JUDGMENTS AND PERCEPTIONS OF BLAME:
THE IMPACT OF BENEVOLENT SEXISM AND RAPE TYPE ON
ATTRIBUTIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN SEXUAL ASSAULT

by

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Abstract

Observers’ attributions of culpability in sexual assault cases have been studied in the context of psycholegal variables to explain how they come to their conclusions. Most research has revealed that there are differences between stranger and acquaintance rape, where victims of the latter are more likely to be blamed (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Bridges & McGrail, 1989; Littleton, 2001; Mynatt & Allgeier, 1990; Scronce & Corcoran, 1995; Schuller & Klippenstine, 2004; Tetreault & Barnett, 1987). However, the work has been largely limited to examining rape myth acceptance and gender differences of observers. The present study addressed these limitations. The goals of this study were: (1) to examine judgments of perpetrator responsibility, (2) to examine the relationship between benevolent sexism and victim blame in an acquaintance rape, (3) to examine as to how benevolent sexism influences assailant blame, and (4) to examine differences between males and females on a sexism measure in relation to attribution of blame.

This research utilized a community sample. Several groups of measures were utilized, including sexual assault vignettes with a questionnaire that assessed perceptions of sexual assault. Also administered were measures that assessed for social desirability,
benevolent sexism, the preference for unequal relationships, and demographics. Two studies were conducted. The first one was a pilot study, which gathered qualitative and descriptive data for a measure designed specifically for this research. Participants ($n=20$) reported that the measure was simple to read, understand and complete. The second study (200 participants) focused on the goals outlined and obtained reliability and principal components analysis information. Findings from study 2 revealed no significant differences between men and women in attribution of responsibility. However, assailant-victim relationship, and the presence of alcohol were statistically significant for blame. Although men scored higher on benevolent sexism in general, women obtained high scores when assailant-victim relationship and the presence of alcohol in the scenarios were taken into account. Similar to previous research (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki, Masser, & Abrams, 2004), benevolent sexism was found to act as a moderator. Implications from results from this study were also discussed.
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Chapter One: Introduction and Literature Review

Statement of the problem: Prevalence, incidence, and seriousness of sexual assault

It is estimated that millions of women around the world have experienced or will experience some form of sexual assault. In Canada alone, 51% percent of all women have experienced at least one incident of sexual or physical violence (Statistics Canada, 1993). In 2004, women made up the vast majority of victims of sexual assault (86%) and are much more likely to be victimized by someone they know than by a stranger (Statistics Canada, 2006). About half of sexual assault victims in 2002 reported that they were assaulted by assailants who were known to them, where 10% by a friend, 41% by an acquaintance, and 28% by a family member (Statistics Canada, 2003).

According to Statistics Canada (2003, 2006), women continue to be more likely than men to be sexually victimized. In 1983, there was a peak in reported cases which was followed by a decline ten years later. Between 1999 and 2004, cases of sexual assault reported to the police have remained constant. It should be noted that the data varied widely according to which province or territory the victim was from. For example, in 2002, Nunavut reported the highest number of sexual assault cases out of the territories, while Manitoba and Saskatoon had the highest among the provinces. The lowest recorded rates were reported by Quebec and Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Despite these trends, researchers were unsure whether they reflected actual changes regarding sexual violence in Canadian society or victims’ hesitancy to involve the criminal justice system (Statistics Canada, 2006). Unfortunately, the number of sexual assaults reported annually to authorities is a vast underestimate of the actual number of assaults committed each year due to the fact that most victims do not report the crime (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995). As a result, most of this prior knowledge about sexual assault is a limited generalization to non-reporting victims and assailants who are not identified as such (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). One study found that only 6% of sexual assaults are reported to the police. Furthermore, the same study found that 1% of date rapes are reported to the authorities (Ontario Women’s
Data from 2004 General Social Survey appeared to echo these findings, where only 8% of sexual assault cases in all of Canada were brought to the attention of the authorities (Statistics Canada, 2003; 2006).

Given the gravity of sexual assault, many researchers have been keen to explore why survivors of sexual assault rarely report. They found that there is additional trauma that is incurred from the bias that meets their contact with authorities. Some survivors have stated that seeking assistance was as traumatic as the assault itself. The negative encounters have been identified as secondary victimization or second rape (Bergen, 1995; Clark & Hepworth, 1994; Gager & Schurr, 1976; New York Radical Feminists, 1974; Roberts & Grossman, 1994; Rozee & Koss, 2001; Winkel & Koppelaar, 1991), where there is a lack or absence of positive social support (Ullman, 1999). Participants in the 2004 General Social Survey provided other reasons for not reporting what happened to them to the police. Some of them included: desire for privacy, lack of faith in the criminal justice system, shame or embarrassment, little or no evidence of what happened, uncertainty as to what occurred was a crime, and fear or sympathy for the perpetrator (Statistics Canada, 2003; 2006). In short, the numbers provided in the trends from the reports cited probably do not illustrate accurately the extent of the problem of sexual in Canada given the issues with underreporting.

Effects of Sexual Victimization

Sexual assault is a crime that elicits fear of vulnerability among women regarding not only their physical integrity but their psychology integrity as well (Brownmiller, 1975; Cahill, 2001; Clark & Lewis, 1977; Griffin, 1971). Statistics Canada (2006) found that most women, whether or not they personally experienced any sexual violence, reported being more concerned about their safety compared to men. Warr (1985) framed the high fear of rape in terms of the multiplicative model of fear. This general model proposed that the degree of fear evoked by any particular offence in a given population is dependent on two perceptual characteristic of that offence: 1) the perceived seriousness of the offence, and 2) the perceived risk of the offence. Applying this model to rape, the fear could be traced back to 1) the perception that is a serious crime, and that 2) it seen as
likely to happen to any woman. Moreover, as risk increases, the level of fear would also increase as well. Keane (1995) further argued that the nature of women’s fears of sexual assault might be based on two dimensions: concrete fear (fear associated with certain crimes) and formless fear (a global fear of crime). The implicit assumption regarding concrete fear is that some criminal activities elicit more fear than others. For example, rape elicits more fear than theft.

Another theme pertaining to the fear associated with rape is where concern is often manifested in either avoidance or risk management behaviours (Scott, 2003). A by-product of this concern is the severe limitation of women’s freedom through the restriction of their activities, to the point of producing dependence or passivity (Brownmiller, 1975; Cahill, 2001; Griffin, 1971; Warr, 1985). Keane (1998) found that women’s fear of being victimized limited women’s movement in their environment. Using the data collected from the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey (where data was collected through telephone interviews), the researcher found that a significant number of women (62%) restricted their behaviour according to the perceived likelihood of being a victim of some sort of crime. This same trend was demonstrated in the 2004 General Social Survey results. Among users of public transit, 58% of women reported being concerned about their safety while waiting for or using transportation. An additional 16% stated that they feared walking alone at night. This fear for one’s own personal well-being extended when female participants were at home, where 27% expressed concerns about being safe in their residences at night (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Fears of sexual assault have also been seen as reinforcing women’s historically limited relationship with public spaces, which support long-standing cultural and physical restrictions to their ability to access (Day, 1995). Traditional roles and society’s acceptance of male dominance over females further contribute to sexual aggression, which is used as a means to punishment to keep women in their place and reducing women’s control over their own sexuality (Malamuth, 1996). As a result, rape is construed as an extension of a dominative-submissive, competitive, sex-role stereotype culture (Burt, 1980; Cahill, 2001; Fonow, Richardson, & Wemmerus, 1992; Griffin,
In addition to the physical trauma, victims also experience psychological injury in the aftermath of sexual assault. Rape trauma syndrome has been used to characterize a collection of responses that consist of somatic symptoms, eating and sleeping disturbances, substance-use disorders, mood swings, anxiety, and depression. Some go to the lengths of restructuring aspects of lifestyle or relationships. The responses often stem from the shock, disbelief, and despair individuals experience as a result of assault (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Gager & Schurr, 1976; Hampton, 1995; Halligan, Michael, Clark, & Ehlers, 2003; Ozer, Best, Lipsey, & Weiss, 2003; Resick, 2004; Scouting, Fairbrother, & Koch, 2004).

Mynatt and Allgeier (1990) suggested that self-blame was greater in assaults where situational, psychological, economic, or evaluative force was more prominent than for those cases involving physical force. In a review of the literature, they found that the use of economic or psychological force in cases of coercion resulted in greater psychological distress. The self-blame on the part of the victim might be a part of a vicious cycle, where they perceive themselves in negative ways (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Thornton, Ryckman, Kirchner, Jacobs, Kaczor, & Kuehnel, 1988). They might interpret the repeated assaults as evidence for some pre-existing, self-defeating cognition. Given this, Scouting et al. (2004) noted that these women’s cognitive patterns of viewing themselves are at risk altering their behaviour to confirm these schemas, such as aspiring to traditional gender roles. An early study conducted by McCahill, Meyer, and Fischman (1979) noted a curvilinear relationship between the degree of force used and the degree of post-adjustment problems victims suffered. In cases where the amount of force was either great or little, the victims experienced more severe adjustment problems compared to victims whose assailants used a moderate amount. In regards to the women who experienced little violence, the researchers postulated that these individuals were at great risk for self-blame.
Research has also identified prior victimization was associated with increased risk of developing symptoms of psychological distress and difficulties with recovery (Brunet, Boyer, Weiss, & Marmar, 2001). One researcher found self-blame in a study of women who had been sexually abused in childhood and adulthood. Through the use of a mail survey, 155 women completed measures that queried for sexual assault history and attribution of blame. The participants reported experiencing lower self-worth. Most of these individuals also tended to blame themselves for what happened. Moreover, the self-blame often contributed to lower rates of recovery. This was particularly true for women who had been victimized as a child and as an adult (Ullman, 1997).

A higher rate of childhood sexual abuse was associated with higher rates of adult sexual and physical victimization was found in another study. Participants \((n = 117)\) were from a community sample of adult sexual assault survivors who were assessed for childhood sexual victimization one month following the assault. Path analyses performed after structured interviews demonstrated that the impact of previous and present abuse contributed to the degree of post-traumatic stress disorder symptomatology in the aftermath of a sexual assault. Results from the study appeared to indicate the presence of dysfunctional interpersonal schemas that might make survivors of past abuse more vulnerable. The researchers also believed the data provided evidence interruption of cognitive appraisals of risk could be a factor as well in how individuals interpret interpersonal situations (Nishith, Mechanic, & Resick, 2000).

In line with the cognitive processing model of post-traumatic stress disorder, researchers found evidence of negative interpretations of traumatic memories, particularly during the appraisal process. These distortions were often associated with greater severity of post-traumatic stress disorder (Halligan et al., 2003; Resick & Schnicke, 1992). In the first phase of the study, researchers used a cross-sectional study approach with 81 sexual assault survivors, where symptoms were assessed currently (at the time of data collection) and one month following. This allowed researchers to distinguish between individuals with current symptoms, individuals who met past criteria, and individuals who demonstrated no symptoms. Participants were administered semi-structured interviews and completed memory measures. Results from this part of the
study demonstrated differences among the three groups. Participants with current symptoms and those who had recovered had higher traumatic memory scores. In the second study, 73 sexual survivors participated in a prospective longitudinal design. These participants completed the same measures as those in study 1, but were also asked to identify an unpleasant but nontraumatic memory that occurred around the time of the assault. Following the first meeting, these participants were followed three and nine months following. Analyses found that together with stressor variables (which included objective traumatic severity, perceived threat to life/physical integrity, and fear and terror), cognitive processing and appraisals of the situations predicted 71% of the variance of post-traumatic stress disorder at six months (Halligan et al., 2003).

Breitenbecher (2006) conducted a study with 224 female sexual assault survivors, where they were asked to complete measures that ascertained responsibility for past assaults, perception of their ability to avoid future assaults, frequency of previous victimization, and psychological distress. One of the measures, the Sexual Victimization Attribution Measure, was specifically designed for this study. Results from factor analysis indicated that there were five factors in survivors’ attribution of blame: perpetrator blame, characterological self-blame, situational blame, behaviour self-blame and societal blame. Data also indicated that characterological self-blame was related to negative outcomes, including psychological distress and increased frequency of previous assaults. Meanwhile, behavioural self-blame was associated with perceived avoidability of future assault but not with lower psychological distress.

*Reporting Sexual Assault*

Responses to sexual assault

As noted earlier, sexual assault victims are often wary of reporting what happened to them because of the additional trauma from interacting with the authorities and/or support agencies (Bergen, 1995; Clark & Hepworth, 1994; Gager & Schurr, 1976; New York Radical Feminists, 1974; Roberts & Grossman, 1994; Rozee & Koss, 2001; Ullman, 1999; Winkel & Koppelaar, 1991). Statistics Canada (2006) conducted a review of studies utilizing data from victimization surveys and found that over 90% of sexual
assault victims did not seek assistance from the criminal justice system via reporting the crime. Instead, they were more likely to disclose to friends and family than to the police. Although the numbers were higher for those seeking services, such as counselling and medical treatment, in the aftermath of an assault (27%), they were still believed to be an underestimate of those actually seeking help. In a review of the literature, Maier (2008) noted that the manner in which the police and support services handle cases contribute to victims’ distress after reporting the assault. The line of aggressive police questioning, information regarding the provision of medical treatment, and lengthy waiting times in sexual assault care clinics were identified as factors in secondary revictimization.

In a study of victims’ perception of credibility upon reporting, Canadian researchers found that women who were raped by someone who was known to them were less likely to report the incident. Using chart information from 958 cases seen at a sexual assault clinic in Vancouver, regressions were employed to examine the relationship between police contact and circumstances of the cases. The presence of physical injury and the fact that the assailant was a stranger were variables significantly associated with police involvement. This finding was interpreted as victims’ misconception that injuries must be present in order to be seen as credible by the authorities (McGregor, Wiebe, Marion, & Livingstone, 2000).

A sample of 102 women across Canada was interviewed by telephone in order to explore their reasons for not contacting the police after being assaulted. 38% of those interviewed indicated their reticence stemmed from negative perceptions of the criminal justice process being involved. Much of this stemmed from fears of not being taken seriously by the police or the courts. Other respondents reported anxiety of being blamed for the assault taking place. They often cited other women’s experiences or their own experiences with the criminal justice system as support for their positions. It was only when the probability of conviction was high that victims were willing to document the assault (Hattem, 2000).

DuMont, Miller, and Myhr (2003) obtained similar results from their research. They found that the more severe the type of coercion used, the more likely the victim
would obtain police involvement. Using a sample of 186 cases from a sexual assault care clinic in Toronto, the researchers performed regressions to explore the relationship between rape-myth and the likelihood of reporting to the police. Victims who experienced physical violence or were restrained in some manner were three times more likely to contact the authorities than those who did not. That is, those who believed themselves to have met criteria for assault as defined by rape myths often reported to the police and medical professionals. The researchers concluded that these violent aspects of the assaults helped victims to define what happened to them and consequently, to report it.

A qualitative study using interview data from 47 rape victim advocates from the U.S. found that many of the clients these participants served experienced secondary victimization at the hands of the police and medical professionals. This was particularly true when the victims were subjected to questions that forced them to recount the rape multiple times to multiple parties, accused them of lying, or blamed them for what transpired. The majority of the rape advocates interviewed (64%) felt their clients’ interactions with the police were primarily responsible for revictimization. Although emergency room medical professionals (doctors and nurses) were viewed less negatively, the participants still believed much could be done to improve the manner in which services and treatment could be provided. One advocate told the researcher she often heard doctors telling victims no rape kit would be performed if they did not remember being assaulted (Maier, 2008).

It has also been found that the type of rape and level of violence involved significantly affects how community resources are provided to victims. A U.S. study found that victims received minimal services from these agencies, while few filed a police report only to have law enforcement and prosecutors not pursue their cases. Meanwhile, those who received medical treatment were not fully advised about consequences of the assault, such as pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease precautions. Not surprisingly, the rates of secondary victimization were higher among individuals who sought medical and legal services. Researchers were also able to identify survivors of non-stranger rape as an at-risk group for post-traumatic stress. These
individuals received fewer services from the legal system in their attempts to prosecute, but experienced higher rates of secondary victimization than victims of stranger assault. A four-way interaction, which included the type of rape, medical services, medical secondary victimization, and mental health services, revealed a unique variance on participants’ post-traumatic stress scores (Campbell, Sefl, Barnes, Ahrens, Wasco, & Zaragoza-Diesfeld, 1999).

Delayed reporting

The emotional presentation of the victim upon reporting has also been found to impact perception and timeliness of reporting (e.g., Gager & Schurr, 1976; Winkel & Koppelaar, 1991). The more emotional the victim was, the more likely she was seen as exhibiting more caution, to be honest, and less culpable. Meanwhile, the calmer and withdrawn victim was perceived as being less reliable and more responsible for the assault. The results of two studies (Calhoun, Cann, Selby, & Magee, 1981; Winkel & Koppelaar, 1991) indicated that emotionally withdrawn victims are at greater risk for secondary victimization by the community. In addition, observers were more likely to attribute greater causal responsibility to the calm victim for the attack (Calhoun et al., 1981; Gager & Schurr, 1976; Winkel & Koppelaar, 1991).

Tsoudis (2002) examined how emotional displays influence an observer’s perception of the suspect according to affect control theory, which states that the victim’s emotional presentation can elicit assumptions about his or her identity. By empathizing with the victim, the observer might believe that obtaining a conviction would assist the victim in recovering in that justice has been served. Should the victim express a positive response, such as indifference, the observer surmises that the incident confirmed a negative identity for the victim. Thus, the crime is perceived as less negative, which results in a less punitive sentence. When mock jurors perceived the victim as responding negatively, they empathized less with the criminal. Consistent with previous work, perceived identities of both parties did influence sentencing recommendations. Yet, empathy for the victim did not have a significant influence for perceived identity (Tsoudis, 2002).
The level of injuries was also found to influence when victims report. A study by Feldman-Summers and Norris (1984) found that among a pool of self-identified rape victims, 74% who reported to the police and/or a social agency had suffered cuts and bruises. 44% of the women who suffered similar injuries did not report. Meanwhile, 36% of victims who reported the crime to the authorities had no prior relationship with the perpetrator, compared to 61% who did not report had some relationships with the assailant.

Millar, Stermac, and Addison (2002) also found that the more severe the attack, the earlier victims would seek treatment. In their analyses, it was discovered that victims sustaining physical injury were more likely to obtain treatment 13-24 hours after the assault. When weapons were used during the attack, victims sought help within 12 hours. The researchers also found patterns when it came to the relationship between perpetrator and victim. In cases where the assailant was a stranger, victims were more likely to seek help within 12 hours. Meanwhile, non-stranger rape victims waited over 48 hours before obtaining treatment. In regards to the last finding, there were several possible explanations proposed by the researchers. The first is that victims of assaults where the perpetrator was known would be less likely to label their experiences as rape since the prevailing view often involves an anonymous assailant. As a result, this might make their experiences subject to scepticism. Another reason as to why there is a delay in report might stem from these individuals’ belief that what happened to them will be taken less seriously than cases where the attacker was a stranger (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Bergen, 1995; Gager & Schurr, 1976; Lips, 1993; Millar et al., 2002; Winkel & Koppelaar, 1991; Ullman, 1999). Unfortunately, the results from the Campbell et al. (1999) study provide some evidence to back this argument.

Other individual factors have also been implicated in the delay in reporting. Bergen (1995) found themes of guilt and self-blame during interviews with victims of marital rape and domestic violence. Many of these women saw themselves as partially responsible in their efforts to play the role of the good wife to their partners. Others experienced shame as a result of their abuse due to the brutality involved that
compounded the sense of violation. It was not until these women sought assistance and consequently left their abusers were they able to define what happened to them as rape (Bergen, 1995; Estrich, 1995). On a related note, Ullman (1999) observed that victims who engaged in self-blame were more likely to have experienced some form of secondary victimization.

Bias in perceptions in the prosecution of sexual assault

Statistics Canada (2003) conducted an analysis of data from victimization surveys. Results indicated that once reported to the police, sexual assault cases are less likely than other violent offences to be considered as “founded” by the authorities. These cases are also less likely to result in charges laid against the suspect. Of the 27,094 cases in 2002, 37% were not cleared by laying charges.

Researchers have found that upon initial contact with a sexual assault victim, law enforcement officials utilize screening techniques to determine whether certain cases should not be pursued. Some reasons include: discrepancies in the victim’s story, or if from the investigation, they conclude nothing happened at all. In addition to the reasons, there was pervasive discrimination against a specific type of victim or against a social class in which he or she belongs. For example, the authorities have been less likely to pursue an investigation if the victim is poor, a member of any minority groups, a prostitute, or a substance abuser (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Gager & Schurr, 1976). Moreover, if the victim’s behaviour could have been construed to provoke the assault, the case might be declared unfounded as well (Gunn & Linden, 1997). Finally, if there is a possibility that the defendant will not be convicted, the police might conclude the case is unfounded (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Brown, Hamilton, & O’Neill, 2007; Clark & Lewis, 1977; Estrich, 1995; Gager & Schurr, 1976; Hall, 1995; New York Radical Feminists, 1974).

Clark and Lewis (1977) found that out of the 74 unfounded cases, most reports provided no explanation as to why they were not pursued. For the remaining cases, the officers involved appeared to believe that the cases would not be strong enough to prosecute or that the victim had not been assaulted at all. The remaining 12 cases, from
the documentation provided, appeared to demonstrate some bias. The reports seemed to share the prejudices the officers had about how women should behave. Some reasons involved alcohol use, any mental illness, and the promptness of reporting the incident. The researchers concluded that these attitudes might have influenced how these cases were handled.

Following the passing of Bill C-127 in Canada, researchers examined the impact of this law upon the processing of sexual cases in Winnipeg. The intent of this legislation was to change the manner in which these cases were handled by the criminal justice system, redefining sexual assault as an act of violence rather than a sexual one. The researchers used police files, Crown files, and court documents two years prior to Bill C-127 and two years after. A sample of 740 cases from these two periods of time was utilized in the analysis. Results indicated that the introduction of the legislation did not reduce attrition rate in the courts given that the increases in case processing took place at the police level. Furthermore, if the complainant’s character was dubious by the prosecutor, this variable tended to predict lower conviction rates. However, it should be noted that the researchers did not discuss what constituted questionable character in terms of the victims (Gunn & Linden, 1997).

DuMont and Myhr (2000) used Canadian victim data (n = 187) from a sexual assault care clinic. This study was innovative in that the researchers were able to link the medical files to legal ones so that they could track the progress of the case. Analyses from the database found that women who did not sustain injuries and who did not resist the assailant were less likely to see their cases result in charges. However, women who knew the perpetrator for more than 24 hours were more likely to see their cases result in charges than women who knew the assailant for less than 24 hours or not at all.

**Bias in victim-assailant relations**

The bias against victims of sexual assault is not limited to the police. While it is often easier to make arrests in situations where the victims know the assailant, obtaining convictions for these cases is often difficult. Among the cases brought forth in the U.S., about half or more are rejected (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Brown et al., 2007; Clark &
Lewis, 1977; Frohman, 1995; Hall, 1995; Rozee & Koss, 2001). Using a sexual assault care clinic database and legal files, DuMont and Myhr (2000) found that the overall conviction rate for sexual assault cases was 17%. Compared to violent offences, sexual assault cases in Canada often result in lower conviction rates. In 2002, the rate was 43% versus 51% (Statistics Canada, 2003). Statistics Canada (2006) found that less than four in ten cases of sexual assault cases that were brought before the courts resulted in a conviction between 2003 and 2004.

In an examination of several district attorneys’ offices across the United States by Frohman (1995), it was discovered that prosecutors use a similar set of criteria to the police when it comes to pursuing cases. Topping the list of reasons to reject cases was a previous relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, followed by the lack of force involved, and the absence of corroborating evidence. The study also found that some district attorneys distinguished different types of sexual assaults based on the acts that occurred, the situation in which the assault transpired, and the relationship between the parties. Others had issues as to the timeliness of the crime being reported, stating that the victim’s motives and credibility could be questioned in the course of a trial. In regards to corroborating evidence, sexual assault is viewed as less likely to be supported by it than in other crimes, such as a theft. In these cases, evidence for trial is quite difficult to procure, where there is little probability of witnesses, no contraband, and no way to re-enact the event for recording. Other researchers have found that it was dependent on the victim not immediately engaging in behaviours that most do following an assault, such as bathing, douching, and brushing their teeth (Brekke & Borgida, 1988; Brown et al., 2007; Estrich, 1995; Frohman, 1995; Gager & Schurr, 1976).

Campbell et al. (1999) found that only a handful of cases were prosecuted from 102 reports. Four of these cases convicted the assailant at trial, while five cases accepted a guilty plea. The remaining cases received little attention from the legal system as they were dropped early in prosecution process. Some of the prosecutors surveyed cited the unconvincing presentation of the survivor as a witness. This often becomes an issue when there is a discrepancy between the victim’s behaviour and what the prosecutor knows of rape and its’ effects on other victim’s behaviours. Meanwhile, others in charge of
prosecuting these cases have used the survivor’s living circumstances, relationship with the assailant, and behaviour as reasons to drop cases. Should the victim live in a racially mixed, working class neighbourhood, other prosecutors often conclude that a predominantly White, middle-class jury will render a not guilty verdict (Brown et al., 2007; Campbell et al., 1999; Rozee & Koss, 2001; Temekin, 2000).

In a qualitative study, Temekin (2000) conducted interviews with ten barristers. She found that most British prosecutors were concerned about the delay in presenting cases at trial. Specifically, they were leery of asking a rape victim to recall the traumatic event after the person had worked so hard to put the incident behind them in order to live. As a result, most of these attorneys noted that these witnesses were often reluctant and sometimes blanked out while testifying. Others talked about weak forensic evidence, which was attributed to the victim delaying examination. Interestingly, medical experts for the prosecution were seen as liabilities to a case. Many of these individuals often change their mind in the midst of their testimony, destroying their credibility and that of the prosecution’s case. Finally, prosecutors discussed how the victim’s conduct and how it could be used against them during the course of a trial, where the implicit message is that the rape was instigated by the victim. This latter concern has been echoed in the literature (Bowland, 1994; Brown et al., 2007; Clark & Lewis, 1977; Rozee & Koss, 2001).

A report compiled by the U.S. Department of Justice found that victim characteristics were factors in whether or not prosecutors pursued sexual assault cases. Using data files from sexual assault cases that took place in two major U.S. cities (n = 526), researchers conducted regression analyses to examine how race, and age impacted attorneys’ decisions to prosecute. The researchers controlled for whether the victim physically resisted her attacker or made a prompt report to the police, whether the victim’s “moral character” was in question, and whether the victim engaged in any type of risk-taking activity at the time of the incident. Prosecutors were more likely to file charges if there was physical evidence to connect the suspect to the crime, if the suspect had a prior criminal record, and if there were no questions about the victim’s character or behaviour at the time of the incident. This suggests that prosecutors’ concerns about
convictability lead them to file charges when they believe the evidence is strong, the suspect is culpable, and the victim is blameless. In cases that involved friends, acquaintances, and relatives, prosecutors were significantly less likely to file charges if the victim engaged in risk-taking behaviour at the time of the incident or if her reputation or character were questioned. If the victim and suspect were or had been intimate partners, prosecutors were less likely to file charges if the victim engaged in risky behaviour or physically resisted the suspect but were more likely to file charges if the victim was injured (Spohn & Holleran, 2004).

There is a dearth of literature related to the topic of Canadian prosecutors and factors involved in their decision to pursue cases. In the only study that focused on this topic, DuMont and Myhr (2000) found that women who had known their assailant at the time of the assault were more likely (five times) than women involved in stranger assaults to see their cases forwarded on for prosecution. In contrast to research conducted in the U.S., victim character variables for the Canadian sample were not related to prosecutors’ decisions to move forward with cases. Rather, the presence of physical trauma was significantly related to guilty pleas ($p < .05$). Cases where the victim sustained physical injuries were almost three times likely to result in a conviction.

In one of the few studies of judges’ perceptions of victims presiding over cases of sexual assault, researchers obtained similar findings from studies of prosecutors. They found that presiding judges shared similar views of victims. Survey data results indicated that they tended to divide them into two categories: true victims and those who asked for it. Their assessments were based on the factors related to the attack and the nature of the victims’ character. They also tended to hold on to more traditional views of sexual assault, where the stranger scenario was more believable than assaults where the victim knew the perpetrator (Gager & Schurr, 1976).

Feldman-Summers and Palmer (1980) surveyed 17 superior court judges from the U.S. The questionnaire they completed was comprised of four sections: beliefs regarding the causes of sexual assault, ways to prevent sexual assault, judgments of the number of complaints brought to the attention of the criminal justice system, and judgments about
the circumstances associated with different sexual assault complaints. Compared to social services personnel (counsellors, social workers), judges were more likely to perceive sexual assault as a result of characterological issues of men (i.e. sexual frustration and mental illness) and women’s behaviour (e.g. going out alone at night). Furthermore, they believed that the sexual assault could be prevented by changing the behaviours of potential victims.

A sample of 53 Norwegian judges was provided with videotaped rape scenarios, where the female victim provided an account of an acquaintance rape. The judges were assigned to three conditions: the congruent condition (where the victim was emotional and occasionally sobbing), the neutral condition (where the victim displayed no affect), and the incongruent condition (where the victim demonstrated paradoxical emotion, such as happiness and positive affect). Following viewing of the testimony, the judges were asked to complete a questionnaire that assessed for victim credibility. Because the items examining victim credibility was highly correlated with the perceived plausibility of the incident ($r = .89$), that was used as the dependent measure. Results of the study demonstrated that victims’ emotionality does not influence judges’ assessment of credibility. Only 2% of the variance in credibility ratings was explained by emotional expression (Wessel, Drevland, Eilertsen, & Magnussen, 2006).

Jury Perceptions

There is also evidence that juries tend to render verdicts according to their own sexual beliefs as well applying their own standards of behaviour for the victim (Brekke & Borgida, 1988; Clark & Lewis, 1977; Gager & Schurr, 1976; Kalven & Zeisel, 1971; Wiener & Hurt, 2000). In a study that examined jury decisions in rape trials, researchers compared the outcomes of cases decided by a jury and cases where only a judge presided. They found that juries rarely rendered a conviction when the case was an acquaintance rape (three out of forty-two cases). According to the researchers, the juries used a doctrine of ‘contributory’ behaviour on the part of the victim to guide their decisions. Examples would include accompanying him back to his residence or hitchhiking (Kalven & Zeisel, 1971). In another study, Clark and Lewis (1977) noted that juries were less
likely to believe that a rape occurred if the victim went back to the assailant’s residence. There is an implicit belief that she did so voluntarily, and probably provoked or enticed the assailant. These cases were also deemed to be unfounded by the police as well.

Brekke and Borgida (1988) used a sample of 208 undergraduate students to examine mock jurors’ decision-making processes in a case of sexual assault. The researchers audiotaped participants as they deliberated over testimony presented at a mock rape trial. The participants were divided into two groups: one where an expert witness was used and the other group without such testimony. Discussions were subjected to content analysis, where the researchers coded the deliberations according to whether participants felt it was beneficial for the prosecution to have the testimony of an expert witness or not. Results indicated that in cases where there is great ambiguity, mock juror participants resort to using themselves as reference points. Under these conditions, these individuals were more likely to be influenced by variables that concerned task, situation, context, and individual differences. When participants did not have feedback from an expert witness, they tended to spend a great deal of time deliberating over the fact that the victim did not resist enough. Furthermore, the tones of their discussions were more oriented towards the defence attorneys’ position.

The acceptance of certain false beliefs about rape and rape victims has also been found to influence legal decisions in sexual assault trials as well. These beliefs are often termed rape myths, and are often used to justifying laying blame on the victim for what happened (A more in-depth discussion of these attitudes will be covered later on in this chapter). In their review of the literature, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) found two trends. First, they noted that participants from a community sample who were more inclined to possess such beliefs were less likely to convict a person accused of rape. In addition, higher rape myth acceptance has been associated with shorter sentence length for men convicted of sexual assault in studies that utilized both student and community samples.

When it comes to the introduction of the victim’s sexual history with the defendants, researchers believe that jurors will make certain conclusions about the victim
and her credibility despite the fact that most judicial directions outline the specific purpose of such evidence. Here, jurors are instructed to ignore and/or limit the amount of attention in light of the evidence. Estrich (1995) noted that juries tended to differentiate among cases that involved a previous relationship between the victim and the assailant. The latter are seen as either less serious than other kinds of rape or as a private dispute between two people and therefore, not the business of the prosecutorial system. Most of the juries presiding over these cases tended to rely on resistance from the victim when weighing the arguments presented.

Schuller and Hastings (2002) studied the impact of prior sexual history evidence on the judgments of mock jurors. The researchers also wanted to see whether limiting instructions accompanying the testimony would be effective. Results of the study indicated that jurors who were aware that the victim had a sexual relationship with the defendant negatively evaluated the victim compared to people who did not have this information. Furthermore, the researchers found that providing jurors with instructions limiting the scope of considerations of this evidence was ineffective. Many of the participants who knew about the victim’s previous sexual history with the defendant often disregarded the judge’s instructions.

In a review of available research in this area, Schuller and Klippenstine (2004) noted that many individuals often do not comply with directives provided to them from judges at trial. While the ideal stipulates that jurors are neutral parties who passively take in information presented at trial, the reality is different. They actively assess the information provided to them, evaluating the strength of evidence and arguments. Jurors are individuals with pre-existing ideas and opinions of human behaviour and about justice, which might come into conflict with the judge’s directions regarding evidence.

Researchers studied the impact of victim-assailant relationship and victim substance use on mock juror deliberations, using a university sample (n = 152). Participants were provided with vignettes that depicted a sexual assault, where the relationship and victim intoxication was manipulated. For the victim substance use variable, the researchers included the following categories: illegal alcohol consumption
(the victim was underage), legal alcohol consumption, LSD use, and sober. Participants were asked to rate victim credibility and to provide a verdict. Findings from the study indicated that mock jurors’ perception of credibility and verdicts were affected by substance use. Participants in the sober condition viewed the victim as credible and were more likely to render guilty verdicts than those who were in the substance use conditions. Their judgments were not reflective of a significant interaction between substance use and relationship. Women in the study tended to rate the victim as more credible than men. It should be noted alcohol and LSD use exerted similar effects in the study (Wenger & Bornstein, 2006).

Participants (n = 171) in a study of mock jurors’ examining the impact of negative forensic evidence in a sexual assault case involving drug facilitation were provided with written stimulus which contained mock forensic evidence and information about the victim’s alcohol consumption. Researchers manipulated the trial stimulus for the two independent variables (forensic evidence and alcohol consumption), where there were three assigned conditions: no forensic evidence without expertise testimony, no forensic evidence with expertise testimony, and no evidence and no testimony. Participants completed measures that assessed for verdict rendering, case evaluation (whether they believed the victim was drugged), victim and defendant credibility, perception of the forensic evidence, and whether the defence introduced evidence regarding the victim’s toxicology screening. Results of the study indicated that testimony provided negated the impact of negative forensic evidence. Without testimony in the presence of evidence, mock jurors tended to greater verdict leniency and more favourable ratings for the defendant. It should be noted that there was no difference between the control condition that omitted the report and the condition in which expert testimony was introduced to contextualize the negative forensic report were found on any of the dependent measures (Jenkins & Schuller, 2007).

It should be pointed out that some strides have been made. In the past decade, metropolitan police departments have established specialized sex crime units, possibly in response to the criticism. Individuals working for these units receive specialized training to deal with victims. Consequently, the manner in which the crime is investigated might
be affected in that more resources are allotted to specific aspects of the investigation, such as dealing with the crime scenes or utilizing female officers and detectives to question victims (Clark & Hepworth, 1994; Gager & Schurr, 1976; Hall, 1995). Specific to the Canadian context, the case of Jane Doe v. Board of Commissioners of Police for the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto et al. 39 O. R. (3d) 487 highlighted discrimination victims faced at the hands of the police. The case also introduced subsequent changes regarding how Toronto police handle sexual assault cases. These changes included revising the definition of rape, which shifted away from the emphasis on violence as being part of the crime and including both men and women as possible perpetrators and victims (Landau, 2006). Yet, given the pervasive discrepancy between actual and reported cases of sexual assault, it appears that the bias treatment still remains.

**Legislative reform**

In addition, legislative reforms to existing measures have taken place both in Canada and in the United States. The goals of these reforms were to increase the likelihood of reporting and to make the legal standards for sexual assault consistent with those of other crimes (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Berger, Searles, & Neuman, 1995; Bevacqua, 2000; Bowland, 1994; Landau, 2006; Lips, 1993; Łoś, 1994; Statistics Canada, 2006). First, the broadening of the definition of rape was made from penile penetration to include penetration, using objects, as well as oral and anal penetration. As a result, the term sexual assault was now used legally in order to connote coercive sexual contact. Second, across Canada and in many US states, the laws have been rewritten to include gender-neutral language so that the offender or victim could either be male or female (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Berger et al., 1995; Brownmiller, 1975; Gunn & Linden, 1997; Landau, 2006; Rozee & Koss, 2001; Statistics Canada, 2006). In Canada specifically, legislation was revised to abolish the term rape, which was replaced by three levels of sexual assault (Landau, 2006; Statistics Canada, 2006).

The work of feminist legal scholars and academics has also resulted in some changes to legislation when it came to sexual assault. In 1979, the U.S. Congress passed the Rape Victim’s Privacy Act, which limited the extent to which evidence pertaining to
the victim’s sexual history with people other than the defendant could be introduced (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995). Canada adopted similar rape shield provisions in 1985, renumbered as S 276 and S 277 (Schuller & Klippenstine, 2004). Unfortunately, these rape shield laws were subject to vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction regarding how much flexibility the judge has in determining what is admissible and what is not (Denike, 2004; Hall, 1995).

In 1991, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down S 276 of the Criminal Code, which limits the questioning pertaining to the victim’s sexual history. The defendants in the case argued that the laws violated their right to a fair trial. This resulted in individual trial judges having somewhat free reign in determining what evidence was admissible. In response, a new piece of legislation was proposed in 1992, entitled Bill c – 49. The bill outlines the criteria for what constitutes admissible evidence when it comes to the victim’s sexual history. Specifically, information about the victim’s sexual history cannot be used at trial to determine consent or credibility (Bowland, 1994; Denike, 2004; Gunn & Linden, 1997; Mohr & Roberts, 1994; Schuller & Klippenstine, 2004). Some have argued that in pursuit of truth and justice, the rights of the victim are often dismissed or worse, sacrificed as a result of the ambiguities in these laws (Denike, 2004).

Research conducted with police, prosecutors, judges, and jurors only serves to emphasize the fact that the criminal justice system in North America continues to operate under more traditional notions of what sexual assault is (Brekke & Borgida, 1988; Brown et al., 2007; Campbell et al., 1999; Estrich, 1995; Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Frohman, 1995; Gager & Schurr, 1976; Gunn & Linden, 1997; Maier, 2008; Schuller & Klippenstine, 2004; Spohn & Holleran, 2004; Temekin, 2000). This is in spite of feminist legal scholars’ efforts to lobby for the revision of legislation when it came to sexual assault as well as public perceptions of the crime and the victims. As a result of the loopholes that seem to nullify rape shield laws in some cases, the public’s acceptance of rape myths appears not to have diminished.

Given the secondary victimization that occurs following reporting a sexual assault, it should be no surprise that reporting rates severely underestimate the number of
actual cases. Further exacerbating this is the misguided information those in the criminal justice system use to ascertain culpability. The perceptions that are shaped from this information ultimately result in biased treatment when survivors attempt to access services (Campbell et al., 1999; Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Frohman, 1995; Gunn & Linden, 1997; Hattem, 2000; Maier, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2003; 2006; Ullman, 1999). By being implicitly told that their ordeal will constantly be doubted and questioned at every turn, victims of sexual assault find themselves traumatized once again and consequently, wondering why they have sought out assistance in the first place. This tendency to find fault with the victim is pervasive and also discourages those who have been assaulted from coming forward at all, forcing them to deal with their experience in silence.

Status of the research on perceptions of responsibility in sexual assault cases

There have been many studies that examine how people understand and view sexual assault as well as attribute responsibility in a sexual assault case (Abrams et al., 2003; Brekke & Borgida, 1988; Clark & Lewis, 1977; Gager & Schurr, 1976; Estrich, 1995; Jenkins & Schuller, 2007; Kalven & Zeisel, 1971; Littleton, 2001; Morry & Winkler, 2001; Schuller & Hastings, 2002; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2003; Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2004; Wenger & Bornstein, 2006). A great deal of research pertaining to both the individual difference and situational variables that influence rape attribution now exists (please see reviewed studies below). Such studies are relevant to the issue of sexual assault given that the cognitive processes entailed might involve assessing whether a situation meets the definition of rape. Furthermore, victims might internalize the beliefs of other people regarding whether or not what happened to them was truly rape. They might also be wary of the stigma that is often attached to being labelled as a victim (Herman, 1997). The consequences often hamper the recovery process and predict worse victim outcomes (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995; Schult & Schneider, 1991).

One of the concepts identified in the attribution of responsibility in sexual assault is sexism. Most of the work has focused on examining benevolent sexism as a valid
construct, as described by Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001). However, in general, the literature is relatively new. As a result, the amount of work is quite limited. In response to this new construct, recent research has been conducted to examine how this contributes to attribution making.

The following section will outline the available research, starting with the theories used to examine attribution of responsibility in sexual assault. The next part will provide background information on the construct of and what is referred to as benevolent sexism. The third and fourth sections of the literature review will detail the research conducted on situational factors and victim characteristics, respectively. Finally, individual difference variables studied by previous research will be discussed. It should be noted that although older studies will be drawn upon for this literature review, the work cited is still very much relevant to the issues pertaining to attribution of responsibility in sexual assault. Furthermore, the majority of the research available has concentrated on attributing responsibility to the victim rather than the perpetrator. Given this, the review of the literature follows this trend.

Attribution theories in sexual assault

Much of the early work first focused upon sex role socialization theory. This theory postulated that rape, specifically acquaintance rape, is an extreme form of normal sexual interactions. Males are socialized to be initiators while females are socialized to be more passive. Any sexual violence that occurs between people who are dating is perceived not severe enough to be rape since it is a normal part of sexual interactions (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Check & Malamuth, 1983; Jackson, 1995; Littleton, 2001; Yamawaki, 2007). However, this theory has been found to possess limitations and little research has been done examining this as a factor as a result. Some have criticized it for being general to account for a number of the factors that affect attributions. According to the theory, it would only take a moderate amount of force and resistance to be considered a normal part of sexual relations. However, a linear relationship has been demonstrated between the degree of force involved and victim’s resistance. Furthermore, it also does not address why other factors, like perpetrator alcohol use, would impact rape
attributions. Finally, the sex role socialization does not elucidate how observers make the judgment as to whether or not a situation constitutes sexual assault (Jackson, 1995; Littleton, 2001).

Lerner (1980) proposed that the phenomena of blaming victims for their fate stemmed from a belief in a Just World. These beliefs are assumed to be common since they assist in providing some order and stability when it comes to perceiving the world. Such cognitions are elicited when ‘rational’ responses of seeking justice are not available. Applying this theory to sexual assault, other people might be motivated to search for a reason why the person was attacked. The motivation increases if the rape targeted an innocent person, which might make the observer feel more vulnerable. As a result, if an innocent person is attacked, he or she will be blamed for the incident in order for observer to maintain a belief in a just world. According to the theory, women should blame the victims for the assault because of the threat to their own invulnerability (Bohner et al., 1999; Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2007). Thus, greater similarity of the victim to the perpetrator results in less blame for the victim (Kleinke & Meyer, 1990; Mason et al., 2004).

Kleinke and Meyer (1990) studied a sample of 165 university students, where they were shown a videotaped interview of a mock rape victim. The researchers assigned participants to one of three conditions: 1) the assailant was not caught, 2) the assailant was caught and sentenced to one year in prison, and 3) the assailant was caught and sentenced to 15 years in prison. There was a control group, who was not shown the videotape but simply answered the Just World scale (Rubin & Peplau, 1975) and an original measure that contained items pertaining to a “typical rape victim” and a “typical rapist”. Men with a high belief in a just world evaluated the victim more negatively than men with a low belief in a just world. They also view the crime as less serious. The same trend was not true for women, where those with a high belief in a just world evaluated the rape victim less negatively than those with a low belief. There was an interaction with other variables such as victim resistance, relationship with the assailant, and the dress of the victim.

Researchers explored male rape myths held by university students ($n = 423$) through the administration of measures of male rape myth acceptance (an original
measure designed for the study), female rape myth acceptance (Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale Short Form; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999), ambivalent sexism toward men (Ambivalence Towards Men Inventory; Glick & Fiske, 1999), adversarial sexual beliefs (items from the Rape Myths Acceptance Scale; Burt, 1980), and acceptance of interpersonal violence (items from the Rape Myths Acceptance Scale; Burt, 1980). Three factors emerged from factor analyses of the original measure, which include blame, trauma, and denial. There were gender differences in male rape acceptance ($ps < .01$), where men demonstrated higher overall male rape myths than women. This was in contrast to the finding of no significant differences between genders for female rape myth acceptance. The blame factor was associated with benevolent sexism scores in men. Applying the just world theory to their results, the researchers theorized that those who scored high on benevolent sexism believed men should be invincible. If a man is raped, he must have demonstrated some weakness or provoked the assault (Chapleau et al., 2007).

Sakallı-Uğurlu, Yalçın, and Glick (2007) conducted a study with Turkish university students ($n = 425$) to determine what factors were predictive of empathy towards rape victims. The researchers administered the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996), the Just World scale (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), General Belief in a Just World Scale (Dalbert, Montada, & Schmitt, 1987), Attitudes Towards Rape scale (Ward, 1988), and Rape Victim Empathy Scale (Deitz, Blackwell, Daley, & Bentley, 1982). A multivariate analysis of variance demonstrated that males possessed less positive views of rape victims than females. They also tended to score higher on measures of hostile sexism and lower on empathy ($ps < .01$). However, there were no gender differences on benevolent sexism and just world measures. Belief in a just world also predicted significantly more negative attitudes toward rape victims among both male and female respondents, presumably because it promotes blaming the victim.

In a recent study by Capezza and Arriaga (2008), participants ($n = 189$) took part in a $3 \times 3$ design experiment, where they were randomly assigned to read one of nine hypothetical scenarios depicting a married couple’s conflict. Three levels of psychological aggression (baseline, verbal, and emotional) were crossed with three levels of physical aggression (absent, low, and high). In addition to completing the Belief in a Just World scale (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), participants completed items that assessed for
perceptions of the aggressor’s behaviour, conflict, and future problems, as well as items that examined traditional gender role views. Multivariate analyses revealed that across all conditions, the perpetrator’s behaviour was viewed as unacceptable, negative, and abusive. Although the multivariate analysis for just world beliefs did not yield any significant main or interaction effects, there were tentative findings (based on correlations obtained) that those who held high just world beliefs were related to viewing the perpetrator’s behaviour as less unacceptable.

Benevolent sexism

Sexism has been found to be a form of prejudice, carrying a set of attitudes and views that could be classified as stereotypes (Brehm & Kassin, 1996). Sources of these attitudes might be traced to the sexual dimorphisms, where men’s physical characteristics of being bigger and stronger have allowed them to exert some dominance, men’s social dominance over women as a result of sexual selection, and gender-based role divisions in which women are responsible for domestic duties. Conrad (2006) framed the nature of female gender role stereotypes as being reactions to male sexual aggression. It is because of this that women’s sexuality is bipolar in nature. That is, women who comply and conform to men’s sexual prowess are viewed as “good”, and women who overstep rigid gender expectations are viewed as “bad”. Feminist scholars have termed this duality as the Madonna/whore complex, which also argues that Christian thought has shaped society’s ideas of gender and sex (Conrad, 2006; Elam, 1998).

Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001) delineated between two types of sexism, hostile and benevolent, which can be viewed as responses to whether or not women follow gender role behaviour. The researchers defined hostile sexism as the more negative aspects of prejudice (characterizes women as weak and unfit to hold responsibilities associated with power), while benevolent sexism was seen as a collection of attitudes that viewed women in stereotypical roles, but are subjectively more positive and meant to elicit behaviours that are prosocial or intimacy seeking. Benevolent sexism is seen more acceptable, and compensating for hostile sexism. Moreover, individuals who ascribe to these beliefs might be unaware that they have any conflictual attitudes towards women. Individuals who hold these views resolve any anxieties by dividing women into two groups, one that
embraces traditional roles and seen as good, and one that challenges such roles and seen as bad. Therefore, they rationalize their attitudes as not being sexist by implying that it is only certain women they disliked. Because of this, benevolent sexism is seen as rather dangerous form of prejudice because it does not meet the overt characteristics of prejudice and women might be hard pressed to find fault with it (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001; Sibley & Wilson, 2006).

According to researchers, benevolent and hostile sexism operate in different ways to achieve the same goal—the justification for the dominance of male power. The components work together in a way to reinforce women’s lower status (Brehm & Kassin, 1996; Clark & Lewis, 1977; Glick & Fiske, 2001). First, paternalism has been found to influence in shaping sexist attitudes, where women are likened to not-completely mature adults. However, because men are dependent on women for childbearing purposes, women are also seen as cherished as wives and mothers. This legitimizes a dominant, male figure to make major decisions, but who will also protect them as well (Brehm, 1992; Brehm & Kassin, 1996; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lips, 1993; Peplau, 1983). Finally, heterosexuality can be identified as another theme in sexism. Glick and Fiske (1996) saw it as one of the most powerful sources of ambivalence towards the opposite sex. Because of the dyadic dependence on females, they are seen as gatekeepers to a resource (sex, children). As a result, there is vulnerability that men might resent (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Unger & Crawford, 1992). In the context of the Madonna/whore discussion, women who engage in behaviours that are consistent with gender role are rewarded with protection. Meanwhile, women who openly defy such prescribed behaviours are viewed with contempt and seen as deserving of punishment (Conrad, 2006; Sibley & Wilson, 2006). What follows a review of the studies conducted in this area.

Benevolent sexism has been examined in a number of ways. Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, and Zhu (1997) conducted two studies, using the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) to examine people’s attitudes towards women in a sample of undergraduate students. In addition to the ASI, a measure assessing the classification of female characteristics (traditional versus non-traditional) was also administered. The first study, involving 80 undergraduate participants, indicated that men who scored high on
the ASI possessed polarized views of women. Meanwhile, men who obtained high hostile sexism scores targeted women who were non-traditional and benevolent sexism targeted women who were more traditional. Women in the sample also tended to evaluate non-traditional women less positively than traditional ones. In the second study, participants (n = 100) completed the ASI along with measures that asked them to evaluate specific types of women, which included items regarding positive and negative traits, participants’ emotions towards these women, and symbolic beliefs about them. The analyses confirmed that certain female subtypes elicit either type of sexism, but not both. Meanwhile, hostile sexism accounted for the negative evaluations, while benevolent sexism accounted for positive ones.

The female participants in a later study also found some acceptance of benevolent sexism over the neutral point. The participants outright rejected hostile sexism as measured on the ASI. From these findings, the researches surmised that women might “want it both ways”. In other words, they are willing to accept aspects of benevolent sexism, but at the same time, they disapprove hostile sexism in men (Killianski & Rudman, 1998). Glick and Fiske (2001) proposed that many women might want the protection and safety that benevolent sexism is associated with, or that it is a form of self-protection. By endorsing benevolent sexism, they are finding a way to cope in societies where men are hostile sexists. Meanwhile, hostile sexism might be perceived as punishment for not conforming to traditional roles (Glick et al., 2000).

Sibley and Wilson (2006) presented participants (61 university males) with vignettes describing women who either conformed or defied gender role expected behaviour. Men in the study reported high hostile sexism towards the female character when she was portrayed as a negative female stereotype (sexual temptress condition). When the female character’s behaviour was consistent with positive gender role actions (pure and chaste), the men reported increased benevolent sexist views. The researchers also found support for previous research (Glick et al., 1997) that men’s endorsement of benevolent sexism conveys their approval or disapproval of women’s behaviour.

Researchers found evidence of a significant positive relationship between benevolent sexism and paternalistic chivalry, ranging from .37 to .75. These results
indicated that people who are high in benevolent sexism are more likely to support a belief system where women are treated with politeness, but are confined when it comes to the roles in intimate relationships. Women in the sample appeared to accept paternalistic chivalrous attitudes. Consistent with previous work, men were found to have higher benevolent sexism scores than women (Viki et al., 2003).

When it comes to attribution of responsibility, the research that has been conducted has found that high benevolent sexists are more likely to blame victims of acquaintance rape situations than stranger rape situations. In a study by Viki and Abrams (2002), participants who scored high on benevolent sexism assigned more blame on the married mother victim than people that scored lower. The researchers proposed that benevolent sexism allows people to find another avenue to attribute blame when it comes to victim blame. Here, a married woman who is assaulted during a possible act of infidelity was seen violating standards important to those who ascribed to high benevolent sexism.

Abrams et al. (2003) utilized scores from the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, the Impression Management Scale from the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding, and the benevolent sexism subscale of the ASI along with an original measure of blame and sexual assault vignettes to assess responsibility in a case of sexual assault to 65 university students. The vignettes presented an acquaintance rape versus a stranger rape. The composite measure designed was composed of seven items that assessed for participants’ perceptions of blame, and had adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .75$). They found that higher benevolent sexism was related to higher blame for the acquaintance rape victim and saw the victim’s behaviour as more inappropriate for a woman. Meanwhile, individuals who scored high in benevolent sexism were more likely to see a woman inviting a relationship with a man as a violation of traditional sex role norms. As such, they were perceived as being more responsible for the unfortunate consequences. True rape was not seen to occur when women fail to follow traditional gender roles by participants who scored high in benevolent sexism. Women who ignored such roles might be seen as actively inviting aggressive behaviours in the eyes of hostile sexists. The second phase of the study examined the propensity to rape. Abrams et al. (2003)
found that hostile sexism significantly predicted rape proclivity. The male participants perceived the victim as really wanting sex, but pretending not to. Hostile sexism appeared to act to justify rape with these participants.

Viki et al. (2004) found that people who scored high on benevolent sexism placed less blame on perpetrators of acquaintance rape compared to stranger rape assailants. Using a university sample of 85 university students in this part of the study, the researchers administered the benevolent sexism subscale of the ASI along with an original measure of blame and sexual assault vignettes to assess responsibility in a case of sexual assault. Study 2 focused on sentence recommendations for the assailant in the scenarios. Participants in this portion of the research ($n = 67$) tended to recommended shorter sentences for assailants in acquaintance rapes. The researchers warned that this has implications both legally and psychologically. It would seem that high benevolent sexists either implicitly condone violence against women or blame the assailant less if the victim behaved inappropriately.

In summary, the available research has consistently found that people who scored high on benevolent sexism placed less blame on perpetrators of acquaintance rape. This was compared to stranger rape assailants. It would seem that high benevolent sexists either implicitly condone violence against women or blame the assailant less if the victim behaved inappropriately.

**Situational factors**

As stated earlier, one of the factors examined in the literature on the perceptions or attributions of sexual assault is the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. One study used a sample of college students, each of whom read one of six scenarios that portrayed a rape or proposition. In each depiction, the victim-perpetrator relationship varied, where some of the characters had been in a steady relationship while others were depicted as first date encounters or strangers. They found that the ratings for victim responsibility were highest in the rape and proposition scenario than for situations with strangers. The results suggested that a rape and proposition scenario during a date elicited

This finding was also obtained in a study by Scronce and Corcoran (1995). They found that in dating situations, there was a greater expectation that led to increased blame on the victim. The research went further in that it obtained findings that concerned the victim’s ability to resist, which influenced attributions. In a study by Luo (2000), participants were more likely to attribute responsibility and blame to victims who were sexually experienced and those who offered the date in the first place. Females were more likely to respond in such a manner. Meanwhile, males seemed to suspect the victim of “seducing” a sober assailant or failing to fend him off since his advances were presumed to be easier to resist.

A previous relationship between the victim and perpetrator, where contact had taken place, predicted less blame for the perpetrator in a sexual assault in another study. The researchers used an operant conditioning approach, where they assigned men to one of two conditions. Prior to listening to a tape of a sexual assault, they were informed they had been on several dates and that they engaged in some touching. In one condition, participants were told she did not object, while in the other condition the victim initially objected but stopped resisting. Compared to the participants in the no-resistance condition, the participants who experienced resistance took longer to determine that the man should stop attempting sexual intercourse (Marx & Gross, 1995). In a review of the literature, Schuller and Klippenstine (2004) also observed that as the sexual intimacy of a couple increased, people were more likely to concentrate on the behaviour of the woman and be more wary of her credibility when it came to reporting sexual assault.

The victim’s use of alcohol also influences the attributions in a rape, which poses serious questions pertaining to criminal responsibility (Schuller & Wall, 1998; Wall & Schuller, 2006). Specifically, observers often view victims who consume alcohol prior to the assault as more culpable than ones who did not (Clark & Lewis, 1977). They might view her as being more sexually available, which might increase the miscommunication between the victim and the assailant in acquaintance rape situations. That is, women who
drink might be seen as more likely to elicit sexual invitations that would interfere with effective resistance when refusing intercourse. Researchers found that this was true in a study of undergraduate men and women, who perceived the victim as being careless and more responsible for her fate than the non-drinking woman. There was also a tendency not to label the scenario as a rape, especially when alcohol was involved. In particular, females were as likely as males to find the victim at fault in a rape. One possible rationale proposed for this finding is that women perceive rape as a direct, personal attack. Consequently, they look for ways to distance themselves from the likelihood of the crime happening to them. By not drinking, they can feel that they exercised some control by reducing the chances of bad outcomes (Scronce & Corcoran, 1995).

Schuller and Stewart (2000) used a sample of police officers to examine their beliefs about victim intoxication and sexual assault. Using vignettes, the victim’s beverage consumption (beer vs. cola) was manipulated. The researchers found that the more intoxicated the victim was depicted to be, the less trustworthy she was perceived to be. Main effects for victim intoxication also revealed that the less blame was placed on the perpetrator and that this blame shifted to the victim. The results also found that victim intoxication had an influence on how the officers empathized with the perpetrator. That is, with the more intoxicated victim, the officers were more likely to believe that the perpetrator was honestly under the impression that the victim was a willing, consenting partner who was interested in sex.

Participants in another study ($n = 152$), acting as mock jurors, reviewed information from a sexual assault case. The alcohol consumption of the assailant and victim were manipulated and participants were asked for their assessment of responsibility. In cases where the victim was moderately intoxicated as opposed to being sober, the victim was viewed as less credible. The researchers also framed the results in terms of gender stereotypes, where the intoxicated female victim was seen by the observers as more sexually disinhibited when compared to the sober victim (Schuller & Wall, 1998).
In a more recent study, researchers provided 323 participants with descriptions of a sexual assault trial, where the intoxication level of the assailant and victim varied: sober, moderate, and extreme. Similar findings to the Schuller and Wall (1998) study were obtained. When participants were informed that the victim was moderately intoxicated, they were more likely to render guilty verdicts if the assailant was similarly inebriated. In conditions where the victim was extremely intoxicated, the perpetrator’s alcohol consumption did not exert any influence on participants’ assessment of responsibility. Also consistent with previous research (notably the 1998 study by Schuller and Wall), participants viewed the extremely intoxicated victim as being less sexually inhibited (Wall & Schuller, 2006).

Whether or not the victim resisted has been found to influence attributions of blame in sexual assault (Clark & Lewis, 1977). Researchers found that only 6% of participants in their sample of college students identified the incident as rape if the victim did not resist when forced to choose the best term to label a situation depicting forced intercourse. Meanwhile, 25% did so when the victim made verbal resistance. The remaining 53% of the sample labelled the incident as rape if the victim resisted physically. This led researchers to conclude that the stronger and explicit the resistance, the more likely observers would identify the situation as a sexual assault (Hannon, Kuntz, Van Laar, Williams & Hall, 1996).

Kopper (1996) also found that observers’ perception of victim resistance played a role in judgments regarding rape. Specifically, the time of initial resistance was significantly associated with blame attributed to the victim, assailant, and situation post-assault. When the time of resistance occurred early in the encounter, participants held the victim less responsible. In addition, they were more likely to believe that the assault was unavoidable. The result might explain as to why acquaintance rape is not as widely reported. Given that the victim knows her assailant in these assaults, she might feel, as well as those around her, to blame herself. This might be particularly true should the victim not resist right away (Mynatt & Allgeier, 1990).
Whether or not the victim possessed a condom was studied in order to assess as to how that might impact other people’s judgment of the situation. The researchers found that participants viewed the female in the scenario with the condom as being more sexually available and more willing to engage in sex than the female in the scenario who did not possess a condom. Participants in the condition where the female had a condom were less likely to evaluate what was happening as sexual assault (Hynie, Schuller, & Couperthwaite, 2003).

**Victim characteristics**

Another factor that has been found to affect the attribution of responsibility in rape is the sexual connotativeness of the victim’s behaviour. Specifically, the research has examined whether or not her presentation is consistent with positive gender role identity. These role-specific behaviours, which reflect the view of women as being chaste, wholesome, and not sexually promiscuous, are the result of a dichotomy imposed upon them by society. This is in contrast to those who fail to conform, where these women are aggressive and promiscuous (Conrad, 2006). As discussed in the section reviewing benevolent sexism research, studies that focused on female gender role behaviour have found that transgressions are often viewed negatively. By defying traditional standards of prescribed behaviour, these females are viewed with contempt and wariness (Conrad, 2006; Sibley & Wilson, 2006).

Related to sexual assault research, the literature indicates that if the victim acts in a manner that suggests her sexual availability and interest, observers’ interpretation of the situation will be such that the victim’s role in the attack and that of the perpetrator will be downplayed. Women who engage in behaviours that fail to conform to male dominated hierarchies are seen as deserving of punishment (Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2006). Examples of such behaviour include consensual sexual activity with the perpetrator, previous intimacy with the perpetrator, or allowing the perpetrator to pay for the date (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Littleton, 2001; New York Radical Feminists, 1974).

In a study by Schult and Schneider (1991), the victims’ histories influenced participants’ judgments. They tended to place more blame to rape victims when they
were perceived as possessing characteristics, such as sexual experience, that make them more at-risk for being targets. Under these circumstances, rape survivors are no longer seen as innocent, but as unconsciously cunning or stupid. Thus, observers are able to distinguish different types of responsibility, causal and moral. Causal responsibility implies cause-and-effect between antecedents and consequences, while moral responsibility dictates that a victim contributes to an unfortunate event happening through willing and intentional behaviour. Applied to rape, observers might assess the sexually provocative victim as instigating the behaviour.

Vali and Rizzo (1991) examined perceptions of rape victims among a sample of psychiatrists from the U.S. The results found that victim apparel is an important variable, especially if visibility of intimate areas is shown or suggested. 63% of the participants indicated that revealing clothes contributes to the sexual victimization of young females, while 88% reported that the victim signalled attention from the perpetrator just from the nature of their clothing. Cassidy and Hurrell (1995) studied students and their perceptions of rape based on the victim’s clothing in a series of presented stimuli. The results showed that provocative dress of a date rape victim resulted in a greater likelihood of blame towards the victim (37%) than when the victim was conservatively dressed (4.3%) or when no photograph was presented (5.5%). In addition, there was a greater tendency to justify the assailant’s behaviour when the victim was dressed provocatively (31.5%) than when the victim was conservatively dress (6.9%) or when no photograph was presented (7.3%). Finally, participants were less likely to render judgments that a rape occurred when the victim was dressed provocatively (37%).

In another study of 703 students, the effects of clothing, sex of the subject, amount of money spent, date type, and its perceived similarity to a date rape was studied. Consistent with the literature regarding differences in gender, males in the study were more likely to attribute blame to the victim by indicating that she wanted to have sex and that she led the assailant on. It was theorized that when females do act assertively and lay claim to their power and share dating expenses, they were more likely to experience sexually offensive episodes because they were seen as more liberal and, therefore, more
sexually liberal. However, the victim’s attire was found not to have to contribute to the blame towards the victim (Johnson, 1995).

It should be noted that resistance by the victim as a factor used in considering culpability has been a controversial topic for feminist legal scholars. Sexual assault victim advocates argued that the victim should not be made to risk serious physical injury in order to prove that an assault occurred. Instead, voluntary agreement, verbally or physically, by the victim has been a key feature in recent legislation (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Gager & Schurr, 1976; Lips, 1993). In the 1990s, state jurisdictions in the U.S. were moving toward not requiring evidence that the victim resisted, where the burden of proof was on the victim to establish that she did everything possible to thwart the assault. In Canada, the focus is on two factors: 1) that it was clear that the victim did not consent and 2) that the assailant was aware that the victim did not consent (Department of Justice Canada, 1988).

Individual differences

As indicated earlier, some studies have found individual difference variables that affect rape attributions. The most frequently examined factor that has been explored by researchers is rape myth acceptance. Rape myth acceptance is comprised of a collection of beliefs, such as the belief that women can effectively resist sexual assault or that they possess an unconscious desire to be raped (Burt, 1980). In short, they are used to justify and normalize sexual victimization by blaming the victims (Bohner, Reinhard, Rutz, Sturm, Kerschbaum, & Effler, 1998; Brehm & Kassin, 1996; Kershner, 1996; Lips, 1993; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995; New York Radical Feminists, 1974; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999; Pinzone-Glover, Gidycz, & Jacobs, 1998; Scouting et al., 2004; Xenos & Smith, 2001). The rationale behind these myths is to shift the blame from the assailant to the victim, protecting both individuals and society from confronting sexual assault and its realities (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

One of the first instruments to be drafted to examine attitudes toward rape was the Attitudes Toward Rape Scale (Feild, 1978). In a large factor analytic study of the instrument, Feild found that 50% of the variance was accounted for by eight factors.
These factors included: women’s responsibility for preventing the rape, sex as motivation for rape, severe punishment for rape, victim precipitation for rape, normality of rapists, power as motivation for rape, favourable perception of a woman post-rape, and resistance as woman’s role during rape (Feild, 1978; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

Burt (1980) later created an instrument to assess levels of endorsement of these myths entitled the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS), where higher scores are indicative of greater acceptance. This is the most well known measure in the field. Research on this measure found that the attitudinal component variables were closely correlated with the RMAS. Such variables include traditional sex role stereotypes, interpersonal violence, and adversarial sexual beliefs (Payne et al., 1999; Pinzone-Glover et al., 1998). Studies conducted using this instrument have yielded similar results that Burt originally obtained in her 1980 research, where men were more accepting of these attitudes than women were (Fonow et al., 1992; Jimenez & Abreu, 2003; Kassing & Prieto, 2003; Kopper, 1996; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, 1995).

One of the studies that followed examined college students’ rape myths acceptance. As found in Burt’s 1980 research, there were gender differences. Women generally held fewer false beliefs than the men. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to agree with certain myths, such as woman secretly desires to be raped, and that rape is the same as sex. Moreover, men more often blamed the victim than women did. The researchers characterized the attitudes of the men in the sample as being more controlling (Fonow et al., 1992).

Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1995) studied a sample of 429 undergraduate students in an attempt to separate hostility towards women from adversarial sexual beliefs and condoning interpersonal violence. They found that the association between hostility towards women and rape myths were stronger for men than for women. For the men in the sample, hostility towards women accounted for 12% of the variance in higher scores on the RMAS. The researchers concluded that rape myth acceptance in myth operates as a means for men to justify sexual violence; while for women it acts as a way to disavow personal vulnerability.
In another study of undergraduate students that examined rape myth acceptance using the RMAS (Burt, 1980), women were found to possess lower mean myth acceptance scores. Meanwhile, the mean scores for men were higher. Overall, individuals who had low rape myth acceptance scores were less likely to attribute blame to the victim, hold the perpetrator more responsible, and less convinced that the assault could have been avoided (Kopper, 1996).

Researchers found similar results as well, where men tended to demonstrate greater rape stereotype acceptance, hold more rape-tolerant attitudes, and blame the victim compared to women (Jimenez & Abreu, 2003). When examining the effects of the race of the victim, Caucasian females were more sympathetic and blamed the victim less than their Hispanic counterparts. Latina women tended to possess more negative attitudes toward rape victims and espouse to higher tolerance of rape myths. The researchers surmised the reason for this result stemmed from the fact that Hispanic women might have more traditional sex roles, where men are favoured over women (Jimenez & Abreu, 2003).

Mason, Riger, and Foley (2004) also examined scores on the RMAS (Burt, 1980) in a sample of female undergraduates, where some had been victimized. Consistent with previous research, they found that participants who had high scores on this measure often blamed the victim more and were less likely to report that they believed a rape transpired. This was particularly true of those who identified themselves as victims of date rape ($M = 16.29$) versus non-victims. Victims of stranger rape assigned the least amount of blame to the victim in the scenario.

Another study found a similar relationship between rape myth acceptance and acceptance and expectation of sexual assault (Morry & Winkler, 2001). The RMAS (Burt, 1980) was administered in addition to an acceptance and expectation measure. According to the results, there was a positive correlation between the participants’ scores on the rape myth acceptance measure for acceptance measure and the expectation measure. Individuals who scored high on the rape myth acceptance measure were more
likely than people who scored lower to report that rape was accepted. These participants also indicated that rape was expected (Morry & Winkler, 2001).

In a survey of 183 counsellor trainees in the U.S., it was found that males in the sample were more accepting of rape myths than their female counterparts. Experience in providing therapy to rape clients played a role in whether one endorsed rape myths. Individuals who possessed less experience in this area were more likely to endorse rape myths than those who engaged in prior work with such clients. What concerned the researchers was the fact that on average, the participants did not outright reject certain rape myths, which might be an obstacle in providing treatment to victims of sexual assault (Kassing & Prieto, 2003).

Another factor that has emerged in the attribution literature is the gender of the observer. In an early study, researchers found significant differences between men and women and the way they reacted to stranger and acquaintance rape scenarios. Females in the sample attributed less responsibility to a victim of a stranger rape than males did. From the data, men appeared to devalue the victim of a stranger assault, reducing the perceived seriousness of what happened. The researchers theorized that this result might have something to do with the prevailing idea that females’ sexual behaviour is only allowed in legitimate relationships. Sexual acts that take place during the course of a stranger assault occur with someone who has no established relationship (Tetreault & Barnett, 1987).

Bridges and McGrail (1989) also found that the males in the sample tended to provide higher ratings for the responsibility measures, which were liked to sex role and sexual considerations. Data from Taiwanese males in another study suggested that they were more lenient towards the sexual misconduct of the perpetrator, particularly if he was intoxicated or unattractive (Luo, 2000). Schult and Schneider (1991) found that males in their study assigned more blame to the victim and blamed perpetrator less. As for females, they held the perpetrator as more responsible for what happened compared to their male counterparts.
Xenos and Smith (2001) obtained similar results, using a sample of Australian secondary and university students. Across all presented scenarios, men held the victim more accountable than women. For the clinical vignettes, the total mean scores for the males when presented with all situations that found the female victim responsible were relatively high.

In a study of police officers, researchers found that males were more likely to believe a perpetrator’s claim of innocence than their female counterparts (Schuller & Stewart, 2000). Males were also less likely to believe a victim than females in the sample. Specifically, these officers were more likely to believe that the victim was interested in having sex with the perpetrator, behaved in a sexually provocative manner, and that the victim was possibly lying about what happened. Compared with female officers, male officers were more likely to believe that because of how far along things progressed in the vignette, the perpetrator could not be expected to stop. The researchers also found a significant relationship between the officers’ gender and the likelihood of the perpetrator being charged (Schuller & Stewart, 2000).

Related to rape myth acceptance, women’s gender roles have been examined by research. The studies have demonstrated that people with more traditional views of women see the victim as being more responsible and to blame, wanting sex more, and less damaged by the rape. For example, Luo (2000) noted that the propensity for Taiwanese adolescents to blame the victim appear to reflect an ingrained philosophy in Chinese culture when it comes to sexual violence, where images of male dominance and female passivity act as supports for rape and attitudes that are tolerated. Finally, they see the perpetrator as less culpable (Abrams et al., 2003; Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Littleton, 2001; New York Radical Feminists, 1974; Tetreault & Barnett, 1987; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki, Masser, & Abrams, 2004). As a result, the concept of consent becomes an issue because men and women are socialized in such a manner that fosters inequality. Not surprisingly, this might explain as to why women are reluctant to report sexual assault (Fonow et al., 1992).
Overall, much of the work done in this area has consistently found similar results across studies. For example, men tend to have higher rape myth acceptance according to Burt (1980) measure, Rape Myth Acceptance Scale than women. Men who scored higher on this measure were more likely to blame the victim in presented scenarios. In general, males relative to females have been found to characterize portrayed scenarios less as sexual assault, see the victim as more culpable, blame the perpetrator less, and view rape as justifiable (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1995; Bridges & McGrail, 1989; Lips, 1993; Littleton, 2001; Luo, 2000; Schult & Schneider, 1991; Tetreault & Barnett, 1987; Xenos & Smith, 2001).

Recently, the study of individuals’ preference for social hierarchy as a factor in determining attitudes has attracted interest. Much of this work has been based on Social Dominance theory and the measure that examines people’s attitudes, the Social Dominance Orientation scale (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). The theory stipulates that there are social divisions based on groupings, such as age, race, and gender, where hegemonic groups dominate higher positions of power and justify their privileges by subordinating others through their beliefs and attitudes (Sidanius, 1993). For example, cross-cultural research has consistently provided evidence that ethnic groups with higher status in society often score higher on the SDO. Studies examining gender have also found that on average, men score higher on the SDO than women (Sidanius, Levin, Liu, & Pratto, 2000). In regards to this variable and sexual assault, there is a surprising dearth of research available.

**Need for study**

Due to the fact that victims of sexual assault often interact with many aspects of a criminal justice system that continues to adhere to rape myths, it is no surprise that the statistics are a severe underestimate of the crime. It is important, therefore, to examine how culpability in cases of sexual assault is determined. Given the limited amount of current research on observers deliberating sexual assault cases, it is clear that little is known as to how people make decisions when presented with evidence at trial. Studying
how jurors come to certain conclusions can be generalized because research subjects have
the potential to be jurors (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2004).

While the area of benevolent sexism has been explored recently, there is a limited
amount of research in this area, particularly in examining the attribution of responsibility
in sexual assault. It should be noted that all studies used samples from European
universities. There is no work done in this area, using participants from North America,
where the laws regarding sexual assault might be framed differently. Furthermore, there
has yet to be any research conducted that has examined whether benevolent sexism
impacts the perception that the victim consented to sex. Previous research has collected
information on gender differences in sexism scores. But surprisingly, this work has not
analyzed these results in relation to attribution of blame. Finally, none of the reviewed
studies involved in sexual assault trials have looked at the characteristics of observers and
how they impact decision-making outcomes.

Therefore, further work is needed that provides insight into the aspects that
compel observers to make their assessments of culpability. This research would have
important psycho legal implications. Because acquaintance rape has been found to be
more pervasive than stranger rape, attributions of responsibility are key. Research into
this can illustrate how jurors or laypersons reach different conclusions in these cases. It is
also hoped that better education initiatives will be in place in order to dispel myths about
victims of sexual assault, particularly those who knew their assailant.

Purpose of the study and research questions

The following research is designed to examine how attributions in sexual assault
are made. Specifically, the present study examines laypersons’ judgments of the
responsibility of perpetrators with a focus on male-on-female sexual assaults. This is an
extension of the research conducted by Abrams et al. (2003), Viki et al. (2002), and Viki
et al. (2004) on the attribution of responsibility in cases of sexual assault. This study will
build on previous research in that it investigates the relationship between benevolent
sexism and the attribution of responsibility in an acquaintance rape situation. It also
examines how this construct influences the extent to which blame is attributed to a
perpetrator of sexual assault. This research is innovative in that it examines differences between males and females on a measure of benevolent sexism in relation to attribution of blame. Finally, this study is the first to use a Canadian sample. As noted earlier, previous research using this construct in the attribution of responsibility in sexual assault cases have utilized European participants (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2004). It should be noted that the study was not specifically targeting jurors. Rather, the intent of the research was to ascertain the decision-making process for average people, many of whom could conceivably be asked to serve on a jury.

The following research questions were posed:
1. How does benevolent sexism impact participants’ attributions of blame?
2. Are there gender differences in attributions of blame?
3. Are there gender differences regarding reasons why benevolent sexism might moderate blame?

Hypotheses

On the basis of previous research and theory, it was expected that:
1. People who score high on the benevolent sexism subscale of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) will be more likely to blame the victim for the assault in the acquaintance rape scenario compared to the stranger rape scenario.
2. There will be no differences between high- and low- benevolent sexism participants in attributions of blame in the stranger rape scenario.
3. Males will score higher on the benevolent sexism subscale than females on the ASI.
Chapter Two: Examination of the Perceptions of Sexual Assault Questionnaire

Pilot study

In order to examine overall blame and sexism in a case of sexual assault, a new measure was constructed for this research. Specifically, this original measure was designed to assess the average person’s opinion and how it influences decision-making in court. A pilot study was initially conducted to obtain information for the questionnaire items and to test and eliminate any use items that might be confusing or ambiguous. The researcher was also concerned with ensuring that the directions for completion were easy to answer. Overall, the goal of this phase of the research was to develop questions that potential respondents will interpret consistently, respond to accurately and easily (Dillman, 2000; Litwin, 1995).

Participants

A sample of 20 individuals was recruited to participate in the pilot study. According to DeCoster (2002), using a sample of at least 20 participants should be considered in order to calculate for reliability of a measure. While obtaining additional data would not be detrimental, it would not strongly impact the stability of the findings either. Participants in the first phase of the study were recruited by visiting university classes (with prior permission from the course instructor). The researcher briefly outlined the research, what participation entailed, and provided contact information should the participants be interested. The researcher stressed confidentiality, the voluntary nature of participating and that at any time, they could leave without penalty. The researcher provided coupons for $10 off a meal to a local restaurant to participants to thank them for taking part.

Measure development

For the pilot study, an original measure, designed specifically for this research, was administered. This measure, the Perception of Sexual Assault Questionnaire (PSAQ), was composed of questions and accompanying vignettes that aimed to assess
participants’ opinions of who was responsible for the outcome. The PSAQ is discussed in detail below.

**Perceptions of Sexual Assault Questionnaire**

A self-administered questionnaire, entitled the Perception of Sexual Questionnaire (PSAQ), was developed for this study and administered to the pilot study participants. This measure was composed of thirty closed-ended questions that examined the evaluative and cognitive components of participants’ attitudes towards who was responsible for the sexual assault. The questions were ordered so that the participants would read the least loaded items first and then work their way towards “more serious questions” (Dillman, 2000, p. 234). This was determined by the researcher and a statistical consultant sorting through and organizing the questions.

Items included questions that examine blame, assessment of victim consent, evaluation of perpetrator’s intent to use violence and commit sexual assault, and assessment of the kind of verdict to be rendered. A 7-point Likert response scale was used ranging from 0 (indicated that the respondent does not agree with the statement at all) to 7 (indicated that the respondent completely agrees with the statement). Some items have been adapted from those used in previous work (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki et al., 2004). The total number of items agreed with was taken as a measure of attitudinal strength, where higher scores were indicative of perpetrator blame. Items included in the questionnaire were selected to examine if content validity was established through a review of the PSAQ contents by persons knowledgeable in the field of sexual assault. Other than minor grammatical changes to the items, the content of the questions remained the same. Assessment of items examined relevancy, redundancy, and clarity. Although this is not a scientific measure of the instrument’s accuracy, this method provides an adequate basis on which to build a methodologically rigorous assessment of the questionnaire’s validity (Litwin, 1995).

The most frequent method of measuring the intensity of attitudes is to build an intensity scale into the response categories. Here, the responses not only indicate the direction of evaluation but also the perception of the response that is asked about, and the
certainty or intensity with which it is believed (Dillman, 2000; Sudman & Bradburn, 1982). Moreover, because cases of sexual assault, especially ones where the perpetrator and victim know one another, often involve ambiguities that complicate determining which party is completely responsible. A seven-point Likert scale with ordered categories was employed to address these issues. Such a response format is useful for well-defined concepts for which participants’ evaluation is wanted (Dillman, 2000). In this study, the concept was perception of responsibility. As recommended by Sudman and Bradburn (1982), an odd number of categories were provided in order to reserve a middle or indifferent point for participants who insisted on taking a middle position or who are undecided about the two ends of the continuum.

**Sexual Assault Vignettes**

Vignettes were created to depict sexual assault situations that would be rated for attributions of blame. Two factors were used: victim-assailant relationship and use of alcohol, both of which has been used in previous research (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki et al., 2004), but included the factor of alcohol consumption. For the acquaintance rape vignette, the scenario described a woman who met a friend at a party and invited him back to her apartment. Back at the apartment, she initiates kissing. When the male attempts to undress her, she pushes him away and asks him to stop, however, he does not. For the stranger rape vignette, the scenario described a woman being approached and attacked by a man while walking home after the workday. The vignettes were also differentiated by whether or not alcohol was involved so that there were four types of scenarios: 1) acquaintance rape/alcohol involved, 2) acquaintance rape/no alcohol involved, 3) stranger rape/alcohol involved, and 4) stranger rape/no alcohol involved. These vignettes are included in Appendices A through D.

**Procedures**

The Perceptions of Sexual Assault Questionnaire along with the accompanying scenarios and the demographics questionnaire were administered in a 2 x 2 design. Five people were assigned to the acquaintance rape, alcohol involved scenario, five people were assigned to the acquaintance rape, no alcohol involved scenario, five were assigned
to the stranger, alcohol involved scenario, and finally, the remaining five were assigned to the stranger, no alcohol involved scenario.

The researcher met the participants in a classroom within the department for administration of the measure, informing them that they will have 20 minutes to complete the measure. Prior to any study procedures being implemented, informed consent was obtained for all participants in the pilot study. The researcher then passed out the measures, the vignette, a list of counselling resources, and provide a brief overview of instructions.

Following completion of the questionnaires, the researcher debriefed the participants and solicited suggestions towards improving the measure. Specifically, they were asked to relay in their own words their understanding of a meaning of a question. This was done in order to resolve any possible ambiguity with regard to their comprehension of the questions. They were also asked about the order in which the questions were presented on the PSAQ. This was important because the order of questions have been found to provide a context within which they are answered. The effects of order can influence how participants answer questions, such that when questions have a close substantive relationship to one another, there are logical implications for others (Sudman & Bradburn, 1982).

Participants were also asked for feedback on the presented scenarios. They were only asked for feedback and input on these materials, but not about the answers they provided. The researcher took handwritten notes of these deliberations, but did not record any identifying information about the participants. At the conclusion of Study 1, participants were asked to enclose their completed questionnaires in the manila envelopes provided. The researcher used the qualitative information to implement any necessary changes to the questionnaire and/or vignettes.

All questionnaires were randomly assigned a numerical code for the purposes of data entry. Hard copies of the questionnaires and notes were stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s residence. All information was entered into a password-
protected database (to protect confidentiality and privacy of respondents). In addition, results were reported in aggregate form only so that no individual participants’ responses were used separately.

**Data Analysis**

Because of the small sample collected for this phase of the research, quantitative analyses were not performed for items on the PSAQ. Instead, qualitative feedback was obtained. This was accomplished through an examination of participants’ comments, which assessed the questionnaire items’ clarity and comprehension. Demographic data was entered into and analyzed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were calculated by computing means and standard deviations for integer variables. Frequencies were computed for all interval variables. The purpose of gathering this information was to provide normative data.

**Demographic Information for Study 1**

Twenty students and individuals from the community (14 women, 6 men, mean age = 30.75 years, $SD = 6.58$) volunteered to participate in the pilot study. The majority of the participants identified themselves as being White/Caucasian ($n= 15$), married and living with their spouses ($n= 11$), working full-time ($n= 11$), and not identifying with any organized religion ($n= 9$). In addition, this was a well-educated sample with most reporting that they had some post-secondary education ($n= 14$). Most of the participants also tended to come from high socioeconomic backgrounds, where half indicated that their total family income was above $60,000 per year.

**Results from Study 1**

The small number of participants recruited for this phase of the research allowed for descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis. Participants commented on the ease and clarity of wording, order of items, and time frame of completion. There was no reduction in the number of the questions on the PSAQ. Changes made to individual items on the measure were made and randomization of the order of the question items were performed as a result of the qualitative input obtained from participants.
Qualitative feedback

Participants in Study 1 were allowed the opportunity to meet with the researcher in order to provide qualitative feedback about the measure. Most commented that the format was quick and easy to understand, although one participant suggested a decision tree format for the questionnaire so that the participant can answer yes or no for the first question, ‘Do you believe a rape took place?’ and depending on what the person answer is, they can answer a different set of questions (Yes, a rape happened vs. No, it was consensual sex). However, this individual acknowledged that this would ultimately make the measure more complicated than necessary. Participants also commented on the repetitive nature of some questions. The item that asked, “Do you think the incident could have been avoided in the first place?” and the item that asked, “In your opinion, could all of this been avoided?” were particularly repetitive for participants. One individual told the researcher that both sounded as if they were assessing for the same thing. However, he said he answered them differently. In one case, he felt that the situation could not be avoided at all because there was alcohol in the vignette assigned to him, and people get aroused. He felt that the latter item assessed more personal responsibility. Overall, participants found the measure easy to read, the content appropriate, and order of the questions logical. The item that asked, “Do you think the incident could have been avoided in the first place?” was originally the third question. However, participants suggested that this item should be placed later in the measure.
Chapter Three: Main Study Results

Study 2

This study was designed to address the main research questions examining attribution of blame in sexual assault. Data from this part of the research was also used to conduct principal components and reliability analysis on items from the original measure, the Perceptions of Sexual Assault Questionnaire.

Participants

Two hundred participants were recruited for the main study. Participation was voluntary. Individuals were from the downtown Toronto area, recruited through flyers posted on community bulletin boards at grocery stores and at community centres, as well on online volunteer classifieds. The flyer asked individuals if they are interested in participating in a study about perceptions of sexual assault. Participants were required to be literate in English. Given the sensitive nature of the topic and the explicit content of the vignettes, participants were at least 18 years old. Upon contacting the researcher either by phone or by email, participants were provided with information about the study. Participants were compensated with a small honorarium ($20). For detailed information about the advertisement used for recruitment, please see Appendix J.

Sample size was determined by power analysis (Green, 1991). For this analysis, the alpha level was set at .05, power was set at .8, and the desired effect size to detect was .5, which was a medium-sized effect. Based on eth power analysis, it was determined that 180 people should be recruited for Study 2. To ensure the presence of power in the statistical analyses, 200 participants were recruited for the research. It was hoped that in this sample, substantial numbers of individuals from diverse backgrounds were included. However, there was no guarantee for ensuring this.

Measures

Several measures were used in this study. The measures examined benevolent sexism (Ambivalent Sexism Inventory; Glick & Fiske, 1996), social desirability
(Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding; Paulhus, 1994), social dominance (Social Dominance Orientation; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994), and attribution of blame (Perceptions of Sexual Assault). The use of an anonymous questionnaire encouraged participants to respond honestly about particular items without fear of being judged by others and likely reduced any effects of social desirability on the study results. Another advantage of using self-administered questionnaires is that it allowed individual to complete them at their own pace, encouraging them to take time to comprehend each question and provide thoughtful answers (Dillman, 2000).

**Perceptions of Sexual Assault Questionnaire**

Using qualitative feedback from participant in Study 1, questionnaire items were rewritten and placed in different order, necessitating a revision of this original measure. One item was shifted in the measure (“Do you think the incident could have been avoided in the first place?”) so that it appeared later. As in Study 1, a seven-point Likert scale was used for the questions that examine blame, assessment of victim consent, evaluation of perpetrator’s intent to use violence and commit sexual assault, and assessment of the kind of verdict to be rendered, where is 0 indicated that the respondent does not agree with the statement at all and 7 indicated that the respondent completely agrees with the statement. Some items have been adapted from those used in previous work (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki et al., 2004). Following reverse scoring of some questions, the items were added together to comprise a score, where higher scores were indicative of perpetrator blame. Principal component analysis results indicated that a one-factor solution, blame, was the best for fit items on this measure. Reliability for this measure was found to be high, $\alpha = .93$, indicating some redundancy in the items and further lending support to a one-factor solution. More information about the principal components and reliability analyses can be located in this chapter.

**Sexual Assault Vignettes**

The vignettes used in the pilot study were also used in the main study. Participants also provided their comments regarding the scenarios. Most expressed that the depiction of the event in a police report made the presentation neutral, which they felt
placed the onus on them to determine responsibility. One participant advised the researcher to take out a sentence about the victim sitting up immediately after the assault, which sounded awkward in the sequence of events. Other than this modification, no changes were made following pilot-testing.

Balance Inventory of Desirable Responding Scale, Version 6 (BIDR, Paulhus, 1994)

In order to check for social desirability, the BIDR (Paulhus, 1994) was added to the questionnaire. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with statements referring to different types of socially desirable behaviours on a 7-point scale (1 = not true, 7 = very true). The items were presented as propositions. Once certain items were reverse scored, a social desirability score was calculated by adding one point for each extreme response (either a six or seven). Therefore, scores for this measure ranged from 0 to 20, with higher scores indicating a stronger tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner (Paulhus, 1994).

The BIDR measured two different aspects of the impression management spectrum: Impression Management (IM) and Self-deceptive Enhancement (SDE). The scale examined the tendency to deliberately over-report desirable behaviours and under-report behaviours that are undesirable. SDE represented the tendency to provide overly positive reports, and differs from IM in that respondents actually believe their positive SDE reports. Typical Cronbach’s alphas for each of these subscales were .67-.77 for SDE and .77-.85 for IM (Paulhus, 1994; Paulhus & Reid, 1995). Research using this measure in rape attribution research has demonstrated that IM scale had significant correlations with the composite measures and the ASI (all ps < .01). This particular scale was also a factor in regression analyses assessing for blame, where researchers controlled for its effects in order to examine interaction effects between blame and certain types of sexism (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki, Chiromo, & Abrams, 2006).

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI, Glick & Fiske, 1996)

Glick and Fiske (1996) created the ASI to distinguish between two models of sexism, benevolent and hostile. The use of this measure in rape studies has been
discussed previously. Benevolent sexism is a more socially acceptable form of gender 
inequality justification. The instrument measured the three subcomponents of benevolent 
sexism: dominant and protective sexism, complementary and competitive gender 
differentiation, hostile and intimate heterosexuality. Consisting of 22 items, there were 
two 11-item subscales, Hostile sexism and Benevolent sexism. The ASI was made up of 
statements concerning male-female relationships, which subjects have to indicate their 
agreement on a five-point, Likert scale, where 0 indicates that the person disagrees 
strongly and 4 indicates that the person agrees strongly. Hostile and benevolent sexism 
sections were equally weighted by averaging the scores for all items after reverse-
scoring, although it should be noted that the subscales could also be calculated separately. 
Meanwhile, the ASI total score was based on averaging all of the items on the measure. 
Higher scores were indicative of sexist responses (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & 
Zhu, 1997; Glick & Fiske, 1996).

The total score and averages provided good alpha coefficients. The Cronbach 
alphas for the three subscales are as follows: .89 for hostile sexism, .81 for benevolent 
sexism, and .90 for the total ASI score (Glick et al., 1997). Viki et al. (2004) found the 
internal consistencies to be .90 for hostile sexism and .81 for benevolent sexism. In 
addition, the total ASI score correlated well with the Attitudes Toward Women’s Scale 
(Spence & Helmreich, 1972), and with the Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1980). 
Women in the study responded in such a manner that indicated they accepted the 
prevailing beliefs, or that they considered the hostile aspects of sexism while being aware 
of benevolent sexism should they reject traditional roles. Men, on the other hand, tended 
to obtain higher scores on the benevolent sexism subscales, where the belief of 
dominating women is veiled (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO₆) Scale (Pratto et al., 1994)

The Social Dominance Orientation (SDO₆) scale was based on the premise that 
individuals prefer unequal relationships between groups of people (Pratto et al., 1994). 
The measure contained 15 items and is made up of statements that refer to hierarchical 
group relations (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius et al., 2000). Respondents were asked to
indicate on a scale from 1 to 7 regarding the extent to which they agree with each statement. Eight of the items were worded to reflect social dominance preferences. One example was written as, "Inferior groups should stay in their place." Meanwhile, the other eight items reflect equality preferences. An example of an item that falls into this category was, "Group equality should be our ideal." Such items were reverse scored. Item ratings were averaged to calculate an overall SDO score, where higher scores represent higher levels of SDO. Internal consistency has been assessed as good, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .87 (Pratto, Lemieux, Glasford, & Henry, 2003).

It has been found that people who were high in SDO prefer views that strengthen status hierarchies, contrasting against people who are low in SDO. These individuals preferred ideologies and policies that serve to weaken status hierarchies. SDO was therefore an individual difference variable that predicts a person's attitude toward several ideologies and social policies regarding intergroup relations. Research has also found moderate to strong relations between SDO and sexism (Pratto et al., 1994). Christopher and Mull (2006) found that the measure positively correlated with hostile sexism ($r = 0.46, p < 0.001$) and benevolent sexism ($r = 0.45, p < 0.001$).

Demographic Characteristics

The last section of the questionnaire gathered demographic information on participants. Items included age, gender, marital status, racial/ethnic background, and level of education in order to examine the relationships between these variables and the ones examined in the hypotheses.

Design

This study used of a 2 x 2 between-subjects design. The independent variable was the type of rape (acquaintance rape, alcohol involved scenario; acquaintance rape, no alcohol involved scenario; stranger, alcohol involved scenario; and stranger, no alcohol involved scenario), while the dependent variable was perpetrator blame. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. Covariates to be included in the multivariate analyses included gender, marital status, and educational background.
Procedures

Participants were met on an individual basis, in a university classroom in order to administer the questionnaires and to give a brief overview of instructions. Prior to the start of survey administration, information sheets, pertaining to the study procedures, and a list of counselling resources were passed out. Contact information for the researcher was also included in the event anyone has questions about the study. To ensure the privacy of responses, manila envelopes were provided for respondents to place their completed instruments in. Participants had 60 minutes to finish the questionnaire, which included one of the four vignettes.

Following this phase of data collection, all questionnaires were randomly assigned a numerical code for the purposes of data entry. Hard copies of the questionnaire results were stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s residence. All information was entered into a password-protected database in order to protect confidentiality and privacy of respondents. In addition, results were reported in aggregate form only so that no individual participants’ responses were used separately or identifiable in any way.

Data Analysis

As in Study 1, data was entered into and analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were calculated by computing means and standard deviations for integer variables, such as age. Frequencies were then computed for interval variables, such as gender. Correlational analyses were also performed among all the measures used in this study, as well as between gender and benevolent sexism in order to assess for multicollinearity.

In addition, the items were subjected to initial internal consistency analysis. This procedure is a commonly used psychometric measure in assessing survey instruments and scales. Internal consistency indicates how well different items measure the same issue (Litwin, 1995). Acceptable internal consistency alphas have been found to be 0.6 while any values less than 0.2 indicate poor fit. Items with Cronbach’s alpha values of 0.8
demonstrate redundancy (Green & Salkind, 2005). The analysis also revealed there were items that did not correlate well, based on their low corrected item total correlation values.

Principal components analysis procedures were employed for the Perceptions of Sexual Assault Questionnaire-Revised. To examine the dimensionality of the measure, this mode of analysis was used since it is also a data reduction technique. In other words, the ultimate objective of the analyses was to determine the number of common factors required to account for the pattern of item correlations, which is better served through principal components analysis (Crocker & Algina, 1986; Hambleton, Swaminathan, & Rogers, 1991). The analyses performed used 0.4 as the criterion. While some studies have used values as low as 0.3 to indicate the presence of factors, the researcher decided to use a more stringent value because the measure being analyzed is a new questionnaire. Extraction of factors from a correlational matrix was performed first as well as an assessment of eigenvalues (Green & Salkind, 2005). In this research, analyses of the measure attempted to include only a one-factor solution for blame.

A series of multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVAs) were then performed on the data. Using the General Linear Model procedure provided a multivariate effect size index, which ranges in value from 0 to 1 and indicates the relationship between the factor and the dependent variables (Green & Salkind, 2005). The first MANOVA examined whether there are gender differences regarding why benevolent sexism might moderate assailant blame and victim blame. Gender differences in type of sexual assault (stranger and acquaintance) were examined through a two-way MANOVA to see if these factors had any effects on benevolent sexism and culpability. Next, a One-Way Analysis of Variances (ANOVA) was conducted as follow-up analysis for each dependent variable. To control for Type I error, each ANOVA was tested at the .025 level (Green & Salkind, 2005). This procedure was employed to investigate any possible relationship between gender and hostile sexism. Specifically, it examined whether the type of sexual assault yielded any differences when it came to PSAQ scores and benevolent sexism.
To further examine the determinants of blame, two multiple regression analyses were conducted to explore the impact of factors, such as relationship, participant gender, alcohol, and benevolent sexism. Multiple regressions were utilized because these analyses estimate the impact of each variable given the impact of the others. To investigate the nature of the impact of each of these variables, the regression coefficients were divided by the total possible score on the blame measure, providing a percentage. Depending on whether the coefficient was positive or negative, the resulting percentages indicate a decrease or increase in blame score.

In order to evaluate the impact of the type of sexual assault and benevolent sexism on attribution of responsibility, multiple regression analyses were performed. Prior to the analysis, the means for each predictor variable was calculated. Then the variables were centred and an interaction term computed. Centring each of the predictors and their product has been demonstrated to reduce the colinearity between the predictors and the interaction. To centre the predictors, the means for each have to be obtained (McClave, Benson, & Sincich, 2001). For the first step, the type of rape and benevolent sexism were entered. In the second step, the interaction term, the type of rape × benevolent sexism, were entered.

Finally, two multivariate analyses of covariances (MANCOVAs) were conducted on the two dependent variables, benevolent sexism scores and PSAQ scores. The purpose of this analysis was to determine whether social desirability scores on the BIDR (includes both impression management and self-deceptive enhancement scores) and scores on the SDO affected participants’ level of benevolent sexism and attribution of responsibility. The inclusion of social desirability and social dominance orientation scores as covariates was meant to control for differences on these variables. The MANCOVA also allowed the researcher to compare participants based on the following groupings: educational background, gender, and marital status. The first independent variable, educational background, included three levels: up to post-secondary, university, some/complete post-grad. Marital status, the third independent variable, included two levels: single/never married and involved in a relationship. The reason why the levels for educational background and marital status were condensed was because some of the categories were
small, which would leave some cells empty. To rectify this problem, marital categories were collapsed. Finally, it should be noted that income level was not included in the analysis because it was found to be highly correlated with educational background.

Demographic Information for Study 2

Two hundred volunteers (128 women, 72 men) from the Toronto area who participated in this phase of the research were recruited through advertisements posted in community centres and on electronic bulletin boards. They ranged in age from 18 to 66, with a mean age of 30.90 (SD = 11.63). Demographic information collected on this sample indicated that most were single (62%), White (64%), did not identify as being religious (34.5%), well-educated (33% having completed a university degree, 15% pursuing post-university studies, and 16% having some or completed graduate education). The majority of participants were making under $15,000 a year. See Table 1 for more detailed information.
Table 1: Study 2 participant demographics

\( (N = 200) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single/Never been married</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged/Committed in relationship</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married, living with spouse</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic and racial affiliation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious affiliation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University graduate</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/Medical school/Law school</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some post-college education</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In school (either working full-time or part-time)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the Perception of Sexual Assault Questionnaire

After reverse-scoring items on the PSAQ so that high scores consistently represented higher perpetrator blame, the researcher examined the spread of the data through measures of dispersion (means and standard deviations) for each question. Items subjected to reverse-scaling were worded so that higher scores indicated participants finding the victim at fault and consequently, needed to be reverse-scaled before the PSAQ scores could be calculated. Overall, there appeared to be a lack of normality with the data where participants rated the assailant as primarily responsible, were less sympathetic towards him, and viewed him as in control of the situation. Specifically, scores for items that were written to elicit observers’ responses regarding assailant blame were positively skewed, indicating that they felt he was responsible for what transpired in the vignettes. Responses for items that examined victim responsibility were negatively skewed, which also indicated participants perceived the assailant as responsible. The same pattern of responses was found with items that examined perception of control. Questions eliciting observers’ levels of sympathy for the assailant and the victim were subjected to this analysis as well. Item 9, which asked how much participants sympathized with the victim in the vignettes, was skewed positively indicating high levels of sympathy for her. The opposite trend was found for the item 11 (negative skewed), which asked how much one sympathized with the assailant. For detailed information about the descriptive analysis for the 30 items on the PSAQ, please see Table 2.
Table 2: Descriptive information for the PSAQ items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q 1 (Do you think Tom had control over what happened?)</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 2 (Do you think Jessica liked her interaction with Tom?)</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 3 (Do you think Tom meant to have the situation turn out the way it did?)</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 4 (Do you think Jessica was being too forward?)</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 5 (Are you convinced that Jessica meant to have sex with Tom?)</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 6 (Do you think Jessica had control over the situation?)</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 7 (Should Tom have expected Jessica to have sex with him?)</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 8 (Was Tom’s response reasonable given Jessica’s behaviour?)</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 9 (How much do you sympathize with Jessica?)</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 10 (Do you think Jessica <em>should</em> have done more to prevent the situation from taking place?)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 11 (How much do you sympathize with Tom?)</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 12 (Do you think Tom was in total control?)</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q_13 (Do you think Jessica <em>could</em> have done more to prevent the situation?)</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_14 (How much do you believe that Tom meant to have sex with Jessica?)</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_15 (How much do you think Tom was led on by Jessica?)</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_16 (Do you believe Jessica’s whereabouts contributed to what happened?)</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_17 (How much should Tom hold himself responsible for what happened?)</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_18 (Do you think Jessica “got what she deserved”?)</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_19 (Should Tom have done more to prevent the situation from taking place?)</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_20 (In your opinion, <em>could</em> all of this been avoided?)</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_21 (Do you think Tom meant to hurt Jessica?)</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_22 (Do you think Tom is at fault for what happened?)</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_23 (How much do you believe Tom used violence in doing what he did?)</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_24 (How much should Jessica hold herself responsible for what happened?)</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_25 (Do you think Tom meant for things to turn out the way they did?)</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_26 (How much do you believe Tom meant to force Jessica?)</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q_27 (Do you think Jessica “teased” Tom?)</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q 28 (Do you think the incident <em>could</em> have been avoided in the first place?)</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 29 (Do you think Tom <em>could</em> have done more to prevent the situation from having taken place?)</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 30 (Do you believe Tom committed sexual assault?)</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*R* indicates item was reverse-scored

Principal components analysis was conducted with all 30 items. Although the scree plot indicated the possibility of two factors as seen in Figure 1, there was strong evidence for a one-factor solution. The eigenvalue for the first factor was six times more (12.75) than the eigenvalue for the proposed second factor (2.10). The loadings of the items were on the one dominant factor, which was responsible for 42.5% of the variable variance. Given the eigenvalues and the loading dominance of the first factor, the second factor was not interpretable. Thus, a one-factor solution was forced on the items for the principal components analysis. Because a one-factor solution was applied, no rotation of factors was performed.
Table 3 provides the item loadings from the commonalities analysis, where only two questions had low loadings. These questions were questions 14 (“How much do you believe that Tom meant to have sex with Jessica?”), 20 (“In your opinion, could all of this been avoided?”), and 28 (“Do you think the incident could have been avoided in the first place?”). Questions 20 and 28 were also found to have negative loading values.
Table 3: *Principal component analysis matrix using a one-factor solution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor (Blame)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q 1 (Do you think Tom had control over what happened?)</td>
<td>.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 2 (Do you think Jessica liked her interaction with Tom?)</td>
<td>.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 3 (Do you think Tom meant to have the situation turn out the way it did?)</td>
<td>.446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 4 (Do you think Jessica was being too forward?)</td>
<td>.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 5 (Are you convinced that Jessica meant to have sex with Tom?)</td>
<td>.788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 6 (Do you think Jessica had control over the situation?)</td>
<td>.702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 7 (Should Tom have expected Jessica to have sex with him?)</td>
<td>.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 8 (Was Tom’s response reasonable given Jessica’s behaviour?)</td>
<td>.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 9 (How much do you sympathize with Jessica?)</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 10 (Do you think Jessica <em>should</em> have done more to prevent the situation from taking place?)</td>
<td>.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 11 (How much do you sympathize with Tom?)</td>
<td>.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 12 (Do you think Tom was in total control?)</td>
<td>.463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 13 (Do you think Jessica <em>could</em> have done more to prevent the situation?)</td>
<td>.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 14 (How much do you believe that Tom meant to have sex with Jessica?)</td>
<td>.185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor (Blame)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q 15 (How much do you think Tom was led on by Jessica?) R</td>
<td>.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 16 (Do you believe Jessica’s whereabouts contributed to what happened?) R</td>
<td>.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 17 (How much should Tom hold himself responsible for what happened?)</td>
<td>.683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 18 (Do you think Jessica “got what she deserved“?) R</td>
<td>.655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 19 (Should Tom have done more to prevent the situation from taking place?)</td>
<td>.469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 20 (In your opinion, could all of this been avoided?)</td>
<td>-.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 21 (Do you think Tom meant to hurt Jessica?)</td>
<td>.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 22 (Do you think Tom is at fault for what happened?)</td>
<td>.808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 23 (How much do you believe Tom used violence in doing what he did?)</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 24 (How much should Jessica hold herself responsible for what happened?) R</td>
<td>.877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 25 (Do you think Tom meant for things to turn out the way they did?)</td>
<td>.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 26 (How much do you believe Tom meant to force Jessica?)</td>
<td>.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 27 (Do you think Jessica “teased” Tom?) R</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 28 (Do you think the incident could have been avoided in the first place?)</td>
<td>-.471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Further evidence of a one-factor solution was obtained from internal consistency analysis, which examined reliability of the measure. The coefficient alpha was found to be .93 from all vignette conditions. Coefficient alphas were also computed for each vignette condition, where all were found to be .93. The high level of coefficient alpha indicates redundancy amongst the items on the PSAQ. However, there were questions that differed from the overall measure. There were a few items that were low on the item total correlations, and these included questions 14 (“How much do you believe that Tom meant to have sex with Jessica?”, \( r = .16 \)), 20 (“In your opinion, could all of this been avoided?”, \( r = -.18 \)), and 28 (“Do you think the incident could have been avoided in the first place?”, \( r = -.42 \)). As reported in the previous paragraph, these same three items obtained low loadings in the principal components analysis.

Descriptive information was then obtained for the PSAQ. After reverse-scaling items, all 30 items were averaged in order to create a total score. The scores on this measure ranged from 43 to 159, where higher scores indicate that participants hold the assailant responsible. The average score on the measure was found to be 119.9 with a standard deviation of 23.35.

**Preliminary Analyses**

The internal consistencies of the other measures were acceptable to good (IM scale: \( \alpha = .61 \); SDE scale: \( \alpha = .51 \); Benevolent Sexism: \( \alpha = .86 \); Hostile Sexism: \( \alpha = .89 \); SDO: \( \alpha = .90 \)). Correlational analysis revealed significant relationships among most of the measures. As seen in Table 5, the weakest correlations were between scores on social desirability measure and scores on the PSAQ, ASI, and the SDO. There were negative
correlations between the questionnaire created specifically for this research and benevolent sexism scores, hostile sexism scores, and social dominance scores.

Table 4: Correlations among measures of blame, benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, social desirability, and social dominance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Blame (PSAQ)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Benevolent sexism</td>
<td>-.296**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hostile sexism</td>
<td>-.552**</td>
<td>.631**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Impression management</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-deceptive enhancement</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.358**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social dominance</td>
<td>-.336**</td>
<td>.355**</td>
<td>.517**</td>
<td>.189**</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01

Factors Involved in Blame

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine the effect of gender on benevolent sexism and blame (PSAQ scores). No significant differences were found among men and women on the dependent measures, Wilks’s Λ = .978, F(2, 197) = 2.24, n.s. Table 6 displays the means and the standard deviations on the dependent variables for males and females.

Table 5: Means and standard deviations on the dependent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Blame</th>
<th></th>
<th>Benevolent sexism</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A three-way MANOVA was carried out to examine the effect of the participants’
gender, the presence of alcohol, and the relationship between the assailant and victim on
the assessment of responsibility and on benevolent sexism scores. Significant differences
were found in regards to the assailant-victim relationship, Wilks’s Λ = .767, $F(2, 191) = 29, p < .01$. The multivariate $\eta^2$ based on the Wilks’s Λ was strong, 233. A follow-up
ANOVA revealed that this was significant for scores on blame, $F(1, 192) = 42.1, p < .01$, but not for benevolent sexism scores, $F(1, 192) = 1.94, n.s$. Table 7 provides the means
and standard deviations for attribution of responsibility scores by gender, relationship
condition, and presence of alcohol. On average, males found the assailant less culpable
than females no matter the relationship condition or whether or not alcohol was involved.

Table 6: *Means and standard deviations on blame scores by gender, relationship condition, and presence of alcohol*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Blame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance Relationship condition</td>
<td>Presence of alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>Alcohol present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>No alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>Alcohol present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>No alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>Alcohol present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>No alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>Alcohol present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>No alcohol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were also differences when taking into account the presence of alcohol in the scenarios. However, the differences were not as significant, Wilks’s $\Lambda = .972$, $F(2, 191) = 29, p = .065$. Follow-up tests to the MANOVA also revealed marginally significant differences for both blame, $F(1, 192) = 3.32, p = .070$, and benevolent sexism scores, $F(1, 192) = 4.21, p = .041$. Similar findings were obtained for participants’ gender, confirming the results from the previously conducted one-way MANOVA. Table 8 displays average benevolent sexism scores and standard deviations for the three factors. Although male participants obtained higher benevolent sexism scores for all vignette conditions than female participants, these differences in scores were not statistically significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Benevolent sexism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Relationship condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two regression models were developed to examine the impact of alcohol, participant gender, relationship between the victim and assailant, and benevolent sexism on blame scores. The first model included the impact of the acquaintance relationship.
scenario, the presence of alcohol, and the participant being a male. As seen in Figure 1, the fact that the victim knew the assailant was related to more than a 10% decrease in blame scores and was statistically significant. If the participant was a male, there was less than a 4% decline in blame scores, which was significant ($p = .046$). The presence of alcohol was also associated with a less than 4% decline in blame but fell just short of being statistically significant ($p = .054$). The second model included benevolent sexism in the regression. When this was done, the acquaintance relationship increased the decline in blame score (almost 12%), retaining significance. However, both gender and alcohol were less of an impact and also declined in statistical significance.

Figure 2: Determinants of Blame

A MANCOVA was performed on the two dependent variables, benevolent sexism and PSAQ scores, with BIDR scores (both impression management and self-deceptive enhancement scores) included as the covariate. As stated earlier, there were three independent variables included in the analysis: educational background, gender, and marital status. Table 8 provides the means and standard deviations obtained from this
analysis. A preliminary analysis evaluating the homogeneity-of-slopes revealed no violation of this assumption. The test of the covariates evaluated the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variables. This relationship was not significant for the impression management scores on the BIDR for benevolent sexism scores, $F(1, 184) = .270$, n.s., and for PSAQ scores, $F(1, 184) = 1.55$, n.s. The same was true for self-deceptive enhancement scores on the BIDR for benevolent sexism scores, $F(1, 184) = .047$, n.s., and for PSAQ scores, $F(1, 184) = .004$, n.s. The results of the MANCOVA indicated that there were no significant interactions of educational background, gender, and marital status for benevolent sexism scores ($F_{2, 184} = .943$, n.s.) and for scores on the PSAQ ($F_{2, 184} = .264$, n.s.). As seen in Table 9, the main effects for educational background, gender, and marital status were not significant.

Table 8: Benevolent Sexism and PSAQ Mean Scores and Standard Deviations as Functions of Educational Background, Marital Status, and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Benevolent Sexism</th>
<th>Blame (PSAQ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to Some Post-secondary ($n = 72$)</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single ($n = 56$)</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females ($n = 37$)</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males ($n = 19$)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Benevolent Sexism</th>
<th>Blame (PSAQ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a relationship ($n = 16$)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females ($n = 12$)</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males ($n = 4$)</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University ($n = 65$)</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single ($n = 39$)</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females ($n = 26$)</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males ($n = 13$)</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a relationship ($n = 26$)</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females ($n = 14$)</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males ($n = 12$)</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some/Complete Post-grad ($n = 61$)</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single ($n = 40$)</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females ($n = 26$)</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males ($n = 14$)</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a relationship ($n = 21$)</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females ($n = 11$)</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males ($n = 10$)</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9: Multivariate Analysis of Covariance of Benevolent Sexism and PSAQ Scores as Functions of Educational Background, Gender, and Marital Status, BIDR scores as Covariates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Impression Management</th>
<th>Self-deceptive Enhancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benevolent sexism</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.917</td>
<td>.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>.604</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame (PSAQ)</td>
<td>.844</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.994</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>.723</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.949</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When social dominance orientation scores were included as the covariate, the resulting test of the covariate (which evaluates the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variables) was significant, $F(1, 185) = 16.53, p < .001$ for benevolent sexism scores, and $F(1, 185) = 18.45, p < .001$ for scores on the PSAQ. The covariate accounted for about 8% of the variance for benevolent sexism scores, and for about 9% for PSAQ scores. However, the MANCOVA itself for educational background, gender, and marital status on PSAQ and benevolent sexism scores was not significant, which can be seen in Table 10. Given that no significant findings were discovered as a result of the MANOVAs, post-hoc analyses were not performed.
Table 10: Multivariate Analysis of Covariance of Benevolent Sexism and PSAQ Scores as Functions of Educational Background, Gender, and Marital Status, SDO score as Covariate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Social dominance order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolent sexism</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.367</td>
<td>.418</td>
<td>.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame (PSAQ)</td>
<td>.315</td>
<td>.731</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** $p < .001$

**Hypothesis One**

The first hypothesis proposed that individuals who have high benevolent sexism scores will be more likely to blame the victim in the acquaintance rape scenario compared to the stranger rape scenario. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate whether or not this was true. In the first step, the type of rape and benevolent sexism were entered while in the second type, the interaction term was added. There was a significant main effect for the type of rape ($\beta = -19.6$, $t = 5.13$, $p < .01$) and for benevolent sexism scores ($\beta = -6.81$, $t = 2.69$, $p < .01$), which supports the hypothesis and previous research findings.

**Hypothesis Two**

This hypothesis proposed there will be no differences between high- and low-benevolent sexism subjects when presented with the stranger rape scenario. The findings from the hierarchical regression performed for the first hypothesis will be used to explain. When the stranger rape scenario was analyzed, it was found that benevolent sexism continued to have an impact on blame, though not as much as in the case of acquaintance
rape ($\beta = -7.69$, $t = -2.06$, $p < .05$). Given this, the data does not support this hypothesis and contradicts previous research.

*Hypothesis Three*

The final hypothesis proposed that males will score higher on the benevolent sexism subscale than female participants. Results from the one-way MANOVA conducted that examined possible gender differences on the dependent measures were used. As seen in Table 7, men obtained higher average benevolent scores ($M = 1.69$, $SD = .85$) than women ($M = 1.43$, $SD = .90$). However, as indicated earlier in this chapter, the differences between men and women were not statistically significant, falling outside of a .05 level ($p = .052$).
Chapter Four: Discussion

The results of this study demonstrated that observers perceive stranger and acquaintance rape differently. This is particularly evident when they are asked about their perceptions of responsibility. Moreover, it appeared that situational factors, specifically the behaviour of the victim prior to the assault, and a psychological variable both impacted individuals’ attributions of blame in a case of sexual assault.

A number of important findings emerged from the main study. Results indicated that participants were making their decisions about responsibility in cases of sexual assault based on perceptions of the victim’s behaviour. Specifically, they appeared to be using their own belief system regarding how women should conduct themselves and applying these standards for the victim when making their decisions. Given that the Criminal Code of Canada does not distinguish between stranger versus acquaintance rape, it appears that participants are formulating their judgments on situational factors when deliberating cases of sexual assault. As seen from the main effects analyses in this study, what was significant in determining blame was the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. On average, men and women in the acquaintance rape conditions tended to find the assailant less responsible (as evident from mean PSAQ scores) than those in the stranger rape conditions. This was further supported by a regression model, where the acquaintance rape scenario was associated with 10-12% decrease in likelihood that a participant would find the assailant responsible.

Benevolent sexism appears to be a relatively static trait but the degree to which one endorses these views seems to be influenced by certain situations. This finding requires further research. In this study, the main effects analyses revealed were some statistical significance once alcohol was included. Average benevolent scores were higher for those who read vignettes where the victim had been drinking. Results indicate that people hold certain beliefs regarding women and how they ought to behave. In light of the current study’s findings and supporting findings from previous studies (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Schuller & Wall, 1998; Wall & Schuller, 2006), these participants might believe that good and respectable women do not drink. Those that do are perceived as
less credible and to an extent, responsible for what happened to them because of decreased self-regulation. In a practical sense, this finding is of particular importance because it might influence the manner in which attorneys adjust their screening questions for potential jurors in the future. For example, one might make an inquiry regarding women and alcohol, asking a possible juror whether he or she thinks that “good” women drink excessively. Moreover, benevolent sexism in this current study appears to be a factor in determining how individuals assign blame in a case of sexual assault. In the second regression model developed for this research, this construct was related to an over 4% decline in blame scores (reduced likelihood of finding the perpetrator responsible) and absorbed the impact of other factors, such as alcohol and participant gender.

Although males in the study tended to obtain higher benevolent sexism scores than females for all vignette conditions, these differences in scores were not significant. Thus, it appeared that gender was not significant on scores of benevolent sexism in this study. This is in contrast to previous research, which found significant differences between men and women for scores of benevolent sexism, where men score higher than women (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick et al., 2000; Viki et al., 2003). One might draw at least three interpretations from this result. Either men in the study were relatively egalitarian and thus, did not completely endorse benevolent sexist views, or women were quite traditional in how they viewed themselves and others, which was reflected in higher benevolent sexism scores. In regards to the latter, Glick and Fiske (1996), and Killianski and Rudman (1998) proposed that women, while rejecting hostile sexism, might unconsciously adopt the prevailing societal views about themselves reflected in benevolent sexism. Finally, it is possible that the vignettes used in this study did not elicit any strong views.

On average, men in the study tended to blame the assailant less than females in this study. These findings have been found in previous research (Viki et al., 2003; Yuo, 2000), where male participants assigned lower scores of blame in sexual assault scenarios than female participants. In this study, the differences were more striking when analyzing the acquaintance rape scenarios, which reached a level of statistical significance (less than 1%). Men were less likely to find the perpetrator responsible for what happened than
women. Though not as significant, alcohol was also important in the differences regarding how men and women responded. When this factor was included in the analyses, the average blame score for men was much lower than for women in the study. It is possible that women rated the assailant as being more responsible due to their stronger perception of vulnerability of sexual victimization than men.

However, when the victim knew the assailant and had been drinking prior to the assault, women scored higher on benevolent sexism than men. The latter finding is particularly interesting because this trend appears to be a self-protective response on the part of these women to situations they might view as threatening. The vignettes used in this study might have elicited some beliefs that they are vulnerable to such an attack. To lessen any perceived similarities between themselves and the victim in the scenario, women in the study might endorse views that place themselves as beneficiaries of protective attitudes afforded to them by benevolent sexism. This is in line with the basic tenets of Lerner’s just world theory (1980), where observers hold victims of crime as being somewhat responsible in order to reduce any perception that something similar would happen to them. Researchers have extended the concept of benevolent sexism as an extension of this theory, particularly in sexual aggression studies (Abrams et al., 2003; Masser, Harper, & McKimmie, 2007; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2004).

Analyses were also conducted to examine the impact of social desirability on scores for blame and benevolent sexism. In previous studies, social desirability was not a factor on scores of blame (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2006) and on scores of benevolent sexism (Abrams et al., 2003; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2006). In this study, social desirability (using both impression management and self-deceptive enhancement scores) was found not to be significant. Social dominance orientation scores were also examined in relation to scores for blame and benevolent sexism. To date, this is the first study that has included this variable in research focusing on rape and benevolent sexism. Results from this analysis demonstrated that this variable was not significant in relation to the two dependent variables. That is, preference for social hierarchy does not appear to be related to attribution of responsibility or to benevolent sexism. Although gender has been included
in investigations for interaction effects on scores of blame and benevolent sexism (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2004; Viki et al., 2006), the present study was the first to include marital status and educational background as possible factors. Findings indicated that none of these variables demonstrated any significant interaction effects on both dependent variables.

The hypothesis that individuals who obtain high benevolent sexism scores would blame the victim in the acquaintance rape scenario was supported by the results of this study. Analyses revealed that when the victim knew the assailant, participants blamed him less for the assault. Moreover, the analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship (less than 1% significance level). This was consistent with results from previous research examining rape attribution through vignettes and benevolent sexism by Viki et al. (2004) and Abrams et al. (2003), which found that benevolent sexism was a significant moderator of finding the perpetrator less responsible.

In the acquaintance rape condition, the victim was portrayed as the initial aggressor. Given that her behaviour violated gender role norms, the victim in this scenario might not be afforded the same protections outlined by benevolent sexist beliefs. Because the victim initiated some sexual contact with the perpetrator, she might have been seen as consenting to what happened. By excusing his actions, high benevolent sexist participants might condone the attack and could justify the outcome by citing the victim’s inappropriate behaviour (inviting the assailant back to her apartment, being the first to be sexually aggressive in the situation), shifting the blame onto her as a result.

Although the second hypothesis was not confirmed, analyses revealed an important finding for the current study. In contrast to previous research (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2004), the current study found that benevolent sexism continued to impact the degree of blame towards the victim in the stranger rape scenario. That is, individuals who were assigned to the stranger rape condition and who scored high on benevolent sexism did not attribute as much blame towards the assailant. Although the impact was not as much as in the case of the acquaintance rape, the relationship was significant at the 5% level.
Unlike the acquaintance rape scenario, the stranger rape victim was not portrayed as violating gender norms. Nonetheless, similar to the acquaintance rape condition, individuals who scored high on benevolent sexism and who were assigned to the stranger rape condition might have perceived the victim as behaving inappropriately. In the case of the stranger rape vignette, participants in this research viewed the victim as instigating the attack by walking home alone late at night. This was evident during the debriefing phase of the main study, where some participants approached the researcher and explained how they saw the victim as responsible for what happened. One participant even commented, “What was she doing walking at home at that hour? Didn’t she know she was looking for trouble?”

It appears that high benevolent sexist participants in this study struggled to find an explanation for the attack in order to maintain their belief in a just world and protect their own sense of vulnerability. By deciding that only certain women invite sexual aggression and violence, these individuals are implicitly stating that rape only occurs when the victim behaves appropriately according to traditional gender norms (Abrams et al., 2003). In the case of the acquaintance rape scenario, the victim was portrayed as being sexually forward with the assailant, asking him back to her apartment and initiating some kissing before withdrawing her consent. High benevolent sexist individuals might perceive her as violating conventional gender roles because they view good women as being chaste and modest in regards to sexual activities (Abrams et al., 2003; Masser et al., 2007; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2004). In the case of the stranger rape scenario, the victim was not portrayed as violating gender role behaviour. However, high benevolent sexists continued to assign some degree of blame towards her for the assault. They might have seen her as acting inappropriately by walking home alone late at night and participating in some conversation with the assailant prior to the rape.

The Perceptions of Sexual Assault Questionnaire

Given that the pilot study of for the Perception of Sexual Assault Questionnaire (PSAQ) focused on a small number of participants (n = 20), qualitative feedback of the measure was obtained and used to make minor revisions prior to the main study. Thus,
the other objective of the main study was to obtain psychometric information. Using the data obtained as part of the study 2, principal components analysis was performed on the 30 items. Results from the analysis supported a one-factor solution, blame, for the measure. That is, items tended to load onto one dominant factor and the variance accounted for by this factor (42.5%) with the exception of three items. Reliability analysis also provided supporting evidence of a one-factor solution where the coefficient alpha was high ($\alpha = .93$), indicating a redundancy among the questions. Descriptive information, obtained through means and standard deviations, indicated that items were skewed, where most participants tended to find the assailant responsible for what happened.

Together, the results appear to demonstrate that the participants responded similarly no matter what vignette condition they were assigned to. This could explain the lack of item differentiation, as evident by the skewed results from the means and standard deviations obtained. These findings could also account for why items seemed to load on one dominant factor. The demographics of the participants themselves could also be a possible reason why there was so little spread in the data for the measure. Despite the researcher’s best efforts to recruit a diverse sample, individuals involved in the study tended to be homogeneous overall (primarily young, White, and earning under $30,000 per year). This could have, in turn, impact the responses on the PSAQ.

*Strengths and weaknesses of the current research*

Relative to the existing literature, there were a number of strengths in this current investigation. This is the first study to utilize a community sample in order to simulate a jury population as closely as possible, where individuals in this study differed in terms of age and education. Previous studies have drawn upon university students as mock jurors. While these individuals might be called upon to serve on a jury, they do not necessarily represent the composition of actual juries, where members often vary in terms of education, age, and socioeconomic status. Another strength of the current study draws from the sample size used. Two hundred individuals participated in the main phase of this
The number of participants assigned to each condition (fifty individuals to each of the four vignettes) was large enough to detect the differences of smaller effect sizes.

The use of vignettes in this type of research has been demonstrated to be a positive asset. Individuals often judge situations based on their own long-standing beliefs (Brehm & Kassin, 1996). By utilizing scenarios that force them to intensely imagine certain aspects of a given situation, it believed that there is a closer approximation of their responses to similar occurrences compared to other methods where people might be asked to provide their opinions based on hypothetical circumstances (Abrams et al., 2003).

There are a number of limitations of this study. Despite the efforts of the researcher, the study involved a fairly homogenous sample. Participants were primarily Caucasian and female, reducing external validity to some degree. The nature of one of the recruitment methods might have been a factor in the sample obtained for this study. About 73% of the participants heard about the research through an electronic bulletin board, which possibly introduced a bias in the results. Many of these individuals were young, unemployed or employed part-time, and earned incomes less than $30,000 per year.

Because the methodology employed self-report, the results might be subjected to the same issues inherent to this type of data collection. It bears to mention that social desirability might have influenced how participants responded to the measures. That is, people who might have held conservative, tradition beliefs in regards to gender and heterosexual relationships might have downplayed their attitudes towards the victim in the vignettes or the degree of their benevolent sexist beliefs.

Finally, further work is needed with the original measure developed for this study, the Perceptions of Sexual Assault-Revised (PSAQ). Analyses assessing for the instrument’s psychometric properties revealed that the distributions of the items were quite skewed depending on whether the question was asking about blame towards the perpetrator or the victim. Future research using this instrument should focus on the
possible overlap of items and the revision of these questions in order to provide a better and more accurate representation of the measure’s factor structure.

Future directions

Given the evidence obtained from this study regarding the role of benevolent sexism’s role in influencing assessments of blame in sexual assault, one might want to examine the pathways in which psychological constructs influence observers’ assessment of blame in cases of sexual assault. Viki et al. (2004) recommended that additional research could examine benevolent sexism in relation to other factors involved in culpability, such as perceived intention to commit rape or perceived victim consent, and how each impact blame towards the assailant and victim. Path analyses could also assist in exploring the interrelatedness of these variables. Analysis could examine judgments regarding legally relevant issues related to criminal responsibility, such as intent or perceptions of consent. Other path analyses could take into account the behaviours of the assailant and victim, and the attribution of responsibility.

Additional work could also focus on examining the source of gender differences in regards to benevolent sexism and why it moderates blame. Previous research (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2004) has consistently found different response patterns between men and women. Similar results were obtained in the current study, although the differences were not statistically significant. Future research should investigate what is behind benevolent sexist beliefs in men and women. This could be achieved through explicitly asking participants why they endorse such attitudes and then compare the responses by gender.

Future studies could also assess whether or not high benevolent sexist men and women are aware that their beliefs are prejudicial. In the only study to examine this issue, Barreto and Ellemers (2005) found that participants who endorsed benevolent sexism did not recognize that their attitudes were sexist. Relative to hostile sexism, benevolent sexism is evaluated as more positive and thus, might not be perceived as harmful. As a result, it often goes unnoticed as contributing to the maintenance of gender inequality in society, and most importantly, unchallenged. Although the current study did not address
this particular issue, it is an important factor to consider especially in the selection of jury members.

Despite the attempt in this study to simulate a jury in order to extend the results into more applied situations, the composition of the sample obtained was rather limited. Future research should utilize participants who are from more diverse backgrounds to determine whether the results from this study can be replicated. In addition, subsequent studies should strive to recreate jury deliberations as closely as possible. This could be achieved through administering the surveys and scenarios in a group setting. Upon completing the measures, participants would then be asked about the processes in which they came to their decision regarding blame.

It is also possible that an immeasurable variable, outside the scope of this study, might have influenced benevolent sexism and blame scores. Despite the inclusion of the Social Dominance Ordinance (SDO) scale, a measure used to examine the extent to which participants endorsed conservative views regarding society and groups, there might have been other factors that could be related with the findings from this study. Future research should attempt to isolate and identify these variables to explore their effects.

**Conclusion**

Several factors such as a pre-existing relationship between the victim and the assailant (Littleton, 2001; Luo, 2000; Schuller and Klippenstine, 2004; Scronce & Corcoran, 1995), the victim’s use of alcohol (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Schuller and Stewart, 2000; Scronce & Corcoran, 1995), and the level of resistance on the part of the victim (Hannon et al., 1996; Kopper, 1996; New York Radical Feminists, 1974) have all been implicated in how people perceive and judge responsibility in sexual assault. Interestingly, all of these factors point to situational factors but do not account for individual differences. Much of this work has been explored through assessing the impact of rape myth acceptance (Bohner et al., 1998; Brehm & Kassin, 1996; Kershner, 1996; Lips, 1993; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995; New York Radical Feminists, 1974; Payne et al., 1999; Pinzone-Glover et al., 1998; Scouting et al., 2004; Xenos & Smith, 2001). The
present study provides support that another variable, benevolent sexism, has a significant relationship with finding the victim more at fault than the assailant.

While research on benevolent sexism is fairly limited given how recent the literature is, there has been consistent evidence that demonstrates the impact of benevolent sexism on how individuals assign blame in sexual assault cases where the victim and the assailant had prior knowledge of one another (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2004; Masser et al., 2007). Although hostile sexism was not examined as a factor in the current study, it has been suggested that this variable be included in analyses despite the fact that previous research (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2004) has not found it to be significantly related to blame. Furthermore, in preliminary analyses examining benevolent sexism and rape types, benevolent sexism was discovered to not only impact blame in the acquaintance rape scenarios, but the stranger rape scenarios as well (B. Masser, personal communication, July 6, 2007), similar to the results obtained in the current study. Additional research should be conducted to determine whether these findings were anomalies when compared to the previous research or if they are indicative of a trend not found by these studies.

Barreto and Ellemers (2005) argued that benevolent sexist beliefs often go unchallenged due to the prosocial appearance of these attitudes. This proves to be problematic because benevolent sexism appears to have an insidious influence within the criminal justice system. Those who have contact with sexual assault victims, such as police officers, judges, and lawyers, are often sceptical of cases involving acquaintance rape (Abrams et al., 2003). This is quite alarming given that the majority of reported assaults are committed by perpetrators who had a prior relationship with the victim. A study by Koss, Dinero, and Seibel (1988) found that 85% of completed rapes involved such cases.

It should be noted that discrimination towards sexual assault victims is not limited to prior relationship or benevolent sexism. Males who have been sexually assaulted often face prejudice when coming forward to report the crime, which is often reflected in the dearth of research. Although the statistics are limited, a study by the Canadian Centre for
Justice Statistics (2003) found that only 8% adult male victims reported what happened to them to the police. The existence of male survivors often challenges how society perceives sex, roles of power, and gender identification, which has often been reflected in community resource responses (Landau, 2006; Lisak, 1994; Michigan Resource Centre on Domestic and Sexual Violence, n.d.). Lisak (1994) conducted interviews with a sample of adult males who were sexually assaulted. Many men expressed their anger towards their communities and rigid gender norms, which questioned the legitimacy of their claims.

Despite its limitations, the present study has provided evidence of the impact of benevolent sexism on jury decision-making in sexual assault cases. The results of this study indicate that people’s responses to acquaintance rape assailants and stranger rape assailants are different. More specifically, depending on the context of the situation and whether the victim and the assailant knew each other prior to the rape, less blame might be assigned to the perpetrator and more to the victim. This is in spite of the fact that sexual assault laws in Canada make no distinction based on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. In the current study, high benevolent sexist participants tended to find the assailant less responsible in the case of acquaintance rape than in the case of stranger rape. Although further research is required, the current study represents an important step in isolating the variables associated with how individuals assign blame in a case of sexual assault.
Glossary of terms

**Benevolent sexism.** A term delineated by Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001), used to describe a collection of attitudes that viewed women in stereotypical roles, but are subjectively more positive and meant to elicit behaviours that are prosocial or intimacy seeking.

**Hostile sexism.** A term delineated by Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001), used to describe the more negative aspects of prejudice. The attitudes often characterize women as weak and unfit to hold responsibilities associated with power.

**Sexual assault.** According to the Criminal Code of Canada (S. 271), a person can be found guilty of sexual assault if they committed an indictable offence. In 1983, the law was amended to delineate a three-level system of classification:

1. **Level I - sexual assault (section 271):** The person can be charged as an indictable offence or a summary offence. As an indictable offence, it carries a maximum sentence of 10 years imprisonment.

2. **Level II - sexual assault with a weapon, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm (section 272):** It is an indictable offence with a maximum sentence of 14 years imprisonment. During the crime, the perpetrator carries, uses or threatens to use a weapon or an imitation of a weapon; threatens to cause bodily harm to a person other than the complainant; causes bodily harm to the complainant; or is a party to the offence with any other person.

3. **Level III - aggravated sexual assault (section 273):** It is an indictable offence with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. The perpetrator, in committing a sexual assault, wounds, maims, disfigures or endangers the life of the complainant, and where a firearm is used in the commission of the offence.
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Appendix A: Acquaintance Rape Scenario, No Alcohol Involved
Acquaintance Rape Scenario, No Alcohol Involved

**SUMMARY POLICE REPORT:** A 25-year-old female called police to report a sexual assault at approximately 3:00 am. Officers arrived at the scene within minutes to take her report and transport her to the hospital for an examination.

Her hair, clothing, and makeup were dishevelled. At the hospital, a visual examination revealed slight bruising to both her forearms and wrists. A physical exam revealed traces of semen in her vagina. Later DNA testing revealed that the sample collected positively matched the suspect’s.

The victim is single and lives alone. There were no apparent witnesses at the scene.

**VICTIM’S STATEMENT:** The victim, Jessica, said she met the suspect, Tom, while she was at a coffee shop. He was an acquaintance she knew from a long time ago. The two of them spent much of the night together talking and flirting with one another. As people were leaving, she invited him to her apartment so they could catch up some more. When they got there, she admitted kissing and petting him. In response, she said the suspect tried to take her clothes off. At that point, she said that she pulled away and told him to stop. Not listening to her, he grabbed her and held her down. This time, he succeeded in pulling off her clothes. Then he vaginally penetrated her. When he climbed off of her, she sat up and began straightening her clothing. It was then that the suspect left the scene on foot.

**SUSPECT’S STATEMENT:** The suspect, Tom, reported he was “shocked” to be picked up for questioning. He stated that he did have sex with the complainant but that “she wanted to.” The suspect said Jessica, a woman known to him, had been progressively
friendlier to him since meeting at the coffee shop by flirting with him. On the evening in question, he reported that flirtation continued when she invited him back to her home. There, the alleged victim kissed and touched him through his clothes. The suspect said he thought she wanted to have sex with him based on her friendly manner. He also stated that the alleged victim was “turned on” and “played hard to get”. According to him, she encouraged him to be “rough” with her when he grabbed her and held her down.
Acquaintance Rape Scenario, Alcohol Involved

SUMMARY POLICE REPORT: A 25-year-old female called police to report a sexual assault at approximately 3:00 am. Officers arrived at the scene within minutes to take her report and transport her to the hospital for an examination.

Her hair, clothing, and makeup were dishevelled. At the hospital, a visual examination revealed slight bruising to both her forearms and wrists. A physical exam revealed traces of semen in her vagina. Later DNA testing revealed that the sample collected positively matched the suspect’s.

The victim is single and lives alone. There were no apparent witnesses at the scene. She admitted to having 1-2 drinks prior to the assault.

VICTIM’S STATEMENT: The victim, Jessica, said she met the suspect, Tom, while she was at a happy hour gathering at the local bar. He was an acquaintance she knew from a long time ago. The two of them spent much of the night together talking, dancing, and flirting with one another. As people were leaving after last call, she invited him to her apartment so they could catch up some more. When they got there, she admitted kissing and petting him. In response, she said the suspect tried to take her clothes off. At that point, she said that she pulled away and told him to stop. Not listening to her, he grabbed her and held her down. This time, he succeeded in pulling off her clothes. Then he vaginally penetrated her. When he climbed off of her, she sat up and began straightening her clothing. It was then that the suspect left the scene on foot.

SUSPECT’S STATEMENT: The suspect, Tom, reported he was “shocked” to be picked up for questioning. He stated that he did have sex with the complainant but that “she wanted to.” The suspect said Jessica, a woman known to him, had been progressively
friendlier to him since meeting at the bar by flirting with him. He admitted to having 1-2 drinks on the evening in question, and that the flirtation continued when she invited him back to her home. There, she kissed and touched him through his clothes. The suspect said he thought she wanted to have sex with him based on her friendly manner. He also stated that she was “turned on” and “played hard to get”. According to him, she encouraged him to be “rough” with her when he grabbed her and held her down.
Appendix C: Stranger Rape Scenario, No Alcohol Involved
Stranger Rape Scenario, No Alcohol Involved

SUMMARY POLICE REPORT: A 25-year-old female called police to report a sexual assault at approximately 3:00 am. Officers arrived at the scene within minutes to take her report and transport her to the hospital for an examination.

Her hair, clothing, and makeup were dishevelled. At the hospital, a visual examination revealed slight bruising to both her forearms and wrists. A physical exam revealed traces of semen in her vagina. Later DNA testing revealed that the sample collected positively matched the suspect’s.

The victim is single and lives alone. There were no apparent witnesses at the scene.

VICTIM’S STATEMENT: The victim, Jessica, was walking home to her apartment after work (she is employed as a telemarketer). The suspect, who introduced himself as Tom, asked if she needed to be walked home since it was not safe to be in the city alone. She said she told him no and continued walking. After this exchange, the suspect followed her and asked for her name and phone number. The victim reported that she ignored his requests. When she reached an unlit part of the street, she said that the suspect grabbed her and took her into a vacant alley. At this point, the victim said she pulled away and told him to stop. She reported that he overpowered her and removed her clothes. Then he vaginally penetrated her. When he climbed off of her, she sat up and began straightening her clothing. It was then that the suspect left the scene on foot.

SUSPECT’S STATEMENT: The suspect, Tom, reported he was “shocked” to be picked up for questioning. He stated that he did have sex with the complainant but that “she wanted to.” On the evening in question, he reported that this was the first time they met.
one another and that they talked while on the street. According to him, she made it clear when she was walking home that he should follow her. The suspect insisted that she was flirting with him, expressing her attraction towards him. He thought she wanted to have sex with him based on her friendly manner. He also stated that she was “turned on” and “played hard to get” throughout the encounter. According to him, she encouraged him to be “rough” with her when he grabbed her and held her down.
Appendix D: Stranger rape vignette, Alcohol Involved
Stranger Rape Scenario, Alcohol Involved

**SUMMARY POLICE REPORT:** A 25-year-old female called police to report a sexual assault at approximately 3:00 am. Officers arrived at the scene within minutes to take her report and transport her to the hospital for an examination.

Her hair, clothing, and makeup were dishevelled. At the hospital, a visual examination revealed slight bruising to both her forearms and wrists. A physical exam revealed traces of semen in her vagina. Later DNA testing revealed that the sample collected positively matched the suspect’s.

The victim is single and lives alone. There were no apparent witnesses at the scene. She admitted to having 1-2 drinks prior to the assault.

**VICTIM’S STATEMENT:** The victim, Jessica, was walking home to her apartment after a night out with her friends at a local bar. The suspect, who introduced himself as Tom, asked if she needed to be walked home since it was not safe to be in the city alone. She said she told him no and continued walking. After this exchange, the suspect followed her and asked for her name and phone number. The victim reported that she ignored his requests. When she reached an unlit part of the street, she said that the suspect grabbed her and took her into a vacant alley. At this point, the victim said she pulled away and told him to stop. She reported that he overpowered her and removed her clothes. Then he vaginally penetrated her. When he climbed off of her, she sat up and began straightening her clothing. It was then that the suspect left the scene on foot.

**SUSPECT’S STATEMENT:** The suspect, Tom, reported he was “shocked” to be picked up for questioning. He stated that he did have sex with the complainant but that “she wanted to.” On the evening in question, he reported that this was the first time they met
one another and that they talked while on the street. According to him, she made it clear when she was walking home that he should follow her. The suspect insisted that she was flirting with him, expressing her attraction towards him. He thought she wanted to have sex with him based on her friendly manner. He also stated that she was “turned on” and “played hard to get” throughout the encounter. According to him, she encouraged him to be “rough” with her when he grabbed her and held her down.
Perceptions of Sexual Assault Questionnaire (Kelly, 2005)

Please answer the following questions by circling the answer that indicates your response. The information should be based on what you have just read in the vignette provided. There are no right or wrong answers, only personal responses. This should take 10-15 minutes to complete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th></th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th></th>
<th>Completely</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How much should Tom hold himself responsible for what happened?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you think Tom is at fault as far as things turning out the way they did?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you think Tom had control over what happened?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How much control do you think Tom had over the situation?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How much sympathy do you feel for Tom?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you agree that Tom should have expected for Jessica to have sex with him?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do you think the incident could have been avoided in the first place?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do you think that Jessica was in control of this situation?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How much do you think Jessica should blame herself for what happened?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Completely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How much sympathy do you feel for Jessica?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Completely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. In your opinion, could all of this been avoided?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Completely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Do you think it was likely that Jessica enjoyed being taken in this situation?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Completely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. How much do you think Jessica really wanted to have sex with Tom in this situation?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Completely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. How much do you think Tom was led on by Jessica’s behaviour?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Completely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Do you think Jessica’s resistance to Tom was to hide her being too forward?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Completely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How much do you think Jessica teased Tom?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Completely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Do you think Jessica “got what she deserved” for how she handled things with Tom?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Completely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>Completely</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. From what you have read, how likely would you believe that Tom committed sexual assault?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Do you think Tom meant to have things turn out the way they did?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. How much do you believe that Tom meant to force Jessica?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. How much do you believe that Tom intended to have sex with Jessica?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. How much do you believe that Jessica intended to have sex with Tom?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Do you think Tom could have done more to prevent the situation from having taken place?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Do you think Jessica could have done more to prevent the situation from having taken place?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Do you think Tom should have done more to prevent the situation from having taken place?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td></td>
<td>Completely</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Do you think Jessica should have done more to prevent the situation from having taken place?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Do you think Tom’s response reasonable given Jessica’s actions?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. How much do you believe Tom used violence in doing what he did?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Do you think Tom hurt Jessica?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Do you believe Tom committed sexual assault?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1994)
Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1994)

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability by circling the answer that is most appropriate. The items below represent concepts people identify with. As such, there are no right or wrong answers, only personal responses. This should take 5-10 minutes to complete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not True</th>
<th>Somewhat True</th>
<th>Very True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My first impression of people usually turns out to be right.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I don’t care to know what other people really think of me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I have not always been honest with myself.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I always know why I like things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. When my emotions are aroused, it biases my thinking.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Once I’ve made up my mind, other people can seldom change my opinion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am not a safe driver when I exceed the speed limit.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I am fully in control of my own fate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. It’s hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not True</td>
<td>Somewhat True</td>
<td>Very True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I never regret my decisions.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I sometimes lose out on things because I can’t make up my mind soon enough.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The reason I vote is because my vote can make a difference.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. My parents were not always fair when they punished me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I am a completely rational person.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I rarely appreciate criticism.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I am very confident of my judgments.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. It’s all right with me if some people happen to dislike me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I don’t always know the reasons why I do the things I do.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I sometimes tell lies if I have to.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I never cover up my mistakes.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not True</td>
<td>Somewhat True</td>
<td>Very True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I never swear.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>I always obey laws, even if I’m unlikely to get caught.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>I always declare everything at customs.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>When I was young, I sometimes stole things.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>I have never dropped litter on the street.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>I never read sexy books or magazines.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not True ▼</td>
<td>Somewhat True ▼</td>
<td>Very True ▼</td>
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<tr>
<td>35. I have done things that I don’t tell other people about.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. I never take things that don’t belong to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn’t really sick.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>38. I have never damaged a library book or store merchandise without reporting it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. I have some pretty awful bad habits.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. I don’t gossip about other people’s business.</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996)
### Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996)

Below is a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the scale below. This will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree strongly ▼</th>
<th>Disagree somewhat ▼</th>
<th>Disagree slightly ▼</th>
<th>Agree slightly ▼</th>
<th>Agree strongly ▼</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person until he has the love of a woman.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Many women are actually seeking special favours, such as hiring policies that favour them over men, under the guise of asking for “equality”.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Women are too easily offended.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. People are not truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Feminists are seeking for women to have more power than men.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree strongly</td>
<td>Disagree somewhat</td>
<td>Disagree slightly</td>
<td>Agree slightly</td>
<td>Agree strongly</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Many women have a purity that few men possess.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Women should be cherished and protected by men.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Men are incomplete without women.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Women exaggerate problems they have at work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree strongly ▼</td>
<td>Disagree somewhat ▼</td>
<td>Disagree slightly ▼</td>
<td>Agree slightly ▼</td>
<td>Agree strongly ▼</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Many women get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Feminists are making unreasonable demands of men.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H: Social Dominance Orientation Scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994)
### Social Dominance Orientation Scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994)

Below are a series of statements with which you may either agree or disagree. For each statement, please indicate the degree of your agreement/disagreement by **circling** the appropriate number from '1' to '7'. Once again, remember that your first responses are usually the most accurate. This will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disapprove</th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree/Favour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Some groups of people are just more worthy than others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In getting what your group wants, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It’s OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If certain groups of people stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It’s probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Inferior groups should stay in their place.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree/Disapprove</td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree/Favour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Group equality should be our ideal.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. All groups should be given an equal chance in life.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. We should increase social equality.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. We would have fewer problems if we treated different groups more equally.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. We should strive to make incomes more equal.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. No one group should dominate in society.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I: Demographics questionnaire
**Demographic Information**

Please take the time to fill out the following items to the best of your ability. Please bear in mind that all information received is being collected for statistical purposes and will remain strictly confidential. This will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Thank you.

1. **Age**
   Please indicate your age in the blank below.

   _____ years old

2. **Gender**
   Please mark the appropriate category with an x.

   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female

3. **Marital Status**
   Please indicate your current marital status by marking an x by the appropriate category.

   - [ ] Single/ Never been married
   - [ ] Engaged/ Committed in relationship
   - [ ] Married, living with spouse
   - [ ] Married, not living with spouse
   - [ ] Widowed
   - [ ] Divorced
   - [ ] Other, please specify __________________________________________________________

4. **Race & Ethnicity**
   Please mark an x by the choice that closely describes your race and ethnicity.

   - [ ] White/Caucasian
   - [ ] Black/ African-American
   - [ ] White, Hispanic
   - [ ] Nonwhite, Hispanic
   - [ ] Asian/Pacific Islander
   - [ ] Native American
   - [ ] Arab American
   - [ ] Multiracial
   - [ ] If yes, please specify __________________________________________________________
   - [ ] Other, please specify __________________________________________________________
5. Religion

Which of the following religious affiliations are you more likely to identify with? Please mark your choice with an x.

☐ Protestant
☐ Catholic
☐ Jewish
☐ Muslim
☐ Hindu
☐ Buddhist
☐ None
☐ Other, please specify ________________________________________________

6. Education

Please indicate the highest grade or level you have completed by marking your choice with an x.

☐ Some high school
☐ High school graduate
☐ Some college
☐ College graduate
☐ Some post-college education
☐ Graduate school/Medical school/Law school

7. Employment

Please indicate the answer that best represents your current employment status by marking your choice with an x.

☐ Employed (full-time)
☐ Employed (part-time)
☐ Employed, but not at work because of a work-related accident, labour dispute, etc.
☐ Unemployed
☐ In school (either working full-time or working part-time)
☐ Armed services
☐ Retired
☐ Housewife/Househusband
☐ Other, please specify ________________________________________________
8. **Income**

Please indicate the answer that best represents your total family income before taxes by marking your choice with an x.

- [ ] Under $15,000
- [ ] $15,001-$30,000
- [ ] $30,001-$45,000
- [ ] $45,001-$60,000
- [ ] $60,001-$75,000
- [ ] $75,000 and above

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your assistance in providing this information is very much appreciated. Please enclose your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided and return it in the drop box.
Appendix J: Information sheet for pilot study
I would like to invite you to take part in a pilot study at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto. This study is being carried out as partial fulfilment for my degree Doctor of Philosophy in Counselling Psychology. The project is being overseen by Dr. Lana Stermac. This form talks about the study itself and your participation.

In this pilot study, I am trying to create a questionnaire that will look at how people determine responsibility in a case of sexual assault. I would also like to get feedback about the accompanying scenario. The questionnaire and scenario will be used in my dissertation. I will be offering coupons for $10 off a meal to a local restaurant (Pogue Mahone on Bay and College).

If you would like to take part, you will be invited to meet with me at OISE for about 1 hour. You will be asked to read a story that describes a sexual assault taking place. Then you will be asked to fill out a measure that asks your opinion about what happened, and a series of questions that will ask for some information about yourself. After you finish, I will ask you which items should be kept, taken out, or re-worded. I will also ask for your feedback for any improvement about the story you read. I will not ask you about your answers. At this point, I will be taking notes. However, no information that might identify you will be written down. Because the story talks about a sexual assault, the subject might be upsetting to some people. I have included a list of counselling resources with this questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is strictly confidential. You can leave the study at any time. All you would have to do is tell me that you want to stop. Leaving the study will not be held in against you.

Special care will be given to make sure all information provided stays confidential and that you stay anonymous. My supervisor and I will be the only ones who will have access to the data. A code will be on the questionnaire so that your name will not appear. Also, the information collected will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Once the study is done, the data will be destroyed. Any academic publications from this research will not identify you in any way.
By completing and returning the questionnaire, I have read and understood the information provided and agree to participate in this research.

Address (if you want the results mailed to you):

________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

Email (if you want the results emailed to you):

________________________________________________________
Appendix K: Information sheet for main study
Information Sheet

Judgments and Perceptions Of Blame: The Impact Of Benevolent Sexism and Rape Type On Attributions Of Responsibility In Sexual Assault

Investigator: Theresa Kelly, M.A., NCC (416) 923.6641 Ext. 6030
Supervisor: Dr. Lana Stermac (416) 923.6641 Ext. 2346

I would like to invite you to take part in a study at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto. **This study is being carried out as partial fulfilment of my degree Doctor of Philosophy in Counselling Psychology.** The project is being supervised by Dr. Lana Stermac. This form talks about the study itself and your participation.

The purpose of this study is to look at how people determine responsibility in a sexual assault case. You will be asked to read a story that describes a sexual assault taking place and to fill out a series of questionnaires. One of them will ask your opinion about what happened in the sexual assault. If you agree to take part, you will be invited to meet with me at OISE for about 20-60 minutes. Because the story depicts a sexual assault, the subject might be upsetting to people sensitive to this issue. I have included a list of counselling resources with this questionnaire. You were invited to participate because you are at least 18 years old and available to volunteer for this research.

Your participation in this study is strictly confidential. You can leave the study at any time. All you would have to do is tell me that you want to stop. Leaving the study will not be held against you.

By participating in this study, you will have the chance to contribute to the research on sexual assault. You will also be compensated for your time as well ($20.00).

Special care will be given to make sure all information provided stays confidential and that you stay anonymous. **Should you choose to leave before completing the questionnaire, your questionnaire will not be read nor will it be used in the analysis. Furthermore, the questionnaire will be sealed and shredded within 24 hours.** My supervisor and I will be the only ones who will have access to the data. A code will be on the questionnaire so that your name will not appear. Also, the information collected will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Once the study is done, the data will be destroyed. Any academic publications from this research will not identify you in any way.

**By completing and returning the questionnaire, I have read and understood the information provided and agree to participate in this research.**
If you are interested in getting a summary of the results after the study is finished, please fill out the space below.

Address (if you want the results mailed to you):

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Email (if you want the results emailed to you):

________________________________________________________________________
Appendix L: Advertisement for recruitment of subjects
Study volunteers needed

Research participants are needed for a study that will look at how people engage in decision-making as a juror. The purpose of the study is to see how people determine responsibility in a sexual assault case.

Are you:
- At least 18 years of age
- Available for approximately 20-60 minutes

Participants will complete anonymous, confidential questionnaires at the investigator’s research office at the University of Toronto (252 Bloor St. West) at an agreed upon time during normal business hours (between 9 am to 6 pm). Participants will be compensated $20 for their time. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Theresa Kelly at (416) 923.6641 Ext. 6030 or at tbui@oise.utoronto.ca