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THE EFFECT OF VICTIM STATUS AND SYSTEM THREAT
ON RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE

by

Kristine M. Chapleau, M.S.

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT
THE EFFECT OF VICTIM STATUS AND SYSTEM THREAT
ON RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE

Kristine M. Chapleau, M.S.

Marquette University, 2010

This study examined how rape myths are used to protect the perpetrator, particularly high-status perpetrators. Participants read a date-rape scenario: the status of the victim and perpetrator were manipulated as well as the threat the victim posed to the perpetrator as depicted by whom the victim would tell about the rape. Participants with a strong system justification orientation reported lower rape myth acceptance when a low-status victim decided to tell no one about a high-status perpetrator raping her compared to when she decided to report him to the police. This suggests that rape myth acceptance is malleable and that the absence of rape myth acceptance may be the reward for low-status victims who do not threaten the status quo.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Dominant-group members maintain their authority and higher status through the use of violence against subordinate-group members (Jackman, 2001). Because this violence could incite the subordinate group to revolt, this violence is obfuscated to maintain the legitimacy of the dominant group's higher status. Indeed, dominant-group members are sensitive to threats against their authority made by the subordinate group (Jackman, 2001; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). To protect the dominant group's authority and maintain group inequality, the dominant group may vilify subordinates who seek justice (Jackman, 2001) as well as create ideologies that explain social inequality as fair and natural (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, Ni Sullivan, 2003).

From this perspective, rape has been conceptualized as a tool to keep women in their place either through physical force or threat of physical force (Burt, 1980; Groth & Burgess, 1978). When rape victims demand justice, they are often vilified for unjustly accusing someone (e.g., a dominant-group member) of rape (Benedict, 1992). Some people may even perceive the victim's rape allegation as a hostile attack on the perpetrator (Katz, 2004). For example, Yamawaki, Darby, and Queiroz (2007) found that when the female victim was lower status (i.e., less educated, less successful) than was the male assailant, participants blamed the victim more and they expressed more hostile sexist attitudes toward women. This finding suggests that violence committed by a dominant-group member against a subordinate-group member may be perceived as a threat to the status quo.

Consistent with the idea that people create ideologies to explain social inequality as fair and natural (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost, Pelham et al., 2003), a number of social scientists propose that rape myths have been created to explain sexual violence as fair and natural (Burt & Albin, 1981; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Rape myths are false beliefs about rape that absolve the perpetrator for his misdeeds (e.g., “Men don’t usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.”), disregard the harm he inflicted on the victim (e.g., “Being raped isn’t as bad as being mugged and beaten.”), and blame the victim for the assault (e.g., “If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.”; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Third parties (e.g., judges, police, family members, etc.) who endorse rape myths are less sympathetic toward rape victims and are less likely to blame or prosecute the perpetrator (Burt, 1980; Campbell & Johnson, 1997; Du Mont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003; Feild, 1978; Frohmann, 1991; George & Martinez, 2002; Koss, 2000; see Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994 for a review).

For this reason, it is important to understand what factors will increase people’s rape myth acceptance. Previous research, however, has studied the relationship between rape myth acceptance and other factors (e.g., sexism) or how rape myth acceptance predicts victim blame. For example, higher rape myth acceptance is associated with being male (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995), having authoritarian personality traits (Altermeyer, 1998; Lerner & Miller, 1978; Mirels & Garrett, 1971; Sidanius, Levin, Federico, & Pratto, 2001), and upholding traditional gender roles (Burt, 1980; Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2007; Glick & Fiske, 1997). Furthermore, rape myth acceptance predicts victim blame when the victim is lower status than the perpetrator (Yamawaki et

al., 2007) and when the victim is romantically involved with the perpetrator (Frese, Moya, & Megias, 2004). Researchers have not examined if or how rape myths are employed to protect the perpetrator and thus, the status quo. Specifically, how do the victim's status and the threat of a victim's rape allegation affect people's endorsement of rape myths?

I propose that system justification theory may be useful in predicting rape myth acceptance. According to system justification theory, people tend to defend existing social inequality particularly when that social system is under threat (Jost, Burgess, & Mosso, 2001). If rape myth acceptance is an ideology that legitimizes violence against subordinate-group members, then people's level of rape myth acceptance should fluctuate in a manner consistent with system justification theory. In the following sections, I will discuss system justification theory, antecedents to system justification, and how these antecedents may relate to rape myth acceptance.

System Justification Theory

For society (or any organization) to function it is important for people to adapt to unfavorable policies and outcomes (Jost, 1995). System justification theory asserts that low-status groups can identify with the dominant culture and will defend it even though they could gain more power in a new regime (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Witnessing social inequality distresses most people and provokes negative feelings such as guilt, helplessness, and anger (Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007). At the same time, people also need to perceive existing social arrangements as fair and legitimate (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Lerner & Miller, 1978).

To alleviate this dissonance, some people use ideologies to legitimize social inequality as fair and natural (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost & Hunyady, 2002; Jost, Pelham, et al., 2003; McGuire & McGuire, 1991). For example, people will rationalize that likely but unpleasant outcomes become more desirable (“sweet lemons”) and unlikely but pleasant outcomes become more undesirable (“sour grapes”). Kay, Jimenez, and Jost (2002) conducted two studies that tested this effect. In Study 1 partisan and nonpartisan participants were surveyed about their attitudes toward Bush and Gore one week before the 2000 election. Participants were randomly assigned to one of five conditions in which the predicted outcome of the election was manipulated. After reading predicted outcome of the elections, participants were asked, “How desirable or undesirable would it be for you if Gore were elected president?” and “How desirable or undesirable would it be for you if Bush were elected president?” Participants used a 9-point scale (1 = *strongly undesirable*; 9 = *strongly desirable*) to respond to these questions. Not surprisingly, there was a significant main effect of participants’ party loyalty such that across conditions Republicans reported that it would be more desirable if Bush were president ($M = 7.2$) than if Gore were president ($M = 2.9$) and that Democrats reported that it would be more desirable if Gore were president ($M = 7.2$) than if Bush were president ($M = 2.8$). As a demonstration of “sour grapes,” Republican participants who were told that Bush would definitely lose the election reported that it would be less desirable if Bush were elected president ($M = 5.9$) than did the Republican participants who were told that Bush would definitely win the election ($M = 8.2$). Similarly, Democrat participants who were told that Gore would definitely lose the election reported

that it would be less desirable if Gore were elected president ($M = 6.8$) than did Democrat participants who were told that Gore would definitely win the election ($M = 8.0$).

As a demonstration of “sweet lemons,” Republicans who were told that Gore would definitely win reported that it would be more desirable if Gore were president ($M = 4.4$) than did Republicans who were told that Gore would definitely lose ($M = 1.8$). Democrats demonstrated a similar effect although this was only marginally significant. Democrats who were told that Bush would definitely win the election reported that it would be more desirable if Bush were president ($M = 2.0$) than did Democrats who were told that Bush would definitely lose ($M = 3.0$). For both demonstrations of “sour grapes” and “sweet lemons,” non-partisan participants’ ratings did not significantly differ across condition which indicated that participants must be motivationally invested in the outcome to warrant rationalizing the outcome.

In Study 2, Kay et al. (2002) tested if a favorable tuition decrease would become less desirable as it became less likely to happen (“sour grapes”) and that an unfavorable tuition increase would become more desirable as it became more likely to happen (“sweet lemons”). Students rated how desirable or undesirable it would be if such a tuition change occurred ($1 = \textit{extremely undesirable}$; $15 = \textit{extremely desirable}$). There was a main effect in which students rated a tuition decrease as more desirable ($M = 11.9$) than a tuition increase ($M = 4.4$). As a demonstration of “sour grapes,” students who were told that it was unlikely that the university would lower tuition rated the decrease as less desirable ($M = 11.0$) than did students who were told that it was likely that the university would lower tuition ($M = 14.5$). As a demonstration of “sweet lemons,” students who were told that it was likely that the university would raise tuition rated the increase as

more desirable ($M = 4.8$) than did students who were told that it was unlikely that the university would raise tuition ($M = 1.8$). Kay et al. concluded that changes in the perceived likelihood of an event are associated with changes in the judged desirability of that event for people who are invested in the outcome.

One issue with both of these studies is that it is a between-subjects design and thus does not demonstrate how people's attitudes may shift upon changes in the perceived likelihood of an outcome. Such a within-subjects design would demonstrate how resistant or malleable people's initial judgments are to change. People's resistance or malleability to change could be related to dispositional traits. For example, in Kay et al.'s (2002) Study 1, it is possible that the Republicans had a different dispositional trait than the Democrats that made the Republicans better at rationalizing unfavorable outcomes. Specifically, Republicans in Study 1 demonstrated a more robust "sweet lemon" effect than did the Democrats. This may be consistent with the finding that Republicans are more amenable to group inequality and hierarchy than are Democrats (Pratto et al., 1994).

It is important to note that Kay et al. (2002) did not compare the "sweet lemon" and "sour grapes" effects between high- and low-status groups. Such a study would be interesting in determining if group status plays a role in people's perceptions of outcome likelihood and how that can affect people's tendency to rationalize unfavorable outcomes. For example, low-status groups may view policies that benefit them as highly unlikely to occur and policies that benefit high-status groups as highly likely to occur. Thus, low-status groups may rate those policies as relatively less desirable ("sour grapes") and more desirable ("sweet lemon"), respectively.

A broader issue with system justification theory (as well as the related social dominance theory) is the assertion that low-status groups “prefer” or “desire” unfavorable outcomes that benefit high-status groups (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius et al., 2001). In both studies, favorable events were rated as far more desirable than unfavorable events despite the likelihood of the favorable events occurring. It is unclear if the results demonstrated that people become more accepting of unfavorable outcomes or prefer unfavorable outcomes over favorable ones. Further, Kay et al. (2002) noted that the “sour grapes-sweet lemon” effect was only found in people who were motivated and personally invested in the outcome. Kay et al. did not determine if the participants’ change in judged desirability was due to a decrease in their personal investment. That is, upon learning that an unfavorable outcome was likely to happen, the participants may have disidentified with the outcome and concluded that the outcome (i.e., politics, tuition) was not that important to them. If this is true, people who disidentify with important outcomes may become apathetic and accept injustice more easily.

In sum, system justification theory suggests that social inequality is distressing to most people and thus, people will use psychological tactics to cope with this distress. Specifically, people become more tolerant of social inequality when inequality seems likely. This point is particularly important in understanding how low-status groups can accept policies that put them at a disadvantage and how members of both high- and low-status groups can rationalize social inequality as “the way things are.”

Antecedents to System Justification

System justification theory has identified factors that encourage people to accept and even defend group inequality. The degree to which people defend group inequality depends on (a) a dispositional acceptance of hierarchical relationships (i.e., system justification orientation), (b) salience of group stereotypes that legitimize inequality (i.e., complementary stereotypes), and (c) situational attacks levied against the system (system threat) (Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Jost & Kay, 2005). Each of these factors can lead to increased system justification alone or in combination (Jost & Hunyady, 2005).

System Justification Orientation

As a disposition, some people are more accepting of group hierarchies and see group interactions as a zero-sum game (e.g., Pratto et al., 1994). System justification theory states that some people may be more accepting of social arrangements that conflict with their own self-interests because “there are hedonic benefits to minimizing the unpredictable, unjust, and oppressive aspects of social reality” (Jost & Hunyady, 2005, p. 261). Specifically, group hierarchies minimize group conflict in a society and some people are more willing to minimize conflict even if it is at their own expense (Overbeck, Jost, Mosso, & Flizik, 2004; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993). A *system justification orientation* is driven by people’s identification with the social system (Overbeck et al., 2004) and describes people’s acceptance of group inequality (Jost et al., 2001; Jost & Thompson, 2000).

A system justification orientation was adapted from a competing theory, social dominance theory (Jost & Thompson, 2000; Overbeck et al., 2004). Whereas system

justification theory initially focused on situational factors that provoke people's support for inequality, social dominance theory focused on individual differences in people's quest for social dominance (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1993). The Social Dominance Orientation scale was developed to measure people's acceptance of ingroup dominance, aggression, and control (e.g., "to get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups"; "we should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups") (Pratto et al., 1994). When the Social Dominance Orientation scale was tested, all scale items formed a single construct for several predominantly White samples. Past research has shown that dominant groups, such as White males, tend to have a stronger social dominance orientation; subordinate groups, such as women and African Americans, tend to have a weaker social dominance orientation (Pratto et al., 1994). People with a strong social dominance orientation choose ideologies that strengthen group hierarchies whereas people with a weak social dominance orientation choose ideologies that weaken group hierarchies (Pratto et al., 1994). For example, a social dominance orientation has been found to correlate with sexist and racist attitudes (Pratto, 1996).

Whereas Pratto and her colleagues (1994) proposed that a Social Dominance Orientation was a personality trait, Jost and Thompson (2000) proposed that a Social Dominance Orientation was a combination of a person's personality and his or her position in the hierarchy. Jost and Thompson tested the Social Dominance Orientation scale using White and African-American samples. Consistent with their prediction, Jost and Thompson found that the scale items split into two subfactors which they named "Group-Based Dominance" (e.g., "to get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups") and "Opposition to Equality" (e.g., "we should do what we can to

equalize conditions for different groups”). The Group-Based Dominance subscale assesses belief that it is okay for one’s group to dominate other groups and thus, is a purer measure of a social dominance orientation (Jost & Thompson, 2000). The Opposition to Equality subscale assesses the belief that group inequality is acceptable without stipulating whose group receives unfair treatment and thus, is a purer measure of a system justification orientation (Jost & Thompson, 2000). Jost and Thompson found that correlations between Group-Based Dominance scores and Opposition to Equality scores were stronger for White samples than they were for African-American samples. Because Whites represent the dominant culture, opposing equality bolsters ingroup dominance; because African Americans represent the subordinate culture, opposing equality conflicts with ingroup dominance. Based on Jost and Thompson’s findings, social dominance theorists changed the definition of a social dominance orientation to a “general desire for unequal relations among social groups, regardless of whether this means ingroup domination or ingroup subordination” (Sidanius et al., 2001, p. 312). This new definition is a shift toward system justification theory and closely approximates the definition of a system justification orientation (Jost et al., 2001; Jost & Thompson 2000).

Complementary Stereotypes

Another antecedent to system justification is the salience of complementary stereotypes. Controlling for individual differences in a system justification orientation, some people use complementary stereotypes (and self-stereotypes) to justify social inequality (Jost & Kay, 2005; Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay et al., 2002; Kay, Jost, Mandisodza, Sherman, Petrocelli, & Johnson, 2007). Dominant-group members are ascribed agentic traits (e.g., *competent, assertive, intelligent*) and subordinate-group members are ascribed

communal traits (e.g., *warm, friendly, honest*) (Conway, Pizzamiglio, & Mount, 1996). Complementary stereotypes justify social inequality in several ways. First, complementary stereotypes state that groups are well-suited for their prescribed social roles (Eagly & Steffen, 1984) and that these social roles are accepted as natural, inevitable, and fair (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Complementary stereotypes seem to contain a “kernel of truth” about gender differences: women are assumed to be more communal and less agentic than men are because of their biological role as mothers (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989). People universally apply complementary stereotypes to ethnic and regional groups as well (Kay et al., 2007). For example, other low-status groups (i.e., Southern Italians, Northern Englanders, and Sephardic Jews) are assumed to be more communal and less agentic than are their high-status counterparts (i.e., Northern Italians, Southern Englanders, and Ashkenzi Jews, respectively) (Jost, Kivetz, Rubini, Guermandi, & Mosso, 2005). This suggests that complementary stereotypes are not specific to men and women’s biology but rather characterize status differences (Jost et al., 2005).

Second, complementary stereotypes prescribe traits for men and women that maintain men’s authority over women and women’s dependence on men (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Agentic and communal traits have been conceptualized using dichotomous terms that describe power relationships: instrumental power/dyadic power (Glick & Fiske, 1996), competence/warmth (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002), self-profitable/other-profitable (Peeters & Czapinski, 1990), status-enhancing/status-diminishing (Hochschild, 1983/2003), and perhaps, dominance/submission. All of these conceptualizations prescribe how people should be in a dominant/subordinate relationship (Jackman, 1994). Specifically, agentic traits such as “intelligent,” “assertive,” and “cold” can command

respect and intimidate others, whereas communal traits such as “considerate,” “honest,” and “naïve” can put people at ease and invoke patronization (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989; Fiske et al., 2002; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jackman, 1994; Ridgeway, 2001). Within this power relationship, dominants’ and subordinates’ have feelings for each other and these have been categorized into four types of ambivalent prejudice: admiration, paternalistic prejudice, envious prejudice, and contemptuous prejudice (Fiske et al., 2002; Glick & Fiske, 2001). Admiration is subordinates’ grateful deference paid to dominants. Paternal prejudice is dominants’ kindness and patronization of subordinates for their good behavior. Although dominants may have benevolent feelings toward subordinates, dominants do not respect subordinates as equals (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Envious prejudice is dominants’ fear of competent subordinates who threaten dominant power (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Dominants may use this threat to justify retaliating against subordinates to stabilize the status quo. Contemptuous prejudice is dominants’ hostility toward incompetent subordinates whom dominants perceive as ungrateful or a drain on resources. This power relationship and associated ambivalent prejudice make it very difficult for subordinates to successfully challenge and overthrow the status quo (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Ridgeway, 2001).

Third, complementary stereotypes justify social inequality by assigning positive and negative traits to each group (Kay & Jost, 2003; Kay et al., 2007). This creates the illusion of equality because “no one has it all” (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost et al., 2005; Jost & Kay, 2005). Kay, Jost, and Young (2005) found that people used complementary stereotypes to simultaneously derogate and compensate “losers” and “winners.” Participants were randomly assigned to read one of four stories. The four stories varied

in that they expressed a causal link between the trait and the outcome (causal vs. not causal) as well as the complementarity of the traits (complementary vs. noncomplementary). Story 1 described smart-but-poor Mary and dumb-but-rich Sarah (causal and complementary). Story 2 described smart-and-rich Mary and dumb-and-poor Sarah (causal and noncomplementary). Story 3 described smart-and-attractive Mary and dumb-and-unattractive Sarah (not causal and noncomplementary). Story 4 described smart-and-unattractive Mary and dumb-but-attractive Sarah (not causal and complementary). After reading one of these four stories, participants completed a measure of system justification (e.g., “Most policies serve the greater good.”) using a 9-point scale. When there was a causal link between the trait and the outcome, participants who read the noncomplementary story (smart+rich; dumb+poor) reported higher system justification ($M = 5.6$) than did the participants who read the complementary story (smart+poor; dumb+rich; $M = 4.8$). When there was no causal link between the trait and outcome, participants who read the complementary story (smart+unattractive; dumb+attractive) reported higher system justification ($M = 5.9$) than did participants who read the noncomplementary story (smart+attractive; dumb+unattractive; $M = 5.2$). Kay et al. concluded that complementary stereotypes praise “winners” and derogate “losers” on traits that are relevant to outcomes but derogate “winners” and praise “losers” on traits that are irrelevant to outcomes.

In regard to gender inequality, Jost and Kay (2005) found that activating complementary stereotypes would increase “low-status” participants’ perception that inequality is fair. Male and female participants were assigned to one of nine groups. Participants were exposed to items from Glick and Fiske’s (1996) Ambivalent Sexism

Inventory. Group 1 rated their agreement with four items that were drawn from the Benevolent Sexism subscale (e.g., “Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.”). Group 2 rated their agreement with four items that were drawn from the Hostile Sexism subscale (e.g., “Most women do not fully appreciate all that men do for them.”). Group 3 rated their agreement with two benevolent sexist items and two hostile sexist items. Group 4 participants rated their agreement with a set of positive, gender-neutral traits (“resourcefulness,” “creativity,” “tactfulness,” and “realism”). These traits were presented in a similar fashion as the benevolent sexist items (e.g., “Women, compared to men tend to be more realistic.”). Participants in Groups 5–8 read the same statements as the participants in conditions 1–4 but were asked to proofread the items and rate the degree to which they thought the items were “ambiguously worded.” Thus, whereas participants in Groups 1–4 endorsed their agreement with items, participants in Groups 5–8 were only exposed to the items. Participants in Group 9 did not read any of the gender-related items. Afterwards, all participants completed a diffuse measure of system justification in which they endorsed their level of support for the United States (e.g., “In general, the American political system operates as it should.”). These items were measured on a 9-point Likert scale. Results indicated that endorsement to the gender-related statement compared to exposure to the statement had no effect on participants’ endorsement of diffuse system justification. Collapsing across endorsement and exposure conditions, men perceived the American system to be more fair ($M = 5.0$) than did women ($M = 4.6$). Examining the effect of specific gender-related statements, the results indicated that women’s system justification scores were affected by their exposure to the different types of gender-related statements (Means 3.9–5.1) whereas

men's system justification scores remained relatively stable across condition (Means 4.7–5.2). Specifically, women who were exposed to benevolent stereotypes reported significantly higher agreement with the pro-U.S. statements ($M = 5.1$) than did women who were exposed to positive, gender-neutral traits ($M = 3.9$). Further, women in the benevolent stereotype condition reported the same level of agreement with pro-U.S. statements ($M = 5.1$) as had men in the same condition ($M = 4.7$). Jost and Kay concluded that activation of communal and benevolent stereotypes can increase women's system justification and that positive gender stereotypes that give women an advantage over men can flatter some women into supporting an unfair system.

This could convey a positive view of people such that people are more supportive of a system that is balanced and fair. However, the results from these studies contradict this. Because men's system justification remained stable across gender-stereotyped conditions whether they were exposed to benevolent, hostile, or no stereotypes about women, this suggests that men were more supportive of a system that benefited them rather than about fairness. Apparent fairness, as conveyed by assigning women traits that value them over men, however, raised women's support for the status quo. In this sense, benevolent stereotypes about women and men that counterweigh lower status have the insidious effect of getting the lower-status group to perhaps inadvertently accept their lower status.

In sum, there is evidence that complementary stereotypes are not accurate descriptions of men and women per se; rather, complementary stereotypes describe status roles. Complementary stereotypes rationalize group inequality and create an interpersonal script that maintains group inequality. Further, complementary stereotypes

flatter subordinate-group members who know their place and justify the punishment of those who do not.

System Threat

A final proposed antecedent to system justification is a threat to the status quo or system. Just as people identify with their own interests (Allport, 1954/1958) and the interests of those who are similar to them (Condor, 1990), people can also identify with the overall system (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Threats to the system encourage people to psychologically defend the system and legitimate it as the way things should be (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). One way people psychologically defend the system is to endorse complementary stereotypes which justify the status quo (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003). For example, Israeli participants either read about Israel's weak national security (high system threat) or strong national security (low system threat). Participants then rated high-status Israelis and low-status Israelis on measures of agency and communality. Agency ("efficient," "responsible," "productive," "active," "dominant," "educated," "ambitious," and "intelligent") and communality ("emotional," "honest," "friendly," "extraverted," "religious," and "happy") were measured using 9-point scales (e.g., 1 = *extremely irresponsible*; 9 = *extremely responsible*). Participants in the high system threat condition rated the high-status Israelis as more agentic ("responsible") and less communal ("emotional"); conversely, they rated low-status Israelis as being less agentic and more communal. Increased complementary stereotype differentiation positively correlated with the perceived legitimacy of the current system (Jost et al., 2005). This suggests that when people perceive that the system is breaking down, they try to relieve this psychological distress by endorsing group-status

differences. It is unknown if these participants increased endorsement of complementary stereotypes because they were trying to bring order to a threatening and chaotic situation, or if they assumed that the system broke down because group hierarchy was not upheld and so the solution was to restore it, or for another reason. Although not yet tested, it follows that people who have a strong system justification orientation would be more sensitive and reactive to threats against the system than would people who have a weak system justification orientation.

In sum, several factors encourage people to support group inequality. Some people have a system justification orientation and accept group hierarchy even if that entails holding a lower status. Complementary stereotypes remind people that gender inequality exists not because the system is unfair, but because men and women “naturally” differ and therefore should occupy different roles. When the group hierarchy or system is threatened, people use complementary stereotypes to remind themselves and to remind others that group inequality exists for good reasons. Each of these factors can lead to increased system justification alone or in combination (Jost & Hunyady, 2005).

CHAPTER 2: System Justification Antecedents of Rape Myth Acceptance

If rape myths are ideologies that justify gender inequality, then the same factors that increase system justification should also increase rape myth acceptance. Jost and colleagues identified a system justification orientation, complementary stereotypes, and threat to the status quo as antecedents to system justification (Jost & Kay, 2005; Jost & Thompson, 2000; Jost et al., 2005). Therefore, potential antecedents to rape myth acceptance are a) a system justification orientation, b) complementary stereotypes in the sexual domain and c) degree of threat to the status quo.

System Justification Orientation and Rape Myth Acceptance

A system justification orientation is people's acceptance of inequality, regardless of whether they belong to the dominant or subordinate group (Jost et al., 2001; Jost & Thompson, 2000; Overbeck et al., 2004). A system justification orientation is conceptually similar to a social dominance orientation (Jost & Thompson, 2000; Sidanius et al., 2001) such that people with a strong system justification orientation choose ideologies that strengthen group hierarchy (e.g., Pratto et al., 1994). There is evidence that people's motivation to maintain group inequality is associated with rape myth acceptance (Lambert & Raichle, 2000; Pratto et al., 1994). Pratto et al. (1994) found that rape myth acceptance correlated with scores on the full Social Dominance Orientation scale for both male and female participants (average $r = .47$). Lambert and Raichle (2000) also found that participants' scores on the full Social Dominance Orientation scale predicted higher blame for a female acquaintance rape victim, but lower blame for the male perpetrator. A social dominance orientation was a stronger predictor of victim blaming than was participants' belief in a just world and their belief in personal responsibility (i.e., Protestant Work Ethic). Participant gender did not moderate the relationship between social dominance orientation and victim blaming. However, female participants reported less victim blaming, more perpetrator blaming, and scored lower on the full Social Dominance Orientation scale than did men. Because the full Social Dominance Orientation scale is comprised of two subscales (Jost & Thompson, 2000), it would have been informative if Lambert and Raichle had examined the social dominance and system justification subscales separately. Although Lambert and Raichle did not measure the participants' perceptions of the status of the victim and perpetrator in the

date-rape scenario, their results suggest that victim blaming and perpetrator leniency are related to people's desire to legitimate gender inequality.

Based on the findings of Lambert and Raichle (2000), it follows that the more people identify with the social system (regardless of his or her status within the system), the more they will legitimize sexual assault if the perpetrator is higher status than the victim. Lambert and Raichle's findings suggest that because men, in general, are higher status than are women, people with a system justification orientation will show leniency toward the male perpetrator. If, however, the perpetrator is of lower status than the victim, people with a system justification orientation may be more likely to blame the perpetrator (LaFree, 1980; Patton & Snyder-Yuly, 2007). Consistent with this argument, past research has found that African-American perpetrators were viewed as more responsible for sexual assault when victims were White rather than African-American (Ugwuegbu, 1979; Wolfgang & Riedel, 1975). This finding, however, was moderated by the participant's race; White participants thought that White victims were considered more truthful when the perpetrator was Black (Varelas & Foley, 1998). Interestingly, African-American participants were more lenient toward a White rapist than a Black rapist.

Complementary Stereotypes and Rape Myth Acceptance

System justification theory suggests the salience of complementary stereotypes can increase people's satisfaction with the status quo (Jost & Kay, 2005) and people are more likely to endorse complementary stereotypes when the status quo is threatened (Jost et al., 2005). Similarly, the salience of complementary stereotypes may increase rape

myth acceptance and a threat to the status quo (i.e., a rape allegation) may increase some people's endorsement of complementary stereotypes.

Previous research has found that rape myth acceptance correlates with ambivalent sexism toward women and toward men (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Chapleau et al., 2007, 2008; Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2003). Ambivalent sexism is a construct composed of both hostile and benevolent attitudes toward women and toward men (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1999). Hostile sexism toward women reflects men's fear of women using their sexual allure to usurp power; benevolent sexism reflects men's acknowledgement that heterosexual men need women as romantic partners and mothers (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997). Hostile sexism is the "stick" that derogates women who threaten men's authority; benevolent sexism is the "carrot" that praises women who support men's power. Together, hostile and benevolent sexism justify the status quo of male domination by asserting that women should not be in power and that they should be content in their lower status in society (Glick et al., 2000).

According to Glick and Fiske's (1999) ambivalent sexism theory, generally speaking, women's relationship with men, the more powerful outgroup, is also conflicted. Women are thought to resent men for their greater power and higher social status, yet, in heterosexual relationships, depend on men as protectors, providers, and romantic partners. Hostile sexism toward men reflects women's dissatisfaction with the status quo and characterizes men as exploitative and controlling. Benevolent sexism toward men justifies women seeking romantic relationships with men by idealizing men as heroes who need women's love and support (Glick & Fiske, 1999). Unlike ambivalent sexism toward women, Glick and Fiske did not conceptualize hostile and benevolent sexism

toward men as the “carrot” and “stick” that keep men in line. Rather, both hostile and benevolent sexism are associated with gender inequality because they evince men’s dominance and natural propensity for leadership (Glick et al., 2004).

For ambivalent sexism toward women, Chapleau et al. (2007) found that rape myth acceptance positively correlated with hostile sexism and one subfactor of benevolent sexism characterizing women as more moral and innocent than are men (i.e., complementary gender differentiation toward women). Hostile sexism toward women denigrates women as manipulative and trying to gain power over men. People who view women this way also may believe that rape victims use a rape allegation as a weapon against men. Complementary gender differentiation, the belief that women should be ladylike, may translate into the perception that women who violate this stereotypic role are partially responsible for making themselves vulnerable to sexual attack by drinking alcohol or wearing revealing clothing. Rape myth acceptance was negatively associated with protective paternalism, the benevolent attitude that men should use their power to protect women. People who believe that men should use their higher status and power to protect women may be more likely to blame the male perpetrator because they perceive him to be stronger, quicker, and more powerful than she.

For ambivalent sexism toward men, rape myth acceptance correlated positively with two subfactors of benevolent sexism (Chapleau et al., 2007). These subfactors characterized men as being braver than women are (complementary gender differentiation) and necessary as romantic partners for women (heterosexual intimacy). Those who admired men for their masculine attributes of strength, risk-taking, and stoicism were less likely to hold men accountable for rape. Chapleau et al. suggested that

participants may have viewed the aggressor as a potential romantic partner rather than a rapist, or that victims were seeking male attention in attempts to secure a mate.

Furthermore, for female participants (but not male participants) rape myth acceptance correlated positively with maternalism, the benevolent belief that women should protect and nurture men. For women, nurturing men is a way to gain men's favor and thus access men's power, albeit indirectly (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Thus, women who hold benevolent sexist attitudes toward men may turn against female victims and support male aggressors due to their admiration for men, their belief that women are unfulfilled without a male partner, and their need to nurture men (Chapleau et al., 2007).

Rape myth acceptance did not correlate with hostile sexism toward men.

Interestingly, resentment of male power and domination was not negatively associated with rape myth acceptance. This suggests that although some participants characterized men as exploiters of women, this did not translate as sympathy toward rape victims or outrage toward rapists. Although some may have supported female rape victims, others may have believed that because men are inherently bad, women must beware potential victimization by men.

Interestingly, ambivalent sexist attitudes toward men and women are quite similar: Both men and women are characterized as power-hungry and manipulative, but also needing protection and love (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1999). Despite these similarities, ambivalent sexism supports men's higher status over women (Glick et al., 2004).

Therefore, in the study of rape myth acceptance, specific sexist attitudes may be less important than are status differences that are conveyed through complementary stereotypes (e.g., Conway et al., 1996).

System Threat and Rape Myth Acceptance

The higher the status of the perpetrator relative to the victim, the more likely people will endorse rape myths (Du Mont et al., 2003; George & Martinez, 2002; Yamawaki et al., 2007). Research has not shown how people respond when the victim intends to report the perpetrator to the police. Such an act by the victim may be perceived as a threat, not only to the perpetrator, but to men's higher status and the status quo of gender relations. Therefore, the greater the threat the victim poses to the perpetrator (e.g., reporting him to the police), the more some people may endorse rape myths to mitigate the threat.

I propose a model of rape myth acceptance in which a system justification orientation, victim's relative status, and system threat contribute to rape myth acceptance. A system justification perspective of rape myth acceptance could parsimoniously combine disparate studies that has linked rape myth acceptance with sexism, social dominance, and status into on theoretical model. This model could then test causal predictions about what factors increase rape myth acceptance.

To test this model, a date-rape scenario was created that manipulated the relative status of the victim compared to the perpetrator as well as what the victim decided to do after the rape. Study 1 pre-tested the date-rape scenario. Study 2 tested the hypothesis that participants with a strong system justification orientation would be more motivated to espouse rape myths when a lower-status victim threatened to report a higher-status perpetrator to the police.

CHAPTER 3: Study 1

In Study 1, the date-rape scenario was pretested to determine (1) if manipulating the type of school Kate and Jason attended would be associated with different levels of social status, (2) if participants rated one gender as having more status than the other, controlling for the type of school they attended, and (3) if it was clear that Jason sexually assaulted Kate. For the date-rape scenario to be effective, participants should rate Kate and Jason attending a prestigious university as having the highest social status, rate Kate and Jason attending a state college as having lower social status, and rate Kate and Jason who dropped out of state college but attends technical school part time as having the lowest social status. Further, participants should rate Kate and Jason as having the same social status when they attend the same type of school. Participants should also strongly agree that Jason raped Kate and that she did not consent to sex.

Method

Participants

Participants were 115 male and female students (67.8% female, $n = 78$) from a Midwestern university ($M_{\text{age}} = 18.8$ years, $SD = 1.13$). Most were Caucasian (85.2%, $n = 98$), 6 were African American, 5 were Mexican American, 2 were Asian American, 1 was Native American, 1 identified as “Other,” and 2 did not answer this question.

Participants received course extra credit for their participation.

Measures

Measure of social status. Participants rated the social status of Jason and Kate when they were described as the following: a junior at a private, prestigious university; a junior at a state college; dropped out of state college and now takes classes at a technical college, part-time (e.g., “Kate is junior at a prestigious, private university.”). Participants were asked to think about how most people would rate Jason and Kate’s social status when making their ratings. See Appendix A. Participants used an 11-point Likert scale (0 = *No social status*, 5 = *Some social status*, 10 = *A great deal of social status*) to indicate their responses.

Date-rape scenario. Participants read a date-rape scenario about Jason and Kate; there was no mention of where Jason and Kate went to school or what Kate decided to do after Jason assaulted her.

Kate and her friend, Laura, went to a college party. At the party, Laura introduced Kate to Jason. Kate and Jason hit it off immediately and spent the night talking, laughing, and flirting with each other. As Kate and her friend, Laura, were leaving the party Jason asked Kate for her number and if she wanted to go out with him. Kate readily agreed. The next weekend, Kate and Jason had dinner together and later went to Jason’s apartment to watch a movie. As they watched the movie they started kissing. When Jason started undressing Kate, she said she was uncomfortable and that she wanted him to stop. Jason did not stop, however. Although Kate resisted, Jason continued undressing her, held her down and had sexual intercourse with Kate.

Perception of Sexual Aggression. Participants used an 11-point Likert scale (0 = *Not at all*, 10 = *Definitely*) to respond to two questions regarding their perception of a sexually aggressive act in the scenario (“Do you think that Kate consented to having sex with Jason?” and “Do you think Jason raped Kate?”).

Demographics. Participants were asked to identify their sex, age, current relationship status, and ethnic background.

Procedure

Two female experimenters distributed the surveys to the participants at the beginning of class. Each survey contained an information sheet about the survey, the social status perception measure, the date-rape scenario, the two items perception of sexual aggression items, and the demographic measure. One experimenter stated that participation was voluntary and that participants should not share their responses with their classmates to ensure privacy. On the last page of the survey, there was an extra credit slip; students were instructed to print their names and tear off that sheet of paper. Upon completion, the participants passed the surveys and the extra credit slips forward to the experimenters en masse. One experimenter debriefed the participants and left copies of the debriefing sheet at the front of the room. Extra credit was given to all participants who filled out the extra credit slip.

Results and Discussion

To determine participants' perceptions of social status between Kate and Jason attending three types of schools, a 6 (item) x 2 (participant gender) mixed-model ANOVA was calculated with the six items as a within-subjects factor, and participant gender as a between-subjects factor. Assumptions of sphericity were violated so a Huynh-Feldt correction is reported. The Item x Participant Gender interaction was significant ($F(2.3, 260.1) = 5.09, p = .005$). Women's ratings of social status were more extreme than men's ratings.¹ Specifically, women rated Kate attending a private

university as having higher status ($t(113) = 2.20, p = .03$) and rated Kate attending technical college as having lower social status ($t(113) = -2.51, p = .01$) than what men had reported. Women also rated Jason attending technical college as having lower social status than what men had reported ($t(113) = -2.02, p = .05$). Women's status ratings of Kate and Jason attending a state college did not significantly differ from men's ratings ($ps > .30$). There was no main effect for participant gender ($F(1, 113) = 0.005, p = .94$) indicating that collapsing across items, women and men's ratings were not significantly different.

There was a main effect for the type of item ($F(2.3, 260.1) = 253.3, p < .001$). Participants rated Kate and Jason as having the same status level when they attended the same institution: there was no effect of one character having more status than the other due to their gender (all $ps > .10$). Of the three types of schools, participants rated Kate and Jason attending a private, prestigious university as having the most status ($M_{\text{Kate}} = 8.24; M_{\text{Jason}} = 8.39$). Participants rated Kate and Jason taking classes at a technical college, part-time as having the least status ($M_{\text{Kate}} = 4.27; M_{\text{Jason}} = 4.13$). Participants rated Kate and Jason attending a state college as having mid-level status ($M_{\text{Kate}} = 6.26; M_{\text{Jason}} = 6.39$). All pairwise comparisons between academic institutions were statistically significant ($ps < .001$; see Table 1).

In regards to participants' perception of rape in the date-rape scenario, participants thought that Jason raped Kate ($M = 9.70, SD = .74$) and did not think that Kate consented to having sex with Jason ($M = .22, SD = .59$). Comparing male and female participants, there was no difference in their perception of rape ($M_{\text{men}} = 9.68; M_{\text{women}} = 9.71; t(113) = .20, p = .84$). Eighty-one percent of participants ($n = 93$)

TABLE 1

Mean Values of Social Status Based on School Type and Character Gender

Type of School	Women	Men	Total
Private University			
Kate	8.51 _a (.16)	7.97 _b (.21)	8.24 _{ab} (.12)
Jason	8.62 _a (.16)	8.16 _{ab} (.24)	8.39 _{ab} (.14)
State College			
Kate	6.31 _c (.14)	6.23 _c (.20)	6.26 _c (.12)
Jason	6.51 _c (.15)	6.27 _c (.21)	6.39 _c (.13)
Dropped out/Tech School			
Kate	3.92 _d (.16)	4.62 _e (.21)	4.27 _{de} (.14)
Jason	3.85 _d (.15)	4.40 _e (.25)	4.13 _{de} (.14)

Note. Judgments were made on an 11-point scale (0 = *No social status*, 10 = *A great deal of social status*). The values in parentheses are standard errors. Means that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$.

definitely thought that Jason raped Kate (i.e., gave the highest rating of 10). Another 10.4% ($n = 12$) gave the next highest rating of 9, and another 7.8% ($n = 9$) gave the rating of 8. Only one person, a female participant, was unsure if Jason raped Kate (i.e., gave the midpoint rating of 5). In sum, 91.3% ($n = 105$) gave the two highest ratings to express their certainty that Jason raped Kate.

For participants' perception of consent, men rated Kate as more likely to have consented to sex than did women, but this difference was marginally significant ($M_{\text{men}} = .38$; $M_{\text{women}} = .14$; $t(53.2) = -1.81, p = .08$). Ninety-one percent ($n = 71$) of women responded "not at all" (rating of 0) whereas only 73% ($n = 27$) of men responded "not at all." Approximately 19% of male participants ($n = 7$), however, responded with the next lowest rating of "1" compared to 5.1% ($n = 4$) of female participants. Only four participants (two women and two men) gave a rating of "2" and another two participants (one woman and one man) gave a rating of "3." No one responded that they were unsure if Kate consented to sex (i.e., midpoint value of 5). Overall, 94.8% ($n = 109$) of male and female participants gave the two lowest ratings to express their certainty that Kate did not consent to have sex with Jason.

These results suggest that manipulating the type of school that Kate and Jason attended in the date-rape scenario would be an adequate manipulation of their social status. There was no gender difference in social status between Kate and Jason controlling for the type of school they attended. The results also suggest that the scenario was written so that most people would agree that Jason raped Kate and that Kate did not consent to have sex with Jason.

CHAPTER 4: Study 2

The goal of this study is to examine how the victim's status and the threat of a victim's rape allegation affect people's rape myth acceptance, particularly for people with a strong system justification orientation. Participants read a date-rape scenario in which the victim is the same status, higher status, or lower status than the perpetrator. Participants also read what the victim decides to do after the perpetrator rapes her: tell no one about the rape, tell a mutual friend, or report the perpetrator to the police. I hypothesized a three-way interaction between participant's System Justification Orientation, victim's relative status, and threat to perpetrator: high-System Justification Orientation participants who are in the condition in which the victim is lower status than the perpetrator but decides to report him to the police will report higher rape myth acceptance than will high-System Justification Orientation participants who are in the condition in which the lower-status victim decides to tell no one.

Because rape myths are stereotypes about men, women, and rape, *in general*, I also examined participants' victim blaming attitudes that were specific to the victim named in the scenario. I hypothesized that participants with a strong system justification orientation would be more motivated to blame the victim in the scenario when that victim was lower status and she threatened to report the perpetrator to the police.

I was also interested in determining if people mitigate the threat of a lower-status victim reporting a higher-status perpetrator to the police by espousing attitudes that disregard gender inequality. Gender-specific system justification assesses people's perceptions of gender equality in the United States (Jost & Kay, 2005). Similar to the first two hypotheses, I hypothesized that participants with a strong system justification

orientation would be more motivated to report that women in the United States have the same opportunities as do men when a lower-status victim threatened to report a higher-status perpetrator to the police.

To determine if System Justification Orientation differs from Social Dominance Orientation in its relationship to legitimizing rape, I conducted the same analyses substituting System Justification Orientation with Social Dominance Orientation.² That is, participants' Social Dominance Orientation, participant gender, victim's status, and the threat of a rape allegation predicted participants' rape myth acceptance, victim blame, and gender-specific system justification. I hypothesized that the pattern of results for rape myth acceptance, victim blame, and gender-specific system justification would be different for System Justification Orientation and Social Dominance Orientation. Because Social Dominance Orientation measures group dominance, I hypothesized that men with a strong Social Dominance Orientation would report higher rape myth acceptance, victim blame, and gender-specific system justification regardless of relative status of the victim and the degree of threat she posed to the perpetrator (i.e., Social Dominance Orientation x gender interaction). If the analyses for Social Dominance Orientation and System Justification Orientation showed the same pattern of results, however, then it may not be important to separate these constructs.

Method

Participants

Participants were 373 students from a medium-sized Midwestern Catholic university (53.9%, $n = 201$) and people from the U.S. who completed the survey online (n

= 172). University participants received extra credit in an Introductory Psychology course; online participants did not receive compensation for their participation. Overall, participants were predominately female (60.3%, $n = 225$) and White (81.2%, $n = 303$); the median age was 19 years ($M = 22.60$, $SD = 7.77$). There were an equal number of female university and online participants; however, there were more male university participants (60.1%) than male online participants ($\chi^2(4) = 3.85$, $p = .05$). University and online samples did not differ in ethnic composition. University participants were younger ($M = 20.07$, $SD = 5.01$) than online participants ($M = 25.55$, $SD = 9.25$; $t(371) = 7.24$, $p < .001$). University participants were also wealthier than online participants ($\chi^2(4) = 43.73$, $p < .001$). University participants comprised 72.7% of those who reported an annual income over \$100,000. Conversely, online participants comprised 76.8% of those who reported an annual income of less than \$25,000.

The median time to complete the survey was 21 minutes ($M = 25.52$, $SD = 24.78$). University participants completed the survey faster ($M = 20.59$, $SD = 4.28$) than did online participants ($M = 31.28$, $SD = 35.39$; $t(371) = 4.25$, $p < .001$). Participants who were at 99th percentile of the amount of time spent completing the survey (< 103.31 minutes, $n = 3$) were excluded from analyses leaving 370 participants.

Procedure

Student participants completed the survey in a computer lab. A maximum of ten participants completed the survey during each scheduled session. A female experimenter greeted the participants and they were seated at a computer. The experimenter explained the participants' rights and instructions on how to access the survey. Participants accessed the survey website, read the information sheet online, and completed the full

Social Dominance Orientation Scale. They were then asked to select their birthdate from nine choices to be assigned to condition. Based on their selection, participants read one of the nine date-rape scenarios. Afterwards, they completed the measure of victim and perpetrator blame, Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale–Short Form, and the measure of gender-specific system justification. The items within each of these scales were presented in random order. After the participants completed the survey, a debriefing form appeared on the computer screen. The female experimenter gave them an extra-credit slip and thanked them for their participation.

Non-student participants completed the survey that was posted on the following websites: Online Psychology Research (www.onlinepsychresearch.co.uk), Social Psychology Network (www.socialpsychology.org/expts.htm), and the Web Experiment List (genpsylab-wexlist.unizh.ch/). The procedure was the same as for the student participants but without the direction of an experimenter.

Measures

System Justification Orientation and Social Dominance Orientation. Participants first completed the full Social Dominance Orientation scale (Pratto et al., 1994). The full Social Dominance Orientation scale has 16 items and contains two subscales that assess a System Justification Orientation and a Social Dominance Orientation (Jost & Thompson, 2000; see Appendix B). System Justification Orientation is the belief that group inequality is acceptable without stipulating whose group receives unfair treatment (e.g., “We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups” reverse-scored). Social Dominance Orientation is the belief that it is acceptable for one’s group to dominate other groups (e.g., “To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on

other groups”). Participants indicated their response on a 9-point scale (1 = *Not at all agree*, 5 = *Somewhat agree*, 9 = *Very much agree*). Jost and Thompson reported coefficient alphas for System Justification Orientation and Social Dominance Orientation as .85 and .84, respectively. For this study, the coefficient alphas for System Justification Orientation and Social Dominance Orientation were .83 and .79, respectively. System Justification Orientation and Social Dominance Orientation scores were positively skewed (System Justification Orientation: Skew = .56, SE Skew = .13; Social Dominance Orientation: Skew = .63, SE Skew = .13). These scores were corrected using a log-transformation.³

Date-rape scenarios. Participants read one of nine date-rape scenarios depicting Kate and Jason. The date-rape scenarios were adapted from a set of materials by Abrams et al. (2003) and Yamawaki et al. (2007). Kate and Jason’s status were manipulated through the type of school they attended. In the scenario in which Kate is higher status than is Jason, Kate attends a prestigious, private university whereas Jason dropped out of college and attends a technical college part-time. In the scenario in which Kate is lower status, Kate dropped out of college and now attends technical college part-time whereas Jason attends a private university. In the scenario in which Kate and Jason are the same status, both are juniors at a state college. The threat to the perpetrator was manipulated through Kate’s actions after Jason sexually assaults her. At the end of the scenario, Kate decides that it is important to do one of the following: tell no one about the rape (no threat to Jason), tell a mutual friend about the assault (mid-level threat to Jason), or report the rape to the police and press charges against Jason (high threat to Jason).

Kate [is a junior at a prestigious, private university][is a junior at a state college][dropped out of college but now takes classes at a local technical college

part-time]. She and her friend, Laura, went to a college party. At the party, Laura introduced Kate to Jason, a friend of Laura's family. Jason [is a junior at a prestigious, private university][is also a junior at a state college][dropped out of college but now takes classes at a local technical college part-time]. Kate and Jason hit it off immediately and spent the night talking, laughing, and flirting with each other. As Kate and her friend, Laura, were leaving the party Jason asked Kate for her number and if she wanted to go out with him. Kate readily agreed. The next weekend, Kate and Jason had dinner together and later went to Jason's apartment to watch a movie. As they watched the movie they started kissing. When Jason started undressing Kate, she said she was uncomfortable and that she wanted him to stop. Jason did not stop, however. Although Kate resisted, Jason continued undressing her, held her down and had sexual intercourse with Kate. Afterwards, Kate decided that it was important [to tell no one about this incident] [to tell her friend, Laura, about this incident] [to report this incident to the police and press charges against Jason].

Measure of victim and perpetrator blame. Participants completed an 11-item measure of victim and perpetrator blame adapted from Abrams et al. (2003). See Appendix C. Participants indicated their responses using a 9-point scale (1 = *Not at all*, 5 = *Somewhat*, 9 = *Completely or Totally*). For the two items in which participants had to assign blame or sympathy, participants used a different 9-point scale (1 = *Jason*, 5 = *Kate & Jason equally*; 9 = *Kate*). Four items were reverse-scored and the mean was calculated. Higher scores indicated more victim-blaming. Abrams et al. reported a coefficient alpha of .75. The coefficient alpha for this sample was .82. Scores were positively skewed (Skew = 1.59, SE Skew = .13) and were log-transformed.

Rape myth acceptance. Participants completed the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA-SF; Payne et al., 1999). This scale contained 20 items and had a 9-point Likert scale (1 = *Not at all agree*, 5 = *Somewhat agree*, 9 = *Very much agree*) to assess agreement with myths about women as victims of rape, male perpetrators, and rape as a violent crime (e.g., "A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape."). See Appendix D. The total score was calculated by computing the mean. Higher scores

signified more agreement with rape myths. Payne et al. reported a coefficient alpha of .93. The coefficient alpha for this study was .88. Scores were positively skewed (Skew = .88, Skew SE = .13) and were log-transformed.

Measure of Gender-Specific System Justification. Participants' completed Jost and Kay's (2005) measure of gender-specific system justification. This measure assessed people's attitudes toward the current state of sex-role division in the United States ("In general, relations between men and women are fair in the United States."). See Appendix E. Kay and Jost reported a coefficient alpha of .65. Because their coefficient alpha was lower than desired, four items were added from Schmader, Major, Eccleston, and McCoy's (2001) measure that assessed the perceived legitimacy of status difference between men and women in United States ("America is an open society in which both men and women can achieve higher status."). Schmader et al. reported a coefficient alpha of .72. Participants were asked to indicate the strength of agreement using a 9-point scale (1 = *Not at all agree*, 5 = *Somewhat agree*, 9 = *Very much agree*). An overall score was calculated using the mean. The coefficient alpha was .86.

Scenario manipulation checks. Participants were asked a series of questions to determine if they read the date-rape scenario and if the threat manipulation within the scenarios worked. To check the manipulation of status, participants indicated where Kate and Jason went to school. To check the manipulation of threat, participants were asked who Kate decided that it was important to tell about the incident (no one, her friend, her parents, a school counselor, the police). Participants also indicated how much Kate's decision would negatively affect Jason (1 = *Not at all*, 5 = *Somewhat*, 9 = *Very much*). See Appendix F.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Manipulation check. Seventy-three participants (19.7% of the sample) incorrectly remembered where Kate or Jason went to school or whom Kate told. Of these 73 participants, significantly more participants who completed the survey online misremembered the story (61.6%, $n = 45$) compared to the college students who completed the survey in person ($\chi^2(1) = 9.34, p < .01$). There was no gender difference in the sub-sample of participants who misremembered the story ($\chi^2(1) = 0.07, p > .10$). Participants who misremembered the story were excluded from the main analyses leaving 297 participants.

Differences between the Online Sample and the University Sample. A MANOVA was conducted to determine if the university sample and online sample differed on any of variable means. Means and standard deviations (untransformed) are presented in Table 2. The overall MANOVA was not significant ($F(5, 290) = 0.48, p = .79$) indicating that there were no significant differences between the university and online samples on these variables.

Threat manipulation. To determine if the threat manipulation worked, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if participants reported differences in how Kate's decision about who to tell would negatively affect Jason. There was a main effect of threat ($F(2, 279) = 107.92, p < .001, \eta^2 = .44$). Participants who read that Kate was going

TABLE 2

Descriptive Statistics of Variables for the University (n = 173) and Online Samples (n = 123)

Variable	University	Online
System Justification	3.13 (1.37)	3.04 (1.40)
Social Dominance	2.84 (1.37)	2.92 (1.48)
Victim Blame	1.92 (0.74)	2.02 (1.06)
RMA	2.32 (0.85)	2.41 (1.10)
GSJ	5.17 (0.78)	5.12 (0.79)

Note. RMA = Rape Myth Acceptance, GSJ = Gender-specific System Justification. Judgments were made on a 9-point scale (1 = *Not at all*, 9 = *Completely*). The values in parentheses are standard deviations.

to tell no one reported that her actions would affect Jason significantly less ($M = 2.79$) than did participants who read that Kate was going to tell a mutual friend ($M = 5.86, p < .001$); those who read that Kate was going to tell a mutual friend thought that her actions would affect Jason significantly less than did participants who read that Kate was going to report Jason to the police ($M = 8.03, ps < .001$). There were no other significant main effects or interactions. This finding indicates that the threat manipulation worked.

System Justification Orientation and Social Dominance Orientation Scores across Conditions. To determine if participants' System Justification Orientation and Social Dominance Orientation scores were equal across conditions, a 9 (condition) x 2 (participant gender) MANOVA was conducted. Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 3. The main effect of Condition was not significant ($F(16, 554) = 1.27, p = .21$) and the interaction between participant gender and condition was not significant ($F(16, 554) = 1.09, p = .36$).

There was a main effect of gender for System Justification Orientation ($F(1, 279) = 9.34, p = .002, \eta^2 = .03$) such that men reported higher levels of System Justification Orientation ($M_{in} = 1.13$) than did women ($M_{in} = .95$). The main effect of gender for Social Dominance Orientation was marginally significant ($F(1, 279) = 3.34, p = .07$) such that men reported marginally higher Social Dominance Orientation ($M_{in} = 1.00$) than did women ($M_{in} = .88$). Both men and women reported significantly higher levels of System Justification Orientation than Social Dominance Orientation (men: $t(116) = -3.02, p = .003$; women: $t(179) = -2.04, p = .04$).

TABLE 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Participants' System Justification Orientation and Social Dominance Orientation by Condition for Women (n = 180) and Men (n = 117).

Condition			SJO(ln)	SDO(ln)	n
Victim Lower	Tells No one	Women	.84 (.38)	.99 (.45)	20
		Men	1.05 (.32)	.85 (.50)	11
	Tells Friend	Women	1.08 (.39)	.93 (.41)	22
		Men	1.36 (.34)	1.14 (.46)	18
	Tells Police	Women	.92 (.49)	.75 (.65)	18
		Men	.98 (.46)	.67 (.62)	9
Victim Equal	Tells No one	Women	.94 (.50)	.90 (.48)	21
		Men	1.14 (.51)	.97 (.50)	16
	Tells Friend	Women	.98 (.47)	.88 (.47)	18
		Men	1.24 (.45)	1.06 (.33)	13
	Tells Police	Women	1.02 (.52)	1.03 (.56)	23
		Men	1.09 (.36)	.95 (.48)	6
Victim Higher	Tells No one	Women	.90 (.47)	.70 (.67)	14
		Men	1.33 (.39)	1.20 (.48)	12
	Tells Friend	Women	.86 (.56)	.61 (.56)	22
		Men	1.01 (.48)	1.02 (.54)	16
	Tells Police	Women	1.00 (.44)	1.01 (.51)	22
		Men	.89 (.59)	.99 (.44)	16

Note. SJO(ln) = System Justification Orientation (log), SDO(ln) = Social Dominance Orientation (log). Judgments were made on a 9-point scale (1 = *Not at all*, 9 = *Completely*). Values in parentheses are standard deviations.

Intercorrelations between Variables

Pearson correlations among the predictors are presented in Table 4. Men's ($r = .53, p < .001$) and women's ($r = .52, p < .001$) correlations between Social Dominance Orientation and System Justification Orientation were robust. Most of the correlations between System Justification Orientation, Social Dominance Orientation, Victim Blame, Rape Myth Acceptance, and gender-specific system justification were positive (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Pratto et al., 1994).

Multivariate Assumptions

Scatterplots between System Justification Orientation, Social Dominance Orientation, victim blame, rape myth acceptance, and gender-specific system justification were linear. Multicollinearity was checked using multiple regression; tolerance levels were at acceptable levels (.60 and above) for the additive model (Step 1) but were below .60 for the hierarchical interaction models (Steps 2, 3, and 4). Two participants were identified as high leverage (Cook's $> .20$; Leverage $> .55$) and were omitted from analyses, leaving 295 participants.

Using System Justification Orientation to Predict Rape Myth Acceptance, Victim Blame, and Gender-Specific System Justification

Three hierarchical multiple regressions computed the effect of participants' System Justification Orientation score on participants' (1) rape myth acceptance, (2) victim blame, and (3) gender-specific system justification. Predictor variables were participants' System Justification Orientation score, participant gender, Kate's status

TABLE 4

Intercorrelations between Variables for Women (above the diagonal, n = 180) and Men (below the diagonal, n = 115).

Subscale	SJO	SDO	Blame	RMA	GSJ
SJO	—	.52***	.17*	.19*	.12
SDO	.53***	—	.31***	.46***	.32***
Blame	.27**	.31***	—	.56***	.14 [†]
RMA	.17 [†]	.34***	.53***	—	.23**
GSJ	.25**	.19*	.20*	.34***	—

Note. SJO = System Justification Orientation, SDO = Social Dominance Orientation, Blame = Victim blame, RMA = Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, GSJ = Gender-specific system justification.

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

relative to Jason's, and the level of threat Kate posed to Jason. In Step 1, System Justification Orientation, participant gender, level of threat, and victim's relative status were entered. In Step 2, all possible two-way interactions were entered. In Step 3, all possible three-way interactions were entered and, in Step 4, all possible four-way interactions were entered. Continuous and categorical variables were coded to test the hypotheses (West, Aiken, & Krull, 1996). System Justification Orientation scores were centered and participant gender was contrast coded (-1 = female; +1 = male). For Kate's relative status, dummy variables were created for Equal (i.e., Kate and Jason are equal status) and Higher (i.e., Kate is higher status than Jason) so that the comparison group was Lower (i.e., Kate is lower status than Jason). For threat to Jason, dummy variables were created for Friend (i.e., Kate tells a mutual friend about Jason raping her) and Police (i.e., Kate reports Jason to the police) so that the comparison group was No one (i.e., Kate tells no one).

It was predicted that high-System Justification Orientation participants would report higher rape myth acceptance, victim blame, and gender-specific system justification when lower-status Kate decided to report higher-status Jason to the police. Thus, the System Justification Orientation x Lower x Police interaction should be a significant predictor (i.e., Step 3 or 4 in the multiple regression). All simple slope analyses were computed on a web-based calculator (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006).

Predicting Rape Myth Acceptance. Using System Justification Orientation to predict rape myth acceptance, Step 1 with main effects only was significant and accounted for 8.0% of the variance in rape myth acceptance ($F(6, 284) = 4.09, p = .001$). On average men reported higher levels of rape myth acceptance than did women ($\beta = .18$,

$t = 3.16, p = .002$). System Justification Orientation was positively associated with rape myth acceptance ($\beta = .16, t = 2.81, p = .005$). Victim's relative status or the threat she posed to the perpetrator did not predict rape myth acceptance ($ps > .10$).

Step 2 did not add a significant amount of variance to this model and none of the two-way interaction terms were significant ($ps > .10$). Step 3, however, added 6.6% of the variance to the model ($p = .06$) and, including Steps 1 and 2, accounted for 17.1% of the variance in rape myth acceptance ($F(31, 263) = 1.75, p = .01$; see Table 5). Step 4 did not add a significant amount of variance to this model and none of the four-way interaction terms were significant ($ps > .10$).

In Step 3, the System Justification Orientation x Lower x Police interaction was significant ($\beta = .22, t = 2.30, p = .02$) and the System Justification Orientation x Lower x No one interaction was marginally significant ($\beta = -.55, t = -1.78, p = .08$; see Figure 1). Consistent with prediction, analysis of the simple slopes showed that high-System Justification Orientation participants reported lower rape myth acceptance when lower-status Kate decided to tell no one than when she decided to report higher-status Jason to the police ($B = .37, t = 1.97, p = .05$). By comparison, low-System Justification Orientation participants' rape myth acceptance was not significantly affected when lower-status Kate reported higher-status Jason to the police compared to when she told no one ($B = -.28, t = -1.62, p = .11$).⁴

The System Justification Orientation x Equal x Police interaction was significant ($\beta = -.30, t = -2.22, p = .03$). Simple slope analysis again showed that high-System Justification Orientation participants reported lower rape myth acceptance when lower-

TABLE 5

Multiple Regression Predicting Participants' Rape Myth Acceptance Based on Participants' System Justification Orientation Level (n = 295).

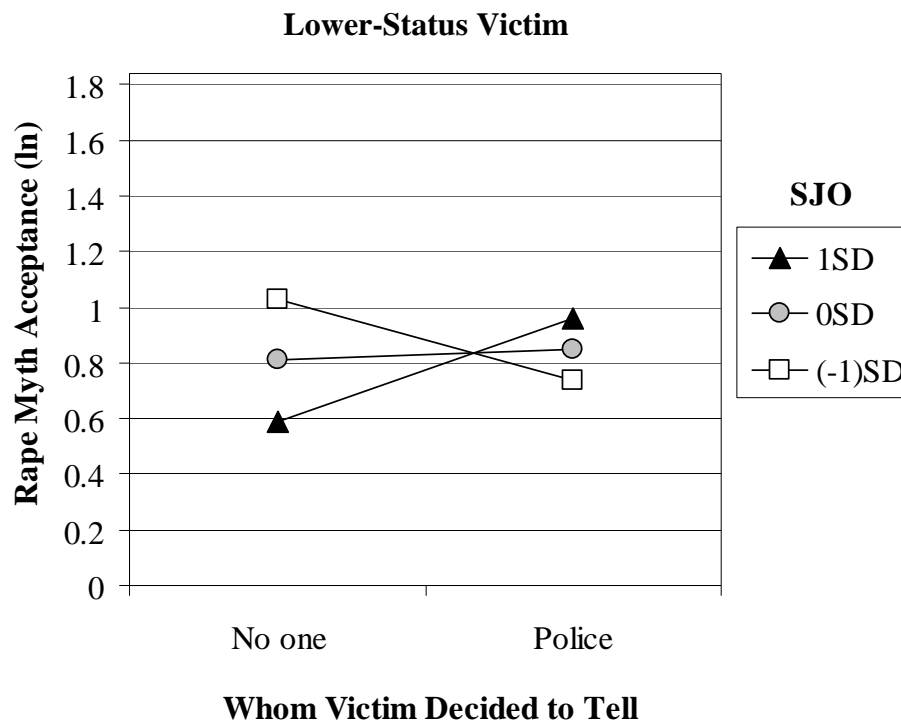
Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Step 1 $R^2 = .08^{***}$			
Participant gender	.08	.02	.19**
SJO	.14	.05	.16*
Step 2 $\Delta R^2 = .02$			
Step 3 $\Delta R^2 = .07^\dagger$			
Mean SJO x Lower x No one (Intercept)	.81	.08	
Mean SJO x Gender x Lower x No one	.15	.08	.36 [†]
SJO x Lower x No one	-.47	.26	-.55 [†]
SJO x Lower x Police	.70	.30	.47*
SJO x Equal x No one	.67	.29	.45*
SJO x Higher x No one	.59	.31	.43 [†]
SJO x Equal x Friend	-.76	.37	-.27*
SJO x Equal x Police	-.79	.36	-.30*
SJO x Higher x Police	-.89	.37	-.40*
Step 4 $\Delta R^2 = .005$			

Note. SJO = System Justification Orientation. For Step 3, the comparison group is the intercept which is (averaging across male and female participants) mean-level SJO, and lower-status victim telling no one about the perpetrator raping her.

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

FIGURE 1

Participants' Rape Myth Acceptance when Lower-Status Victim Decides to Tell No one Versus Report Perpetrator to the Police Moderated by Participants' System Justification Orientation.



Note. System Justification Orientation x Lower x Police ($\beta = .22, t = 2.30, p = .02$).
 Simple slope for strong System Justification Orientation (+1SD: $B = .37, t = 1.97, p = .05$).
 Simple slope for weak System Justification Orientation (-1SD: $B = -.28, t = -1.62, p = .11$).

status Kate decided to tell no one than when she decided to report higher-status Jason to the police. By comparison, participants' System Justification Orientation level was unrelated to their rape myth acceptance when equal-status Kate decided to tell no one compared to when she decided to report Jason to the police ($ps > .10$).

The System Justification Orientation x Higher x Police interaction was significant ($\beta = -.40, t = -2.42, p = .02$). Simple slope analysis again showed that high-System Justification Orientation participants reported lower rape myth acceptance when lower-status Kate decided to tell no one than when she decided to report higher-status Jason to the police. By comparison, participants' System Justification Orientation level was unrelated to their rape myth acceptance when higher-status Kate decided to tell no one compared to when she decided to report lower-status Jason to the police ($ps > .10$).

The System Justification Orientation x Equal x Friend interaction was also significant ($\beta = -.27, t = -2.06, p = .04$). Simple slope analysis found that participants' System Justification Orientation level was unrelated to their rape myth acceptance when equal-status Kate decided to tell no one compared to when she told a mutual friend ($ps > .10$). Although high-System Justification Orientation participants reported lower rape myth acceptance when lower-status Kate decided tell no one than when she decided to tell a mutual friend, this slope was not significant ($p = .12$).

The gender x Lower x No one interaction was marginally significant ($\beta = .36, t = 1.79, p = .08$). Men reported marginally higher rape myth acceptance than did women when lower-status Kate told no one about higher-status Jason raping her.

Predicting Victim Blame. Using System Justification Orientation to predict victim blame, the overall model including only main effects was significant and

accounted for 4.9% of the variance in victim blame ($F(6, 288) = 2.48, p = .02$). System Justification Orientation was positively associated with victim blame ($\beta = .19, t = 3.24, p = .001$). There was no difference between male and female participants ($p > .10$). Step 2 added 5.7% of the variance to the model and this increase was marginally significant ($p = .07$). This model, including Step 1, accounted for 11.8% of the variance in victim blame ($F(13, 275) = 1.94, p = .01$; see Table 6). Against prediction, neither Step 3 nor Step 4 added a significant amount of variance to this model and none of the interaction terms in these steps were significant ($ps > .10$).

In Step 2, the Lower x Police interaction was significant ($\beta = -.22, t = -2.14, p = .03$). Averaging across System Justification Orientation-level, participants blamed lower-status Kate more when she told no one about higher-status Jason raping her than when she reported him to the police.

The Equal x Friend interaction was significant ($\beta = .33, t = 3.15, p = .002$). Averaging across participants' System Justification Orientation level, participants reported higher victim blame when lower-status Kate told no one about higher-status Jason raping her than when she told a mutual friend ($B = -.25, t = -2.54, p = .01$). By comparison, participants reported the same level of victim blame when equal-status Kate told no one about Jason raping her or told her friend ($B = .18, t = 1.67, p = .10$).

The Higher x Friend interaction was also significant ($\beta = .24, t = 2.03, p = .04$). As stated above, participants blamed lower-status Kate more when she told no one than when she told a friend. By comparison, participants reported the same level of victim blame when higher-status Kate told no one about lower-status Jason raping her than when she told a mutual friend ($B = .03, t = 0.30, p > .10$).

TABLE 6

Multiple Regression Predicting Participants' Victim Blame Based on Participants' System Justification Orientation Level (n = 295)

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Step 1 $R^2 = .05^*$			
SJO	.16	.05	.19**
Step 2 $\Delta R^2 = .07^\dagger$			
Mean SJO x Lower x No one (Intercept)	.76	.07	
Mean SJO x Lower x Friend	-.25	.10	-.31**
Mean SJO x Lower x Police	-.22	.10	-.26*
Mean SJO x Equal x No one	-.20	.10	-.24*
Mean SJO x Equal x Friend	.43	.14	.33**
Mean SJO x Higher x Friend	.28	.14	.24*
SJO x Higher	.25	.13	.19 [†]
Step 3 $\Delta R^2 = .03$			
Step 4 $\Delta R^2 = .01$			

Note. SJO = System Justification Orientation. For Step 2, the comparison group is the intercept which is lower-status victim, telling no one about the perpetrator raping her, averaging across SJO-level and participant gender.

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

The System Justification Orientation x Higher interaction was marginally significant ($\beta = .25, t = 1.94, p = .05$). Simple slope analysis showed that low-System Justification Orientation participants blamed the victim more when she was lower status than the perpetrator than when she was higher status ($B = -.28, t = -2.31, p = .02$). High-System Justification Orientation participants reported the same amount of victim blame no matter if the victim was lower or higher status ($B = -.04, t = -.037, p > .10$).

Predicting Gender-Specific System Justification. Using System Justification Orientation to predict gender-specific system justification, Step 1 including only main effects was significant and accounted for 4.8% of the variance in gender-specific system justification ($F(6, 287) = 2.42, p = .03$). System Justification Orientation was positively associated with gender-specific system justification ($\beta = .15, t = 2.58, p = .01$). Men reported marginally higher gender-specific system justification than did women ($\beta = .10, t = 1.68, p = .09$). The relative status of the victim or the amount of threat she posed to the perpetrator in the date-rape scenario did not directly affect participants' gender-specific system justification. Steps 2, 3, and 4 with the interaction terms did not add a significant amount of variance to this model ($ps > .10$): all possible 2-way, 3-way, and 4-way interactions were tested and none was significant. Against prediction, participants did not report higher gender-specific system justification when the lower-status victim decided to report the perpetrator to the police.

Using Social Dominance Orientation to Predict Rape Myth Acceptance, Victim Blame, and Gender-Specific System Justification

I hypothesized that the pattern of results for rape myth acceptance, victim blame, and gender-specific system justification would be different for System Justification

Orientation and Social Dominance Orientation. Because Social Dominance Orientation measures ingroup dominance, I hypothesized that men with a strong social dominance orientation would espouse more rape myths, victim blame, and gender-specific system justification regardless of relative status of the victim and the degree of threat she posed to the perpetrator compared to women with a strong social dominance orientation (i.e., Social Dominance Orientation x gender).

Three hierarchical multiple regressions computed participants' (1) rape myth acceptance, (2) victim blame, and (3) gender-specific system justification. In Step 1, participants' Social Dominance Orientation score, participant gender, victim's relative status, and the level of threat she posed to the perpetrator were entered. In Step 2, all possible two-way interactions were entered. In Step 3, all possible three-way interactions were entered and, in Step 4, all possible four-way interactions were entered. Social Dominance Orientation scores were centered and participant gender was contrast coded (-1 = female; +1 = male). Kate's relative status and threat to Jason were dummy-coded as in previous analyses. Again, the comparison group was Lower (i.e., Kate is lower status than Jason) and No one (i.e., Kate tells no one).

Predicting Rape Myth Acceptance. Using Social Dominance Orientation to predict rape myth acceptance, Step 1 with main effects only was significant and accounted for 21.2% of the variance in rape myth acceptance ($F(6, 288) = 12.94, p < .001$). On average, men reported higher levels of rape myth acceptance than did women ($\beta = .17, t = 3.25, p = .001$). Social Dominance Orientation was positively associated with rape myth acceptance ($\beta = .40, t = 7.54, p < .001$). Steps 2, 3, and 4 with the interaction terms did not add a significant amount of variance to this model ($p > .10$) and

none of the interactions were significant ($ps > .10$). Against prediction, the Social Dominance Orientation x gender interaction was not significant.

Predicting Victim Blame. Using Social Dominance Orientation to predict victim blame, the Step 1 including only main effects was significant and accounted for 10.0% of the variance in victim blame ($F(6, 288) = 5.33, p < .001$). Social Dominance Orientation was positively associated with victim blame ($\beta = .30, t = 5.23, p < .001$). There was no difference between male and female participants ($p > .10$). The relative status of the victim or the amount of threat she posed to the perpetrator in the date-rape scenario did not directly affect participants' victim-blaming attitudes.

Step 2 added 6.5% of the variance to the model and this increase was marginally significant ($p = .07$). This model, including Step 1, accounted for 16.5% of the variance in victim blame ($F(13, 275) = 2.86, p < .001$; see Table 7). Neither Step 3 nor Step 4 added a significant amount of variance to this model and none of the interaction terms in these steps were significant ($ps > .10$).

Against prediction, the Social Dominance Orientation x gender interaction was not significant. The Lower x Police interaction was marginally significant ($\beta = -.20, t = -1.88, p = .06$). Participants reported marginally higher victim blame when lower-status Kate more when she told no one about higher-status Jason raping her than when she reported him to the police.

The Equal x Friend interaction was significant ($\beta = .44, t = 3.38, p = .001$). Averaging across participants' Social Dominance Orientation level, participants reported higher victim blame when lower-status Kate told no one about higher-status Jason raping her than when she told a mutual friend ($B = -.27, t = -2.81, p = .005$). By comparison,

TABLE 7

Multiple Regression Predicting Participants' Victim Blame Based on Participants' Social Dominance Orientation Level (n = 295)

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Step 1 $R^2 = .08^{**}$			
SDO	.23	.04	.30 ^{**}
Step 2 $\Delta R^2 = .06^\dagger$			
Mean SDO x Lower x No one (Intercept)	.76	.07	
Mean SDO x Lower x Friend	-.27	.09	-.32 ^{**}
Mean SDO x Lower x Police	-.20	.10	-.23 [†]
Mean SDO x Equal x No one	-.20	.09	-.24 [*]
Mean SDO x Equal x Friend	.44	.13	.33 ^{**}
Mean SDO x Higher x Friend	.30	.13	.26 [*]
SDO x Higher	.18	.10	.15 [†]
Step 3 $\Delta R^2 = .04$			
Step 4 $\Delta R^2 = .02$			

Note. SDO = Social Dominance Orientation. For Step 2, the comparison group is the intercept which is lower-status victim, telling no one about the perpetrator raping her, averaging across SDO-level and participant gender.

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

participants reported the same level of victim blame when equal-status Kate told no one about Jason raping her or told her friend ($B = .17, t = 1.38, p > .10$).

The Higher x Friend interaction was also significant ($\beta = .30, t = 2.26, p = .02$). As stated above, participants blamed lower-status Kate more when she told no one than when she told a friend. By comparison, participants reported the same level of victim blame when higher-status Kate told no one about lower-status Jason raping her than when she told a mutual friend ($B = .04, t = 0.28, p > .10$).

The Social Dominance Orientation x Higher interaction was marginally significant ($\beta = .18, t = 1.72, p = .09$). Simple slope analysis showed that low-Social Dominance Orientation participants blamed the victim more when she was lower status than the perpetrator than when she was higher status ($B = -.24, t = -2.16, p = .03$). High-Social Dominance Orientation participants reported the same amount of victim blame no matter if the victim was lower or higher status ($B = -.07, t = -0.06, p > .10$).

Predicting Gender-Specific System Justification. Using Social Dominance Orientation to predict gender-specific system justification, Step 1 including only main effects was significant and accounted for 9.7% of the variance in gender-specific system justification ($F(6, 287) = 5.15, p < .001$). Social Dominance Orientation was positively associated with gender-specific system justification ($\beta = .27, t = 4.76, p < .001$). There was no difference between male and female participants ($p = .10$). The relative status of the victim or the amount of threat she posed to the perpetrator in the date-rape scenario did not directly affect participants' gender-specific system justification. Steps 2, 3, and 4 did not add a significant amount of variance to this model ($p > .10$) and none of the

interaction terms were significant ($ps > .10$). Against prediction, the Social Dominance Orientation x gender interaction was not significant.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to determine what factors influence people's rape myth acceptance. Specifically, this study determined how rape myth acceptance is affected by individual factors, such as people's gender and their system justification orientation, as well as situational factors, such as the victim's status relative to the perpetrator and the threat posed to the perpetrator by the victim's rape allegation. In addition to predicting rape myth acceptance, I was also interested in determining how these individual and situational factors would predict how much people blamed the victim and believed that women and men have equal opportunities in the U.S (i.e., gender-specific system justification). Further, as a comparison to system justification orientation, I examined if people's social dominance orientation-level also influenced rape myth acceptance, victim blame, and gender-specific system justification.

Based on system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994), I expected that rape myth acceptance would increase for people with a strong system justification orientation in the situation where a low-status victim threatened to press charges against a high-status perpetrator. Controlling for situational factors and people's system justification orientation, men reported higher rape myth acceptance than did women. This suggests that people's system justification orientation (i.e., acceptance of the status quo) did not account for gender differences in rape myth acceptance. It could be that men identified more with the male perpetrator, but this seems unlikely: previous research has shown that, compared to women, men report higher rape myth acceptance regardless of the

perpetrator's or victim's gender (Chapleau et al., 2008). Rather, men may report higher rape myth acceptance because they focus more on the sexual aspect of rape. Chapleau and Oswald (2010) found that men explicitly associate consensual sex with power to a greater degree than do women and that an explicit power-sex association positively correlates with men's rape myth acceptance. If men on average are more likely to believe the "sex myth" that consensual sex typically involves dominating a sexual partner, then they may also be more likely to believe rape myths (e.g., women enjoy being forced to have sex), particularly in cases of date rape where consensual sex is a possible outcome of a date. Thus, the gender difference in rape myth acceptance may be due to men's sexual socialization, higher testosterone levels (see Carney & Mason, 2010), or a confluence of the two.

Controlling for participants' gender, people with a stronger system justification orientation reported higher rape myth acceptance than did people with a weaker system justification orientation. People with a strong system justification orientation are more accepting of group hierarchy and the status quo, regardless of whether they are at the top or the bottom of the hierarchy (Jost & Thompson, 2000). People who accept the status quo may be more likely to believe that women perpetrate their own rapes because, if they acknowledge that rape is a social problem, then they must acknowledge that something is wrong with the status quo.

Although people with a strong system justification orientation reported higher rape myth acceptance overall, their rape myth acceptance-level was influenced by the situation. Participants with a strong system justification orientation who read that a low-status victim would tell no one and allow the high-status perpetrator to go unpunished

reported lower rape myth acceptance than when that victim decided to press charges against him. All participants in this study reported a low rape myth acceptance-level suggesting that people still believe some rape myths to a small degree. It is interesting, then, that people with a strong system justification orientation endorsed rape myths to an even lesser degree when the low-status victim decided to tell no one. Because strong-system justification people would be sensitive to the usurping of the status quo, it follows that when the low-status victim chose to not seek justice there would be less of a need to endorse rape myths. This suggests that, for people with a strong system justification orientation, rape myths serve as a legitimizing ideology and that low rape myth acceptance is the reward (or lack of punishment) for the low-status victim who knows her place.

It is important to note that this effect occurred in the participants' own minds – they were not called to use rape myths to sway other people's opinions. This shows that rape myth acceptance is malleable and that it can shift depending on the relative status of the characters and the threat posed to the perpetrator. This finding refutes our understanding of rape myth acceptance as a stable trait. Recent research has started examining the stability of people's attitudes (Garcia-Marques, Santos, & Mackie, 2006) and how people use ideologies to support the social hierarchy (Knowles, Lowery, Hogan, & Chow, 2009). The findings in this study are consistent with this research. Like other stereotypes and ideologies, rape myth acceptance is dynamic and may be employed to satisfy socially-motivated goals such as maintaining the status quo.

System justification theory was partially supported given that the findings were specific to people with a strong system justification orientation. The findings, however,

were inconsistent with system justification theory because previous research has shown that everyone (regardless of system justification orientation-level) legitimizes the system more when the system is under threat (Jost, Glaser, et al., 2003). This discrepancy may be due to how system threat was operationalized. In this study system threat was operationalized as a single rape victim threatening to report her attacker to the police. In comparison, Jost, Glaser, and colleagues operationalized system threat as waning national security and pride. Thus, a single rape victim reporting a rapist to the police may not have been a big enough threat to provoke all people to defend the high-status perpetrator. Future studies could examine if system threat on a national scale relates to people's rape myth acceptance.

Furthermore, one question is why was there was no difference in rape myth acceptance when the high-status victim pressed charges against the low-status perpetrator versus when she chose to tell no one? The malleability of rape myth acceptance may be based on the specific situation where the victim is lower status than the perpetrator, based on the victim's low status (regardless of the perpetrator's status), or based on the perpetrator's high status (regardless of the victim's status). Future work manipulating other combinations of the victim and perpetrator's status (e.g., low-status perpetrator rapes low-status victim) would shed light on this issue.

It is also possible that the high-status victim in the date-rape scenario "lowered herself" by agreeing to date a lower-status male and by being victimized by him. Thus, people with a strong system justification orientation may report lower rape myth acceptance when a high-status woman is a raped by a low-status *stranger* and she decides to press charges. This is also an area for future research.

This study also examined how individual and situational factors would influence people's willingness to blame the victim. I expected the same finding for victim blame that had been found for rape myth acceptance: people with a strong system justification orientation would blame the victim more when the low-status victim threatened to report the perpetrator to the police compared to when she told no one. This hypothesis, however, was not supported. Like rape myth acceptance, men and women with a strong system justification orientation reported marginally higher victim blame averaging across the situation factors. That is, people who were motivated to accept the status quo were also motivated to state that Kate was at least partially responsible for Jason raping her. Again, if people with a strong system justification orientation acknowledged that Jason was wholly responsible for raping Kate, then they may have to acknowledge that violence and injustice exist, and that the status quo is flawed. If there is distress associated with this knowledge (Jost & Hunyady, 2005), holding the victim partially responsible could mitigate the distress.

Unlike the results found for rape myth acceptance, victim blame was predicted by an unexpected interaction between people's system justification orientation-level and the victim's relative status, controlling for the threat the victim posed to the perpetrator (i.e., what she decided to do after the rape). Although people with a weak system justification orientation on average blamed Kate less than did strong system justification orientation-people, weak system justification orientation-people blamed Kate more when she was lower status than Jason. People with a weak system justification orientation are less accepting of the status quo and believe that steps should be taken to equalize groups. It follows that they would be more likely to acknowledge that rape is a social problem and

would want a rape victim to seek justice. However, this finding indicates that even people with a weak system justification orientation are somewhat biased against a low-status victim no matter if she reports the high-status perpetrator to the police, tells her friend, or keeps silent.

Furthermore, people (regardless of system justification orientation level) blamed the low-status victim more (not less) when she decided to tell no one compared to when she decided to report the high-status perpetrator to the police or to tell her friend. This finding was only true when the victim was low-status: people reported the same level of victim blame toward the equal-status and high-status victim regardless of whether she told no one, her friend, or the police. Participants may have tried to divine why the low-status Kate chose not to tell anyone about high-status Jason raping her. One reason Kate would tell no one is if she blamed herself for the rape. Specifically, by deciding that it was important to tell no one, participants may have thought that low-status Kate was admitting some culpability. Thus, participants' higher victim blaming would indicate that they (wrongly) agreed with low-status Kate's perception of events. Participants "agreed" less (i.e., less victim blame) when Kate was equal- or higher-status than Jason. This finding is disturbing because it indicates that people would be less likely to discourage a rape victim from keeping silent if she was lower-status than the perpetrator.

Comparing the pattern of results that predict rape myth acceptance and victim blame suggests that rape myth acceptance and victim blame are influenced by different factors. One reason different factors predicted rape myth acceptance and victim blame is that rape myths are stereotypes about female victims and male perpetrators in general, whereas victim blame is specific to a particular victim and perpetrator. Because rape

myth acceptance was influenced by people's acceptance of the status quo combined with the low-status victim's willingness to maintain the status quo, this indicates that rape myth acceptance is an ideology that people use to legitimize injustice as "the way things are."

In contrast victim blame is not an ideology, but it may be an application of ideological beliefs. In this study, participants completed the victim blame measure first and the rape myth acceptance scale second. The order of measures may have produced different patterns of results for victim blame and rape myth acceptance. Bohner et al. (1998, 2005) found that the correlation between men's rape proclivity and rape myth acceptance was higher when male participants completed the rape myth acceptance scale first and the rape proclivity measure second. Bohner and colleagues concluded that men use rape myths to lower their inhibitions to rape as opposed to using rape myths to justify their aggressive behavior after the fact. Although not tested, Bohner et al.'s finding may apply to people's victim blaming. Perhaps if people completed the rape myth acceptance measure first and victim blame measure second, then the same factors that predicted rape myth acceptance would have predicted victim blame. That is, people with a strong system justification orientation would have blamed the low-status victim less when she chose to keep silent than when she reported the high-status perpetrator to the police. This would be interesting to determine in future studies. Regardless, this study suggests that, although rape myth acceptance and victim blame are positively correlated and seem to measure similar attitudes, they are not interchangeable. Researchers who study people's attitudes about rape should be careful when deciding between these measures or they should consider including both.

This study also examined the effect of individual and situational factors on people's gender-specific system justification. People with a strong system justification orientation were more likely to justify life in the United States as fair for men and women. As with rape myth acceptance, I hypothesized that people with a strong system justification orientation would report higher gender-specific system justification when a lower-status victim threatened to report the perpetrator to the police. This hypothesis was not supported. This may be because, although gender-specific system justification is a legitimizing ideology, it does not legitimize rape or violence. Kay and Jost (2005) found that gender-specific system justification increased when people were presented with sexist stereotypes about men's and women's traits and managerial styles. The connection between equal opportunities for success in the United States and stereotypes about men's and women's abilities is obvious. The connection between equal opportunities for success and rape, however, is less so. Thus, whereas evidence of sexism in the workplace would likely provoke people to defend the system by espousing that men and women have equal opportunities (i.e., gender-specific system justification), evidence of rape and threat to the system would provoke people to defend the system by espousing that rape is not a problem—that is, rape myth acceptance. This suggests that people use legitimizing ideologies that are specific to the situation.

As a comparison to participants' system justification orientation, participants' social dominance orientation (i.e., belief that one's group should dominate other groups) was also used to predict rape myth acceptance, victim blame, and gender-specific system justification. Because men have a stronger social dominance orientation than do women (Pratto et al., 1994), I expected that social dominance orientation would interact with

gender to predict the three dependent variables. Unlike system justification orientation, I expected that an interaction between social dominance orientation and the situational factors (i.e., victim's relative status and threat to perpetrator) would not predict the dependent variables. This hypothesis was partially supported.

Predicting rape myth acceptance, both gender and social dominance orientation were independent predictors: men reported higher rape myth acceptance and people with a stronger social dominance orientation reported higher rape myth acceptance. With social dominance orientation in the model, people's rape myth acceptance was not influenced by the victim's relative status or threat posed to the perpetrator. This may be because social dominance and system justification are different constructs. Whereas system justification is the acceptance of inequality, social dominance is the belief that one's group should forcefully dominate other groups (Jost & Burgess, 2000). Because people with a strong social dominance orientation are more accepting of the use of aggression to maintain their dominance, they may also be more likely to legitimize interpersonal violence such as rape (Pratto et al., 1994) regardless of the victim's status or the threat she poses to the perpetrator.

A more important distinction between social dominance and system justification orientations is that a social dominance orientation is about the justness of one using force to get one's way, whereas a system justification orientation is about opposing equality and justice. It follows that system justification orientation-level (but not social dominance orientation-level), in combination with the status of the victim and whether or not she sought justice against her attacker, would predict how much a person would legitimize rape.

Whereas people's system justification and social dominance orientations produced different models in predicting rape myth acceptance, system justification and social dominance orientations produced similar models in predicting victim blame and gender-specific system justification. Controlling for people's gender, people with a strong social dominance orientation blamed Kate more (or Jason less) than did people with a weak social dominance orientation. Because people with a strong social dominance orientation are more accepting of force and domination, they may have been more sympathetic of Jason's use of force and less sympathetic of Kate's predicament (Pratto et al., 1994). Furthermore, people blamed Kate more if she was lower status than the perpetrator and she decided to tell no one. Again, participants may have read low-status Kate's decision to keep silent as an admission of guilt and "agreed" with her by blaming her more. Although people with a weak social dominance orientation on average reported less victim blame than did those with a strong social dominance orientation, weak social dominance orientation-people reported more victim blame when the low-status victim was raped by the high-status perpetrator. Because people with a weak social dominance orientation are less accepting of force and violence as a way to achieve and maintain status, it follows that they should be more likely to label Jason's use of force as wrong and sympathize with the victim, regardless of her status. However, this finding indicates that even people with a weak social dominance orientation are somewhat biased against a low-status victim (or biased toward a high-status perpetrator).

In predicting gender-specific system justification, people with a strong social dominance orientation reported that economic conditions in the U.S. are fair for both women and men. It follows that people who believe that there is a natural social

hierarchy and that those at the top can use whatever means to maintain that hierarchy would also think that the current system is fair. Again, victim's status and threat to the perpetrator were not significant predictors in this model.

While this study provides interesting insight into the malleability of rape myth acceptance, there are caveats and limitations to this study. First, the hierarchical regression models with interaction terms added a marginally-significant amount of variance. Although the interactions were hypothesized by theory, these results need to be replicated. Second, approximately 19% of the sample misremembered the scenario and were omitted from analyses. It may be interesting to determine if people misremember aspects of a date-rape scenario to match their pre-existing stereotypes about rape. Third, status was operationalized by the type of school the victim and perpetrator attended; people may have identified with the victim or the perpetrator based on where they matriculated. Future studies could compare samples of college students currently attending a private university versus a state college, a technical school, and those who have not attended college.

Future research should also examine the malleability of rape myths in cases of interracial rape and stranger rape. Specifically, will people report lower rape myth acceptance if an African-American woman decides to keep silent about a White acquaintance raping her? Will people report higher rape myth acceptance if a White woman is raped by an African-American stranger? Future research could also determine how other types of violence, such as murder and interpersonal violence are legitimized. The advantage of using rape myths to understand the legitimization of violence is that, unlike other types of violence, rape is often perpetuated by one social group (i.e., men)

against another (i.e., women) and beliefs that legitimize rape have been identified and researched. Nonetheless, understanding how other types of violence are justified in society is important for future study. Also, it would be interesting to examine if other stereotypes, such as ambivalent sexism toward women and men, fluctuate depending on the victim's status and the threat to the perpetrator.

In sum, previous research has focused on how rape myth acceptance is a stagnant trait that contributes to blaming the victim. This is the first study to show that rape myth acceptance is malleable and contingent on the situation, as well as individual attributes. Although it was predicted that people would clamor against the low-status victim when she threatened the high-status perpetrator, a more interesting social phenomenon was found. Rape myth acceptance across conditions was fairly constant with one exception: people with a strong system justification orientation reported less rape myth acceptance when the low-status victim protected the high-status perpetrator. In contrast to Jackman's (2001) assertion that dominant-group members vilify subordinate-group members who seek justice, this study suggests that rape myth acceptance is an ideology that vilifies victims regardless of status; however, people who support the status quo "remove" this ideology when a low-status victim knows her place. This is akin to rewarding desirable behavior through negative reinforcement. Although the "reward" of lower rape myth acceptance would be viewed as politically correct and sensitive to victim's rights, it is an underhanded and non-confrontational way to control social behavior and protect the status quo. Worse, people themselves may not even realize that they are engaging in this social sleight-of-hand. In order to dismantle rape

myths (and other ideologies), we can not be satisfied with merely labeling the traits of those who endorse them – we must uncover the mechanisms of rape myth acceptance.

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FOOTNOTES

¹Because women's ratings were more extreme, it was important to determine that their ratings were not driving the significant differences in social status between the three types of schools. In other words, it was important to determine if men's perceptions of social status also varied by type of school. A repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted for men separately. The main effect for the type of item was significant ($F(1.9, 560.1) = 101.6, p < .001$) indicating that men perceived different levels of social status based on the type of school Kate and Jason attended.

²For each of the DVs, preliminary hierarchical regressions were run with gender, System Justification Orientation, Social Dominance Orientation, Friend, Police, Equal, and Higher entered in the first step. All possible interactions 2-way, 3-way, 4-way, and 5-way interactions were entered in succeeding steps. For both victim blame and gender-specific system justification, there were main effects of Social Dominance Orientation. For rape myth acceptance, however, the model with 5-way interactions was significant. To disentangle this model, separate regressions were run for System Justification Orientation (collapsing across level of Social Dominance Orientation) and for Social Dominance Orientation (collapsing across level of System Justification Orientation). The results from these separate regressions are reported.

³Similar results were obtained using the untransformed scores for System Justification Orientation and Social Dominance Orientation.

⁴Differences between system justification orientation levels were tested. For the condition in which the lower-status victim told no one about the higher-status perpetrator raping her, people with a strong system justification orientation had marginally lower rape myth acceptance than did people with a weak system justification orientation (Lower x No one: $B = -.47, t = 1.78, p = .08$). For the condition in which the lower-status victim reported the higher-status perpetrator to the police, there was no significant difference in rape myth acceptance between people with a strong and weak system justification orientation (Lower x Police: $B = .22, t = 1.32, p = .19$).

APPENDIX A

Measure of Social Status

The following questions ask about a person's social status. When answering these questions, think about how most people would rate each person's social status. Please use the scale below when answering.

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

*No Social
Status*

*Some Social
Status*

*A great deal
of Social Status*

1. Kate is a junior at a prestigious, private university
2. Kate is a junior at a state college
3. Kate dropped out of state college but now takes classes at a local technical college part-time
4. Jason is a junior at a prestigious, private university
5. Jason is a junior at a state college
6. Jason dropped out of state college but now takes classes at a local technical college part-time

APPENDIX B

Social Dominance Orientation

For the following items, please use the scale below to indicate how much you agree with each statement:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9
Not at all *Somewhat* *Very much*
agree *agree* *agree*

1. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
2. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups of people.
3. It's OK if some groups of people have more of a chance in life than others.
4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups of people.
5. If certain groups of people stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.
6. It's probably a good thing that certain groups of people are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
7. Inferior groups of people should stay in their place.
8. Sometimes other groups of people must be kept in their place.
9. It would be good if all groups of people could be equal.
10. Group equality should be our ideal.
11. All groups of people should be given an equal chance in life.
12. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.
13. Increased social equality would have negative consequences.
14. We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally.
15. We should strive to make people's incomes as equal as possible.
16. No one group of people should dominate in society.

APPENDIX C

Perceptions of Victim and Perpetrator

For the following items, use the scale below to indicate how much you agree with each statement:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9
Not *Somewhat* *Completely or*
at all *Totally*

1. How much do you think Kate should blame herself for what happened?
2. How much do you think Jason should blame himself for what happened?
3. How much control do you think Kate had over the situation?
4. How much control do you think Jason had over the situation?
5. How much do you agree Kate should not have gone to Jason's apartment if she did not want to have sex with him?
6. Given the circumstances, how justified do you think Jason's actions were?
7. How much do you agree that Kate should not have kissed Jason if she did not want to have sex with him?
8. Whose fault do you think it is that things turned out the way they did? (1 = *Jason*; 5 = *Kate & Jason equally*; 9 = *Kate*)
9. How much sympathy do you feel for Kate?
10. How much sympathy do you feel for Jason?
11. Who do you feel more sympathy for? (1 = *Jason*; 5 = *Kate & Jason equally*; 9 = *Kate*)
12. How much do you agree with Kate's decision about who she should tell regarding the incident with Jason?

APPENDIX D

Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

For the following items, use the scale below to indicate how much you agree with each statement:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9
Not at all *Somewhat* *Very much*
agree *agree* *agree*

1. If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.
2. Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn-on."
3. If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex.
4. Many women secretly desire to be raped.
5. Most rapists are not caught by the police.
6. If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape.
7. Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape.
8. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.
9. All women should have access to self-defense classes.
10. It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped.
11. If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it a rape.
12. Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman's own familiar neighborhood.
13. Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them.
14. A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape.
15. It is preferable that a female police officer conduct the questioning when a woman reports a rape.

16. A woman who “teases” men deserves anything that might happen.
17. When women are raped, it’s often because the way they said “no” was ambiguous.
18. Men don’t usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.
19. A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex.
20. Rape happens when a man’s sex drive gets out of control.

APPENDIX E

Gender-Specific System Justification measure

Instructions: Please read the sentences below. Use the scale to indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with each sentence.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9
Not at all *Somewhat* *Very much*
agree *agree* *agree*

1. In general, relations between men and women are fair in the United States.
2. In America, the division of labor in families generally operates as it should.
3. Gender roles need to be radically restructured in the United States.
4. For women, the United States is the best country in the world to live in.
5. In the United States, most policies relating to gender and the sexual division of labor serve the greater good.
6. Everyone (male or female) has a fair shot at wealth and happiness in the United States.
7. Sexism in America is getting worse every year.
8. American society is set up so that men and women usually get what they deserve (have earned).
9. America is an open society in which both men and women can achieve higher status.
10. Advancement in American society is possible for both men and women.
11. Individual women have difficulty achieving higher status in the United States.
12. Women are often unable to advance in American society.

APPENDIX F

Scenario manipulation checks

Think about the story you read earlier about Kate and Jason. Please answer the following questions about the story.

Where did Kate go to school? (check one)

High school

Technical college

State college

Private university

Where did Jason go to school? (check one)

High school

Technical college

State college

Private university

Who did Kate decide to tell regarding the incident with Jason? (check one)

No one

Her friend

Her parents

A school counselor

The police