

Rape Victim and Perpetrator Blame: Effects of Victim Ethnicity, Perpetrator Ethnicity,
Participant Gender, and Participant Ethnicity

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Abstract

The aim of the current study is to examine the influence of the victim's, perpetrator's, and participant's ethnicity on victim and perpetrator blame attributions. Additionally, comparisons between males and females and a community and student sample were made. Participants read a rape vignette in the form of a newspaper article and subsequently attributed victim and perpetrator blame. A 2 (victim's ethnicity) X 2 (perpetrator's ethnicity) X 2 (gender of participant) X 2 (ethnicity of participant) between subjects design were used. Measures of blame attributions toward the victim and perpetrator were used as dependent variables for both a community (n = 211) and student (n = 200) sample. Main results showed that participants with an immigrant background and participants from the community sample attributed significantly more victim and less perpetrator blame while gender of the participants failed to reach significance in most analyses. Several interactions involving victim and perpetrator ethnicity emerged and were subsequently discussed as well as suggestions for future research.

Keywords: victim blame attributions; perpetrator blame attributions; rape victim ethnicity; rape perpetrator ethnicity; participant ethnicity; student vs. community sample

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When someone has been subjected to a crime and chooses to report that crime, it is important for legal authorities to evaluate and treat the victim with the highest amount of integrity and fairness. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. For example, research suggests that rape victims are sometimes blamed for the atrocities made against them (e.g., Grubb & Harrower, 2008). This is unacceptable and may cause so called secondary victimization to already vulnerable victims (Campbell, Ahrens, Sefl, Wasco, & Barnes, 2001). This, in turn, may lead to self-blaming and make the victim less likely to report the incident to the police (Ullman, Filipas, Townsend, Starzynski, 2007; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2010). In order to decrease this victim blaming, it is important to identify the factors that might influence the blaming of innocent victims and specifically how these factors relate and/or interact with each other. Earlier research has examined how racist and sexist stereotypes influence the attribution of blame toward rape victims (e.g., Donovan, 2007; George & Martinez, 2002; Schneider, Mori, Lambert, & Wong, 2009). Although very meritorious, most research about rape victim blaming and ethnicity has almost exclusively been carried out in a North American context, making generalizations to other countries difficult. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how ethnicity and gender are affecting attributions of blame toward a rape victim and perpetrator, using a Swedish community and student sample.

Bruggen and Grubb (2014) argued specifically that there was a gap in the scientific understanding of ethnicity and how it was related to differences in rape victim blaming. By providing a scientific investigation from an additional country, the scientific knowledge about victim blaming should be enhanced. Furthermore, to the best of the author's knowledge, no current study has utilized both a student and a community sample, making comparisons between these two groups difficult or impossible. Consequently, the present study adds to the existing knowledge in the field by manipulating the ethnicity of both the victim and the perpetrator, including both a community and a student sample, and including participants with different ethnic backgrounds. This is, again to the best of the author's knowledge, something which has not been done before in a Northern European context. Hence, this study is increasing and expanding the knowledge in the area by using an old categorization (i.e., gender and ethnicity) in a new scientific environment, using a novel sample in order to investigate differences in rape victim and perpetrator blaming.

In the literature review below, a short theoretical background of victim blaming more generally is followed by an overview of the current research about rape victim blaming. Special attention is given to the influence of race and gender as powerful variables affecting rape victim blaming as well as the potential impact of a psychological effect - the black sheep effect (Marques, Robalo, & Rocha, 1992; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988) - in this context. At last, research into the potential bases for differences in victim and perpetrator blaming between students and the wider community is presented.

Rape and Victim Blaming

It is a fact that a large number of women are subjected to sexual violence every year and that over 300,000 rape crimes were reported in 2013 in the United States alone (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014a). According to some estimates, 1.3 women are raped every minute in the U.S., and every half an hour someone reports a sex offense in Sweden (Meyers, 1997; Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, 2015, May 13). Yet, rape and sexual assaults are not always reported to the police which means that many offenders are never convicted (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014b).

The scientific discussion about victim blaming can be traced back at least to the 1970s (Ryan, 1976). Ryan described how inequality and racism were justified in society by finding defects in the victims of inequality instead of pointing to the structural problems that made this inequality and racism possible. More specifically, victim blaming is thought to follow a three-stage process (Karmen, 2012; Ryan, 1976). First, there is the assumption that there is something wrong with the people who are victimized and that they are somewhat different from the rest of us. Second, these differences are said to be the origin of their difficult situation. Hence, if they were like everyone else, the reasoning goes, they would not have been under attack in the first place. And third, victims are warned that if they want to avoid trouble in the future, they have to modify their own thinking and behavior. From a more psychological perspective, the reason why people sometimes blame the victims of crimes can be attributed to the just world theory (Lerner & Montana, 1998). This theory was mentioned early by Lerner and Simmons (1966) as a predictable way in which individuals tend to attribute the suffering of a victim to something the victim did or failed to do as opposed to factors outside of the victim's control. In this way the individual's belief in a just world (where everyone get what they deserve and deserve what they get) can be intact. The opposite situation would be a world in which bad things may happen to everyone at any time. Many

people would probably find this rather unnerving and uncomfortable (Karmen, 2012). In the legal psychological literature, victim blaming usually refers to the extent to which people attribute individual blame toward victims of crimes (e.g., rape or theft; Bruggen & Grubb, 2014; Ward, 1995). One variable that is believed to influence rape victim blaming is the ethnic background of the victim and perpetrator as well as the observer (participant).

Race and Rape

The history of race and rape was written and interpreted by privileged people with power (i.e., White males). Consequently, it is not surprising that media coverage on violence against minority (e.g., African American) women have largely been excluded from the news reports unless extremely sensational in nature (Meyers, 2004). The word rape comes from the Latin language meaning to steal, seize, or carry away (Veeraraghavan, 1987). This gives rise to associations to the hiding and assault of women by men for their own sexual pleasure. Aside from the mere sexual and gender aspects of rape, it has also largely been organized around race and ethnicity. For example, the jezebel is a stereotype about African American women that depict them as hypersexual and/or promiscuous (West, 2008). Because they (African American women) were believed to always desire sexual relations, it was continuously used as an excuse for American slave owners to rape African American women. Although historically this image of African American women has been challenged and disputed by African American women themselves, it continues to be a common representation, in for example, pornography (Cowan & Campbell, 1994; West, 1995). Even today young African American girls continue to struggle with the jezebel stereotype as they are constructing representations of themselves as emerging African American women (French, 2013).

As mentioned previously, most scientific studies that have investigated the influence of ethnicity on rape victim blaming were done in a North American context, contrasting African American and White victims and perpetrators (Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). For instance, Donovan (2007) found that male participants (but not female participants) were affected by the victim's race when evaluating the victim's promiscuity, classifying the African American victim as more promiscuous than the White victim, but only when the perpetrator was White, in line with the jezebel stereotype. Intriguingly, the male participants also rated the African American perpetrator as less culpable when the rape was interracial (White victim - African American perpetrator) compared to intraracial, suggesting a more complex

relationship between the influence of the victim's and perpetrator's ethnic backgrounds. Still, a majority of participants mistakenly believed that White women were the most likely victims of an African American rape perpetrator. This may be attributed to stereotypes about African American males as sexual predators of White women (Dorr, 2004). Indeed, this image has also been used historically in the media as a way to unite White people against minority groups (e.g., African Americans; Moorti, 2002). However, the common notion of a large number of interracial rapes (i.e., African American-White) over intraracial rapes has not been supported by rape statistics (South & Felson, 1990). A study by George and Martinez (2002) further discovered that an African American rape victim was blamed more when assaulted by a White perpetrator as compared to an African American perpetrator, again supporting the jezebel stereotype as well as African American males as predators. More interestingly, a White rape victim was also blamed more when raped by an African American perpetrator as opposed to a White perpetrator indicating that interracial rapes were judged more negatively than intraracial rapes regardless of the victim's ethnicity. Perpetrators were likewise blamed less if they committed rapes interracially compared to intraracially. Supposedly, an interracial rape situation would presumably activate stereotypes about African American and White women as hypersexual or promiscuous and therefore more worthy of blame. On the other hand, an intraracial rape between, for example, an African American offender and African American victim would most likely activate completely different types of stereotypes. In partial support of the jezebel stereotype, Foley, Evancic, Karnik, King, and Parks (1995) also found that a rape scenario was interpreted as less serious, less likely to be considered a date rape, and less likely to be considered a crime when the victim was described as African American as opposed to White. The ethnicity of both the victim and the perpetrator thus seem to influence the way the crime is perceived, with African Americans mostly in a disadvantage although White victim's of interracial rapes may also be vulnerable to receive blame. A commendable contribution to the otherwise heavily North American focused rape blame research comes from Korn (2009) who compared reactions to intergroup and intragroup rape scenarios among Jews and Arabs in Israel. For the Jews, the victim was deemed most responsible for the rape when both the victim and perpetrator belonged to the same ethnic group (e.g., Jewish victim and Jewish perpetrator). For Arabs, the opposite pattern was observed, namely, that victim's of interracial rapes were held most responsible the most. This both contrasts and supports some of the North American literature in which an interaction between the victim's and perpetrator's ethnicity resulted in the highest blame attribution (e.g.,

African American perpetrator and White victim; George & Martinez, 2002) which shows the need and necessity for studies from other countries as well. The current study will add to the literature by emanating from a Swedish perspective.

Although the studies that experimentally have manipulated the victim's ethnicity are relatively few, more work has been done when it comes to attitudes toward rape between different cultures and ethnicities. One study by Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre, and Morrison (2005) that used a community sample found that African American males (but not White males) differed significantly in their negative attitudes toward rape compared with African American and White women. This indicates that attitudes toward rape may differ between ethnic and gender groups and specifically between African American and White males. An additional study that compared attitudes toward rape between Caucasian and Asian college students found that the Asian college students were more likely to believe that women were responsible for preventing rape and that rape victims precipitate rape (Lee, Pomeroy, Yoo, & Rheinboldt, 2005). One explanation for this finding could be the high emphasis that is placed upon female purity and the fact that female sexuality in Asian cultures is only supposed to be controlled by her husband (Abraham, 1999). Similarly, Jimenez and Abreu (2003) contrasted Latin American and European American college students' attitudes toward a rape victim and found that the European American female students had more positive attitudes towards the rape victim compared to Latinas. As with Asian culture, one explanation for this result could be that the Latino American culture potentially endorses more traditional gender roles that favor men at the expense of women (Mayo & Resnick, 1996). An interesting contribution to the field by Maier (2008) was done by interviewing several rape victim advocates about their perceptions of rape and ethnicity. In line with the above mentioned studies, the majority of the advocates expressed their belief that women of color (e.g., African Americans, Latinas, and Asians) were treated differently by their families and by the criminal justice system compared to White rape victims. Further research has also demonstrated that African American women were viewed differently than White women by White university students, with African American women being more likely to be seen as loud, religious, and tough (Donovan, 2011). These views can be attributed in part to the sapphire stereotype that depict African American women as hostile, domineering, and nagging (West, 2008). Also, research from Sweden has demonstrated that immigrant women often have more restricted and limited opportunities for sexual activities since large emphasis is placed on their sexual purity (Forsberg, 2005). This may put them in a disadvantage compared to native Swedish women if being raped. The

inclusion of participants with different ethnic backgrounds in the current study together with the manipulation of the victim's and perpetrator's ethnicity, therefore, brings some needed information about this topic to light. Although race and ethnicity seem to have a strong influence on rape attitudes, it is hard to ignore the potential powerful impact of sex and gender in this context.

Rape and Gender

A large majority of all rape victims are women, with as much as 21% to 44% of college female students reporting victimization of rape (i.e., unwanted sexual contact subsequent to coercion) in some studies (Gidycz et al., 2001; Koss, 1998). Men can also be victims of rape with 3% of U.S. males or approximately 2.8 million reported male victims of rape (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). In other words, the widespread prevalence of rape is a serious societal issue for both men and women even though women (at least manifestly) are more likely to be victimized. In a similar line, some scholars have argued that rape is a way for men to control and dominate women and that the act of rape is less about sexual pleasure and more about control, and, for men to be in the command of women (Brownmiller, 2013; Johnson, 2014). Similarly, males may tend to view women as social rivals that should be reduced to abject powerlessness (Johnson, 2014; Scully, 1988). In support of this, empirical research has shown that among a sample of convicted male rapists, perceptions of humiliation and degradation for the female victim were very common (Scully, 1988). As could be expected from this research, the influence of gender on the assignment of blame toward rape victims consistently showed that males attributed more victim blame and responsibility than females (e.g., Davies, Rogers, & Whitelegg, 2009; Grubb & Harrower, 2009; Schneider, Mori, Lambert, & Wong, 2009; cf. Korn, 2009; Strömwall, Alfredsson, & Landström, 2013b). These findings (i.e., males attribute more blame) were also replicated for male rape victims (Davies, Rogers, & Whitelegg, 2009). In other words, as suggested by the aforementioned studies, gender was an important factor influencing rape victim blame and may also be expected to be an important factor in the current study. One reason behind this gender difference could be that women generally empathize more with the victim and less with the perpetrator than men (e.g., women are statistically more likely to be the victim of rape and most rape blame studies use female victims). Similarly, the defensive attribution theory (Shaver, 1970) states that people increase or decrease blame attribution depending on their perceived similarity toward the victim and the likelihood of a similar crime and victimization

befalling them (Grubb & Harrower, 2008). In line with this argument, one study found that men were more empathetic toward a rape perpetrator than were women (Ferrao, Goncalves, Parreira, & Giger, 2013). Another study demonstrated that high perceived similarity between research subjects and a rape victim was negatively correlated to victim blame (Grubb & Harrower, 2009). Also, research about empathy in the criminal justice system has demonstrated that jurors who were presented with statements that were aimed at inducing empathy among the jurors showed changed perceptions of the defendant (Plumm & Terrance, 2009). In addition, mock jurors in an empathy induced group found the defendant to be less guilty and less responsible compared to mock jurors in a control group (Haegerich & Bottoms, 2000). Also, just recently, individual differences in empathy have been demonstrated to be negatively correlated with stringency of punishment for a guilty defendant (Sjöberg, 2015). Yet, since some of the aforementioned studies were correlational, it is hard to make inferences about causation meaning that other underlying variables could be more important for explaining some of these findings. In addition, by including both male and female participants in the present experimental study, a systematic comparison between these two groups is feasible. Finally, although the similarity between the victim and observer (participant) may often be to the victim's advantage, there may be some exceptions to this rule in certain situations as will be outlined below.

The Black Sheep Effect

While the research about the blaming of African American rape victims shows that they are often discriminated against (e.g., Donovan, 2007; Foley et al., 1995), an important caveat needs to be put in place for rape victims belonging to the majority group who do not meet the criteria of how a "White girl is supposed to behave" (assuming that a White person belongs to the majority group). The phenomenon coined the black sheep effect describes how unlikable in-group members are judged more negatively than are unlikable out-group members (Marques, Robalo, & Rocha, 1992; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988). Another way to phrase this is to say that, relative to evaluations of average in-group members, in-group outsiders/deviants are criticized more than out-group outsiders/deviants (Abrams, Palmer, Rutland, Cameron, & Vyver, 2014). It is argued by Marques et al. (1988) that the negative evaluation of unlikable in-group members serves to protect the overall positive view of the in-group. For example, experimental studies have demonstrated that, in an apparent case of discrimination, participants were more likely to rate a person as avoiding

responsibility for his/her actions in an in-group as opposed to an out-group situation (Garcia, Reser, Amo, Redersdorff, & Branscombe, 2005). Another study found that participants rated a low quality essay as being of less quality when someone from the in-group had written it as opposed to the out-group (Lewis & Sherman, 2010). Finally, the black sheep effect has even been demonstrated in the criminal justice system (Devine, Clayton, Dunford, Seying, & Pryce, 2001). Hence, when the evidence against a defendant is poor or ambiguous, juries that are demographically similar to the defendant tend to be more lenient than juries more dissimilar to the defendant. However, when the evidence is clear and there is no doubt about the defendant's culpability, juries more similar to the defendant may actually tend to be harsher against the defendant, thus supporting the black sheep effect (Devine et al., 2001). This could be interpreted as a tendency among jurors to naturally think very highly of an in-group defendant. Yet, if the defendant clearly has done something wrong this would be inconsistent with the positive qualities associated with the in-group. It is very easy to imagine how this effect may put in-group victims of rape in a disadvantageous position if behaving in a way that is perceived as promiscuous or unfeminine. Although the present study is not specifically investigating this effect per se, it can potentially still be used to offer a framework for interpreting the findings. An additional factor that may influence how much blame people attribute toward a rape victim and perpetrator is their level of education.

Student versus Community Samples

Most studies that have investigated rape victim blaming were done with university students (Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). While this is understandable, there are some apparent problems with using this type of sample. Students are potentially more highly educated than the general population, may have more previous knowledge of rape as a social issue, and might display higher levels of supportiveness toward rape victims (Bruggen & Grubb, 2014; Idisis, Ben-David, & Ben-Nachum, 2007; Ward, 1995). Therefore, studies utilizing a community sample would be advantageous for increasing the generalizability of this type of research. In an attempt to bridge this gap and answer this criticism, Strömwall, Alfredsson, and Landström (2013a, 2013b) did a series of studies about rape victim blaming, varying such variables as relationship level and victim gender, using community samples. In essence, both the relationship level and victim gender had a significant effect on victim blaming; male victims and victim's of stranger rapes being assigned the highest amount of blame. An additional study by Strömwall, Landström, and Alfredsson (2014) that also used a community

sample found that the influence of the rapist's previous conviction affected men and women differently. Women assigned the *least* victim blame when the rapist had a previous conviction whereas males showed the opposite pattern; they assigned the *most* victim blame when the rapist had a previous conviction. Interestingly, all three studies from Strömwall et al.'s (2013a, 2013b; 2014) program of research showed low levels of victim blame and high levels of perpetrator blame among the community sample (which is something that could also be expected from the present study). This indicates that although students may be more supportive toward rape victims, the same is perhaps also true for other more diverse samples such as community samples. Finally, a study by Kelly (2009) that also used a community sample demonstrated that participants assigned more blame towards rape victims who had been drinking alcohol compared to sober victims, and that male participants assigned less perpetrator blame than female participants. These findings have also been replicated among student populations (e.g., Kahn et al., 2011; Richardson & Campbell, 1982). What is missing from the literature however, is a systematic comparison of victim and perpetrator blame between a community and student sample, hence, this was also investigated in the current study.

Aims and Hypotheses

As described above, the issue of sexual violence against women in general, and ethnic minority women in particular, is a vast structural problem facing our society. In response to these challenges, this study aims to shed light on the influence of four variables believed to affect the assignment of blame towards a rape victim and perpetrator. These variables are the victim's ethnicity, the perpetrator's ethnicity, the gender of the participant, and the ethnicity of the participant. As was pointed out by Bruggen and Grubb (2014), research into victim ethnicity was almost exclusively limited to North American studies and studies utilizing community samples were relatively rare along with comparisons of community and student samples almost non-existent. Therefore, this study aims to bridge these gaps in the scientific literature by comparing reactions towards rape between a community and a student sample in Sweden. A hypothetical scenario methodology was used to describe a rape. As described above, the manipulated variables were the victim's ethnicity (native vs. immigrant) and the perpetrator's ethnicity (native vs. immigrant), with blame attribution ratings subsequently compared across participant gender (female vs. male) and participant's ethnicity (native vs. immigrant). Based on the current literature, several hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: Participants will attribute more blame to the perpetrator than to the victim, in line with the results from Strömwall et al. (2013a, 2013b; 2014), where participants attributed higher blame ratings to the perpetrator than the victim.

H₂: Participants from the community sample will attribute higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than participants from the student sample, in agreement with the discussion by Bruggen and Grubb (2014), Idisis, Ben-David, and Ben-Nachum (2007), and Ward (1995) that students may display higher levels of supportiveness toward rape victims.

H₃: Participants from the community sample will categorize and classify the event as a rape to a lower degree than participants from the student sample, in consonance with the previous hypothesis.

H₄: Among both samples, subjects with an immigrant background will assign higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than subjects with a native Swedish background, inferred from the studies by Nagel et al. (2005) and Lee et al. (2005) that showed less positive attitudes toward rape victims among African and Asian American participants compared to White participants.

H₅: Overall, the most victim blame and the least perpetrator blame will be allocated for an interracial rape scenario, supporting the study by George and Martinez (2002) where victims and perpetrators of interracial rapes were blamed the most and least, respectively, regardless of their ethnic background.

H₆: Among both samples, male participants will attribute higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than female participants, as suggested by previous studies (e.g., Davies, Rogers, & Whitelegg, 2009; Grubb & Harrower, 2009), and in line with the presented argument that women may potentially empathize more with the victim and less with the perpetrator than men.

Method

Participants

The community sample was recruited in various public spaces such as train stations and shopping malls and the student sample was recruited from various universities and colleges in southern Sweden. In total, 411 people (201 women and 210 men) participated in the study. Age ranged from 18 to 84 years ($M = 26.87$, $SD = 12.58$). The community sample included 211 individuals (99 women and 112 men) and had an age range from 18 to 84 years ($M = 30.86$, $SD = 16.25$). One hundred and fourteen individuals from the community sample had a native background while the rest (97 individuals) had an immigrant background. The student sample included 200 individuals (102 women and 98 men) and had an age range from 18 to 40 years ($M = 22.66$, $SD = 3.57$). One hundred and thirty-five individuals from the student sample had a native background while the rest (65 individuals) had an immigrant background. Participants were randomly assigned to experimental conditions. This study was approved by the Department of Psychology at Lund University in accordance to the law on ethics of research involving humans. Additionally, no negative consequences from participating were considered likely.

Design

The current study used a 2 X 2 X 2 X 2 between subjects design with 2 (victim's ethnicity: native vs. immigrant) X 2 (perpetrator's ethnicity: native vs. immigrant) X 2 (gender of participant: female vs. male) X 2 (ethnicity of participant: native vs. immigrant) as independent variables. The main dependent variables were the assignment of blame towards the victim and the assignment of blame towards the perpetrator in both a student and a community sample.

Materials

The questionnaire consisted of an acquaintance rape vignette (see Appendix) in the form of a newspaper article (approximately 200 words) influenced by the research from Strömwall, Landström, and Alfredsson (2014), but modified to fit the current study by making the vignette less stereotypical in terms of the rape scenario. This was followed by items measuring victim and perpetrator blame (borrowed from Strömwall, Landström, & Alfredsson, 2014) and subjects' level of modern racism (see below). Demographic

information (e.g., gender, age, and ethnicity) was answered at the end of the questionnaire. Ethnicity was operationalized by asking participants whether one, both, or none of their parents were born abroad. Participants that had at least one parent born abroad were categorized as having an immigrant background. Altogether, four vignettes were used. The vignette described a woman named Sarah (native vs. immigrant) who had met an attractive unknown man named Aron (native vs. immigrant) on her way home from a party. She had invited the man into her apartment to spend the night together but had changed her mind when they had already started kissing in the apartment. Yet, the man insisted and completed coitus. The information in the newspaper article was held constant, apart from the manipulation of the victim's ethnic background (native vs. immigrant) and the perpetrator's ethnic background (native vs. immigrant). The word "rape" was left out from the vignette to avoid a potential bias in the subsequent ratings (Davies & Rogers, 2006; Strömwall, Landström, & Alfredsson, 2014). In order to clarify the ethnic background of the victim and perpetrator, the status of both of them (i.e., native vs. immigrant) was manipulated by explicitly stating in the newspaper article that the victim either had a native or immigrant background. The same was done for the perpetrator. Prior to data collection, all materials (i.e., vignettes and response scales) were pilot tested ($n = 26$) for clarity and understanding as well as examining the response distribution. The questionnaires were subsequently modified to improve comprehension and to avoid floor and ceiling effects.

Four items measuring victim blame and four items measuring perpetrator blame were rated with 0% and 100% as its endpoints and concerned the extent to which the victim and the perpetrator could be blamed for the event. In order to reduce a potential bias in using the terms "victim" and "perpetrator" in the blame items, each of the questions referred to the individuals by the names used in the scenarios (i.e., Sarah & Aron; Simonson & Mezydlo-Subich, 1999). The blame items depicted the extent to which the victim and perpetrator was blameworthy, responsible, at fault, and had acted inappropriately, respectively. An example of an item is "To what extent do you think Sarah/Aron can be responsible for the event." The four blame items for the victim blame together with the four items for the perpetrator blame were collapsed into one victim blame scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$) and one perpetrator blame scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$). The last item asked participants to indicate, on a scale from 0% to 100%, to what extent they considered the event described as a rape.

Racism has been measured with different instruments in different contexts (see Henry & Sears, 2002 for a review). The present study used a translated Swedish version of the

Modern Racism Scale which measures subtle racism towards immigrants (translated into Swedish by Akrami, Ekehammar, & Araya, 2000; McConahay, 1983; McConahay, 1986). The translated scale has been shown to have high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$; Akrami, Ekehammar, & Araya, 2000). The translated Modern Racism Scale is a 9-item measure where responses are given on a 5-point scale anchored by 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 5 (*strongly agree*). An example of an item is "Discrimination of immigrants is no longer a problem in Sweden." The items for the current study showed satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$) and were therefore summed into one score. Written permission to use all the aforementioned scales was obtained from the original authors.

Procedure

The participants were approached in different universities and colleges (e.g., in classrooms and cafeterias etc.) in southern Sweden and in public places in the same geographical region (e.g., shopping malls, bus stations etc.). They were asked to participate in a short study (approximately 10 minutes) and were informed about the slightly sensitive topic of the study as well as assurance of their confidentiality and anonymity together with their right to discontinue participation at any time. Fewer than 30% declined to participate, and both oral and written consent were acquired. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four booklets with a different vignette in each booklet. A debriefing page was included at the end of the question sheets. The experimenter waited at a small distance (or in front of the classroom) from the participants while they completed the questionnaire. When finished, participants were thanked and subsequent questions that had emerged during completion of the questionnaire were answered.

Results

Prior to analysis, all relevant measures were screened for missing values and outliers. Missing values were replaced by the expectation maximization method and the negative impact of outliers were reduced by altering their scores to the next highest/lowest score in line with Tabachnick and Fidell (2007, p. 77). At large, participants assigned lower levels of victim blame ($M = 24.23$, $SD = 26.56$) compared to perpetrator blame ($M = 78.33$, $SD = 24.48$); a Wilcoxon signed-rank test¹ confirmed that the level of assigned blame was

¹ Initial exploration of the data suggested some violations (e.g., normality) of the assumptions of parametric tests.

significantly different, $z = -15.24$, $p < .001$, $r = -.53$. Thus, hypothesis 1 of more blame being attributed to the perpetrator than to the victim was supported. Naturally, the relationship between level of assigned victim blame and level of assigned perpetrator blame was also negative and significant ($r_s = -.66$, $n = 411$, $p < .001$). Interestingly, Modern Racism correlated positively with levels of victim blame ($r_s = .36$, $n = 411$, $p < .001$), and negatively with levels of perpetrator blame ($r_s = -.28$, $n = 411$, $p < .001$).

Differences in victim blame, perpetrator blame, and the extent to which the event was classified as a rape between the two samples were investigated using the Mann-Whitney test². First, there was a significant difference in victim blame between the two samples. The community sample ($M = 30.78$, $SD = 29.00$) assigned significantly more victim blame than the student sample ($M = 17.33$, $SD = 21.74$); $U = 15366.50$, $z = -4.80$, $p < .001$, $r = -.24$. Second, there was a significant difference in perpetrator blame between the two samples. The community sample ($M = 75.55$, $SD = 26.08$) attributed significantly less perpetrator blame compared to the student sample ($M = 81.25$, $SD = 22.36$); $U = 18318.00$, $z = -2.34$, $p = .019$, $r = -.12$. Hence, hypothesis 2 (i.e., higher victim blame and lower perpetrator blame attributions among the community sample than the student sample) was supported. Finally, there was a significant difference in the extent to which the event was classified as a rape between the two samples. The community sample ($M = 73.49$, $SD = 33.21$) classified the event to a lesser extent as a rape than did the student sample ($M = 81.22$, $SD = 26.91$); $U = 18328.50$, $z = -2.44$, $p = .015$, $r = -.12$, thus supporting hypothesis 3 (i.e., lower ratings of degree to which the event should be classified as a rape among the community sample than the student sample). Because of the significant differences between the two samples, they were subsequently analyzed separately.

Community Sample

Victim blame. The level of victim blame assignments among the community sample were investigated using a 2 (victim's ethnicity: native vs. immigrant) X 2 (perpetrator's ethnicity: native vs. immigrant) X 2 (gender of participant: female vs. male) X 2 (ethnicity of participant: native vs. immigrant) between-subjects ANCOVA³ with the victim blame scale as

² Initial exploration of the data suggested some violations (e.g., normality) of the assumptions of parametric tests.

³ $df_{error} = 194$. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), robustness of ANCOVA is expected with at least 20 degrees of freedom for error, no outliers, and fairly similar sample sizes.

dependent variable and Modern Racism as a covariate. See Table 1 for the descriptive statistics and Table 2 for the outcome of all the 16 effects tested in the ANCOVA.

Table 1

Mean victim blame attributions (and standard deviations) for the community sample across victim ethnicity, perpetrator ethnicity, participant ethnicity, and participant gender

		Native victim		Immigrant victim	
		Native perpetrator	Immigrant perpetrator	Native perpetrator	Immigrant perpetrator
Participant ethnicity	Participant gender	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Native	Male	20.17 (22.18)	38.42 (33.04)	29.29 (32.23)	18.98 (18.36)
	Female	21.98 (17.76)	24.57 (24.55)	18.44 (25.25)	19.73 (24.52)
Immigrant	Male	49.93 (29.28)	30.93 (26.66)	38.17 (29.86)	44.46 (38.16)
	Female	28.22 (31.22)	49.25 (26.17)	32.64 (30.52)	32.85 (32.78)

Note. Means and standard deviations refer to the unadjusted values.

Table 2

Results of analysis of covariance for victim blame for the community sample

Effect	$F_{(1, 211)}$	p	η_p^2
Modern Racism (covariate)	31.17	.00	.14
Victim ethnicity	.31	.58	.00
Perpetrator ethnicity	.60	.44	.00
Participant gender	.43	.51	.00
Participant ethnicity	14.90	.00	.07
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity	.17	.68	.00
Victim ethnicity X Participant gender	.52	.47	.00
Victim ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	.01	.93	.00
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender	1.20	.27	.01
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	.01	.93	.00
Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	.14	.71	.00
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender	.01	.93	.00
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	.89	.35	.01
Victim ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	.01	.93	.00
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	.60	.44	.00
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	7.80	.01	.04

The covariate, Modern Racism, was significantly related to levels of victim blame, $F(1, 211) = 31.17, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$. There was also a significant four-way interaction between victim's ethnicity, perpetrator's ethnicity, participant gender, and participant's ethnicity, $F(1, 211) = 7.80, p = .006, \eta_p^2 = .04$. This interaction was analyzed further by running supplementary tests separately for male participants with a native background, male participants with an immigrant background, female participants with a native background, and female participants with an immigrant background. For male participants with an immigrant background, female participants with a native background, and female participants with a native background, no significant differences were observed. For male participants with a native background, however, a significant Victim's ethnicity X Perpetrator's ethnicity interaction was found, $F(1, 59) = 4.16, p = .046, \eta_p^2 = .07$. Although no significant differences were obtained in the simple effects tests⁴, graphical inspection of the means, as can be seen in Figure 1, indicated a clear interaction effect.

⁴ Adjustment for multiple comparisons was done with Fisher's LSD.

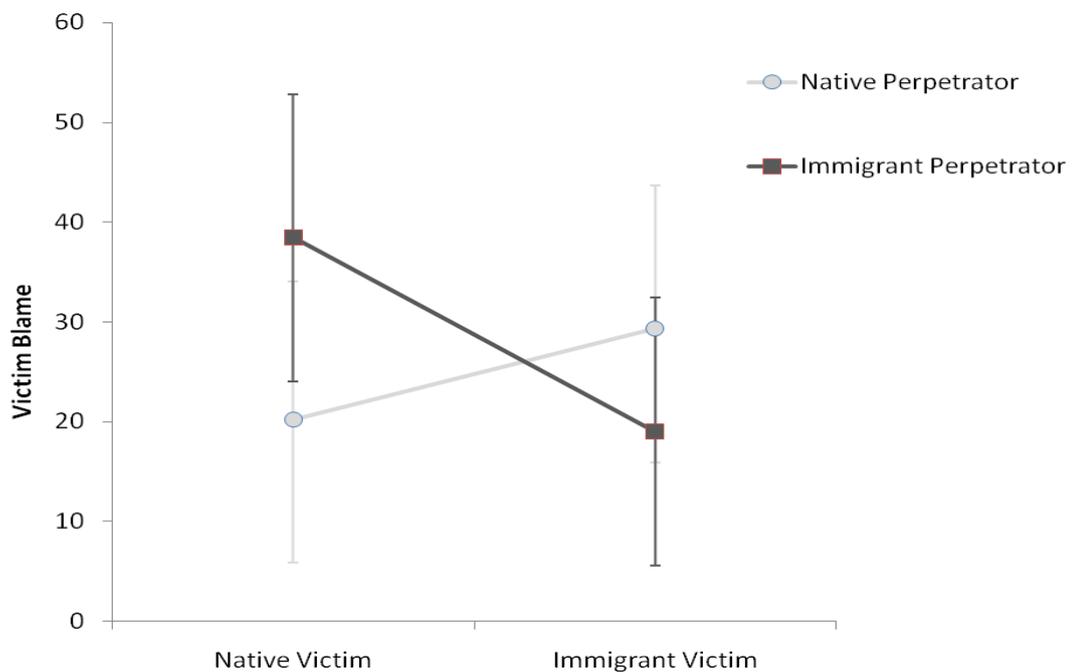


Figure 1. Mean victim blame ratings across victim and perpetrator ethnicity rated by native male community members. Error bars denote 95% confidence intervals around the mean

As shown in Figure 1, when males with a native background gave blame to a native victim, they gave higher victim blame attributions when the perpetrator had an immigrant background ($M = 38.42$, $SE = 7.18$) than a native background ($M = 20.17$, $SE = 6.93$, ns). When the victim instead had an immigrant background, the reverse pattern was observed. Namely that the males with a native background gave higher victim blame when the victim's perpetrator had a native background ($M = 29.29$, $SE = 7.18$) as opposed to an immigrant background ($M = 18.98$, $SE = 6.71$, ns).

Additionally, there was a main effect of participant's ethnicity, $F(1, 211) = 14.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .071$; participants with an immigrant background ($M = 38.34$, $SE = 2.68$) assigned significantly more victim blame than participants with a native background ($M = 24.27$, $SE = 2.47$). In other words, hypothesis 4 (i.e., subjects with an immigrant background will assign higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than subjects with a native background) was supported for the community sample and for victim blame assignments.

Inspection of the means of victim blame attributions for the community sample from Table 1 showed that the most victim blame was attributed by males with an immigrant background to an intraracial rape between a native victim and a native perpetrator. This

contrasts hypothesis 5 of most victim blame (and least perpetrator blame) being attributed to an interracial rape scenario.

Perpetrator blame. To examine differences in levels of assigned perpetrator blame attributions among the community sample, a 2 (victim's ethnicity: native vs. immigrant) X 2 (perpetrator's ethnicity: native vs. immigrant) X 2 (gender of participant: female vs. male) X 2 (ethnicity of participant: native vs. immigrant) between-subjects ANCOVA⁵ was executed using the perpetrator blame scale as dependent variable, again with Modern Racism as a covariate. See Table 3 for the descriptive statistics and Table 4 for all the 16 effects tested in the ANCOVA.

Table 3

Mean perpetrator blame attributions (and standard deviations) for the community sample across victim ethnicity, perpetrator ethnicity, participant ethnicity, and participant gender

		Native victim		Immigrant victim	
		Native perpetrator	Immigrant perpetrator	Native perpetrator	Immigrant perpetrator
Participant ethnicity	Participant gender	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Native	Male	83.08 (23.52)	64.30 (34.58)	75.80 (30.00)	75.83 (24.33)
	Female	84.52 (16.79)	76.80 (21.05)	90.18 (15.15)	91.09 (13.04)
Immigrant	Male	58.32 (26.24)	72.01 (24.60)	71.11 (32.53)	68.68 (36.10)
	Female	82.06 (19.43)	55.26 (26.93)	74.17 (17.90)	84.03 (15.74)

Note. Means and standard deviations refer to the unadjusted values.

⁵ *df error* = 194. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), robustness of ANCOVA is expected with at least 20 degrees of freedom for error, no outliers, and fairly similar sample sizes.

Table 4

Results of analysis of covariance for perpetrator blame for the community sample

Effect	$F_{(1, 211)}$	p	η_p^2
Modern Racism (covariate)	16.12	.00	.08
Victim ethnicity	2.94	.09	.02
Perpetrator ethnicity	1.49	.22	.01
Participant gender	3.91	.049	.02
Participant ethnicity	7.71	.01	.04
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity	.71	.40	.00
Victim ethnicity X Participant gender	1.53	.22	.01
Victim ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	.14	.71	.00
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender	.43	.51	.00
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	.35	.55	.00
Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	.14	.71	.00
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender	1.39	.24	.01
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	.01	.93	.00
Victim ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	.37	.54	.00
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	1.24	.27	.01
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	6.48	.01	.03

The covariate, Modern Racism, was significantly related to levels of assigned perpetrator blame, $F(1, 211) = 16.12, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .077$. Additionally, there was a significant four-way interaction between victim's ethnicity, perpetrator's ethnicity, gender of participant, and ethnicity of participant, $F(1, 211) = 6.48, p = .012, \eta_p^2 = .032$. The interaction was further analyzed by running supplementary tests separately for male participants with a native background, male participants with an immigrant background, female participants with a native background, and female participants with an immigrant background. For male participants with a native background and male participants with an immigrant background, no significant differences were obtained. For female participants with a native background and female participants with an immigrant background, however, there were significant differences. Specifically, for female participants with a native background, there was a significant main effect of victim's ethnicity, $F(1, 55) = 4.69, p = .035, \eta_p^2 = .084$; the perpetrator was blamed significantly more when assaulting a victim with an immigrant background ($M = 90.635, SE = 3.074$) compared to a native background ($M = 80.660, SE = 3.430$).

For the female participants with an immigrant background, there was a significant Victim's ethnicity X Perpetrator's ethnicity interaction, $F(1, 44) = 8.496, p = .006, \eta_p^2 = .175$. Simple effects tests⁶ together with graphical inspection of the means from Figure 2 were used to examine the interaction further.

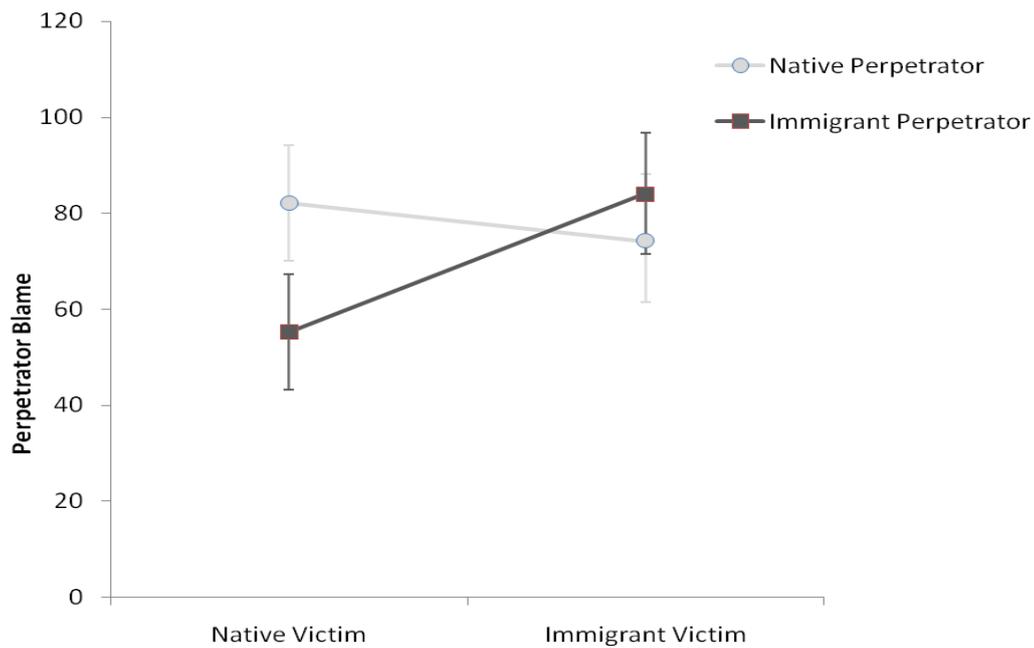


Figure 2. Mean perpetrator blame ratings across victim and perpetrator ethnicity rated by immigrant female community members. Error bars denote 95% confidence intervals around the mean

As can be seen in Figure 2, when the victim had a native background, a native perpetrator ($M = 82.063, SE = 5.981$) was blamed significantly more compared to an immigrant perpetrator ($M = 55.258, SE = 5.981$), $F(1, 40) = 10.042, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .201$. When the victim instead had an immigrant background, there was no significant difference between a native perpetrator ($M = 74.167, SE = 6.907$) and an immigrant perpetrator ($M = 84.032, SE = 6.247$), $F(1, 40) = 1.122, p = .296, \eta_p^2 = .027$.

Finally, for the whole community sample, there were also two main effects. First, there was a significant main effect of participant gender, $F(1, 211) = 3.91, p = .049, \eta_p^2 =$

⁶ Adjustment for multiple comparisons was done with Fisher's LSD.

.020; female participants ($M = 78.68$, $SE = 2.47$) assigned significantly more perpetrator blame compared to male participants ($M = 71.99$, $SE = 2.29$). Thus, hypothesis 6 (i.e., male participants will attribute higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than female participants) was supported for the community sample and for perpetrator blame. As before, there was a significant main effect of participant's ethnicity, $F(1, 211) = 7.71$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .038$; participants with a native background ($M = 79.99$, $SE = 2.27$) attributed significantly more perpetrator blame than participants with an immigrant background ($M = 70.68$, $SE = 2.46$). Consequently, hypothesis 4 (i.e., subjects with an immigrant background will assign higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than subjects with a native background) was also supported for perpetrator blame attributions and for the community sample.

Inspection of the means of perpetrator blame attributions for the community sample from Table 3 demonstrated that the least perpetrator blame was attributed by females with an immigrant background to an interracial rape between a native victim and an immigrant perpetrator. This supports hypothesis 5 of least perpetrator blame (and most victim blame) being attributed to an interracial rape scenario. See Table 5 for an overview of all the significant results from the community sample.

Table 5

Significant effects for various community sub-samples for victim and perpetrator blame

	Sub-sample	Significant effects ($p < .05$)
Victim blame	All community members	Main effect of participant's ethnicity
	Native male community members	Victim's ethnicity X Perpetrator's ethnicity interaction (see Figure 1)
Perpetrator blame	All community members	Main effect of participant's ethnicity and gender
	Native female community members	Main effect of victim's ethnicity
	Immigrant female community members	Victim's ethnicity X Perpetrator's ethnicity interaction (see Figure 2)

Student Sample

Victim blame. In order to investigate differences in victim blame assignments among the student sample, a 2 (victim's ethnicity: native vs. immigrant) X 2 (perpetrator's ethnicity: native vs. immigrant) X 2 (gender of participant: female vs. male) X 2 (ethnicity of

participant: native vs. immigrant) between-subjects ANCOVA⁷ was performed using the victim blame scale as dependent variable and the level of Modern Racism, again, as a covariate. See Table 6 for the descriptive statistics and Table 7 for all the 16 effects tested in the ANCOVA.

Table 6

Mean victim blame attributions (and standard deviations) for the student sample across victim ethnicity, perpetrator ethnicity, participant ethnicity, and participant gender

		Native victim		Immigrant victim	
		Native perpetrator	Immigrant perpetrator	Native perpetrator	Immigrant perpetrator
Participant ethnicity	Participant gender	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Native	Male	20.92 (21.31)	20.73 (17.98)	13.33 (16.79)	16.71 (21.23)
	Female	10.92 (14.10)	12.08 (16.87)	9.65 (16.42)	8.50 (15.32)
Immigrant	Male	10.89 (13.63)	33.37 (28.44)	36.09 (25.53)	27.29 (22.86)
	Female	31.88 (40.35)	21.82 (26.76)	13.88 (13.48)	3.13 (2.71)

Note. Means and standard deviations refer to the unadjusted values.

⁷ *df error* = 183. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), robustness of ANCOVA is expected with at least 20 degrees of freedom for error, no outliers, and fairly similar sample sizes.

Table 7

Results of analysis of covariance for victim blame for the student sample

Effect	$F_{(1, 200)}$	p	η_p^2
Modern Racism (covariate)	18.48	.00	.09
Victim ethnicity	1.84	.18	.01
Perpetrator ethnicity	.02	.90	.00
Participant gender	3.43	.07	.02
Participant ethnicity	6.75	.01	.04
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity	1.52	.22	.01
Victim ethnicity X Participant gender	4.67	.03	.03
Victim ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	.00	.99	.00
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender	2.17	.14	.01
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	.03	.86	.00
Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	.02	.89	.00
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender	1.50	.22	.01
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	1.47	.23	.01
Victim ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	3.59	.06	.02
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	1.56	.21	.01
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	1.53	.22	.01

The covariate, Modern Racism, was significantly associated with victim blame, $F(1, 200) = 18.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .092$. Furthermore, there was a significant two-way interaction between victim's ethnicity and gender, $F(1, 200) = 4.67$, $p = .032$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$. Simple effects tests⁸ were used to explore the interaction together with graphical inspection of the means from Figure 3.

⁸ Adjustment for multiple comparisons was done with Fisher's LSD.

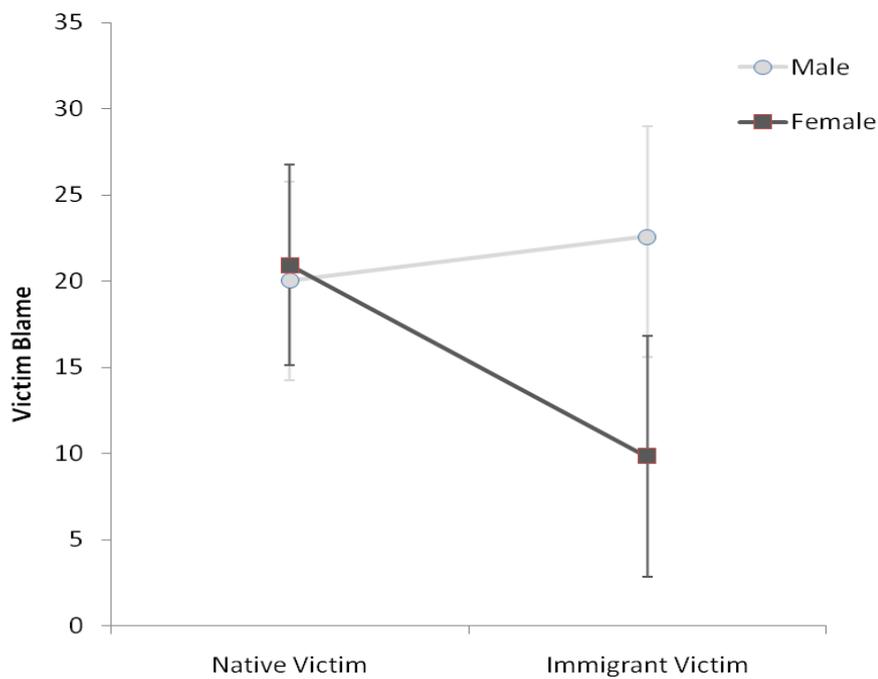


Figure 3. Mean victim blame ratings across victim ethnicity and participant gender as rated by all students. Error bars denote 95% confidence intervals around the mean. As demonstrated in Figure 3, male students ($M = 22.58$, $SE = 3.25$) attributed significantly more victim blame to an immigrant victim than did female students ($M = 9.81$, $SE = 3.55$), $F(1, 183) = 7.03$, $p = .009$, $\eta_p^2 = .037$. When the victim instead had a native background, no significant differences in victim blame emerged between male students ($M = 20.04$, $SE = 2.90$) and female students ($M = 20.93$, $SE = 2.95$), $F(1, 183) = .05$, $p = .83$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$.

Also, there was a significant main effect of participant's ethnicity, $F(1, 200) = 6.75$, $p = .010$, $\eta_p^2 = .036$; students with an immigrant background ($M = 22.44$, $SE = 2.63$) assigned significantly more victim blame than students with a native background ($M = 14.24$, $SE = 1.74$). This, again, supports hypothesis 4 (i.e., subjects with an immigrant background will assign higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than subjects with a native background) for the student sample and for victim blame assignments.

Inspection of the means of victim blame attributions for the student sample from Table 6 demonstrated that most victim blame was attributed by males with an immigrant background to an interracial rape between an immigrant victim of a native perpetrator. This again supports hypothesis 5 of most victim blame (and least perpetrator blame) being attributed to an interracial rape scenario.

Perpetrator blame. At last, to investigate differences in levels of perpetrator blame attributions among the student sample, a 2 (victim's ethnicity: native vs. immigrant) X 2 (perpetrator's ethnicity: native vs. immigrant) X 2 (gender of participant: female vs. male) X 2 (ethnicity of participant: native vs. immigrant) between-subjects ANCOVA⁹ was executed using the perpetrator blame scale as dependent variable and, as before, Modern Racism as a covariate. This time, see Table 8 for the descriptive statistics and Table 9 for all the 16 effects tested in the ANCOVA.

Table 8

Mean perpetrator blame attributions (and standard deviations) for the student sample across victim ethnicity, perpetrator ethnicity, participant ethnicity, and participant gender

		Native victim		Immigrant victim	
		Native perpetrator	Immigrant perpetrator	Native perpetrator	Immigrant perpetrator
Participant ethnicity	Participant gender	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Native	Male	75.59 (22.76)	80.19 (21.19)	88.54 (13.51)	72.89 (30.58)
	Female	86.83 (13.64)	72.50 (31.92)	91.80 (11.38)	86.94 (16.44)
Immigrant	Male	85.00 (14.77)	69.17 (28.25)	70.63 (26.78)	77.50 (13.78)
	Female	92.81 (10.60)	81.98 (19.99)	63.96 (37.69)	97.50 (6.12)

Note. Means and standard deviations refer to the unadjusted values.

⁹ *df error* = 183. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), robustness of ANCOVA is expected with at least 20 degrees of freedom for error, no outliers, and fairly similar sample sizes.

Table 9

Results of analysis of covariance for perpetrator blame for the student sample

Effect	$F_{(1, 200)}$	p	η_p^2
Modern Racism (covariate)	9.00	.00	.05
Victim ethnicity	.05	.83	.00
Perpetrator ethnicity	.65	.42	.00
Participant gender	2.15	.14	.01
Participant ethnicity	.39	.53	.00
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity	4.45	.04	.02
Victim ethnicity X Participant gender	.16	.69	.00
Victim ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	2.88	.09	.02
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender	.75	.39	.00
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	2.17	.14	.01
Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	.17	.68	.00
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender	3.02	.08	.02
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant ethnicity	7.99	.01	.04
Victim ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	1.37	.24	.01
Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	2.22	.14	.01
Victim ethnicity X Perpetrator ethnicity X Participant gender X Participant ethnicity	.03	.88	.00

In line with the previous results, Modern Racism was significantly related to levels of attributed perpetrator blame, $F(1, 200) = 9.00, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .047$. Moreover, there was a significant three-way interaction between victim's ethnicity, perpetrator's ethnicity, and ethnicity of the participant, $F(1, 200) = 7.99, p = .005, \eta_p^2 = .042$. Hence, supplementary tests were conducted separately for students with a native background and students with an immigrant background. For students with a native background, there was a significant main effect of perpetrator ethnicity, $F(1, 135) = 4.226, p = .042, \eta_p^2 = .031$; the perpetrator was blamed significantly more when he was described as having a native ($M = 85.647, SE = 2.553$) as opposed to an immigrant background ($M = 77.995, SE = 2.708$).

For students with an immigrant background, there was a significant Victim's ethnicity X Perpetrator's ethnicity interaction, $F(1, 65) = 8.409, p = .005, \eta_p^2 = .121$. Simple effects tests¹⁰ and graphical inspection of the means from Figure 4 were used to explore the interaction further.

¹⁰ Adjustment for multiple comparisons was done with Fisher's LSD.

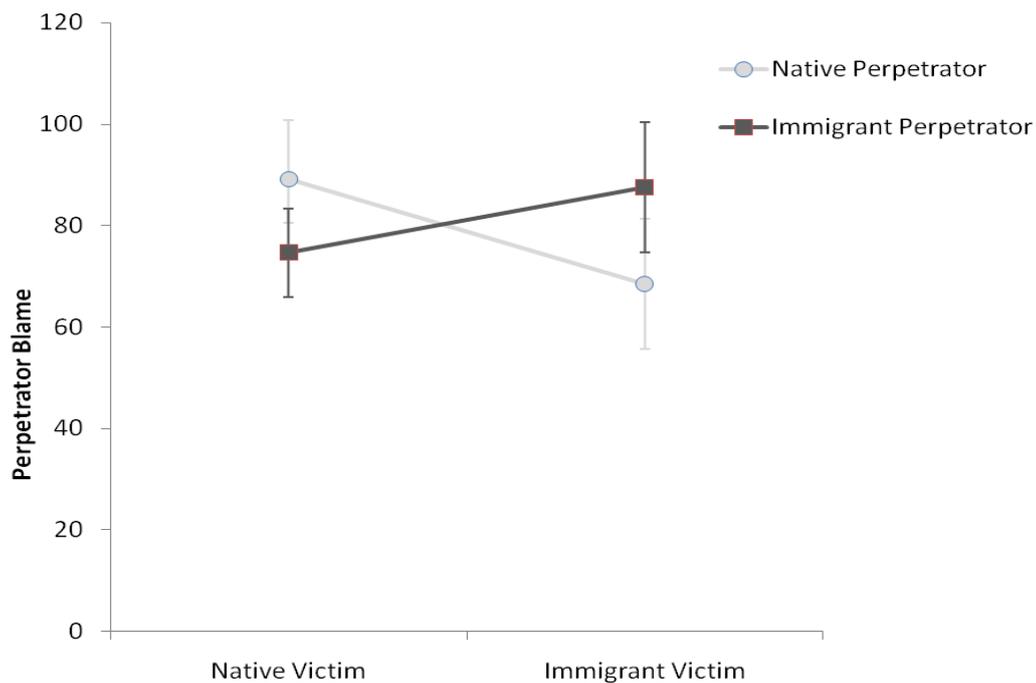


Figure 4. Mean perpetrator blame ratings across victim and perpetrator ethnicity rated by immigrant students. Error bars denote 95% confidence intervals around the mean. As displayed in Figure 4, when the victim had a native background, a native perpetrator ($M = 89.167$, $SE = 5.751$) was blamed significantly more than an immigrant perpetrator ($M = 74.588$, $SE = 4.369$), $F(1, 61) = 4.074$, $p = .048$, $\eta_p^2 = .063$. In contrast, when the victim instead had an immigrant background, an immigrant perpetrator ($M = 87.50$, $SE = 6.430$) was blamed significantly more than a native perpetrator ($M = 68.402$, $SE = 6.430$), $F(1, 61) = 4.410$, $p = .040$, $\eta_p^2 = .067$.

In addition, for the entire student sample, a significant two-way interaction between victim's ethnicity and perpetrator's ethnicity was found, $F(1, 200) = 4.45$, $p = .036$, $\eta_p^2 = .024$. Again, simple effects tests¹¹ were used to analyze the interaction together with graphical inspection of the means from Figure 5.

¹¹ Adjustment for multiple comparisons was done with Fisher's LSD.

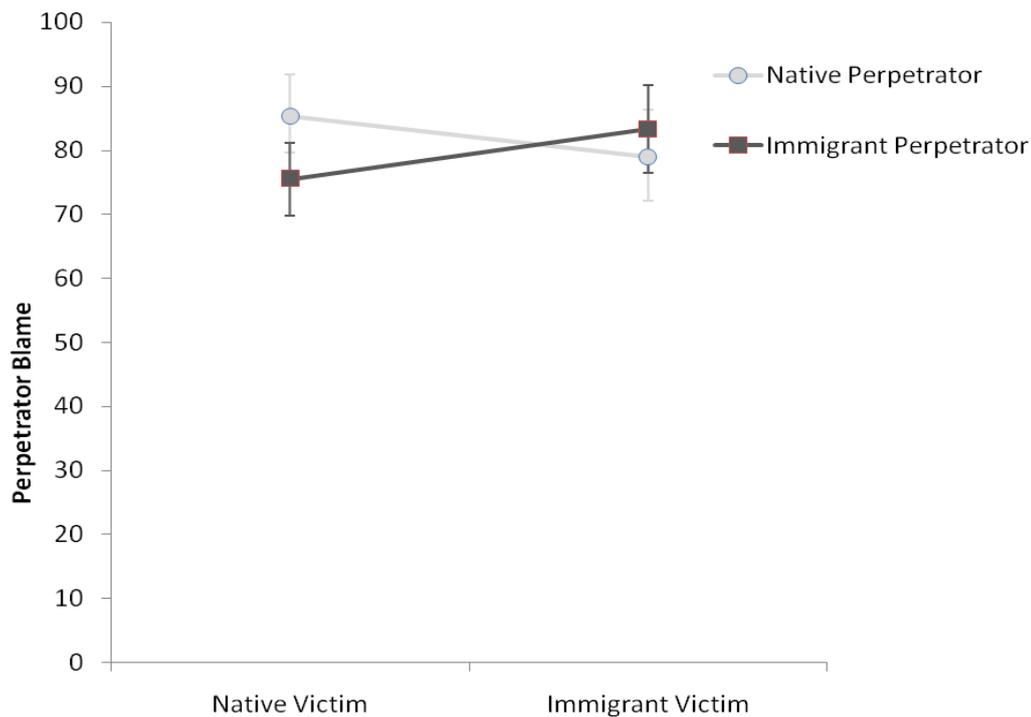


Figure 5. Mean perpetrator blame ratings across victim and perpetrator ethnicity rated by all students. Error bars denote 95% confidence intervals around the mean

As can be seen in Figure 5, when the victim had a native background, students attributed significantly more perpetrator blame to a perpetrator with a native background ($M = 85.29$, $SE = 3.27$) as compared to an immigrant background ($M = 75.50$, $SE = 2.89$), $F(1, 183) = 5.03$, $p = .026$, $\eta_p^2 = .027$. When the victim instead had an immigrant background, there was no significant difference in level of perpetrator blame assignments between a native perpetrator ($M = 78.95$, $SE = 3.71$) and an immigrant perpetrator ($M = 83.31$, $SE = 3.51$), $F(1, 183) = .73$, $p = .39$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$.

Inspection of the means of perpetrator blame attributions for the student sample from Table 8 displayed that the least perpetrator blame was attributed by female students with an immigrant background to an interracial rape between an immigrant victim and a native perpetrator. This once more confirms hypothesis 5 of least perpetrator blame (and most victim blame) being attributed to an interracial rape scenario. See Table 10 for an overview of all the significant results from the student sample.

Table 10

Significant effects for various student sub-samples for victim and perpetrator blame

	Sub-sample	Significant effects ($p < .05$)
Victim blame	All students	Main effect of participant's ethnicity and Victim's ethnicity X Participant's gender interaction (see Figure 3)
Perpetrator blame	All students	Victim's ethnicity X Perpetrator's ethnicity interaction (see Figure 5)
	Native students	Main effect of perpetrator's ethnicity
	Immigrant students	Victim's ethnicity X Perpetrator's ethnicity interaction (see Figure 4)

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of the victim's ethnicity, perpetrator's ethnicity, gender of the participant and ethnicity of the participant on victim and perpetrator blame attributions. Additionally, comparisons between a community and student sample were executed. As expected, participants attributed significantly more blame to the perpetrator than to the victim in line with previous research (Strömwall, Alfredsson, & Landström, 2013a, 2013b; Strömwall, Landström, & Alfredsson, 2014). Hence, the first hypothesis of more blame being attributed to the perpetrator than the victim, was supported. Consistent with arguments in prior research (e.g., Bruggen & Grubb, 2014; Idisis, Ben-David, & Ben-Nachum, 2007; Ward, 1995), the current study also demonstrated that the community sample attributed higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than did the student sample. The community sample did also classify the event as a rape to a lower degree compared to the student sample, supporting hypotheses 2 and 3 of more victim blame, less perpetrator blame, and lower rape classification being attributed by the community sample. This is the first study, to the best of the author's knowledge, to scientifically demonstrate that attitudes toward rape differ between students and the wider community in this part of the world.

For all the tested main effects of participants' ethnicity except perpetrator blame attributions for the student sample, ethnicity of the participants emerged as a significant main effect. That is, immigrant¹² participants assigned higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than native participants. Consequently, hypothesis 4 (i.e., among both samples, subjects with an immigrant background will assign higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than subjects with a native background) was

¹² Participants with an immigrant background are hereafter referred to as simply immigrant participants

mostly supported. This goes in line with previous research that has shown similar results when comparing Caucasians with African Americans and Asian Americans (Lee, Pomeroy, Yoo, & Rheinboldt, 2005; Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre, & Morrison, 2005). Although the ethnicity of the participants was not investigated very thoroughly due to ethical reasons (they were only required to indicate whether they had an immigrant background or not), it could be hypothesized that the immigrant participants in the current study came from somewhat different countries than the participants from the studies just mentioned. For example, the largest ethnic group to immigrate to Sweden over half a decade ago came from Iraq (Statistics Sweden, 2009). Today, most people who try to immigrate to Sweden are from Syria, possibly due to wars in the region (Statistics Sweden, 2015, February 4). Thus, people from the Middle East are a large immigrant group in Sweden, and it could be expected that at least a sizable proportion of all the immigrant participants in the current study also came from this region. If so, the present study is the first to demonstrate significant differences in rape victim and perpetrator blaming between these groups and native Swedish citizens. Yet, such a result would perhaps not be extremely surprising considering that women in the Middle East are lagging behind when it comes to employment and gender equality (Littrell & Bertsch, 2013). On the other hand, Sweden is a very egalitarian country where men and women are treated relatively equal compared to other countries (Sevilla-Sanz, 2010). This may have contributed to the observed differences in victim and perpetrator blaming between the groups.

An interesting pattern also turned out for the blame attributions from the descriptive tables. Specifically, for all blame attributions except victim blame for the community sample, an interracial rape scenario was given the highest victim blame and the lowest perpetrator blame, respectively. This supports hypothesis 5 (i.e., overall, the most victim blame and the least perpetrator blame will be allocated for an interracial rape scenario). Rape blame research from North America has also shown that an interracial rape (e.g., White victim and African American perpetrator) resulted in the lowest and highest blame attributions for the perpetrator and victim, respectively (George & Martinez, 2002). George and Martinez argued that one explanation for these results could be that interracial victims are seen as more adventurous and risk taking for socializing with someone from a different ethnic group compared to intraracial rape victims, and hence, more worthy of blame. Although plausible, more research is warranted to investigate exactly how such perceptions would influence blame attributions toward rape victims and perpetrators in this part of the world.

Interestingly, a significant main effect of participant gender was only observed for the community sample on perpetrator blame. Thus, hypothesis 6 (i.e., among both samples, male subjects will attribute higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than female subjects) was mostly not supported. This, however, mirrors some recent work done in the same country showing that males and females did not differ much in their level of victim and perpetrator blame attributions (Strömwall, Alfredsson, & Landström, 2013b). This, again, may be related to the supposedly egalitarian nature of the Swedish society (Sevilla-Sanz, 2010). The above explanation is especially likely since several research studies have shown that there is a correlation between gender-role traditionality and victim-blame attributions and rape rejecting attitudes (e.g., Check & Malamuth, 1983; Simonson & Mezydło-Subich, 1999). Hence, in countries where women and men have more unequal opportunities, there may perhaps also be larger differences in their perceptions and attitudes towards rape victims and perpetrators.

Apart from the observed main effects, there were also some interesting interaction effects. First, for the community sample, native male community members attributed most victim blame to victims of interracial rapes, as would be expected from hypothesis 5 (i.e., most victim blame being attributed to a victim of an interracial rape scenario). This also goes in line with the study by George and Martinez (2002). Specifically, the native male community members attributed most victim blame to a native victim of an immigrant perpetrator, and to an immigrant victim of a native perpetrator. As alluded to above, perhaps the male community members reasoned that it was more of the victim's own fault for being raped when affiliating with someone from a different ethnic group, thereby being more venturesome. However, at present, these are just conjectures that need to be backed up by future research.

Moving on to perpetrator blame for the community sample, native female community members attributed more perpetrator blame to the rape of an immigrant as opposed to a native victim. This finding is hard to explain by extant theory. Perhaps the native female community members perceived themselves to have certain privileges that immigrant females do not have when it comes to rape support services etc. Consequently, it would be more serious to rape an immigrant woman because she may be blamed more for the incident by her family and friends and not have as widely access to support services whereas native victims are more likely to gain social support from these social institutions. Indeed, as was mentioned earlier, immigrant women often have more restricted and limited opportunities for engaging in socially accepted

sexual activities compared to Swedish women (Forsberg, 2005). This is, however, just speculations and future empirical studies need to back this argument up.

Intriguingly, the immigrant female community members attributed more perpetrator blame to a native as opposed to an immigrant perpetrator, but only when the victim too had a native background. Although this is the first study to include immigrant participants in this context and that extensive theory is lacking, there are some tentative explanations for these findings. For instance, it could be suggested that the immigrant female community members clearly distinguished between a native and an immigrant perpetrator when the rape involved a native victim. Perhaps they felt as though they were not only identifying with the female victim but also with the male perpetrator's ethnicity. When the victim instead had an immigrant background, the ethnicity of the perpetrator did not matter much as the immigrant female students may have identified a great deal with the immigrant female victim in this case. Similarly, some scholars have theorized that minority members' self-interpretation is much more focused on their respective in-group membership compared to majority members' self-interpretation (Simon, 2004). Thus, while the immigrant female community members might have identified strongly with the immigrant victim and to some extent, perpetrator, this was perhaps not as prominent for the native female community members. Albeit plausible, this also needs to be confirmed by empirical studies.

Returning to victim blame, but this time for the student sample, male students attributed higher victim blame than did females (in line with hypothesis 6), but only for an immigrant victim. Looking closely at Figure 3, one can observe that this difference largely comes from the female students giving very low victim blame ratings to an immigrant victim. This goes in line with the previous results where the native female community members attributed more perpetrator blame to the perpetrator when the victim had an immigrant background. Perhaps the female students reasoned in a similar way as was hypothesized for the native female community members and thought that immigrant rape victims do not have as strong support services at their disposal compared to native rape victims. Holding true, this has to be considered a relatively positive finding in light of the specific difficulties that minority rape victims may experience (Maier, 2008).

Continuing with perpetrator blame, again for the student sample, native students gave more perpetrator blame to a perpetrator with a native background as compared to an immigrant background. In light of the black sheep effect (Marques et al., 1988), the native students perhaps saw the perpetrator with a native background as part of their in-group and

hence someone they cared about. However, when the perpetrator turned out to behaving in a deviant way, they punished him harder by blaming him more than someone from the out-group (i.e., the perpetrator with an immigrant background). Nevertheless, this explanation also requires further validation.

Furthermore, immigrant students also showed an intriguing pattern of perpetrator blame. Namely, they attributed most perpetrator blame to perpetrators of intraracial rapes (i.e., native perpetrator - native victim, and immigrant perpetrator - immigrant victim), lending partial support for Donovan's (2007) findings where male participants rated the African American perpetrator as more culpable when the rape was intraracial compared to interracial. This also goes in line with George and Martinez's (2002) findings where perpetrators of intraracial rapes were blamed more. Here, it could be propounded that the immigrant students held the belief that raping someone from the same ethnic group is more serious than raping someone from a different ethnic group. Yet, this needs to be confirmed scientifically.

Finally, the entire student sample (as did immigrant female community members) gave higher perpetrator blame to a native perpetrator, but only when the victim also had a native background. This finding is hard to fully explain by any current theory. One could speculate that the students thought that the native perpetrator should have been more able to listen to the native victim and that perhaps the immigrant perpetrator would have a harder time understanding the native woman's refusal and controlling his own sexual desire. These are, however, again, just speculations and need to be backed up by future research.

Theoretical Implications

The present study contributes to the theory of rape victim and perpetrator blaming more generally as well as to the specific influence of ethnicity in this context. Indeed, this was identified by Bruggen and Grubb (2014) as an important area where the understanding of cross-cultural rape blame attribution was lacking, and therefore, this study contributes to this theoretical understanding. It was also found that the victim blame attributions did not simply mirror the perpetrator blame attributions, confirming previous research (Davies & Rogers, 2009; Strömwall, Alfredsson, & Landström, 2013b; Strömwall, Landström, & Alfredsson, 2014). Moreover, Sleath and Bull (2010) did a Principle Component Analysis on different items that measured both victim and perpetrator blame and found significant support for two different constructs (victim blame and perpetrator blame, respectively). Consequently, both

this study and the aforementioned studies do demonstrate the need for including both perpetrator and victim blame measurements in prospective and future rape blame research.

Practical Implications

The fact that community members attributed higher levels of victim blame and lower levels of perpetrator blame than the students can potentially have some consequences for how rape victims are treated in society's institutions, such as in police departments and criminal courts. For example, most jurors in the Swedish courts are actually not educated in the law but come from the wider community (The Swedish courts, 2015, May 10). Rape victims, on the other hand, are often young and a disproportionate portion of sexual assault victims are adolescents or young adults (Humphrey & White, 2000; U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). This means that the victims of rape and their friends may hold more victim supportive attitudes in comparison to the community jurors who will judge them, creating a large discrepancy between verdicts and young people's opinions. Additionally, even though the current study showed a strong effect of participant's ethnicity on victim and perpetrator blaming, caution should be exercised not to interpret this finding as supporting prejudiced attitudes against immigrants. Instead, the results highlight a population (i.e., immigrants) in the society who potentially come from less egalitarian and gender equal backgrounds. Consequently, the role for an egalitarian and gender equal society must be to educate and show the people from less egalitarian countries the destructive aspects of blaming innocent victims of rape.

Limitations

Although the present study revealed some interesting results, it likewise had several limitations. For example, the hypothetical scenarios used may have been low in ecological validity. Indeed, some participants expressed the opinion that the information included in the scenario was very scarce and limited. Even so, the rape vignette was designed as a newspaper article and it could be argued that most people do not conduct extensive research about news stories before developing judgments about its content. Another limitation is the fact the two different samples (i.e., community and student sample) were not entirely exclusive. Specifically, the community sample likely featured some students, although the majority were not. While this is a limitation, at the same time, it could be argued that students are part of the entire community like any other group and hence exclusion of them could have reduced the

generalizability of the community sample's results. Furthermore, it is likely that the removal of students from the community sample would have resulted in even larger differences between the two samples and thus resulted in stronger effect sizes. Moreover, while most people agreed to participate in the study, some refused to do so, and it could be expected that these people might have differed in some systematic way compared to the people who participated. If so, it is hard to generalize the results to the samples that were included in the current study. It is also of value to bring up the fact that the classification of participants' backgrounds as either native or immigrant was done based on social aspects and would not be considered correct from a legal standpoint. Even so, discrimination of people who are born in Sweden to immigrant parents is still a reality and is backed up by research showing that unemployment rates for second generation immigrants (people born in Sweden with one or both parents born abroad) are higher compared to native born Swedes, especially for those with non-European backgrounds (Rooth & Ekberg, 2003).

Perhaps a more serious limitation concerns the fact that participants may have been motivated to answer in a socially desirable way since it is well known that questions about racism and sexuality may induce such behavior (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). Although this indeed is a plausible threat to the study's internal validity, it is hard to see how this can be prevented in this type of research without losing too much of its original meaning and relevance. It is also worth mentioning that the α -level of the current study was kept relatively liberal throughout all statistical tests at $\alpha = .05$. While some may argue that this increases the probability of making a Type I error to unacceptable levels, others would claim that techniques to deal with this inflation (e.g., Bonferroni) is too conservative and rigid to use with several statistical tests (Perneger, 1998). Furthermore, as noted by Nickerson (2000), α is not the probability of making a Type I error in a particular experiment, but α is the risk that one is willing to take of making a Type I error when the null hypothesis is true. Several researchers have also argued that there is good reason to believe that the probability of making a Type I error is considerably less than α and that, considering all experiments done, Type II errors are much more common than Type I errors (Nickerson, 2000; Pollard & Richardson, 1987).

Future Research

It might be fruitful to expand the results of the present study and specifically look at the ethnic backgrounds of the participants more thoroughly as this was not done in the current

study. It could be hypothesized that participants from countries lower in gender-role traditionality would display lower levels of victim blame and higher levels of perpetrator blame attributions than participants from countries with higher gender-role traditionality. Perhaps there are also other variables such as personal rights, tolerance, and access to advanced education that may be important for shaping attitudes and opinions about victim and perpetrator blaming more generally (factors that are measured in the social progress index; Porter & Stern, 2013). Additionally, to validate the results of the present study and other similar studies, it would be advantageous for future researchers to examine the influence of the victim's and perpetrator's ethnicity in courts by looking at and compare verdicts between intraracial and interracial rapes for native and immigrant victims and perpetrators, respectively. Finally, looking more closely at the relationship between modern racism and rape victim and perpetrator blaming could provide scholars with an interesting link between racial discrimination and sexism.

Conclusions

The present study demonstrated a significant difference in victim and perpetrator blame between a community and a student sample. Additionally, the effect of participants' ethnicity emerged as a relatively stable main effect with immigrant participants generally attributing more victim blame and less perpetrator blame than native participants. Although gender was hypothesized to be an important factor it only reached significance in one analysis (perpetrator blame for the community sample). Several interactions emerged that both supported and extended earlier research in this area (Donovan, 2007; George & Martinez, 2002). At last, this study builds on the already extensive research that has highlighted several important influential factors of rape victim blaming (for a review see Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). However, it also expanded the research by using both a Swedish community and student sample and by manipulating both the victim's and perpetrator's ethnicity. The next decade will hopefully see an increase in studies investigating rape victim blaming and ethnicity from different contexts and situations.

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Appendix
The rape vignette

MORAKORRESPONDENTEN

Nyheter

Ung kvinna utnyttjad i sitt hem av främmande man

En sen kväll i förra veckan var Sarah, som har Svensk (invandrar) bakgrund, på väg hem från en fest i centrala Mora. Hon var kraftigt berusad. Några kvarter från sin bostad träffade hon en attraktiv främmande man som varit på en annan fest. Sarah fattade tycke för mannen och bjöd helt frivilligt upp honom i hennes lägenhet för att spendera natten tillsammans. Hon ångrade sig när de redan hade börjat kyssas i lägenheten, men mannen gav sig inte och genomförde ett samlag mot hennes vilja. Sarah anmälde händelsen till polisen först på morgonen efter. Det fanns inga vittnen till händelsen, men med hjälp av Sarahs beskrivning, är angriparen nu identifierad som Aron och häktad av polisen. Aron har Svensk (invandrar) bakgrund men har aldrig tidigare varit dömd för våldsbrott. Han har en Universitetsexamen och är för tillfället arbetslös. I polisförhören framkom det att Aron upplevde att Sarah var helt med på det som hände.

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