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The Influence of Gender Ideology, Victim Resistance, and Spiking a Drink on Acquaintance Rape Attributions

D. J. Angelone,[1] Damon Mitchell,[2] and Danielle Smith[1]

Abstract

The current study examined observer's attributions about the victim and perpetrator of an alleged acquaintance rape. Participants included 504 college students from a public university in the northeastern United States who read a brief crime report and completed a series of questionnaires for course credit. While men tended to attribute more blame to the victim than women, gender ideology emerged as a stronger predictor of rape attributions, and some types of sexist beliefs were associated with greater victim blaming and others with less victim blaming. Endorsement of hostile sexism, rape myths, and heterosexual intimacy was generally associated with the attribution of greater victim culpability, as well as less perpetrator culpability, perpetrator criminality, and victim credibility. However, complementary gender differentiation was associated with greater perpetrator culpability and criminality, while protective paternalism was associated with greater victim credibility. Observers attributed lower victim culpability and greater perpetrator criminality when the victim's drink was spiked, and attributed greater perpetrator culpability when the

[1]Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ, USA
[2]Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, USA

Corresponding Author:
D. J. Angelone, Department of Psychology, Rowan University, 201 Mullica Hill Road, Glassboro, NJ 08028, USA.
Email: angeloned@rowan.edu

victim verbally resisted the perpetrator's advances. Given the implications that observer attitudes can have on professional and personal support for survivors, as well as juror decision making, the ongoing examination of the complex interplay between the person and situational factors affecting attributions of rape is essential. Sexual assault prevention programs may also benefit from a psychoeducational component that targets reducing traditional gender ideology.

Keywords
acquaintance rape, perceptions, gender roles, resistance, alcohol use

The literature on sexual aggression prevalence suggests that victimization is a widespread phenomenon (Spitzberg, 1999). For example, approximately 18% of women report at least one experience of rape (i.e., attempted or completed forced penetration) in their lifetime (M. C. Black et al., 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). The large-scale Campus Sexual Assault Study noted that about 20% of the female students who were surveyed had experienced some type of completed sexual assault since they enrolled, suggesting that undergraduate women may be at particular risk (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007). In addition, the majority of victims are assaulted by someone known to them, a concept generally referred to as "acquaintance rape" (M. C. Black et al., 2011; Krebs et al., 2007; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). However, many survivors do not report the rape or seek medical/psychological treatment (Amstadter, McCauley, Ruggiero, Resnick, & Kilpatrick, 2008; Ullman & Filipas, 2001). In fact, rates of reporting by undergraduate women who are assaulted are often below 20% (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Krebs et al., 2007). As a result, sexual assault on college campuses has been identified as a significant problem, receiving considerable media attention, and was the subject of a White House Task Force that issued a call for campuses to conduct local climate surveys and implement sexual assault prevention programs (Steinhauer, 2014).

Many survivors, especially of acquaintance rape, do not seek help because they believe that their situation does not represent "real rape," or they will not be perceived as credible victims (Patterson, Greeson, & Campbell, 2009). In fact, observers do minimize the experience of rape relative to other crimes, often approaching victims with skepticism and justifying the actions of a perpetrator (Bieneck & Krahé, 2011). Observers also minimize the seriousness of acquaintance rape and perceive lower perpetrator and greater victim blame compared with stranger rape (Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994; Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2004). As a result, an extensive literature has developed

to understand perceptions of rape victims and perpetrators (Pollard, 1992; van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014) with the phrase "victim blame" used as an umbrella term for the variety of victim and perpetrator attributions that can serve as dependent variables.

Observer Characteristics

The attributions literature has examined a host of factors related to the characteristics of the situation and the characteristics of the observer that may influence victim blame with gender being the most common observer variable. In general, male participants are more likely to endorse higher levels of blame, responsibility, and pleasure to the victim compared with female participants. Female participants are more likely to endorse higher levels of punishment and agreement that the encounter constituted rape compared with male participants (Bell et al., 1994; Grubb & Harrower, 2009; Schneider, Mori, Lambert, & Wong, 2009). However, some research has demonstrated a lack of gender differences, and researchers have suggested that the relationship between gender and attributions is mediated by attitudes about gender (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; I. Anderson & Lyons, 2005; Angelone, Mitchell, & Grossi, 2015; Angelone, Mitchell, & Lucente, 2012; K. A. Black & McCloskey, 2013; Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004; Viki et al., 2004; Yamawaki, 2007).

The broad term *gender ideology* refers to attitudes that delineate the appropriate roles, responsibilities, and rights of men and women in society (Kalin & Tilby, 1978). Traditional gender ideologies suggest that men are the breadwinners who initiate sexual activity, whereas women are the homemakers who are passive recipients of male sexual interests. Traditional gender ideologies can serve to legitimize existing gender inequality, including the fostering and acceptance of prejudicial beliefs about rape (Burt, 1980). Egalitarian gender ideologies suggest that there are few inherent sex differences and that gender roles are socially constructed. A number of gender ideology scales have been developed to assist the understanding of the antecedents, correlates, and/or consequences of such attitudes (McHugh & Frieze, 1997). These scales are closely related, but uniquely predictive of victim blame, and include the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996) and the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (IRMA; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999) scale, both used in the current study.

Ambivalent Sexism

According to Glick and Fiske (1996), traditional gender role attitudes can be conceptualized according to two separate but related dimensions of sexism

measured by the ASI. Hostile sexism (HS) describes overt, subjectively negative attitudes toward women and is the more commonly understood form of sexism. Individuals endorsing HS perceive male–female relationships as adversarial in nature. In contrast, benevolent sexism (BS) describes attitudes that are subjectively positive toward women but stereotypical by restricting women to traditionally passive roles. Individuals endorsing BS believe that gender roles are cooperative, but that men maintain the dominant role in society and serve as protectors of women, who maintain the submissive role in society. While BS is outwardly positive, these attitudes imply that women are innocent, delicate, helpless, and need to be protected by men. BS can be further parsed into three specific attitudes: Protective paternalism (PP) holds that men have power not available to women, and thus men should provide for and protect women. Complementary gender differentiation (CGD) holds that women possess "ladylike" characteristics that are to be cherished. Heterosexual intimacy (HI) holds that men need the love of a woman to be truly complete and satisfied with life.

When considering rape attributions overall, individuals with BS or HS tend to blame victims to a greater extent, blame perpetrators to a lesser extent, minimize the seriousness of an assault, and recommend shorter prison sentences (Abrams et al., 2003; Cohn, Dupuis, & Brown, 2009; Masser, Lee, & McKimmie, 2010; Viki et al., 2004; Yamawaki, 2007). However, when comparing different rape scenarios, benevolent sexists endorse victim blame of acquaintance rape but not stranger rape; while there are no differences for hostile sexists. One explanation for this discrepancy could be related to traditional gender roles, in which men are perceived as aggressive, sexually preoccupied, and the sexual initiators and women the passive recipients and sexual gatekeepers, who hold responsibility for the outcome of sexual encounters (Burt, 1980; Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013). Benevolent sexists may perceive women who violate any expectations of feminine purity and innocence as contributing to their own victimization (Abrams et al., 2003). While some initial work has demonstrated the impact of BS on rape attributions, there is a lack of research examining the role of the specific BS subscales (PP, CGD, HI), as well as the potential interaction of these attitudes with relevant situational variables on attributions of victim blame in an acquaintance rape.

Rape Myth Acceptance

Rape myths are culturally mediated attitudes about rape that are false but persistently held, and deny or justify sexual aggression against women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). These attitudes lead observers to

blame victims, exonerate perpetrators, express disbelief about rape claims, and suggest that only certain types of women can be raped (Payne et al., 1999). A number of specific rape myths have been identified, including (a) "She asked for it," (b) "It wasn't really rape," (c) "He didn't mean to," (d) "She wanted it," (e) "She liked it," (f) "Rape is a trivial event," and (g) "Rape is a deviant event" (Payne et al., 1999). Endorsement of traditional gender role attitudes is considered a precursor to rape myths (K. B. Anderson, Cooper, & Okamura, 1997). In fact, rape myths are positively correlated with HS and the BS subscales, with regressions demonstrating that higher HS and CGD predict higher rape myth acceptance and that higher PP predict lower rape myth acceptance (Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2007).

Similar to the findings with other gender ideology variables, men endorse greater rape myths than women; however, the relationship between gender and victim blame is mediated by rape myth acceptance (van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). In general, individuals who endorse high levels of rape myths are more likely to attribute blame and responsibility to a victim, endorse higher credibility to a perpetrator, and perceive lower responsibility for a perpetrator relative to those with lower levels of rape myths (Basow & Minieri, 2011; Kopper, 1996; Mason, Riger, & Foley, 2004; Newcombe, Van den Eynde, Hafner, & Jolly, 2008; Starfelt, Young, White, & Palk, 2015). In addition, compared with individuals with low rape myth acceptance, those with high rape myth acceptance demonstrate a tendency to minimize the assault experience and are less likely to believe that a rape has occurred, including a lower likelihood of convicting a perpetrator (Burt & Albin, 1981; Mason et al., 2004; Newcombe et al., 2008; Schuller & Wall, 1998). One explanation for this tendency toward victim blame is that rape victims are believed to "get what they deserve" for not adequately protecting themselves or modifying their behavior to avoid an assault (Aronowitz, Lambert, & Davidoff, 2012; Grubb & Turner, 2012). There is currently a lack of research examining the individual rape myths and their interaction with relevant situational variables on attributions of victim blame in acquaintance rape situations.

Situational Characteristics

Victim Resistance

The attributions literature has examined a large number of factors related to the situational characteristics of the offense. One variable with some inconsistent findings is the impact of victim resistance. Several early studies examined stranger rape and found that the indication of overt or forceful

resistance by a victim leads to lower attributions of victim blame and higher levels of agreement that an incident constituted rape (Krulewitz & Nash, 1979; McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, & Crawford, 1990). However, other researchers found that participants were more positive toward the perpetrator and viewed him as less responsible for the rape when the victim physically resisted or was unable to resist relative to the verbally resistant victim (Deitz, Littman, & Bentley, 1984). Later studies that concerned acquaintance rape found a similar inconsistency. In some studies, participants perceived higher levels of perpetrator blame when the victim demonstrated verbal or physical resistance compared with no resistance (Cohn et al., 2009; Kowalski, 1992). In addition, lower levels of victim blame are associated with verbal or physical resistance relative to when no overt resistance is displayed (Cohn et al., 2009; Ryckman, Kaczor, & Thornton, 1992). Observers are also less likely to agree that the victim should report the incident or find the perpetrator guilty when she verbally resists as opposed to combined verbal and physical resistance (K. A. Black & McCloskey, 2013). However, longer prison sentences were recommended for perpetrators when the victim verbally resisted compared with when she verbally and physically resisted (K. A. Black & Gold, 2008).

Acquaintance rape may represent an ambiguous situation for observers to evaluate relative to stranger rape given cultural norms about relationships and attitudes about gender (Cohn et al., 2009). For example, resistance effects may be influenced by traditional gender role beliefs such that women who resist are behaving in a manner (aggressively) that is counter to their femininity and therefore may be judged more harshly (K. A. Black & Gold, 2008; K. A. Black & McCloskey, 2013; Ong & Ward, 1999; Ryckman et al., 1992). Traditional sexual scripts note that women are the gatekeepers of sexuality and should provide some "token resistance" by saying "no" when they actually intend to have sex, to maintain their wholesomeness via the guise that they are not interested in sex (Muehlenhard & Hollabaugh, 1988; Muehlenhard & Rodgers, 1998). As such, victim resistance likely interacts with relevant gender ideology variables. For example, those who endorse "It wasn't really rape" (requiring resistance as evidence for rape) could perceive a woman who does not resist, especially in an acquaintance situation, as dramatically antithetical to their stereotype of a rape situation. Similarly, hostile sexists (who believe that women and men are in adversarial gender roles) could believe that a woman who did not resist now regrets engaging in sexual activity, and therefore is misreporting rape. To date, there is limited research examining the synergistic role of victim resistance with these relevant observer attitudes on attributions of victim blame.

Victim Alcohol Use

Another situational characteristic related to rape attributions is victim alcohol use. In general, victim blame increases if the victim is drinking at the time of the assault. Compared with a sober condition, intoxicated victims are perceived to maintain higher levels of responsibility and thought to experience less trauma. Also, observers attribute less punishment to the perpetrator and are less certain that the sexual activity constitutes rape (Hammock & Richardson, 1997; Sims, Noel, & Maisto, 2007; Wild, Graham, & Rehm, 1998). Interestingly, when a perpetrator is described as sober, the effects of victim intoxication often drop out. However, if a perpetrator surreptitiously administers a substance to a victim (e.g., spiking a drink), observers seem to consider the context of those actions. In other words, if the perpetrator is using the substance as a tool to secure sexual activity, observer attributions toward the victim are more sympathetic, and attributions toward the offender more punitive than if the victim pours the alcohol herself (Angelone, Mitchell, & Pilafova, 2007; Girard & Senn, 2008).

It seems likely that gender role ideology variables are also relevant to understanding observer reactions in spiked versus self-pour situations. Observers high in BS might perceive a drinking woman as engaging in a more traditionally "masculine" and a less "ladylike" behavior (counter to her prescribed gender role), thus leading to greater levels of victim blame. In other words, benevolent sexists could attribute sympathy and protection to "good girls," while "bad girls" are perceived as getting what they deserve. Observers high in the "She asked for it" rape myth (suggesting that a woman's behavior is a precursor to rape) could perceive a woman who is voluntarily using alcohol as more sexually available and thus more to blame (Abbey & Harnish, 1995). However, there is currently a lack of research evaluating the role of gender role ideology in observer reactions to such alcohol-facilitated sexual assaults.

The Current Study

The present study builds on previous research to examine the impact of three observer variables on attributions of victim blame in an acquaintance rape. Our primary goal was to add to the growing literature regarding gender ideology and attributions of victim blame by examining the Ambivalent Sexism subscales and several rape myths to determine the predictive utility of these constructs after controlling for gender. In addition, we examined the predictive utility of two situational variables over and above the aforementioned observer attitudes to clarify several unanswered questions. One situational variable was whether the victim was described as verbally resisting (the *verbal*

resistance condition) versus too groggy to resist the perpetrator's sexual advances (the *unable to resist* condition). The other situational variable was whether the victim's drink was described as spiked by the perpetrator with Everclear (the *spiked* condition) versus one in which the victim voluntarily pours Everclear into her drink (the *self-pour* condition). Due to the number of variables, and consequently larger number of possible interactions, we did not test every interaction effect; rather we targeted those where we expected a specific situational factor to be relevant to a specific sexist belief or rape myth.

Our hypotheses were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Gender ideology, as measured by the HS subscale, BS subscales, and the "It wasn't really rape" and "She asked for it" rape myth subscales, would be predictive of rape attributions. Specifically, traditional beliefs about gender roles and greater endorsement of rape myths would predict greater perceptions of victim blame.

Hypothesis 2: The unable to resist condition would be associated with greater perceptions of victim blame than the verbal resistance condition.

Hypothesis 3: The self-pour condition would be associated with greater perceptions of victim blame than the spiked condition.

Hypothesis 4: Victim resistance and HS would interact such that HS would be a better predictor of perceptions of victim blame in the unable to resist condition than the verbal resistance condition.

Hypothesis 5: Similarly, victim resistance and the "It wasn't really rape" myth would interact such that the rape myth would be a better predictor of perceptions of victim blame in the unable to resist condition than the verbal resistance condition.

Hypothesis 6: The spiked/self-pour manipulation would interact with the BS subscales such that the subscales would be better predictors of perceptions of victim blame in the self-pour condition than in the spiked condition.

Hypothesis 7: Similarly, the spiked/self-pour manipulation would interact with the "She asked for it" rape myth such that the myth would be a better predictor of perceptions of victim blame in the self-pour condition than in the spiked condition.

Method

Participants

A total of 626 college students from a public university in the northeastern United States were recruited through a department of psychology participant

pool. Data from 121 participants were excluded from analyses because they failed a manipulation check, leaving a final sample of 504 participants. The excluded group did not significantly differ from the final sample by age and gender. They were more likely to be non-Caucasian, $\chi^2 = (N = 626) = 12.96$, $p < .001$, although the magnitude of the effect was small, $C = .14$. The final sample was relatively equal with regard to gender (50.6% female and 49.4% male) with an average age of 19.5 ($SD = 2.6$). Seventy-six percent self-identified as Caucasian, 10.1% as African American, 8.5% as Latino/a, 2.8% as Asian American, and 2.8% as some other ethnic background.

Materials

Stimulus. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of four vignettes. Each vignette was titled a "brief crime report" detailing a situation between two college students. The vignettes were identical to each other except in the information provided about whether (a) a drink was described as spiked by the perpetrator with Everclear (the spiked condition) versus one in which the victim voluntarily pours Everclear into her drink (the self-pour condition) and (b) the victim was described as verbally resisting (the verbal resistance condition) versus too groggy to resist the perpetrator's sexual advances (the unable to resist condition). First, participants were presented with background information about an "alleged victim" described as a 19-year-old student who has little experience with alcohol or drugs. Next, participants were presented with information about an "alleged incident" occurring at a college house party. "Sara" reportedly drank three beers over the course of about two hours and stopped drinking when she started to feel "buzzed." She decided to drink some punch to remove the taste of beer from her mouth and was approached by a male college student who introduced himself as "Steve." In the self-pour condition, she added alcohol to her own punch ("A few minutes later Sara was offered some Everclear—one of the most potent brands of alcohol sold in America—by Steve, and she proceeded to pour it into her cup"), whereas in the spiked condition he added alcohol to her punch without her knowledge ("A few minutes later Steve refilled Sara's fruit punch and put some Everclear—one of the most potent brands of alcohol sold in America—in Sara's cup without her noticing"). The vignette noted that Sara finishes the punch without tasting any alcohol and proceeds to dance with Steve. She begins to feel sleepy, and Steve invites her to his bedroom, where he "allegedly forced Sara to have sexual intercourse." The next morning Sara left the house and went to the police station to report what had happened. In the unable to resist condition, she reported to the police "that she felt too groggy to verbally or physically resist," whereas in the verbal resistance condition

she reported to the police "that she had initially said 'no' but felt too groggy to physically resist." The vignette ended with some additional background information about the "alleged offender," including a statement by Steve "claiming the sex was consensual." The vignette purposefully avoided the use of terms such as "rape" or "sexual assault" to avoid biasing participants.

Attribution questionnaire. Attributions about the perpetrator and the victim were measured on a 23-item, 10-point Likert-type questionnaire modified from that developed by George and Martinez (2002) and used in other attribution studies (Angelone et al., 2007; Sizemore, 2013). Items avoid using terms like perpetrator, victim, or sexual assault, and instead refer to "Steve," "Sara," and the "sexual activity" (e.g., "How much did Sara intend to cause Steve to engage in sexual activity with her?").

Attributions regarding the victim. *Victim culpability* was measured with eight items concerning the victim's ability to have changed the outcome of the assault, her intentions to have sex with the perpetrator, the degree of fault she has for the assault, and how responsible she is for the assault (e.g., How much did Sara intend to cause Steve to engage in sexual activity with her?). The items were averaged to yield a single victim culpability rating. Higher scores reflected increased responsibility for the assault attributed to the victim. *Victim credibility* was measured with four items concerning the genuineness and credibility of the victim's refusal of the perpetrator's sexual assault. The items were averaged to yield a single victim credibility rating. Higher scores reflected a stronger belief that the victim did not want to engage in sexual intercourse with the perpetrator.

Attributions regarding the perpetrator. *Perpetrator culpability* was measured with eight items mirroring those used to measure victim culpability (e.g., How much did Steve intend to cause Sara to continue sexual activity with him?). The items were averaged to yield a single perpetrator culpability rating. *Perpetrator criminality*, the degree to which participants perceived his behavior as illegal, was measured with three items concerning the degree to which they would describe the behavior in the report as rape, how guilty they believed the perpetrator was of committing rape, and how likely they would be to convict him of rape.

ASI. The ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996) is comprised of two subscales, which measure different forms of sexism, as noted earlier. The HS subscale consists of 11 items that reflect derogatory and combative views toward women. The BS subscale consists of 11 items that reflect chivalrous views regarding the

need for females to submit to and be protected by men. BS is comprised of three smaller subscales which were the focus of this study: (a) HI refers to traditional highly romanticized view of women as necessary for man's completion, (b) CGD refers to positive attitudes toward traditional sex role characteristic, and (c) PP reflects the belief that men are stronger and more powerful than women and that they should use that power to protect and provide for women. Items on the ASI are rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) and averaged. Higher scores reflect greater sexist beliefs.

IRMA scale. The IRMA (Payne et al., 1999) is a 45-item scale comprised of seven subscales that reflect the acceptance of specific rape myths. For the purposes of the present study, only the "It wasn't really rape" (NR) and "She asked for it" (SA) subscales were used. The NR subscale is comprised of five items reflecting the myth that rapes that do not involve resistance on the part of the victim or weapons on the part of the perpetrator are not "real rape." The SA subscale is comprised of eight items reflecting the myth that women are raped because of their own inappropriate behavior. In both subscales, items are rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all agree*, 7 = *very much agree*) and averaged. Higher scores reflect greater level of rape myth endorsement.

Paulhus Deception Scales (PDS). The PDS (Paulhus, 1998) is a 40-item measure of intentional and unintentional attempts to present oneself in a favorable light. The PDS was included to control for socially desirable responding. Higher scores represent greater socially desirable responding.

Manipulation check. After reading the vignette, but before beginning study questionnaires, participants were presented with a memory test to confirm that they had attended to the independent variables. One question tested their recall of how the victim imbibed alcohol (*self-pour* vs. *spiked*). Another question tested recall of the ability of the victim to resist the assault (*unable to resist* vs. *verbal resistance*). Only data from those participants who were able to correctly answer both items were included in the analysis (504 out of 626).

Procedure

Participants reported to a computer lab that contained 10 computers separated by privacy screens to ensure confidentiality. Participants were assigned to a computer, where they read and signed a hard copy of the informed consent. They were informed that data collection was anonymous and that they

could cease participation in the study at any time without penalty. Participants were told that they would be reading a brief crime report and that the researcher was interested in their impressions of the incident. Each participant was randomly assigned one of four versions of the stimulus as previously described in a 2 (*spiked drink condition* vs. *self-pour condition*) × 2 (*verbal resistance condition* vs. *unable to resist condition*) experimental design. The stimulus and other study materials were presented electronically. After completing their materials, participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Results

Descriptive data, alpha coefficients, and the intercorrelations among the continuous variables are presented in Table 1. The pattern of results between the attribution variables indicates that ratings of victim credibility, perpetrator culpability, and perpetrator criminality are positively correlated and move inversely with ratings of victim culpability. HS had small positive correlations with the BS subscales and moderately sized positive correlations with the SA and NR rape myth subscales. Scores on the HS, SA, and NR were positively correlated with ratings of victim culpability and negatively correlated with victim credibility, perpetrator culpability, and perpetrator criminality. Correlations between the BS subscales and the attribution variables were significantly smaller in magnitude and in some cases in the opposite direction to those observed between HS and the attribution variables (for all *z*s, $p < .01$).

Predicting Attributions With Observer and Situational Characteristics

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were used to predict the victim (culpability, credibility) and perpetrator (culpability, criminality) attributions. Intercorrelations between the predictor variables were not so high, nor did examination of the variable inflation factors for each main effect suggest multicollinearity (which were all below 2.0). For each regression, participant gender (coded as female = 0, male = 1) and PDS (to control for the tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner) were entered on the first step. Hypothesis 1 was addressed on Steps 2 and 3 of the regressions: The ASI scales HS, HI, CGD, and PP were entered on the second step, whereas NR and SA from the IRMA were entered on the third step because we reasoned that gender role beliefs are acquired earlier in life than beliefs in rape myths (Chapleau et al., 2007). To test Hypotheses 2 and 3, the situational variables were entered on the fourth step: Victim resistance conditions were coded as

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Among Continuous Independent and Dependent Variables (N = 504).

Variable	M (SD)	α	PDS	HS	HI	CGD	PP	NR	SA	VCred	VCulp	PCulp
PDS	9.69 (5.08)	.77	—									
HS	2.51 (0.86)	.84	.14*	—								
HI	2.86 (1.01)	.61	−.01	.21***	—							
CGD	2.27 (1.01)	.62	.01	.10*	.21***	—						
PP	2.92 (0.95)	.69	−.01	.22***	.41***	.41***	—					
NR	7.92 (3.86)	.77	−.16**	.34***	.16**	.01	.08	—				
SA	22.02 (9.74)	.86	−.10*	.45***	.29***	.03	.17***	.57***	—			
VCred	8.31 (1.47)	.69	.14**	−.30***	−.14**	.05	.01	−.45***	−.43***	—		
VCulp	3.84 (1.49)	.82	−.05	.32***	.19***	.03	.12**	.37***	.50***	−.57***	—	
PCulp	8.85 (1.14)	.78	.17***	−.16***	−.09*	.13**	.01	−.34***	−.27***	.56***	−.37***	—
PCrim	7.67 (2.20)	.89	.13**	−.28***	−.08	.13**	.01	−.44***	−.40***	.64***	−.52***	.61***

Note. PDS = Paulhus Deception Scales; HS = Hostile Sexism subscale; HI = Heterosexual Intimacy subscale; CGD = Complementary Gender Differentiation subscale; PP = Protective Paternalism subscale; NR = It Wasn't Really Rape subscale; SA = She Asked for It subscale; VCred = victim credibility rating; VCulp = victim culpability rating; PCulp = perpetrator culpability rating; PCrim = perpetrator criminality rating.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

unable to resist = 0, verbal resistance = 1; and the self-pour/spike drink conditions were coded as self-pour = 0; spiked = 1. Interaction effects to test Hypotheses 4 to 7 were added on the fifth step. The significance of R^2 change was used to evaluate each step in the regression.

Attributions regarding victim credibility and culpability. Regressions for attributions of victim credibility and victim culpability are summarized in Table 2. Step 1 for both variables indicated that male participants scored lower on victim credibility and higher on victim culpability than female participants. Higher PDS scores were associated with higher victim credibility but not victim culpability. Step 2 for both variables indicated that higher HS and HI were associated with lower victim credibility and higher victim culpability. Higher PP was associated with higher victim credibility but was unrelated to victim culpability. Step 3 for both variables indicated that higher NR and SA were associated with lower victim credibility and higher victim culpability. Step 4 was significant for both variables and indicated that the spiked condition was associated with lower culpability; however, neither the spiked condition nor the victim resistance condition was a predictor of victim credibility. Step 5 was not significant.

Attributions regarding perpetrator culpability and criminality. Table 3 presents a summary of the regressions for attributions of perpetrator culpability and perpetrator criminality. Step 1 was significant for both variables and revealed that male participants scored lower on perpetrator culpability and perpetrator criminality than female participants while higher PDS was associated with higher perpetrator culpability and criminality. Step 2 for both variables found that higher HS was associated with lower perpetrator culpability and criminality, whereas higher HI was associated with lower perpetrator culpability only. Step 3 for both variables indicated that higher NR was associated with lower perpetrator culpability and perpetrator criminality. Higher SA was associated with lower perpetrator criminality but not perpetrator culpability. Step 4 was significant for perpetrator culpability with the verbal resistance condition associated with higher perpetrator culpability. Although Step 4 was not significant overall for perpetrator criminality, the spiked drink condition was associated with higher perpetrator criminality. Step 5 was not significant overall but the NR × Victim Resistance Condition interaction was a significant predictor of perpetrator culpability. Simple effects analysis indicated that participants who were high on NR indicated higher perpetrator culpability in the verbal resistance condition ($M = 8.73$, $SD = 0.89$) than in the unable to resist condition ($M = 8.29$, $SD = 1.31$), $F(1, 500) = 9.93$, $p < .01$, whereas participants who were low on NR did not significantly differ in their ratings of perpetrator culpability across victim resistance condition.

Table 2. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Attributions Regarding Victim Credibility and Culpability.

Victim Credibility						Victim Culpability				
Predictor	β	*t*	*F* Change (*df*)	R^2	ΔR^2	β	*t*	*F* Change (*df*)	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1			15.11 (2,501)	.06***				6.45 (2,501)	.03***	
PDS	.14	3.24**				−.05	−1.10			
Gender	−.19	−4.42***				.15	3.41**			
Step 2			12.40 (4,497)	.14	.08***			14.40 (4,497)	.13	.10***
HS	−.26	−5.89***				.27	6.07***			
HI	−.14	−3.01**				.13	2.86**			
CGD	.01	0.14				.01	0.05			
PP	.13	2.68**				−.01	−0.08			
Step 3			44.59 (2,495)	.27	.13***			49.55 (2,495)	.27	.14***
NR	−.27	−5.58***				.12	2.60**			
SA	−.21	−4.09***				.37	7.25***			
Step 4			3.04 (2,493)	.28	.01*			20.35 (2,493)	.33	.06***
Spiked	.07	1.82				−.24	−6.33***			
Resist	.06	1.60				−.02	−0.58			
Step 5			0.22 (6,487)	.28	.00			0.91 (6,487)	.34	.01
HS × Resist	−.01	−0.09				−.03	−0.21			
HI × Spiked	.05	0.82				−.10	−1.64			
CGD × Spiked	−.01	−0.01				−.01	−0.06			
PP × Spiked	−.03	−0.42				.09	1.27			
NR × Resist	−.02	−0.26				−.06	−1.10			
SA × Spiked	.03	0.52				−.01	−0.20			

Note. PDS = Paulhus Deception Scales; Gender = participant gender; HS = Hostile Sexism subscale; HI = Heterosexual Intimacy subscale; CGD = Complementary Gender Differentiation subscale; PP = Protective Paternalism subscale; NR = It Wasn't Really Rape subscale; SA = She Asked for It subscale; Spiked = spiked drink condition; Resist = verbal resistance condition.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 3. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Attributions Regarding Perpetrator Culpability and Criminality.

	Perpetrator Culpability					Perpetrator Criminality				
Predictor	β	*t*	*F* Change (*df*)	R^2	ΔR^2	β	*t*	*F* Change (*df*)	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1			12.76 (2,501)	.05***				18.28 (2,501)	.07***	
PDS	.17	3.85***				.13	2.98**			
Gender	−.14	−3.10**				−.23	−5.24***			
Step 2			4.74 (4,497)	.08	.03**			8.62 (4,497)	.13	.06***
HS	−.13	−2.73**				−.24	−5.32***			
HI	−.10	−2.09*				−.07	−1.39			
CGD	.14	2.72**				.10	1.94*			
PP	.02	0.41				.05	1.06			
Step 3			22.58 (2,495)	.16	.08***			43.73 (2,495)	.26	.13***
NR	−.26	−5.00***				−.29	−5.95***			
SA	−.09	−1.61				−.19	−3.57***			
Step 4			3.97 (2,493)	.17	.01*			2.22 (2,493)	.27	.01
Spiked	.07	1.67				.08	2.08*			
Resist	.09	2.23*				.01	0.29			
Step 5			2.00 (6,487)	.19	.02			0.81 (6,487)	.27	.00
HS × Resist	−.05	0.37				−.09	−0.69			
HI × Spiked	−.02	−0.34				.11	1.94			
CGD × Spiked	.09	1.23				−.03	−0.46			
PP × Spiked	−.11	−1.71				−.06	−0.98			
NR × Resist	.13	2.22*				.01	0.16			
SA × Spiked	.04	0.78				−.01	0.13			

Note. PDS = Paulhus Deception Scales; Gender = participant gender; HS = Hostile Sexism subscale; HI = Heterosexual Intimacy subscale; CGD = Complementary Gender Differentiation subscale; PP = Protective Paternalism subscale; NR = It Wasn't Really Rape subscale; SA = She Asked for It subscale; Spiked = spiked drink condition; Resist = verbal resistance condition.

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

Discussion

We examined the individual and synergistic ability of several gender ideology constructs (HS, BS, and rape myths) and two situational variables (victim resistance and drink spiking) to predict attributions of victim blame in an acquaintance rape. In line with Hypothesis 1, gender ideology was significantly predictive of attributions of victim blame even after controlling for participant gender. HS and the two rape myths (she asked for it; it wasn't really rape) were related to attributions in a similar manner. Overall, higher scores on these variables were associated with higher levels of victim culpability and lower levels of victim credibility, perpetrator culpability, and perpetrator criminality. The exception was that the "She asked for it" rape myth was not significantly related to perpetrator culpability.

The relationship between the BS subscales and victim blame was more complex. Although the three subscales were positively correlated with each other, their relationship with attributions and with HS differed. HI was predictive of attributions toward the victim (and in the same direction as HS) but was not predictive of attributions toward the perpetrator. However, CGD was predictive of attributions toward the perpetrator (although in the opposite direction of HS and HI) but was not predictive of attributions toward the victim. Thus, two components of BS were related to victim blame in a distinctly opposing manner. We offer the following tentative explanations: (a) CGD emphasizes that women possess certain positive qualities (e.g., purity, morality, refinement) to a greater extent than men and frames the behavior of a man at a party in a more negative light, influencing attributions about the perpetrator. Furthermore, CGD's overall positive tone toward women places it in opposition to the adversarial tone of HS. (b) HI emphasizes a man's need for a relationship with a stereotypically traditional woman, and therefore may frame the behavior of an unattached woman partying in a more negative light, influencing attributions about the victim in a manner akin to that of HS. Interestingly, PP was similar to CGD in that it moved in the direction opposite to that of HI and HS, but unlike CGD, PP was only predictive of victim credibility and was unrelated to attributions regarding the perpetrator.

Taken together, the above findings are consistent with the emerging literature on the importance of observer's gender ideology for understanding rape attributions relative to observer gender. It appears that HS, BS, and rape myths are relevant to attributions about acquaintance rape as demonstrated in the current study and complement previous research demonstrating the effects of these attitudes on stranger rape. In addition, the findings add to the growing body of work suggesting a benefit of reducing the focus on gender,

and instead researchers should seek to understand the role of specific types of gendered attitudes in coloring observer's perceptions.

With regard to the situational factors, the findings are less consistent and offer only some support for Hypotheses 2 and 3. Drinking a spiked beverage was associated with lower levels of victim culpability and higher levels of perpetrator criminality relative to a self-pour alcohol condition. This suggests that observers consider the intentionality of the substance use in cases of rape and that the impact of this distinction is not just dependent upon gender ideology. Verbal resistance by the victim was associated with higher levels of perpetrator culpability relative to a victim who was unable to resist. This finding must be interpreted in light of the sole interaction effect that emerged in support of Hypothesis 5 (Resistance Condition × Rape Myth), which indicates that individuals more accepting of the "It wasn't really rape" myth attributed greater culpability to the perpetrator when the victim verbally resisted than when she was unable to resist. The other interaction effects, which tested Hypotheses 4, 6, and 7, were not significant.

While victim resistance appears to be associated with attributions of perpetrator culpability, it is surprising that there was little effect on the other dependent variables. One possibility for the limited effect of this variable could be the salience of our manipulation. Perhaps, observer attributions are more affected by blatant physical resistance, as opposed to subtle verbal resistance by the victim. It would be interesting for future researchers to compare varying degrees of resistance, such as nonverbal, subtle verbal, blatant verbal, subtle physical, blatant physical, or some combination, to determine whether these variants affect observer attributions of blame. Another possible explanation is that victim resistance, once a prominent feature in rape statutes and trials, has become a less relevant variable over time. The progressive cultural shifts that have resulted in changes in criminal statutes eliminating the requirements for active victim resistance in rape may have also filtered into observer attitudes.

With regard to the alcohol variable, one reason for the limited support could be that the victim engaged in some intentional alcohol use before her drink was spiked. Furthermore, we did not specifically describe the victim as intoxicated, just that she had consumed "three drinks in two hours" and noted feeling "buzzed." College students drink alcohol to a greater extent than their counterparts (Barnes, Welte, Hoffman, & Tidwell, 2010) and presumably may have used that lens to view the victim as essentially sober. Future researchers should parse the difference between alcohol use versus intoxication, as some observers may perceive a situation as less problematic if someone spikes a drink but the woman does not experience incapacitation from alcohol. Another possibility is that alcohol expectancies, or stereotypic

beliefs about the effects of alcohol, may be an important variable for attributions about alcohol-facilitated rape. In fact, recent research demonstrated that the expectancy that alcohol makes one sexually coercive was associated with higher victim and lower perpetrator blame, and these beliefs were predictive of blame over and above gender ideology variables (Starfelt et al., 2015).

It is possible that situational factors are more or less relevant to observers in the context of other specific attitudes and beliefs. That is, while rape attributions in the current study were not affected by the interactions of victim resistance and spiking drinks with HS or rape myths, victim resistance may be salient in the context of an observer characteristic not assessed in the present study, such as acceptance of interpersonal violence. It may be that victim blaming in observers with high acceptance of interpersonal violence is affected by the victim's degree of resistance than those low in acceptance of interpersonal violence because they view the use of force as a more legitimate means of interaction. In the end, understanding observer perceptions is a complex task that is probably best understood using models taking into account a variety of observer and situational factors.

The value of the current findings should be interpreted in the context of the research methodology and sample used. While in and of themselves, college students are not problematic per se, some critics have suggested that they are not an adequate sample to generalize to "mock jurors." While this criticism may have merit, the use of college students seems applicable, especially given the high prevalence of sexual assault occurring on campus (Fisher et al., 2000; Krebs et al., 2007) and their likelihood of knowing someone with a victimization experience. In addition, some researchers have argued that victim blame is exacerbated in a rape supportive group and that the college environment represents a microcosm of this culture (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). In fact, some male students are more likely to maintain traditional gender role beliefs and a tendency to objectify women through their engagement with fraternities and collegiate athletics (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1995). Thus, college students represent an important population for sexual assault research and intervention. It is hoped that continued research to identify factors that increase the likelihood of victim blaming can be used to develop efficacious prevention programs. For example, our findings could be incorporated into existing psychoeducational programs as they suggest that reducing the endorsement of traditional gender ideology could be beneficial in reducing harmful rape attributions.

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Author Biographies

D. J. Angelone, PhD, earned his doctoral degree in clinical psychology from Kent State University. He is an associate professor of psychology at Rowan University where he codirects the Aggression, Substance, and Sexuality Research Team (ASSeRT). His primary research interests are on sexually aggressive behavior and sexual risk taking. He has developed several laboratory analogues of sexual aggression and has used these paradigms to examine a variety of factors related to perpetration and victimization. His research also focuses on understanding the factors that can influence observer perceptions of sexually assaultive behaviors.

Damon Mitchell, PhD, received his doctoral degree in clinical psychology from Kent State University. He is a professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Central Connecticut State University. His primary teaching and research interests are in the areas of sexual aggression and forensic testing and assessment.

Danielle Smith, MEd, is a school psychology doctoral student at Texas A&M University, and former member of ASSeRT at Rowan University. She earned her master's degree in educational psychology from Texas A&M University in 2014. Her primary research interests include juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention.