members.

**College Male Athletes**

The fourth research question analyzed was whether or not male athletes in college were more likely to endorse rape myths that men who were not athletes. Previous...
research supports the idea that college male athletes endorsed rape myths at a higher rate than men who were not college athletes (Sawyer et al. 2002; Boeringer 1999, Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White 2006, Humphrey 2000). There were only four male athletes in the sample. Therefore, these results cannot be analyzed.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSON

The purpose of this research was to analyze if rape myths are still endorsed at a large Midwestern University. Data was gathered from four introductory sociology classes, and one upper level sociology class. Descriptive statistics, Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances, and independent sample t-tests were completed using SPSS. Grounded in the literature discussed in Chapter 2, I hypothesized that (1) rape myths are still endorsed at the university, (2) men would endorse rape myths more than women, (3) male athletes would have higher rape myth endorsement than non-male athletes, and (4) fraternity members would endorse rape myths at a higher rate than non-fraternity members. This chapter will analyze the results and findings from Chapter 3 and compare them to the hypotheses.

Hypothesis One: Rape Myths Are Still Endorsed

The first hypothesis predicted that rape myths would still be endorsed amongst the large Midwestern University students (McMahon and Farmer 2011, Burt 1980, Gavey 2005). The data do not support this hypothesis. As discussed in the data analysis, the overall average showed a disagreement of rape myths (Table 3). When looking at individual questions it was found that while some rape myths had strong disagreement, others did not. For example, 91.9% of students strongly disagreed with the statement that it wasn’t really rape if the woman had no bruises, and 91.5% strongly disagreed that it wasn’t really rape if no weapons were used. However, 25.6% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that rape happens due to a strong desire for sex, with 29.9% neutral on the statement (Table 4). Twenty-one percent of participants agreed that happens because sometimes men get carried away, with 27.8% neutral on the matter. Overall, students
were most likely to strongly disagree or disagree with statements in subscale 1 (She Asked for It) and subscale 3 (It Wasn’t Really Rape), while they were more hesitant to disagree with statements under subscale 2 (He Didn’t Mean To) and Subscale 4 (She Lied). Therefore, overall rape myths were not endorsed, refuting hypothesis one.

These findings suggest that although students do not agree with rape myths overall. However, there are certain myths they are less likely to disagree with than others. One explanation for this may be the timing. To further explain, programs on sexual assault and sexual assault risk reduction may happen too late in participants’ life for the programs to fully take effect. If the participants have been exposed to rape culture for years, a seminar or program may not be enough to completely dispel the ideas and rape myths formed. Still, the fact that students disagreed with rape myths overall suggests that the programs are effective.

Word choice may also have influenced answers. As discussed by Edwards (2011), the word rape has been show to discourage students from agreeing with a rape myth statement. Edwards et al. (2010) found that the percentage of a men who agreed with the idea that women secretly long to be raped increased from 4%-16% when the word ‘rape” was switched for “physically forced into sex” (Edwards 2011: 769). The IRMA survey used the word rape in several of its statements, and this may have caused students to modify their responses.

Another explanation for the results may be the voluntary form of the study. It could be that the ones who chose to take survey were more interested in the issue of sexual assault, and thus would be less likely to endorse rape myths. In contrast, the ones
who were more likely to endorse the myths at a higher rate may have been less interesting in participating in the study, thus affecting the overall average.

Furthermore, programs may make it so students are able to recognize rape myths without disagreeing with them. This would explain why the average answer of both men and women tended to be neutral. It would also explain why certain subscales were less likely to be disagreed with comparison to others. Additionally, due to the subscale titles being on the survey, students may have recognized that they should not agree with the statements, and this could have influenced their answers. Furthermore, programs may have made it so participants generally no longer strongly agree with rape myths, but still don’t completely disagree either on average.

Overall, this study is significant because it reaffirms literature on rape myth endorsement, and gives updated information for research to move forward with. It also gives recent data to compare to other surveys on rape myths, which gives further insight on rape myths and rape culture. McMahon (2010) also found that college students tended to disagree with rape myths, and were more likely to endorse rape myths under the subscales He Didn’t Mean To and She Lied, similar to this study. Her study also found that more than half of students (53%) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “If a girl acts like a slut, she is eventually going to get in trouble” (McMahon 2010: 9). In contrast, only 14.9% of students agreed with the same statement in this survey.

The results of this study begin to differ a bit more greatly when compared to studies focusing more on the general public. Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) found that 25-35% of their sample agreed with the majority of rape myths. Gylys and McNamara (1996) found that prosecuting attorney from the Midwest had a moderate to high
endorsement of rape myths on average. When look at rape myths and relationships, Basile (2002) found that only 15% of the sample believed that a husband or boyfriend could rape his girlfriend or wife. The fact that the prevalence of rape myths is lower in college campus settings when compared the general population once again shows that sexual assault education programs have been affective in working to dispel rape myths.

Hypothesis Two: Men Have Higher Rape Myth Acceptance

The second hypothesis analyzed whether gender influenced rape myth acceptance (Table 5), with the hypothesis that men would have higher rape myth acceptance than women. The data support this hypothesis. As discussed in the data analysis, on every subscale a high statistical significance was found when comparing men to women, with men consistently endorsing rape myths at a higher level. This supports the second hypothesis, as well as previous literature, which show that men tend to endorse rape myths at higher rates than women (Cota 2016; Edwards et.al 2011; Cowan 2000; McMahon and Farmer 2011; Suarez & Gadalla 2010).

Research suggests that men tend to support rape myths more due to male peer support groups causing patriarchal beliefs which results in rape supportive attitudes and a likeliness to blame women for their assault (Cota 2016; Schwartz 2001; Cowan 2000; McMahon and Farmer 2011; Suarez & Gadalla 2010). The issue of patriarchal male peer support groups could be why men were consistently found to have higher rape myth acceptance. Men may be more likely to blame women for their rape due to peer groups supporting the idea that violence is the best solution (Lee 2004). If male participants had been routinely surrounded by peers who encourage objectification and dominance over women, they would be less likely to disagree with the rape myths overall.
Hypothesis Three: Fraternity Members Will Have Higher Rape Myth Acceptance Rates

The third hypothesis analyzed was whether fraternity members endorse rape myths at a higher rate than men who were not fraternity members (Table 6). The data do not support this hypothesis. Fraternity members were not found to endorse rape at a higher rate than non-fraternity male members overall, nor on any of the subscales. However, the results of this particular part of the study should be analyzed with caution, due to the small sample size of fraternity members ($N = 14$).

The lack of difference between fraternity members and non-fraternity members answers could mean several things. First, it could show that sexual assault education and sexual assault risk reduction programs are effective enough to prevent particular high endorsement of rape, but not enough to rid of it on an average level. Put simply, the programs may work to combat the heightened patriarchal attitudes typically found in fraternity membership, along with the effects it has on rape supportive attitudes. However, the programs do not work enough to efficiently combat the effects of rape supportive attitudes when looking at average male peer groups. Therefore, it is possible that the programs help with extreme forms of sexism and its effects on rape myths, but not more general forms. This would explain why, when comparing fraternity members to a population that included women, significant differences were found on *She Asked For It* and *She Lied*. Furthermore, significant differences were found when looking at the overall survey.

Another explanation would be a possible correlation between awareness of rape myths, interest, and volunteering to take the survey. As stated before, taking the rape
myth survey was completely voluntary and could not be forced or awarded. Therefore, any participation was due to the participant’s self interest. This may have made it so there was a bias in participation, with those more concerned and aware of rape myths being the ones to participate. Students who were not aware or concerned about rape myths (and thus more likely to agree with them) may have been more likely to opt out. Furthermore, students may have understood the socially acceptable answers to put, and this may have caused a bias in their answers. Therefore, fraternity members that would have had higher rape myth acceptance may have simply chosen not to participate.

Hypothesis Four: Male Athletes Will Have Higher Rape Myth Acceptance Rates

The fourth hypothesis was that male athletes would have higher rape myth acceptance than male non-athletes. Additionally, male athletes would also have higher rape myth acceptance when compared to the rest of the sample. Literature shows that male athletes tend to have higher rape myth acceptance due to hypermasculinity (Humphrey 2000; Crosset, Benedict, & McDonald 199; McMahon 2007; Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White 2006). As stated previously, the high statuses given to intercollegiate men may be what cause them to have higher rape supportive attitudes (Martin 2015). However, there was not a large enough sample of intercollegiate male athletes to come to a conclusion ($N=4$). Due to this, the study can neither confirm nor deny the hypothesis that intercollegiate male athletes endorse rape myths at a higher rate.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This research was carried out to determine if rape myths were still endorsed at a large Midwestern university. Additionally, this research discussed whether gender, fraternity membership, or being a male athlete would influence rape myth acceptance. My results varied. For the most part, students were likely to disagree with rape myths survey. However, there were differences across subscales. Certain subscales they were less likely to strongly disagree with than others. Fraternity members were not shown to have higher rape myth acceptance in comparison to men who weren’t in a fraternity. Additionally, there were not enough male athletes to draw a conclusion on rape myth acceptance amongst intercollegiate male athletes. Nonetheless, this research emphasizes the importance of continuing studying rape myth acceptance. It especially emphasizes the importance on taking gender into account, since men were consistently found to have higher rape myth acceptance than women, showing a gap in rape myth understanding that certainly needs to be filled.

As stated in the literature review, radical feminist theory asserts that rape is a gendered act done by men to maintain their power and control over women (Kolmar and Bartowski 2005; Gunew 2013; Gavey 2005). Radical feminists assert that rape is not an isolated act, but instead something steeped in a rape culture and supported by rape myths. Men, according to radical feminists, will be more likely to support rape culture and endorse rape myths because it allows them to maintain a control over women. The findings of this research support this theory. There was a statistical significance when comparing men to women on all of the subscales, with men consistently endorsing rape myths at a higher rate than women. Men may have patriarchal attitudes that influenced
them to designate certain forms of rape as illegitimate, in which case the victim was blamed and not the perpetrator. Because men are the ones who benefit from rape by proving masculinity and maintaining dominance, they may be less likely to sympathize with the victim. Furthermore, blaming the victim makes it so one’s own participation in gender norms does not need to be analyzed, because the victim is to blame instead of a whole culture or society.

Radical feminist theory also states that rape myths are able to form due to a patriarchal culture that normalizes rape to the point that certain forms of rape aren’t seen as “legitimate”, or as rape at all (Gavey 2005). As stated earlier in the literature review, radical feminism made it so “rape was no longer viewed as an outcome of an individual deviant, but a product of a larger rape culture that condoned and excused male violence” (McPhail 2016:315). In other words, radical feminism contends that a patriarchal society will endorse rape myths. This is also supported by the findings of this research.

As stated previously, a third of the total participants strongly agreed with at least one of the rape myths. Thus, although men endorse rape myths at a higher level, both men and women still endorse them to a certain extent. Therefore, the findings do support the assertion that a culture exists that normalizes certain forms of rape.

Strengths and Limitations

My research contributes to literature on rape myth acceptance by providing an updated analysis on the endorsement of rape myths. The issue of sexual assault on campus has raised more awareness in the last few years, due to things like The Hunting Ground - a documentary discussing rape on college campuses - shedding light on the issue. Society has gained increased awareness of rape culture, making the topic of this
research particularly relevant. This thesis also used the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, meaning that it used the most recently updated measurement of rape myth acceptance.

Although the findings of this research are significant, there are still some limitations that need to be discussed. First, the sample size of fraternity members (\(N=14\)) and male athletes (\(N=4\)) needs to be noted. Both sample sizes are not large enough to represent the fraternity members and male athletes at the University, and since this study did not use a probability sample, the results are not generalizable. The results on fraternity members need to be analyzed with utmost caution. Furthermore, there was not a large enough sample of male athletes to draw any conclusions. Finally, the overall sample could not thoroughly represent the university population due to 48% of the sample being 18, compared to 12% of the campus.

Another possible limitation was that the titles of each subscale were left on the survey. Seeing the titles, She Asked For It, He Didn’t Mean To, It Wasn’t Really Rape, and She Lied may have deterred students from agreeing with statements and therefore may have caused a bias in how student answered each question. Additionally, all participants in this study were taking a sociology class fall semester of 2015. Students who chose to take a sociology class fall semester instead of later on may have had more of an interest in social issues as a whole, and thus may be more sensitive and aware of issues such as rape myths. Furthermore, the research was limited to a predominately white population.
Future Research and Policy Recommendations

In terms of recommendations, future research using the IRMA scale should take the subscale titles off the survey to avoid potential bias, because as stated earlier, seeing the scale titles may have deterred students from agreeing with statements. Furthermore, future research should include more a racially diverse sample. Racial and ethnic minority participants need to be analyzed to see if race and ethnicity affects rape myth acceptance, along with economic class. Additionally, future research should analyze rape myths dealing with both male and female rape victims. Male rape victims may face a separate set of challenges when it comes blame and rape myths, and therefore more research needs to be done analyzing how the gender of the rape victim affects reactions and beliefs.

Sexual assault risk reduction programs should take a gendered approach to teaching sexual assault. As shown in this study and in the literature, gender norms make it so men have a higher rape myth acceptance than women (Cota 2016; Cowan 2000; McMahon and Farmer 2011; Suarez & Gadalla 2010). Due to this, there should be separate sexual assault programs for men and women, making it so the programs can focus on taking a gendered approach to teaching sexual assault. Future research could use masculinity conformity scales such as the Conformity to Masculinity Norms Inventory (CMNI) created by Burns & Mahalik (2008) along with the Illinois Rape Myth Scale to further analyze the correlation between classic masculinity norms and rape myth acceptance. Although there is some research on the matter (Rocker & Prohaska 2015), more needs to be done in order to understand how to close the gap between gender and rape myth acceptance.
Additionally, research could be done looking at male participants in healthy masculinity programs to see if they are less likely to endorse rape myths. Some universities have a healthy masculinity club that teaches men a form of masculinity that is better for society. To explain further, the clubs emphasize a masculinity that does not correlate violence and domination with a man’s worth. In the future, universities with participants in clubs such as the healthy masculinity club should be compared to men who are not in healthy masculinity programs to see if a healthier forms of masculinity influences rape myth endorsement.

Future research should also conduct studies focusing specifically at fraternity members and rape myth acceptance, as well as intercollegiate athletes and rape myths acceptance. As stated before, although fraternity members and intercollegiate athletes were analyzed for this study, the sample size for both was particularly small, and all students were taking sociology courses. Future research should use a larger sample of fraternity and intercollegiate athlete members while analyzing their level of rape myth acceptance. Martin (2015) discussed how intercollegiate athletes and fraternity members have been found to be more likely to commit sexual assault, and contributed this to being a result of the homogeneity of gender in fraternities and male athletics, as well as to the status given to fraternities and college athletes. Although there is already research on this matter (Foubert, Garner & Thaxter 2006; Boswell & Spade 1996; Kingree and Thompson 2013), further information is needed. Researchers may want to specifically compare fraternity members and intercollegiate athletic members who have gone through sexual assault risk reduction programs to those who have not, to see the effectiveness of current sexual assault risk reduction programs.
Although this study used radical feminism as it’s foundation and asserted that rape is part of a larger patriarchal culture (making it so rape myths and rape supportive attitudes can be found), it did not particularly analyze how this affects women on a larger context. In other words, this study did not particularly investigate the assertion that patriarchy “keeps women from equal access to resources and dependent on men for protection both physically and financially” (Martin, Vieraitis and Britto 2006: 325).

Future feminist sociologists should research the correlation between the prevalence of rape supportive attitudes and women and men’s equal access to resources.

Due to the study having no data comparing rape rates in areas of high gender equality to those of low gender equality, there is no analysis on whether the ameliorative hypothesis or backlash hypothesis can be supported. Although there is some research on both of these hypotheses (Whaley and Messner 2002; Russell 1975; Williams & Holmes 1981; Eschholz & Vieraitis 2004), further information needs to be gathered to see if one is substantially more supported than the other. Additionally, research should be done looking at the correlation between rape myth acceptance and gender equality overall.

Studies should look into prevalence of rape myths on college campuses compared to the general public. Burt (1980) found that educated individuals tend to be less likely to endorse rape myths when compared to the general public. As noted in the discussion, the prevalence of rape myths in this sample was lower when compared to studies done using the general public, yet had similar rates to samples taken from other college campuses. Future research should be done comparing the two demographics to further understand how education and sexual assault programs help dispel rape myths. By doing so, researchers would give insight into how education influences endorsement, and
potentially how influential sexual assault programs at universities have been in dispelling rape myths.

The legal system has been found to be lacking in its efforts to combat the issues of rape (Corrigan 2013), and as discussed before, rape has still been found to be prevalent (Black, Basile, Breiding, Smith, Walters, Merrick, & Stevens, 2011; CDC, 2010, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013). Due to this, sociologists need to strengthen their efforts and focus more on rape and rape myths. Without their aid, the endorsement of sexual assault, rape, and rape supportive attitudes will remain, and rape culture will prevail.

Future policies need to have a further focus in dismantling the patriarchal system. As radical feminist theory asserts, rape is not due lust or individual want, but a need for men to maintain control over women and a patriarchal system. In order to deplete this system, future policies should work on several things. First, it should work on gender norms. Radical feminists assert that future policies should focus on dismantling gender completely, since it is a social construct made solely to oppress women. Radical feminism declares that dismantling gender norms is essential to dismantling patriarchy. Radical feminists insist that it is not enough to have legal policy changes on sexual assault or pay, because gender norms are at the root of patriarchal issues. Therefore, until policies and society work to change gender norms, other efforts to fix rape and rape culture will not succeed.

Due to rape culture, there should be policies that call for sexual assault education and gender norm equality earlier in education. College may be too late to dismantle thoughts formed in a rape culture and patriarchy; therefore policies should call for education on gender norms, sexual education, and consent at an earlier age. The U.S.
needs policies on teaching such subjects as gender equality and consent at an earlier age to combat the rape culture that children are also exposed to early on in life.


 Instructions: Please take the survey given below. Read each question, and mark whether you strongly agree (1), agree (2), neither agree or disagree (3), disagree (4), or strongly disagree (5) by checking under whichever number you agree with.

Once you are done taking the survey, please fold your survey in half with the answers inside. Please make sure not to write your name, email address, or PID on your survey so it can be kept anonymous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subscale 1: She asked for it</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. If a girl is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of hand.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When girls go to parties wearing slutty clothes, they are asking for trouble.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If a girl goes to a room alone with a guy at a party, it is her own fault if she is raped.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When girls get raped, it’s often because the way they said “no” was unclear.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If a girl initiates kissing or hooking up, she should not be surprised if a guy assumes she wants to have sex.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subscale 2: He didn’t mean to</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. When guys rape, it is usually because of their strong desire for sex.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Guys don’t usually intend to force sex on a girl, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Rape happens when a guy’s sex drive goes out of control.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. If a guy is drunk, he might rape someone unintentionally.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. It shouldn’t be considered rape if a guy is drunk and didn’t realize what he was doing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. If both people are drunk, it can’t be rape.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subscale 3: It wasn’t really rape</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. If a girl doesn’t physically resist sex – even if protesting verbally – it can’t be considered rape.

14. If a girl doesn’t physically fight back, you can’t really say it was rape.

15. A rape doesn’t happen if a girl doesn’t have any bruises or marks.

16. If the accused “rapist” doesn’t have a weapon, you really can’t call it rape.

17. If a girl doesn’t say “no” she can’t claim rape.

**Subscale 4: She lied**

18. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.

19. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at guys.

20. A lot of times, girls who say they were raped often led the guy on and then had regrets.

21. A lot of times, girls who claim they were raped have emotional problems.

22. Girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim it was rape.

---

i Completion and return of this survey implies consent. If you do not wish to participate, you may turn in a blank survey.
The following background information will be very helpful in the analysis of the answers to the survey.

1) What is your gender?
   1 = Male
   2 = Female
   3 = Other ___________________________

2) What is your age?
   1 = 18 years
   2 = 19 years
   3 = 20 years
   4 = 21 years
   5 = 22 years and up

3) Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
   1 = No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
   2 = Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano
   3 = Yes, Puerto Rican
   4 = Yes, Cuban
   5 = Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

4.) What is your race?
   1 = White, Caucasian
   2 = Black, African American
   3 = Asian
   4 = American Indian or Alaska Native
   5 = Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   6 = Other ____________________

5.) Are you an international student?
   1 = Yes
   2 = No

6.) Are you a member of a sorority or fraternity?
   1 = Yes (if yes, go to question #8)
   2 = No

7.) Do you plan to join a sorority or fraternity while at Ohio University?
   1 = Yes
   2 = No

8.) Are you a student athlete at Ohio University?
   1 = Yes
   2 = No

9.) Do you participate in club sports?
   1 = Yes
   2 = No

10.) Do you have anything else you would like to share with me about beliefs regarding sexual assault or rape? If so, please add below:
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!