EXPLORING BLUE LINES: AN EXAMINATION OF RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE AND PERCEIVED PREPAREDNESS IN RESPONDING TO CALLS FOR SERVICE AMONG POLICE OFFICERS

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by

Alondra Denise Garza

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ABSTRACT

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The manner in which police respond to sexual assault survivors warrants further attention given increasingly negative attention for sexual assault case attrition. Shortcomings surrounding police responses to sexual assault survivors may, in part, be the result of rape myth endorsement. The current study utilized a purposive sample of 523 self-report, paper-and-pencil surveys administered to commissioned police officers at one of the fifth largest U.S. cities. The objective of the study was to assess to what degree police personnel adhered to rape myths and whether officer sex, educational attainment, years of service, prior specialized sexual assault training, and the number of sexual assault calls responded to in the previous 12 months influenced their endorsement of rape myths. In addition, this study examined police officer preparedness in responding to sexual assault calls for service, while accounting for officer sex, rape myth endorsement, and prior specialized sexual assault training. Implications for policy, practice, and future research are discussed.

KEY WORDS: Police response, Sexual assault, Rape myths, Police preparedness,

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The pervasiveness of sexual victimization has been of interest to academics, policymakers, criminal justice personnel, and victim advocacy groups spanning several decades (Du Mont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003; Estrich, 1987; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Ullman, 2010). Sexual victimization estimates have demonstrated that between 20% to 25% of females may be the victim of a sexually violating experience, ranging from sexual coercion to completed rape (Black et al., 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In spite of its occurrence, rape has remained the most underreported criminal offense (Morgan & Kena, 2017). Indeed, official data have indicated only 32% of rape and sexual assault incidents were formally reported to law enforcement in 2015 (Truman & Morgan, 2016). Low reporting among survivors of sexual assault has been attributed to insensitivity from the criminal justice system, anticipated stigma and skepticism, and whether or not victims label the assault a "real rape" (Campbell, 2008; Zinzow, & Thompson, 2011)[1]. Chen and Ullman (2010), for example, found that formal police reporting increased when the incident involved a stranger-perpetrator, a weapon, and demonstrable physical injury, suggesting that rape survivors adhere to schemas of "real rape."

Although the underreporting of sexual assault has made it difficult to prosecute offenders, disclosing a rape incident to law enforcement may be the first step for

[1] As the author, I believe individuals who have experienced sexual violence have the autonomy of labeling themselves as a victim or survivor in order to both exert their own agency and make sense of the incident. For the purpose of this thesis, the terms "victim" and "survivor" are used interchangeably to both address sexual assault and rape as a crime and to honor the strength of those who have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime.

survivors' healing process and may facilitate additional help-seeking behavior. To that end, police officer preparedness in response to calls for service (CFS) is crucial for a victim-centered, trauma-informed experience for survivors. Recently, police agencies have received increasingly negative attention for case attrition in sexual assault case processing (Campbell et al., 2014; Lonsway & Archambault, 2012; Maddox, Lee, & Barker, 2012). Existing research has indicated that case attrition may, in part, be the result of misconceptions such as rape myths held by police officers that produce detrimental outcomes for sexual assault survivors (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Page, 2007; Rich & Seffrin, 2012).

A negative first experience with police officers has decreased the possibility that victims will continue to participate in the criminal justice system, further exacerbating case attrition, and producing secondary victimization for survivors. Secondary victimization has been defined as the experience of receiving negative reactions from first-responders, including disbelief, the discounting of victimization events, and the neglect of survivor autonomy (Ullman, 1996). Indeed, scholars have termed these experiences as "the second rape" (Campbell et al., 2001, p. 1239) or "the second assault" (Martin & Powell, 1995, p. 856). To that end, the type of reactions afforded to victims in general and from system personnel, following a sexual assault disclosure, have had significant effects on survivors' wellbeing (Campbell et al., 2001). The deleterious psychological and physiological consequences from secondary victimization by system personnel cannot be understated as these victims experience re-traumatization and re-victimization (Campbell & Raja, 1999; Filipas & Ullman, 2001; Parsons & Bergin, 2010). For instance, among a sample of 102 rape survivors who formally reported their

assault, more than half of the women described their experience with the justice system as harmful (Campbell, Wasco, Ahrens, Sefl, & Barnes, 2001). Conversely, positive initial contact with officers has mitigated trauma sequelae, encouraged additional help-seeking behaviors, decreased case attrition, and ensured continued victim participation in the criminal justice system (Borja, Callahan, & Long, 2006; Frazier, Tashiro, Berman, Steger, & Long, 2004; Maddox et al., 2011; Patterson & Campbell, 2010; Spohn & Tellis, 2012; 2014). While efforts concerning prevalence, incidence, prevention efforts, and system responses to sexual victimization have been extensive, it is important to continue to examine attitudes surrounding sexual assault endorsed by those who interface with survivors, particularly police officers. Specifically, negative attributions, such as rape myths, have continued to proliferate among the general population and among criminal justice system personnel (Anderson, Cooper, & Okamura, 1997; Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Grubb & Turner, 2012; O'Neal, 2017; Page, 2007; 2010; Rich & Seffrin, 2012; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010), resulting in adverse experiences for survivors who disclose sexual victimization.

Decades of scholarly research has posited that sexual victimization is facilitated and sustained through a systemic belief in rape myths. Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994, p.134) defined rape myths as, "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women." Culturally-accepted beliefs and attitudes deeply embedded in society regarding what "real rape" consists of, who real victims are, and who perpetrates sexual assault have created an environment that some have argued is conducive to and accepting of violence against women (Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011).

Common rape myths, discussed in further detail in the following chapter, include, "women cry rape," "women ask for it," and "women can resist rape" (Burt, 1980, p. 217). Adherence to these myths excuse the perpetrator's actions and place responsibility on victims for preventing rape. Importantly, rape myth adherence operates at the individual and institutional levels (Edwards et al., 2011; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). For example, individual endorsement of rape myths can surface when disclosure responses afforded to victims include accusations such as blame for precipitating rape as a result of voluntarily sleeping at the perpetrator's residence, deeming it an "open invitation" for rape (Ahrens et al., 2007, p. 267). Related, institutional news media coverage of sexual violence almost always feature stranger-perpetrated assaults with gratuitous injury (Katz, 2006) further entrenching the myth as to what constitutes "real rape" (Estrich, 1987). The endorsement of rape myths by criminal justice personnel has been particularly problematic as these attitudes can hinder the apprehension of suspects, increase case attrition, and exacerbate negative health consequences for survivors (Campbell et al., 2014; Campbell & Raja, 2005; Patterson, 2011).

Law Enforcement and Rape Myth Acceptance

The assessment of rape-supportive attitudes among law enforcement is a worthy endeavor as police officers are often the first to interface with survivors who formally disclose sexual victimization. Moreover, police officers have the ability and discretion to determine if a case is deserving of further investigation and refer it to prosecution (Kerstetter, 1990; LaFree, 1989; Spohn & Tellis, 2012; 2014). The endorsement of rape myths among law enforcement has received significant empirical attention from scholars for several decades (see e.g., Brown & King, 1998; Campbell & Johnson, 1997; Feild,

1978; Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Gottesman, 1977; Jordan, 2002; LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985; Lonsway, Welch, & Fitzgerald, 2001; O'Neal, 2017; Page, 2007; 2010; Sleath & Bull, 2012; 2015; Venema, 2016; Wentz & Archbold, 2012). The understanding of rape myths, demographic and occupational factors that predict adherence, and psychometric scales for measuring rape-accepting attitudes have evolved substantially since the construct was first introduced in the late 1970s. Early findings suggested White officers and male officers were more likely to endorse rape-supportive attitudes compared to counterparts (Feild, 1978). Subsequent assessments, however, have yielded contradictory findings. Specifically, LeDoux and Hazelwood (1985) suggested that officers in their sample were overwhelmingly sympathetic towards victims of rape.

More recent analyses have assessed police officer attitudes surrounding rape with Burt's (1980) seminal Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (RMAS). Empirical studies examining rape-supportive attitudes among police officers have identified the effect of demographic characteristics such as officer sex, educational attainment, and on the job experience, as predictors of rape myth endorsement. Brown and King's (1998) empirical evaluation of officer attitudes toward rape, for example, identified officer sex as a significant predictor of adherence to rape myths, where female officers reported lower levels of rape myth endorsement compared to male officers. Additional research has affirmed that female officers tend to be more empathic towards rape victims compared to male officers (Page, 2007; Rich & Seffrin, 2012), however, other studies have provided contradictory findings (Jordan, 2002; Wentz & Archbold, 2012). Collectively, small officer samples with a limited number of commissioned female officers and a lack of consistency in the measurement of rape myth acceptance may explain discrepancies

across the literature. Consequently, the way officer sex has conditioned rape myth adherence would benefit from further investigation.

Studies examining demographic and occupational predictors of rape-supportive attitudes among law enforcement have also indicated that officer educational attainment and experience conducting rape investigations have influenced rape myth attitudes. In detail, officers with increased education and more experience investigating rape have reported lower levels of rape myth acceptance compared to counterparts (Page, 2007; 2008). Research has also noted the necessity of assessing the endorsement of rape myths through mixed methods that go beyond quantitative scales on surveys (Mennicke et al., 2014; Shaw, Campbell, Cain, & Feeney, 2017). Discrepancies in survey responses (e.g., LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985) compared to qualitative interview data may, in part, be the result of social desirability bias and because of the overtly explicit statements contained in scales that could be easily identified by police participants. This highlights the importance of inquiring both quantitatively and quantitatively about rape myth acceptance among first-responders (Mennicke et al., 2014).

The development of Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald's (1999) Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA) further refined the construct validity of items capturing adherence to rape myths (see Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995) in creating a scale inclusive of contemporary verbiage. Several studies examining rape myth adherence among general population samples and law enforcement personnel have augmented the IRMA or IRMA-SF (Rich & Seffrin, 2012; 2013; Venema, 2016). In line with previous findings using other scales to capture rape myth endorsement, female officers, officers with more years of experience, and officers of higher rank adhered to lower levels of rape myths

compared to male officers, early career, and lower rank officers (Rich & Seffrin, 2012). Importantly, studies have examined rape-accepting attitudes among international officer samples using the short and long form versions of the IRMA. Results from these studies have suggested officers adhered to myths denying a rape had occurred and myths that minimized the psychological consequences of rape (Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2012; Sleath & Bull, 2015). Cross-cultural findings support the notion that some criminal justice personnel adhere to rape myths, underscoring the importance of continued assessment of police officer rape myth adherence to ensure a positive, victim-centered experience for survivors.

Law Enforcement, Rape Myth Acceptance, and Specialized Training

Efforts to improve police responses to survivors have included augmenting specialized sexual assault training. Indeed, scholars have assessed the degree to which participation in training programs has influenced officers' attitudes concerning rape (Campbell, 1995; Darwinkel, Powell, & Tidmarsh, 2013; Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Gottesman, 1977; Kinney, Bruns, Bradley, Dantzler, & Weist, 2008; Lonsway et al., 2001; Rich & Seffrin, 2014; Sleath & Bull, 2012; Smith, Wilkes, & Bouffard, 2016). The small body of literature concerning the effect of specialized sexual assault training on law enforcement knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions surrounding CFS has yielded mixed findings, at best.

Initially, Gottesman's (1977) exploratory evaluation of officer attitudes surrounding rape, before and after a local crisis center provided training, demonstrated the potential benefits that specialized sexual assault programming had on officer attitudes. A small sample size, lack of controls, and a non-experimental design limited

this pioneering study, though findings suggested officers responded positively to training with increased knowledge surrounding the aftermath and trauma of rape. Officers remained unchanged, however, in beliefs that victims precipitated assault due to attire and behavior. Though Gottesman's (1977) pre- and post-training evaluation is instructive, results may reflect a time period prior to the enactment of rape law reform and when ideas surrounding violence against women, specifically among law enforcement, were more conservative and had not reflected the progress of the women's movement (Dicker, 2008; Freedman, 2007).

Campbell (1995) later suggested that police officers held more favorable views of rape victims if the officers perceived their prior training on rape as helpful and when they had substantial experience handling rape cases. Still, Lonsway et al. (2001) determined police officers sustained significant levels of rape myth accepting attitudes in spite of exposure to a sexual assault training program. Findings from Lonsway and colleagues' (2001) evaluation suggested that specialized training should focus on improving actual behavior rather than altering officer attitudes. Moreover, Kinney et al., (2008) indicated officers reported feeling "very prepared" to handle cases of sexual assault and/or abuse when they received additional specialized training on sexual assault investigation, apart from required, entry-level academy training. On the contrary, recent examinations of rape myth adherence among officers who have received specialized sexual assault training compared to those without training revealed no significant differences in rape myth adherence (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Sleath & Bull, 2012).

Despite mixed evidence, the utility of specialized sexual assault training should not be undervalued. Current research suggests that rape myth adherence is malleable (see

Chapleau & Oswald, 2013). Chapleau and Oswald (2013), for example, examined participant adherence to rape myths after exposure to hypothetical rape vignettes that manipulated status differences between the victim and perpetrator and the threat of formal police reporting. Participant endorsement of rape myths shifted in relation to the social status of the perpetrator, suggesting that rape mythology is not a static construct but an applied belief. In other words, the endorsement of rape-supportive attitudes may emerge to excuse certain perpetrators, such as those with higher socioeconomic status, and to place culpability on particular victims, such as those believed unworthy, promiscuous, or unchaste. Inconsistency in findings across the sexual assault training literature may be explained by diversity in officer samples, different training programs, the therapeutic integrity of programming, the duration of training, varied methods of measuring attitudes surrounding rape myths, and the timing of evaluation (whether the effect of training is measured immediately post-training or long-term). These shortcomings suggest that much remains unanswered regarding prior specialized sexual assault training and its effect, if any, on law enforcement attitudes concerning rape.

Summary

Existing efforts regarding correlates of rape myth acceptance among officers and the effect of specialized sexual assault training on officer attitudes provide a useful context for additional empirical inquiry surrounding demographic and occupational factors that may affect officer attitudes concerning rape myths. Undoubtedly, the assessment of rape myth adherence, particularly among law enforcement, remains a critical area of study as law enforcement attitudes and the manner in which they respond to rape survivors directly affects a victim’s experiences and investigation outcomes.

Given the importance of positive law enforcement responses to sexual assault survivors, further efforts need to examine the effect of specialized sexual assault training on officer rape myth attitudes. Additionally, the relationship between rape myth endorsement and perceived preparedness in responding to CFS is worth exploring. The present study assesses demographic and occupational predictors of rape myth adherence among a sample of 523 police officers commissioned at a large, urban police department located in the one of fifth largest cities in the United States using Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald's IRMA-SF (1999) measure. Additionally, the study examines perceptions of preparedness in responding to CFS, while accounting for participant sex, rape myth endorsement and prior specialized sexual assault training.

CHAPTER II
Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The literature on rape myths has largely drawn from feminist theory as a broad framework to explain the development of attitudes deriving from gender role socialization. Feminist theory, more generally, has proposed that patriarchy fosters power and control disparities among men and women, creating hierarchal differences in social status, privilege, and worth (Dicker, 2008; Freedman, 2007; Johnson, 1997). These gender inequalities exist in ubiquitous actions, behaviors, and attitudes that express one's "masculinity" or "femininity" (Johnson, 1997). Consequently, gender stereotypes also influence beliefs about how victims of sexual violence should behave. Therefore, the discussion of attitudes surrounding rape, a gender-based crime predominantly affecting women, cannot be addressed without examining the role that gender plays in the broader socialization of individuals.

From a feminist theoretical framework, the manner in which patriarchy has contributed to the subordination of women has stratified gender, thus ensuing inequalities between men and women (Dicker, 2008; Freedman, 2007; Johnson, 1997). Patriarchal societies can be characterized as "male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered" (Johnson, 1997, p. 15). In a male-dominated society, for example, men have monopolized positions of authority in government agencies, religion, institutions of higher education, and military leadership (Johnson, 1997). Consequently, perceptions of supremacy are intertwined with the men who occupy these positions of authority as compared to the position itself (Johnson, 1997). Moreover, a male-identified society has largely ignored the experiences of women (Johnson, 1997; Tarvis, 1992). In a male-identified society,

socially-constructed ideas concerning behaviors, social interaction, knowledge, and individual characteristics have been defined predominantly by a male standard or the male experience (Johnson, 1997; Tarvis, 1992). As a consequence, gender is divided into a false dichotomy of either masculinity or femininity (Johnson, 1997; Lorber, 1994, Tarvis, 1992). Desirable characteristics such as assertiveness, toughness, and decisiveness, are associated with masculinity, and thus, the male identity. In contrast, characteristics such as vulnerability, cooperation, empathy, and sensitivity are associated with femininity and have been devalued in comparison to the former as personality attributes. These patriarchal values are omnipresent and have created and maintained inflexible expectations of how social life should function and the ways in which individuals should interact both in intimate and non-intimate settings (Johnson, 1997). Finally, Johnson (1997) has asserted that patriarchal societies embody male-centeredness. In other words, the human experience is portrayed through a lens with special attention primarily attributed to males in media, empirical research, news, law, and medicine.

Feminist theory has maintained that patriarchy is responsible for the inherent power imbalance between men and women. Lorber (1994) defined gender as a "social institution," (p. 55) where individuals express anticipated social assignment of behaviors. West and Zimmerman (1987, p.126) have contested that "doing gender," or performing actions and behaviors deemed appropriate of female and male identities, is both a response to and a byproduct of structural arrangements in society that dictate the way men and women interact (Johnson, 1997). Adherence to gender dualism is so pervasive that engaging in uncharacteristic behavior may result in social consequences. For example, engaging in actions and behaviors deemed as "unconventional" for a particular

gender may be perceived as a threat to power and control dynamics between men and women in a patriarchal society (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Johnson, 1997; Kilmartin, 2000; Lorber, 1994). As a consequence, individuals are often informally and formally sanctioned for threatening established gender dichotomies (Johnson, 1997; Kilmartin, 2000; Tavris, 1992). For instance, Prokos and Padavic (2002) examined the enforced "hidden curriculum" (p. 446) within a police training academy that re-emphasized gender roles and the subordinate status of female police officers attempting to integrate into a historically male-dominated field (Franklin, 2007). Findings revealed that men in the police academy treated the female trainees as outsiders, excluded them from bonding activities, and objectified women (Prokos & Padavic, 2002). This underscores an institutional resistance, or informal sanction, towards female officers given their gender identity and "uncharacteristic" career as a police officer.

Though the defining characteristics of a patriarchal society (see Johnson, 1997) create power and control differences, radical feminist theorists have contended that violence against women, specifically rape perpetrated by men, is essential to maintain authority and control over women (Brownmiller, 1975). Brownmiller (1975, p. 15) asserted that rape functions so, "… all men keep all women in a state of fear." Therefore, sexual victimization is an act where men exert power and control over all women and the threat of rape reiterates imbalances imposed by patriarchal ideologies. Furthermore, Griffin (1971, p.27) proclaimed, "rape and fear of rape are a daily part of every woman's consciousness." According to radical feminist theorists, the perpetual fear of sexual victimization benefits all men as it reinforces women's subordination in social status,

paid labor, educational attainment, and familial decision making (Brownmiller, 1975; Dicker, 2008).

Generally, feminist theory has suggested that patriarchy, structural relationships between men and women, and gender inequalities are essential to understanding the etiology of rape and rape myth endorsement (Brownmiller, 1975; Dicker, 2008; Freedman, 2007; Johnson, 1997). The expression of gender by women is particularly important when it comes to understanding perceptions and attitudes afforded to rape and sexual assault survivors. Deviation from "appropriate" gender roles (e.g., femininity) adversely influences observers due to expectations that correspond with gender and sex. To that end, when rape victims engage in "unconventional" behaviors, bystanders and formal social control mechanisms, such as law enforcement, may chastise nonconforming gender stereotypes. Indeed, victims of rape have been attributed culpability for excessive drinking, staying out late, and expressing sexuality (Ferguson & Ireland, 2012; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Schult & Schneider, 1991; Viki & Abrams, 2002). In turn, survivors are perceived as unreliable, dishonest, and responsible for their victimization because they have failed to comply with feminine gender stereotypes. Moreover, from a feminist theoretical framework, the criminal justice system represents the male bias as it is predominantly and historically has been a male-dominated institution (see Franklin, 2007; Johnson, 1997; Lutze & Symons, 2003). Consequently, feminist theory anticipates that gender socialization and gender role expectations influence the attitudes of personnel working in the criminal justice system who interface with survivors of sexual assault, as they are not immune from the cultural messages that proliferate news and social media, entertainment, and sex role socialization (O'Neal, 2017).

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is an endemic problem among the general population and on college campuses that has detrimental consequences for survivors. Estimates have established the pervasiveness of sexual assault, where up to 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men in the United States have reported experiencing some form of sexual violence during their lifetime (Black et al., 2011). Additionally, official data and self-report surveys have demonstrated that as many as 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men will experience an attempted or completed rape during their lifetime (Black et al., 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In institutions of higher education (IHE), women face an increased risk of victimization, where between 20% to 25% will likely experience attempted or completed rape (Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2018; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Franklin, 2010; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Krebs et al., 2016). To put statewide sexual victimization into context, the Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault estimated that 6.3 million adult Texans (33.2%) have experienced some form of sexual violence during their lifetime (Busch-Armendariz, et al., 2015). Specifically, in 2016, Texas law enforcement received 18,349 formally reported sexual assault incidents (Texas Department of Public Safety, 2016).

"Sexual assault," as a term, encompasses an extensive range of sexually-violating experiences, including unwanted sexual contact, sexual touching, sexual coercion, forced or drug/alcohol-facilitated, attempted or completed penetration, and attempted or completed rape (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2014). To that end, national and state coalitions, practitioners, scholars, service agencies, and criminal justice personnel have emphasized the importance of consistency in terminology and data

collection related to sexual assault to accurately measure prevalence and adequately address sexual victimization. For the purpose of this thesis and the research setting, the state penal code defines sexual assault as, "the penetration of the anus or sexual organ of another person by any means, without the person's consent; the penetration of the mouth of another person by the sexual organ of the actor, without the person's consent; or causing the sexual organ of another person, without that person's consent, to contact or penetrate the mouth, anus, or sexual organ of another person" (Texas Penal Code, §22.011.)[2].

Who are the Perpetrators?

The experience of rape has been historically defined by scripts that define "real rape" as incidents involving a stranger-perpetrator and/or multiple perpetrators, collateral injury, victim resistance, and extrinsic violence stemming from the threat of weapons such as knives or guns (Brownmiller, 1975; Estrich, 1987; Kahn, Jackson, Kully, Badger, & Halvorsen, 2003; Kahn, Mathie, & Torgler, 1994; Koss et al., 1994). Contrary to these stereotypes, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), for example, noted that from 1993 to 2010, strangers perpetrated only 2% of reported rapes and sexual assaults each year (Harrell, 2012). A nationally-representative study indicated that among female victims of attempted or completed rape, approximately 51% of incidents were perpetrated by an intimate partner, 40.8% by an acquaintance, and 12.5% by a family member, with strangers accounting for only 13.8% (Black et al., 2011)[3] . Furthermore, data from

[2] A portion of this thesis is concerned with police officer preparedness in responding to sexual assault calls for service, therefore, it is appropriate to clarify the manner in which the research setting has defined "sexual assault".

[3] Given the possibility of participants reporting multiple perpetrators, the total sum may exceed 100%.

national college campus climate surveys demonstrated that 9% of rape incidents reported by female undergraduate students have involved a stranger-perpetrator (Krebs et al., 2016). BJS (2013) has also noted, among rape and sexual assault captured in the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) from 1994-2010, 90% of incidents involved a single perpetrator. Similarly, about 1 in 10 rape and sexual assault victimization incidents across the same period involved a weapon, such as a firearm or knife (Planty et al., 2013), reiterating the infrequency of incidents that reflect the "real rape" narrative (Estrich, 1987). Although research affirms that many rape and sexual assault incidents do not meet the stereotypic characteristics of "real rape" (see Estrich, 1987), incidents involving acquaintances or intimate partners lacking collateral injury or victim resistance continue to be met with skepticism by criminal justice system personnel who deem these cases less worthy of investigation and prosecution (Du Mont, Miller & Myhr, 2003; Estrich, 1987; Frazier & Haney, 1996; Spears & Spohn, 1997; Spohn, & Holleran, 2001; Spohn & Tellis, 2012).

Sexual Assault Survivors and the Criminal Justice System

The decision to formally disclose a sexual assault to law enforcement is an important step for investigating cases, holding perpetrators accountable, facilitating survivors' post-trauma adjustment, and enhancing public safety. Indeed, police officers serve as "gatekeepers" possessing the ability to formally process cases through the criminal justice system (Kerstsetter, 1990; LaFree, 1989). This is particularly important for sexual assault victims as they depend on police officers' decisions regarding whether the assault is worthy of additional formal criminal justice processing and investigation (Spohn & Tellis, 2012; 2014). Official data have consistently demonstrated that rape and

sexual assault continue to be the most underreported violent offenses (Morgan & Kena, 2017; Truman & Morgan, 2016). Recent estimates from the NCVS have revealed a decline in the percent of rape and sexual assault incidents reported to police from 2015 to 2016. In 2016, for example, 23% of rapes and sexual assaults were reported to law enforcement, compared to 32% in 2015 (BJS, 2016; 2017).

Research has noted numerous reasons for victims' reluctance in reporting sexual assault and/or rape to formal support providers such as police officers. Indeed, low reporting among survivors has been attributed to anticipated blameworthiness and stigmatization, failure to acknowledge the incident as rape, and callous responses from law enforcement (Barrett & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2013; Campbell, 2008; Campbell & Raja, 1999; Cohn, Zinzow, Resnick, & Kilpatrick, 2013; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011; Zinzow & Thompson, 2011). Sexual assault survivors who are met with skepticism, culpability, and insensitivity upon disclosure to law enforcement face re-victimization or secondary victimization (Campbell, 2008; Campbell et al., 2001; Madigan & Gamble, 1991; Martin & Powell, 1995).

Experiencing negative responses from first responders, can exacerbate health consequences, hinder survivors from participating in the criminal justice system, and aggravate case attrition (Campbell & Raja, 1999; Filipas & Ullman, 2001; Maddox, Lee & Barker, 2012). Campbell and Raja (2005), for example, assessed the experiences of 104 female sexual assault survivors who reported incidents to military and civilian police personnel. Findings indicated that civilian police officers engaged in behavior that produced secondary victimization for survivors, such as questioning their attire during the assault and inquiring about prior sexual history (Campbell & Raja, 2005). Notably,

survivors who encountered secondary victimization reported higher levels of post-traumatic stress compared to survivors who did not report secondary victimization (Campbell & Raja, 2005). Related, Monroe and colleagues (2005) assessed the experiences of 125 sexual assault survivors in Maryland. Less than half of all survivors (46.2%) decided to report to police and cooperate with subsequent case proceedings. Of those who reported, half revealed dissatisfaction with their police interview (Monroe et al., 2005). Logan, Evans, Stevenson, and Jordan (2005) examined the experiences of 30 female rape survivors from different geographical areas within the criminal justice system. Findings from focus groups revealed that survivors from urban and rural areas acknowledged feeling re-victimized by criminal justice personnel who questioned their behavior, provided unsupportive responses, and threatened survivors to "get their story straight" (Logan, et al., 2005, p. 607). Most recently, Patterson (2011) assessed the treatment and case outcomes of 20 female sexual assault survivors who had reported to criminal justice system personnel. In the 11 cases that did not result in prosecution, victims reported experiencing insensitive responses from police officers, such as blaming them for an aspect of the rape, threatening the victim with charges of false reporting, and making belittling comments regarding the victim's vocabulary during the interview (Patterson, 2011). These findings highlight the significance of secondary victimization on survivor well-being and sexual assault case processing. Research has posited that secondary victimization from law enforcement may, in part, be a result of the endorsement of rape myths that suggest definitions concerning "real rape," who can be raped, and who is responsible for rape victimization (Barrett & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2013; Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Page, 2007; 2010; Rich & Seffrin, 2012;

Shaw, Campbell, Cain, & Feeney, 2017; Sleath & Bull, 2012; Wentz & Archbold, 2012). In order to improve responses to sexual assault, such as police officer preparedness in responding to CFS, officer endorsement of rape myths warrants further attention. Given the relation between attitudinal measures and behavioral intentions (Schuman & Johnson, 1987), levels of officer preparedness in responding to CFS could be explained by the endorsement of rape myth acceptance.

Rape Myths

Adherence to rape myths have contributed to and enabled the prevalence of continued victimization by justifying and excusing perpetrator behavior and transferring blame to victims (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011; Estrich, 1987; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1974; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Burt (1980, p. 217) defined these myths as, "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists." Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994, p. 134) clarified that rape myths, "serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women." Understanding the development and manifestation of rape myth adherence is critical as literature has contended that endorsement of rape myths creates an adversarial climate that is accepting of violence against women and hostile for survivors of sexual assault who disclose victimization. It is important to focus on the term "myth." Myths explain a cultural phenomenon; however, they are, by definition, not scientifically supported. Similarly, rape myth endorsement is prevalent, yet research has refuted the rationale behind such myths. Rape myths have provided a rational "explanation" for sexual victimization, however, rape myths attribute

responsibility to victims by focusing attention on the victim's actions and behaviors while justifying and defending perpetrators.

"Women Enjoy Rape"

Among common rape myths include, "women enjoy rape" or "women secretly desire to be raped" (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999). Perpetrators of sexual assault may contest that sexual arousal during an assault signifies consent from the victim. Research, however, has noted that individuals can experience sexual stimulation from unwanted sexual acts due to the biological function of genitalia to protect itself from anticipated injury. For instance, Levin and van Berlo (2004) reviewed clinical medical reports and case studies from rape survivors to examine whether nonconsensual sexual stimulation produced sexual arousal among men and women. Findings indicated that 20% of female sexual assault survivors reported experiencing orgasms and vaginal lubrication during the assault (Levin & van Berlo, 2004). The frequency with which this occurs may be higher given that survivors experience shame, feeling their "body let them down" (p. 85), and may withhold this information from forensic sexual assault nurse examiners (Levin & van Berlo, 2004). Suschinsky and Lalumière (2011) assessed the notion that rape cues may produce sexual stimulation by examining sexual arousal among 15 men and 15 women after audio exposure to a wide range of sexual stimuli. Following two-minute audio narratives manipulating consent, violence, and sexual content, participant sexual arousal was measured. Women reported similar sexual arousal to all scenarios, including those depicting a sexual assault with no consent and with violence. Conversely, male participants reported genital stimuli in response to non-violent, consensual sex

(Suschinsky & Lalumière, 2011). To that end, physiological response to sexual victimization does not support the myth that victims "enjoy rape," instead, it is a common and underreported biological response.

"Women Cry Rape"

Another prominent rape myth is the misconception that "women cry rape" (Burt, 1980 p. 217) or exaggerate and falsify sexual victimization (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Payne et al., 1999). Research has noted the durability of this myth among the general population and criminal justice system personnel (Ask, 2010; DuMont, Miller & Myhr, 2003; Jordan, 2004; Mennicke, Anderson, Oehme, & Kennedy, 2014). Early findings suggested police officers estimated the rate of false rape allegations between 30% to 40% (Jordan, 2004). More recently, studies examining police officer perceptions of false allegation claims ranged from between 50% to 70%, with some officers reporting the threshold as high as 80% (Mennicke et al., 2014). Schwartz (2010) found that law enforcement personnel estimated 40% to 80% of sexual assault reports as false. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP, 2005), however, has established that a sexual assault report can only be classified as "false" after an investigation has provided evidence that a crime was not committed or attempted. Conversely, reports classified as "unfounded" have failed to demonstrate any evidence following an investigation proving that a sexual assault occurred or was attempted (IACP, 2005). Using this definition, methodologically robust research has identified the estimate of false reports to range between 2% to 8% (Ferguson & Malouff, 2016; Lisak, Gardinier, Nicksa, & Cote, 2010; Lonsway, Archambault, & Lisak, 2009; Spohn & Tellis, 2014). Lisak and colleagues (2010), for example, assessed 136 sexual assault cases from a university police

department across a 10-year period to provide a systematic approximation of false allegations and reported that 5.9% of all sexual assault cases were classified as false. Related, Spohn, White, and Tellis (2014) examined 401 sexual assaults reported to the Los Angeles Police Department and found only 4.5% of cases met the definition of false reports. These findings invalidate high estimates of false reporting or the myth that large portions of sexual assault allegations are simply, "women crying rape."

Predictors of Rape Myth Endorsement

Several decades of research have focused on examining endorsement of rape myths among the general population and have identified demographic and attitudinal factors that predict adherence (Anderson, Cooper, & Okamura, 1997; Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Suarez and Gadalla, 2010). Burt (1980) was the first to suggest that adherence to rape myths has created a culture that generated sex role stereotyping and produced the normalization and acceptance of violence against women. Burt (1980) assessed 598 Minnesota adults in terms of their perceptions of behavioral roles and their personal sexual/romantic behavior. Findings confirmed that individual beliefs regarding sex roles, sexual beliefs, and sexual stereotyping have been entangled with attitudes regarding rape myth acceptance (Burt, 1980). Specifically, participants with increased acceptance of interpersonal violence and sex role stereotyping endorsed increased rape myths (Burt, 1980). In terms of demographic predictors, male participants, older participants, and participants with lower levels of education attainment adhered to higher levels of rape myths compared to females, younger participants, and participants with increased educational attainment (Burt, 1980).

Meta-analytic reviews have reiterated these early findings across demographic predictors of rape myth acceptance. For example, Anderson, Cooper, and Okamura (1997) examined predictors of rape myth acceptance across 72 studies published between 1972 and 1993 that measured rape myths acceptance on five scales. Consistent with Burt's (1980) initial findings, Anderson et al.'s (1997) meta-analytic review identified increased rape myth acceptance among men, older participants, and participants of lower socio-economic status compared to counterparts. They also reported that women exposed to sexual assault victimization or survivors of rape demonstrated decreased adherence to rape supportive myths (Anderson et al., 1997).

More recently, Suarez and Gadalla (2010) assessed 37 articles published between 1997 and 2007 that examined the correlates of rape myth acceptance among student and community samples in the U.S. and Canada. Articles included in the review used Burt's (1980) RMAS or Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald's (1999) IRMAS. In line with existing findings, Suarez and Gadalla (2010) reported that male participants and participants with lower educational attainment endorsed increased rape myths compared to counterparts. In addition, attitudes such as hostility toward women and sexual aggression also significantly predicted adherence to rape myths (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010).

Law Enforcement and Rape Myths

Substantial attention has been afforded to the endorsement of rape myths among criminal justice system personnel[4], such as police officers, who frequently interface with sexual assault survivors (Brown & King, 1998; Campbell & Johnson, 1997; Feild, 1978;

[4] Extant literature has demonstrated that other criminal justice system personnel, such as prosecutors, often reject sexual assault cases that do not meet constructed typifications of "appropriate" victim behaviors – similar to the construction of rape myths (see Frohmann, 1991).

Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Gottesman, 1977; Jordan, 2002; LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985; Lonsway, Welch, & Fitzgerald, 2001; O'Neal, 2017; Page, 2007, 2010; Rich & Seffrin, 2013; Sleath & Bull, 2012; 2015; Venema, 2016; Wentz & Archbold, 2012).

Early Findings

Initially, Feild (1978) examined correlates of rape-supportive attitudes among a sample of 254 patrol police officers from two urban and two rural police departments. To understand demographic correlates of rape myth acceptance among officers, Feild (1978) employed the earliest developed scale, Attitudes Toward Rape (ATR). The measure captured agreement on 37-items concerning the act of rape, the victim, and perpetrator on a six-point Likert-type scale (Feild, 1978). Results demonstrated that, among officers, race and sex significantly predicted agreement with victim precipitation. In other words, male officers and White officers were more likely than female officers and Black officers to perceive rape as a result of a woman's appearance and/or attire (Feild, 1978).

Subsequently, LeDoux and Hazelwood (1985) assessed attitudes concerning rape among a larger, randomly-selected sample of 2,170 police officers. A stratified sample of county and municipal agencies based on the Uniform Crime Report list was used for the study. Police participants were largely White (90.2%), male (93.6%), and worked patrol (42.1%) (LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985). Using Feild's (1978) ATR scale, LeDoux and Hazelwood (1985) found that officers held improved attitudes compared to prior studies, as they disagreed that "women should have to prove they did not encourage rape by their behavior" and disagreed that "some women deserve to be raped" (LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985, p. 215). Additionally, while the majority of officers agreed that perpetrators use

rape as an exertion of power; they also agreed that rapists are “sexually frustrated” (LeDoux & Hazelwood, 1985, p. 217). Findings from this study suggest that police officers did not endorse rape myths concerning the victim’s role, however, there was confusion surrounding motivation for rape.

Furthermore, Feldman-Summers and Palmer (1980) explored beliefs about rape among 15 police officers from a metropolitan police department. The questionnaire consisted of four sections with statements capturing agreement on a five-point Likert-type scale (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980). The sections assessed beliefs about the causes of rape, ways to prevent rape, the types of rape complaints, and the circumstances surrounding rape complaints. Officers reported that rape was the result of sexually-frustrated men or men with mental illness and that women were responsible for rape victimization through behaviors such as “going out alone” (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980, p. 34). Additionally, officers reported “real rapes” included demonstrable injury, chaste victims, and consistency in victim statements (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980). Importantly, police officers perceived approximately 60% of complainants as dishonest (Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980). As a whole, early studies examining the endorsement of rape myths among police officers have indicated that rape myth acceptance proliferates police organizations. Indeed, these early studies laid the groundwork for continued empirical assessment of demographic predictors of rape myth acceptance among police personnel. It is important, however, to consider that these studies were conducted prior to much of the rape reform movement and the enactment of rape shield laws across states (Spohn, 1999) and prior to seminal work refining the

definition and measurement of “rape myths” (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Payne et al., 1999).

Findings Using RMA-R

Over the past few decades, numerous studies have employed Burt’s scale to examine rape myth endorsement among the general population (Devdas & Rubin, 2007; Yost & Zurbriggen, 2006), college students (Aberle & Littlefield, 2001; Carmody & Washington, 2001; Check & Malamuth, 1985), offenders (Gamper, 2004; Monto & Hotaling, 2001) and law enforcement personnel (Mennicke et al., 2014; Page, 2007; 2008; 2010). To update earlier conceptualizations, such as Feild’s (1978) initial index, Burt (1980) incorporated rape myth terminology and identified attitudinal factors related to the adherence of rape-supportive attitudes. Later revisions made to the scale removed items with outdated and gendered language, which produced the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale-Revised (RMA-R). For example, Page (2007) examined police officer attitudes towards rape among 891 police personnel from eleven police and sheriff’s departments located in two southeastern states. The majority of officers were male (80%), White (64%), attended some college (41%), and generally had little experience investigating rapes (49%) such as working five or less cases (Page, 2007). Findings demonstrated low endorsement of rape myths among law enforcement whereas officers overwhelmingly agreed “any woman can get raped” (93%) and “any man can get raped” (66%) as measured on the RMA-R (Page, 2007, p. 28). Moreover, most police officers disagreed with myths such as, “in the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation” and “many women secretly wish to be raped” (Page, 2007, p. 29). Notably, results established police officers with higher levels of educational attainment adhered to

significantly lower levels of rape myths compared to police officers with a high school diploma or GED (Page, 2007). Furthermore, findings demonstrated that police officers with less experience and exposure to rape cases endorsed significantly higher levels of rape myths, compared to officers with more experience, such as working more than 21 investigations (Page, 2007). Consistent with existing research, female officers in Page's (2007) sample adhered to significantly lower levels of rape myths than male officers.

More recently, Mennicke and colleagues (2014) examined the perceptions of 149 law enforcement officers using the RMA-R and open-ended responses. Participants were primarily White (86.3%), male (86.9%), reported some college education (46.3%), and were affiliated with a police department (81.9%) as compared to a sheriff's office (Mennicke et al., 2014). Consistent with prior research, police officers endorsed low levels of rape myths (Page, 2007; 2010). Officers overwhelmingly disagreed that, "it is a woman's fault if she makes out with a guy and lets things get out of hand" (79.4%) and, "a woman that goes to the home of a man on their first date implied she is willing to have sex" (71.9%) (Mennicke et al., 2014, p. 823). Additionally, officers agreed, "any woman can be raped" (85.8%) and, "any man can be raped" (79.2%) (Mennicke et al., 2014 p. 822). Significant differences across demographic and occupational factors were not explored. The open-ended responses suggested that while law enforcement adhered to low levels of rape myths per the RMA-R (Burt, 1980), perceptions of falsely-reported rapes were alarmingly high. Approximately 43% of officers believed that between 50% to 70% of rape claims were false, with 10% of officers perceiving the threshold of unfounded claims as high as 80% (Mennicke et al., 2014). Indeed, the low endorsement of rape myths on the RMA-R may be influenced by social desirability bias, however,

qualitative findings suggest that law enforcement personnel may hold adverse beliefs concerning false rape claims—a component of rape myths.

Findings Using IRMA

The most recent analyses of rape myth acceptance among law enforcement have used Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald's (1999) IRMA, the shorter form (IRMA-SF), or modified versions (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2012; Rich & Seffrin 2012; 2013; 2014; Sleath & Bull, 2012; 2015; Venema, 2016). Through the efforts of a series of six studies, Payne et al. (1999) created a 45-item questionnaire with seven subscales capturing the following rape myth components: "She asked for it," "It wasn't really rape," "He didn't mean to," "She wanted it," "She lied," "Rape is a trivial event," and "Rape is a deviant event." Though the 45-item rape myth acceptance scale is theoretically relevant and has been statistically validated, a short form was developed for wider applicability in applied research. Indeed, Payne and colleagues' (1999) Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale Short Form (IRMA-SF) captures general adherence to rape myths using 20-items and is considered the established standard for capturing rape myth endorsement.

Rich and Seffrin (2012) investigated the endorsement of rape myths using items from the IRMA-SF among 429 police officers from agencies located in the northeastern United States. Approximately 73% of the sample was male, permitting a larger representation of females compared to other studies. Additionally, rank varied among personnel where 48% of participants identified as captains or higher and 51% identified as patrol officers. Findings from multivariate analyses demonstrated that female officers, officers with more years of experience, officers of higher rank, and officers belonging to

larger agencies adhered to lower levels of rape myth acceptance as compared to counterparts.

More recently, Venema (2016) assessed the endorsement and influence of rape myths on decision making in reported sexual assault cases among 174 police officers from a midsized agency located in the northeastern United States. Participants were presented with a randomized vignette describing a sexual assault report that manipulated perpetrator type and victim intoxication. Although the study did not discuss demographic and/or occupational predictors regarding the endorsement of myths, law enforcement personnel did adhere to some level of rape myth acceptance as the mean level of rape myth adherence fell near the scale midpoint (Venema, 2016). Specifically, police officers with higher levels of rape myth endorsement attributed lower levels of legitimacy and credibility to victims, independent of demographic and case characteristics (Venema, 2016). Importantly, officers who endorsed higher levels of rape myth acceptance reported lower behavioral intentions for formal intervention, such as recommending the case to a detective and recommending suspect arrest, regardless of demographic or case characteristics (Venema, 2016).

Qualitative Findings

Prior research examining the endorsement of rape myths has quantitatively established that demographic and occupational characteristics predict rape myth acceptance among some criminal justice personnel (Brown & King, 1998; Campbell & Johnson, 1997; Feild, 1978; Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Page, 2007; 2008; 2010; Rich & Seffrin, 2012; Venema, 2016). It has been important to qualitatively examine the endorsement of rape myths among law enforcement since the acceptance of rape-

supportive attitudes may not be fully captured quantitatively (see Mennicke et al., 2014; Shaw, Campbell, Cain, & Feeney, 2017). To be sure, Wentz and Archbold (2012) explored perceptions concerning rape survivors among 100 patrol officers from a midwestern policy agency. Content analysis of open-ended questions demonstrated support for rape myths and victim blaming. More female officers (48%) stated adverse views compared to male officers (31%), such as being, "surprised at how many people cry wolf to save face" and claiming, "a tendency to not believe victims because of how many people say they were assaulted" (Wentz & Archbold, 2012, p. 35).

Moreover, Barrett and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2013) qualitatively examined the perceptions of 22 police officers in the United Kingdom as they engaged in a simulated, online investigation of an attempted rape involving a female victim. While conducting the interview, police officers were afforded the opportunity to express comments providing insight into their decision-making. Content analysis indicated that 25% of officers expressed partial support for rape myths, specifically regarding false allegations at some point during the investigation (Barrett & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2013). Several police officers described the victim as "attention-seeking" (p. 14) and stated that "a large number" (p. 25) of rapes reported to law enforcement had not actually occurred (Barrett & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2013).

International Findings

The literature concerning the endorsement of rape myths and adverse rape perceptions among international law enforcement samples is limited, yet necessary to assess the durability of rape myths in the criminal justice system cross-nationally. Lee and colleagues (2012), for example, investigated rape myth acceptance and its influence

on perceptions of a rape vignette among 236 male police officers in South Korea. Findings demonstrated that higher levels of rape myth acceptance among police officers significantly predicted perceptions of the hypothetical rape vignette scenario (Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2012). Officers who endorsed rape myths reported increased negative perceptions, such as failing to acknowledge the scenario as real rape and dismissing the psychological trauma post rape (Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2012).

Additionally, Sleath and Bull (2012) used the IRMA to examine the endorsement of rape myths among a sample of 123 police officers from two police agencies in the United Kingdom. The effect of rape myth acceptance on victim blaming was explored after police officers received manipulated vignettes with either a stranger or an acquaintance rape (Sleath & Bull, 2012). Results suggested that police adhered to myths pertaining to rape victims' lying such as, "rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men" and, "a lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape" (Sleath & Bull, 2012, p. 654). While significant gender differences did not emerge in officer rape myth acceptance, endorsement of rape myths significantly predicted victim blaming (Sleath & Bull, 2012). Specifically, adherence to the sub-scales "She lied" and "He didn't mean to" on the IRMA, increased victim blaming attitudes among police officers (Sleath & Bull, 2012, pg. 659).

Findings from most studies employing the IRMA are in line with existing research that has suggested law enforcement may adhere to some levels of rape myth acceptance (Feild, 1978; Feldman-Summers & Palmer, 1980; Venema, 2016), though endorsement is generally low on quantitative measures (Mennicke et al., 2014; Page, 2007; 2008; 2010). Existing research has noted that certain demographic and

occupational characteristics may increase the likelihood of endorsement, such as being a male, having lower levels of educational attainment, and less experience on the job and conducting sexual assault investigations (Page, 2007; 2008; Rich & Seffrin, 2012). Cross-national studies have demonstrated the saliency of rape myths across various officer samples (Lee et al., 2012; Sleath & Bull, 2012), while qualitative findings have strongly suggested the police officers largely adhered to the myth that victims falsify or exaggerate sexual victimization (Barrett & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2013; Mennicke et al., 2014; Shaw et al., 2017; Wentz & Archbold, 2012).

Consequences of Adhering to Rape Myths

Within the broader context, the endorsement of rape myths among criminal justice system personnel, and specifically law enforcement, is detrimental for sexual assault survivors, and subsequent case processing. Existing literature has established that when survivors are shamed, disbelieved, and blamed for rape victimization by those to whom they report, they experience secondary victimization (Campbell & Raja, 1999; 2005; Filipas & Ullman, 2001; Maddox, Lee & Barker, 2012; Monroe et al., 2005; Patterson, 2011). Additionally, evidence has illustrated the extent to which the endorsement of rape myths among law enforcement has diminished perceptions of victim credibility (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Maddox et al., 2012; Rich & Seffrin, 2012) and increased victim blame (Rich & Seffrin, 2012). Furthermore, the endorsement of rape myths has reduced the likelihood that officers will involve a victim advocate in the investigation (Rich & Seffrin, 2013) or refer cases to prosecution (Venema, 2016), further aggravating case attrition (Campbell et al., 2014; Maddox et al., 2012). The current reviewed literature on police officers and rape myth acceptance underscores the

significant implications that rape myth endorsement has on police responses to survivors of sexual assault. Existing studies, however, have overlooked how the endorsement of rape myths among law enforcement may predict perceived preparedness in responding to CFS, while accounting for participant sex and prior specialized sexual assault training.

Law Enforcement and Specialized Sexual Assault Training

An extensive review of existing literature concerning the utility of prior specialized sexual assault training for police officers produced few studies. The usefulness of prior specialized sexual assault training on police officer attitudes concerning sexual assault, such as endorsement of rape myths, is worthy of additional empirical inquiry given that some research demonstrates encouraging results. Lonsway, Welch and Fitzgerald (2001), for example, evaluated a sexual assault training program by comparing several outcomes, such as rape myth adherence, among police officers who participated in the standard training protocol (n = 56) and police officers who participated in the experimental specialized sexual assault training (n = 105). Police officers in the standard protocol training only received brief material including an overview on sexual assault and laws for 30 minutes of the total training (Lonsway et al., 2001). In the experimental specialized sexual assault training sample, police officers were exposed to three training blocks, lasting at least 60 minutes covering terminology and misconceptions of sexual assaults, best practices surrounding investigation techniques, and the impact of sexual assault on survivor interviews (Lonsway et al., 2001). Findings from the study indicated no significant differences in rape myth adherence, as measured on the IRMA (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999) across both officer groups post-training (Lonsway et al., 2001). Results from the study did demonstrate positive

behavioral change where officers who received the specialized sexual assault training performed significantly better on simulated sexual assault survivor interviews (Lonsway et al., 2001).

Related, Smith, Wilkes and Bouffard (2016) examined the effect of specialized sexual assault training on the endorsement of rape myths among 118 college campus law enforcement officers. Officers reported previously participating in a wide range of specialized training such as training on the investigation of sexual assault (n = 66), victim sensitivity (n = 50), the trauma of victimization (n = 38), federal requirements for sexual assault (n = 43), identifying drug-facilitated assaults (n = 37), and the role of alcohol and/or intoxication in sexual assaults (Smith et al., 2016). Findings suggested that officers who participated in training on victim sensitivity and on the trauma of victimization adhered to significantly lower levels of rape myths as measured on the IRMA (Payne et al., 1999), compared to officers who participated in other trainings (Smith et al., 2016).

International studies examining the potential benefits of specialized sexual assault training for police officers, however, have yielded varying results. Sleath and Bull (2012) examined victim blame among 123 police officers from the United Kingdom with special attention to differences among officers who had received specialized sexual assault training (n = 62) and officers without specialized training (n = 61). Information regarding the content or duration of the training was not specified. Findings demonstrated no significant differences in victim blame among officers across groups. It is noteworthy that increased endorsement of particular rape myths, “She wanted it” and “He didn’t mean to,” as measured on IRMA (Payne et al., 1999) significantly predicted victim-

blame among law enforcement. In contrast, Darwinkel, Powell, and Tidmarsh (2013) assessed victim-blaming attitudes among a sample of 77 Australian police officers pre- and post-training. The training was administered over four consecutive weeks in a classroom setting with special focus on understanding victims and offenders, case studies, and best practices for interviewing, for a total of 170 hours (Darwinkel et al., 2013). To understand the effect of the training, Darwinkel and colleagues (2013) randomly assigned twelve scenarios in a pre- and post-training questionnaire with rape myth manipulations. Results revealed that victim-blaming significantly decreased post-training such that negative comments surrounding victim behavior diminished (Darwinkel et al., 2013).

The utility of specialized sexual assault training has been examined in relation to perceived preparedness in responding to CFS for sexual assault calls for service and on perceptions of false reporting. Kinney and colleagues (2008) analyzed survey responses from 301 police officers across seven agencies in Maryland to examine differences in outcomes among officers who reported additional specialized sexual assault training and officers who only participated in the mandated academy training. Bivariate analysis demonstrated that less than half of all respondents (46.6%) had received specialized training apart from the mandated, one-hour academy sexual assault training. Conversely, participants that reported receiving additional specialized training (56.3%) were trained by a police agency or other formal source for an average of 4 hours (Kinney et al., 2008). Importantly, police officers who received additional specialized sexual assault training reported increased preparedness (“very prepared”) in responding to sexual assault cases compared to officers who only received academy training (Kinney et al., 2008). This

emphasizes potential benefits of specialized sexual assault training on perceived levels of preparedness in responding to CFS, which may, in part, positively influence behavioral change. Additionally, Schwartz (2010) assessed perceptions of false reporting, a component of rape myths, among 49 police officers who specialized in investigating sexual assault cases or were assigned to sex crimes. Using in-depth interview techniques, qualitative findings revealed highly-trained officers (61%) reported that less than 10% of all sexual assault cases were false, whereas, officers with less training (54%) stated that 40%-80% of sexual assaults were falsely reported (Schwartz, 2010).

Purpose of The Current Study

Positive police and victim interactions are essential for continued victim participation in the criminal justice system. Considering that police responses, such as preparedness in responding to CFS, may be influenced by maladaptive attitudes, the assessment of police endorsement of rape mythology is necessary for effective investigation of sexual assault cases. First, the present study uses a sample of 523 self-report, pencil-and-paper surveys administered to a purposive sample of police personnel to examine demographic and occupational predictors of rape myth adherence among a racially-diverse sample of officers commissioned at one of the fifth largest cities in the United States. Second, this study examines perceptions of preparedness in responding to CFS, while accounting for participant sex, rape myth endorsement and prior specialized sexual assault training.

Research Questions

RQ1: To what degree do police officers adhere to rape myths?

H1: Police officers will adhere to rape myths near the midpoint of the rape myth acceptance scale.

RQ2: Does police officer sex, educational attainment, years of service as an officer, number of sexual assault CFS in the previous 12 months and prior specialized sexual assault training influence adherence to rape myth acceptance?

H2: Female officers will report lower adherence to rape myths as compared to male counterparts.

H3: Officers with higher levels of educational attainment will report lower adherence to rape myths as compared to counterparts.

H4: Early career officers will report lower adherence to rape myths as compared to more experienced officers.

H5: Officers who reported responding to an increased number of sexual assault CFS in the previous 12 months will report lower adherence to rape myths as compared to officers who reported responding to a decreased number of sexual assault CFS in the previous 12 months.

H6: Officers with prior specialized sexual assault training will report lower adherence to rape myths as compared to officers with no specialized sexual assault training.

RQ3: Does officer sex, prior specialized sexual assault training, and rape myth acceptance predict preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS?

Hypothesized Path Model

The current proposed path model suggests a relationship between officer sex, prior specialized sexual assault training, rape myth adherence, and preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS. Figure 1 presents the proposed path model. Hypotheses formulated below explicate that path analyses will support the model presented in Figure 1.

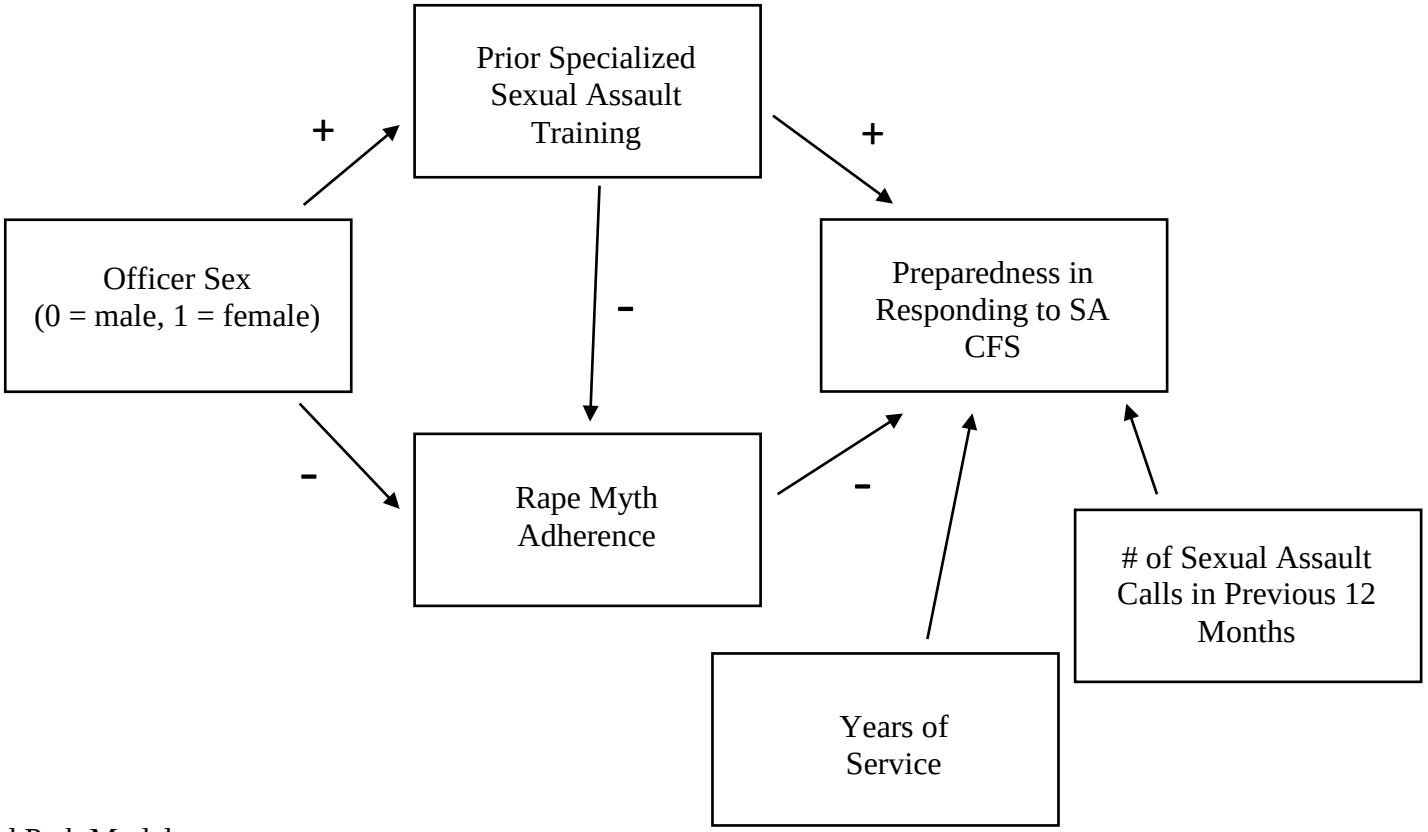


Figure 1. Hypothesized Path Model

Specifically, Figure 1 hypothesizes the following:

H7: Officer sex will predict increased rape myth adherence, such that male officers will report increased rape myth adherence.

H8: Officer sex will predict prior specialized sexual assault training, such that female officers will report increased prior specialized sexual assault training.

H9: Prior specialized sexual assault training will predict decreased rape myth adherence.

H10: Increased adherence to rape myths will predict decreased preparedness in responding to CFS.

H11: Prior specialized sexual assault training will predict increased preparedness in responding to CFS.

CHAPTER III
Methods

Data used for this study were collected from police participants in August 2016 as part of a larger federally-funded grant project awarded by the Office of Violence Against Women evaluating a mandatory sexual and family violence, agency-wide training. Data were collected prior to the beginning of the 2016-2017 training cycle. Survey administration took place during 55 roll call meetings at all 14 metropolitan police substations in a large, urban police department located in one of the fifth largest cities in the U.S. Roll call times were held at 6:00am-7:00am, 2:00pm-3:00pm, and 10:00-11:00pm. A purposive sample of roll call times was selected for each of the 14 substations based on the anticipated number of officers present at each location in order to maximize participation. Reminder announcements were made via email by police Lieutenants from the Special Victims' Division prior to the pre-scheduled survey administration date to further facilitate participation from police personnel. On the pre-arranged date, researchers administered pencil-and-paper surveys to commissioned officers who were present for roll call after reading an institutional review board (IRB) approved description of the study highlighting the voluntary and anonymous nature of survey participation. The survey was described to police participants as "Police Attitudes about Crime and Victimization." Completion of the survey took approximately 25 minutes. Altogether, 694 surveys were administered and 633 surveys were returned, for a response rate of 91.2%[5].

[5] A recent study examining police officer response rates among 497 published police found that the average response rate across all survey methodologies was 64%. (Nix, Pickett, Baek, & Alpert, 2017).

Sample Demographics

Sample demographics presented in Table 1 indicate that mean age of participants was 37.96 years old. Men represented the majority of the sample (n = 464, 88.7%) compared to women, (n = 59, 11.3%). Participants were racially diverse, such that 38.2% (n = 200) were White, 26.8% (n = 140) were Latino/a, 23.5 % (n= 123) were Black, 8.4% (n =44) were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.2% (n = 1) were Native American/Alaska Native. Approximately 40.3% (n = 211) of participants reported having a four-year degree, nearly 27.5% (n = 211) reported some college, and 12% (n = 65) reported graduate school. Participants reported an average of 11.71 years as an officer.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables	n	%	*M* (*SD*)	Range
Officer Age			37.96 (10.34)	21-72
Officer Sex				
Male	464	88.7%		
Female	59	11.3%		
Participant Race/Ethnicity				
White	200	38.2%		
Black	123	23.5%		
Latino/a	140	26.8%		
Asian/Pacific Islander	44	8.4%		
Native American/Alaska Native	1	0.2%		
Other	15	2.9%		
Educational Attainment				
High school	40	7.6%		
Some college	144	27.5%		
Two-year degree	63	12.0%		
Four-year degree	211	40.3%		
Graduate school	65	12.4%		
Years of Service			11.71 (9.86)	0-40.5
Number of Sexual Assault Calls in Previous 12 Months				
None	118	22.6%		
1-5	302	57.7%		
6-10	65	12.4%		
11-20	20	3.8%		
21 or more	18	3.4%		

Endogenous Variable

Officer Sex. Participant sex was captured as a dichotomous variable [Male = 0 (n = 464; 88.7%); Female = 1 (n = 59, 11.3%).

Exogenous Variables

Rape Myth Acceptance. Participant adherence to rape myths was captured using Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald's (1999) 20-item Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance—Short Form (IRMA-SF) measure. Items were captured on a 6-point Likert-type scale from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items were summed to create a scale from 0 to 100 where increased values represented higher levels of rape myth acceptance (M = 21.38, SD = 10.90, α = .832).

Prior Specialized Sexual Assault Training. Prior specialized sexual assault training was captured using six dichotomous items that reflected various types of specialized sexual assault training. Items asked participants to indicate whether or not they received the training (no = 0, yes = 1). Items included having received, "any specialized training on the investigation of sexual assault," "any specialized training on victim sensitivity," "any specialized training on the trauma of victimization," "any specialized training on crime victims' reactions and behaviors in dealing with their victimization," "any specialized training in identifying drug-facilitated sexual assault," and "any specialized training in identifying the role of alcohol and/or intoxication in sexual assaults." The 6-items were subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA), which produced one factor with an Eigenvalue greater than 1 that accounted for 60.43% of the variance. Factor loadings ranged from .649 to .843. The 6-items items were summed to create a prior specialized sexual assault training measure from 0 to 5 where increased

numbers represent increased participation in specialized sexual assault training (*M* = 2.87, *SD* = 2.20, α = 869). Appendix A presents the training items, factor loadings, and index reliability.

Preparedness in Responding to Calls for Service. The degree to which participants reported preparedness in responding to CFS was measured using two items that asked, "how prepared do you feel to respond effectively to calls for service for sexual assaults involving strangers?" and "how prepared do you feel to respond effectively to calls for service for sexual assaults involving intimate partners?" Responses were captured on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (very unprepared) to 5 (very prepared). The 2-items were subjected to EFA, which produced one factor with an Eigenvalue greater than 1 that accounted for 93.45% of the variance. Factor loadings were both .967. Two items were summed to create a preparedness in responding to CFS measure from 0 to 10 where increased numbers represented increased preparedness (*M* = 8.04, *SD* = 1.19, α = .930). Appendix B presents the prior specialized sexual assault training items and factor loadings.

Controls

Two variables were included as controls: years of service and the number sexual assault calls responded to in the previous 12 months. Years of service was a continuous variable that measured the number of years a participant had been a police officer (*M* = 11.71, *SD* = 9.86). The number of sexual assault calls responded to in the previous 12 months was captured through one item that asked police participants to indicate, "how many sexual assault calls have you responded to in the last 12 months." Responses were

captured on an ordinal scale [None = 0 (n = 118, 22.6%), 1 to 5 = 1 (n = 302, 57.7%), 6 to 10 = 2 (n = 65, 12.4%), 11 to 20 = 3 (n = 20, 3.8%), 21 or more = 4 (n = 18, 3.4%)].

Analytic Strategy

The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, univariate statistics, means, and standard deviations were calculated for each of the study variables addressing research question 1. Next, a bivariate correlation matrix was conducted to determine bivariate relations between the study variables addressing research question 2. Finally, individual participant characteristics hypothesized to predict preparedness in responding to CFS were assessed through the use of path modeling in AMOS 22.0.

CHAPTER IV
Results

Data Screening

Prior to estimating the statistical models, SPSS, Version 22.0 was used to screen the data for skewness and kurtosis. Estimates fell within the acceptable range and did not exceed the recommended cutoff values of 3.0 and 8.0, respectively (Kline, 2005). Multicollinearity diagnostics were also evaluated. Tolerance values ranged from .902 to .970 and variance inflation factors (VIFS) ranged from 1.03 to 1.11, indicating that multicollinearity, or the confounding of variables included in the path model, was not a problem (Belsey, Kuh, & Welsch, 1980). Acceptable tolerance values are generally less than 4.0 and greater than 0.2, respectfully (Belsey, Kuh, & Welsch, 1980; Fox, 1991). Acceptable VIF values fall below 2.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Missing Data

A series of steps were conducted in order to address issues surrounding missing data. First, Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test confirmed that the data were indeed missing at random (Littles MCAR $x^2 = 21.952$, df = 18, $p = 0.23$). The analysis demonstrated that the results were not significant, confirming that the use of list-wise deletion would not produce biased estimates (see Graham, 2009). As a result, analyses were conducted using a sample of 523 surveys with complete data retained for bivariate and multivariate models.

Univariate Statistics

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for each of the exogenous variables contained in the path model and demonstrates that mean levels of prior specialized sexual assault training were slightly above the scale midpoint ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 2.20$). In addition,

participants reported low levels of rape myth acceptance, scoring well below the scale midpoint (M = 21.38, SD = 10.90), refuting Hypothesis 1. Participants tended to score above the scale midpoint for levels of preparedness in responding to calls for service (M = 8.04, SD = 1.19).

Table 2

Summary of Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Study Variables

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Officer Sex	---						
2. Educational Attainment	.15*	---					
3. Years of Service	-.13*	-.08	---				
4. # SA Calls in Previous 12 Months	.02	-.01	-.27*	---			
5. Prior Specialized Sexual Assault Training	.07	.19*	-.08	.10*	---		
6. Rape Myth Acceptance	-.12*	.01	-.08	.06	-.04	---	
7. Preparedness in Responding to CFS	.02	.06	.14*	.09	.20*	-.15*	---
M	---	---	11.71	---	2.87	21.38	8.04
SD	---	---	9.86	---	2.20	10.90	1.19

Note. For all scales, higher score are indicative of more extreme responding in the direction of the constructed assessment.
*Correlation is significant at the $p < .05$ level (2-tailed).

Bivariate Correlation Matrix

Table 2 presents the results of the bivariate correlation matrix and demonstrates several significant and substantively important relationships between the endogenous variable, the exogenous variables, and the outcome variable of interest. First, there was positive, significant relation between years of service and preparedness in responding to CFS, $r(521) = .14$, $p = .001$ and between prior specialized sexual assault training and preparedness in responding to CFS, $r(521) = .20$, $p = .000$. Results also demonstrated a negative, significant relation between rape myth acceptance and preparedness in responding to CFS, $r(521) = -15$, $p = .001$. Finally, there was a negative, significant relation between officer sex (M = 0, F = 1) and rape myth acceptance, $r(521) = -.12$, $p = .005$ supporting Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3, 4, 5, and 6 were not supported as the remaining variables (*educational attainment*, *years of service*, *the number of sexual assault CFS in the previous 12 months* and *prior specialized sexual assault training*) did not significantly predict rape myth acceptance.

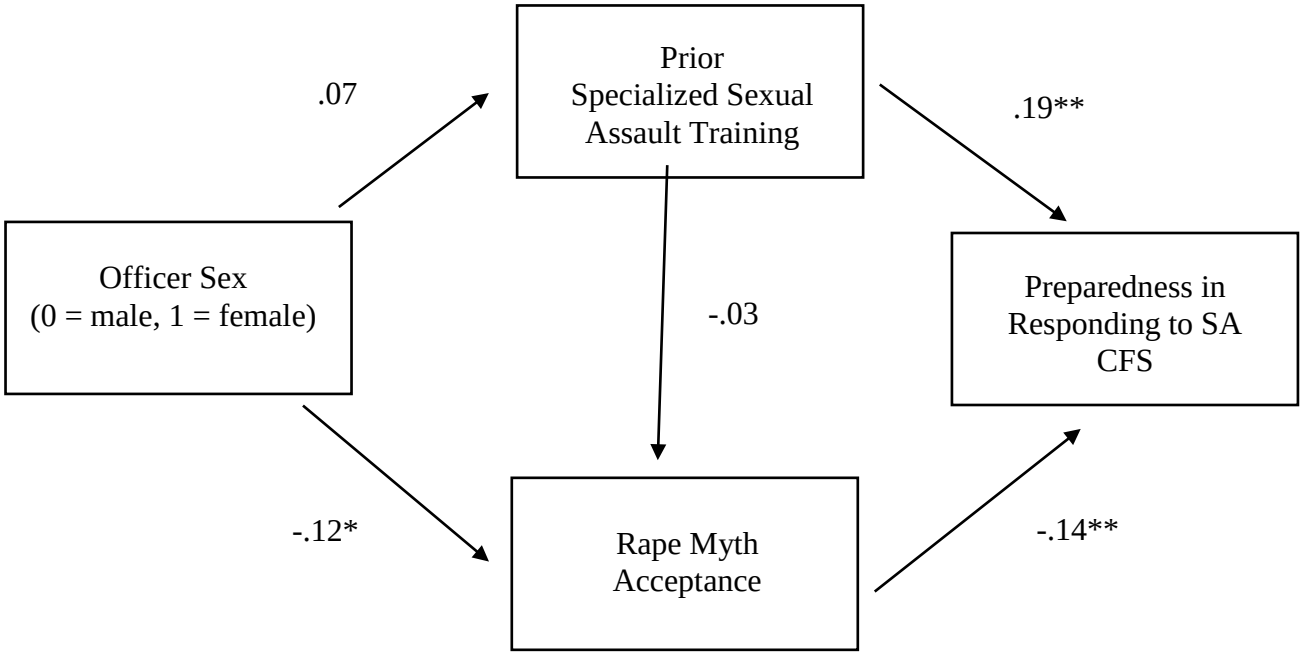
Model Testing

The hypothesized path model presented in Figure 1 was tested using AMOS 22.0. First, the model was estimated with additional paths between the outcome variable of interest (preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS) and control variables: years of service and the number of sexual assault calls responded to in the previous 12 months. These two theoretically relevant variables were estimated as controls given that existing policing research has demonstrated the relation between on the job experience and responses to CFS (Bayley, 1996). Initial model testing produced a poor fit to the data (x^2 [8] = 59.90, $p = .00$) and fit statistics demonstrated a poor overall fitting model (CFI =

0.52, TLI = 0.10, RSMEA = 0.11; Hu & Bentler, 1999). A good fitting model will typically yield a CFI and TLI of .95 or higher, an RMSEA of .06 or less, and an SRMR of .08 or less (Hu & Bentler, 1999)[6]. Next, years of service and the number of sexual assault calls responded to in the previous 12 months were removed from the path model. Neither years of service or the number of sexual assault calls responded to in the previous 12 months were significantly related to rape myth acceptance as presented in the bivariate correlation matrix (see Table 2). Additionally, only years of service was significantly related to preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS in the bivariate correlation matrix. The goal of building a path model is model parsimony where any added paths will generally improve model fitness (Kline, 2005). Indeed, model testing identified that years of service and the number of sexual assault CFS in the previous 12 months did not improve model fit. Model re-estimation without years of service and the number of sexual assault calls responded to in the previous 12 months demonstrated acceptable overall model fit with the data (x^2 [1] = 0.03, p = .87) and strong model fit (CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.16, RSMEA = .06; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Standardized regression coefficients are presented in Figure 2 and significant coefficients are marked with asterisks.

[6] CFI = comparative fit index; SRMR = standard root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error approximation.

Full Path Model



Note: * $p<.05$ **$p<.001$

CFI = 1.00, TL1 = 1.16, RSMEA = .06

Figure 2 Full Path Model

Figure 2 presents the results of the full path model. Several path coefficients emerged as both significant and substantively relevant. First, Hypothesis 7 was not supported as officer sex did not significantly predict prior specialized sexual assault training. Hypothesis 8, however, was supported as officer sex predicted levels of rape myth acceptance, b = -.12, p =.006, such that male officers endorsed increased levels compared to female officers. No significant relationship emerged between prior specialized sexual assault training and rape myth acceptance, refuting Hypothesis 9. Additionally, increased rape myth acceptance predicted decreased levels of preparedness in responding to CFS, b = .-14, p = .000, supporting Hypothesis 10. Finally, increased levels of prior specialized sexual assault training predicted increased levels of preparedness in responding to CFS, b = .19, p = .000, supporting Hypothesis 11.

CHAPTER V
Discussion

Sexual victimization remains a pervasive social concern. National estimates indicated that 43.9% of women and 23.4% of men have experienced some form of sexual violence during their lifetime (Breiding, Smith, Basile, Walters, Chen, & Merrick, 2014). Specifically, 19.3% of women have reported experiencing attempted or completed rape during their lifetime (Breiding et al., 2014), with increased risk of victimization among college women (Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2018). Though the occurrence of sexual assaults and rapes is prevalent, these crimes continue to be underreported to law enforcement (Morgan & Kena, 2017), where the majority of cases never proceed past the initial police investigation phase (Campbell et al., 2014; Lonsway & Archambault, 2012). Prior literature has emphasized that deficits in the overall system response and investigation of sexual assault may, in part, be the result of negative attitudes held by criminal justice personnel that manifest in the form of rape myth endorsement (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Maddox et al., 2012; Page, 2007; 2008; Sleath & Bull, 2017; Venema, 2016). Specifically, police personnel adhering to rape myths have blamed survivors, questioned credibility, and inhibited cases from being referred to prosecution (Maddox et al., 2012; Rich & Seffrin, 2012; Sleath & Bull, 2015). Presently, research has indicated that demographic or occupational characteristics may condition rape myth endorsement among officers, such as sex, educational attainment, job experience, and prior specialized sexual assault training (Page, 2007; 2008; Rich & Seffrin, 2012; 2014; Smith et al., 2016). The current literature, however, has not explored how rape myth endorsement may further influence police officer perceptions of preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS. The present study used 523 paper-and-

pencil surveys administered to police officers commissioned at one of fifth largest U.S. cities to examine demographic and occupational predictors of rape myth acceptance. In addition, this study contributed to the broader program of research by considering the effect of rape myth endorsement on perceptions of preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS, while accounting for officer sex and prior specialized sexual assault training. Several findings are worthy of additional discussion.

First, results from the study indicate low rape myth endorsement among police participants; a finding that reiterates recent literature examining rape myths in other officer samples (Mennicke et al., 2014; Page, 2007; 2010; Sleath & Bull, 2017; Venema, 2016). Any endorsement of rape myths, however, is problematic for victims who formally report, given the unique position of police officers as gatekeepers of the formal criminal justice process who exercise virtually unfettered discretion (Kerstetter, 1990; Spohn & Tellis, 2012; 2014). Additionally, the repercussions for survivors who are disbelieved and blamed as a result of officer rape myth endorsement are consequential as they exacerbate trauma sequelae and hinder further helpseeking (Campbell et al., 2001; Campbell, 2008). From a policy standpoint, police agencies may benefit from educational programming focusing on dismantling rape myths as existing studies have demonstrated promising results (Darwinkel et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2016). Future research should continue to assess rape myths among police personnel with a focus on supplementing quantitative findings with qualitative assessments, such as face-to-face interviews or the use of case notes, as rape myths may manifest in implicit ways (Shaw et al., 2017).

Second, the present study was concerned with whether demographic and occupational characteristics, such as officer sex, educational attainment, years of service,

the number of sexual assault CFS in the previous 12 months, and prior specialized sexual assault training were significantly related to increased rape myth acceptance. Findings from the bivariate correlation matrix demonstrated, that among all the hypothesized characteristics, only officer sex was significantly correlated with rape myth endorsement. Indeed, male officers adhered to higher levels of rape myth endorsement—a finding that replicates existing research on officer samples (Feild, 1978; Page, 2007; 2008; Rich & Seffrin, 2012) and more generally, among community and college samples (Hockett, Smith, Klausing, & Saucier, 2016; Franklin & Garza, 2018; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Given the saliency of sex as a predictor of rape myth endorsement, law enforcement agencies could benefit from educational programming, such as the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program that focuses on facilitating interactive, small group, single sex discussions concerning attitudes surrounding violence against women and bystander efficacy (Katz, 2006). These trainings create a comfortable learning environment where men (and women) "open up" without judgement (Katz, 1995, pg. 165). Furthermore, the MVP training program been implemented in other masculine organizations such as collegiate athletic teams, fraternities, and branches of the military and has produced positive results such as improved attitudes and knowledge surrounding violence against women (Katz, 1995; 2006). Though the other hypotheses related to demographic and occupational officer characteristics were not supported in the present study, it would be interesting to examine these variables within police officers commissioned in smaller agencies, located in rural areas, with more homogenous samples. In addition, future research should consider the role of prior sexual victimization and participant impulsivity in relation to rape myth endorsement among officers as these variables have predicted

adherence in college samples (Franklin, Bouffard, & Pratt, 2012; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015).

Furthermore, research question 3 was concerned with police officer preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS, while taking into consideration officer sex, rape myth endorsement, and prior specialized sexual assault training. Results identified the considerable role of rape myth acceptance, such that increased endorsement of rape myths significantly predicted decreased levels of preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS. This finding is particularly interesting given the low levels of rape myth endorsement among the officer sample, affirming the compelling adverse effects of rape mythology on police responses to sexual assault CFS and behavioral intentions to proceed formally when victims of rape present to report a crime.

Finally, it is noteworthy that findings from the path analysis demonstrated the potential utility of prior specialized sexual assault training as increased training significantly predicted increased levels of preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS. This finding lends support to some of the existing literature indicating that specialized training has improved police responses to sexual assault survivors (Ask, 2010; Darwinkel et al., 2013; Sleath & Bull, 2012).

That said, it is also meaningful that prior specialized sexual assault training had no significant effect on officer levels of rape myth endorsement. This finding replicates existing literature that has suggested the implementation of specialized sexual assault training may be beneficial for behavioral change, however, not for attitudes or beliefs (see Lonsway et al., 2001). It could be that the items summed to create the scale for prior specialized sexual assault training did not directly addressed training focused specifically

on rape mythology. Future endeavors should continue to assess the effect of prior specialized sexual assault training on police personnel's cognitions and behavioral intentions given the dearth of methodologically robust program evaluation research.

Findings presented in this study are instructive, though they are not without limitations. First, data comprised responses from a purposive sample of police officers commissioned in a large, metropolitan city and results should be interpreted accordingly as findings may not be generalizable to the entire agency. Future studies should replicate this study with police personnel commissioned at smaller agencies to examine what demographic and occupational characteristics predict rape myth endorsement and whether rape myth endorsement and prior specialized sexual assault training influence preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS. It should also be noted that responses from this study may be subjected to social desirability bias given the underreporting of undesirable beliefs, particularly regarding sensitive questions (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007), such as those pertaining to the behavior of sexual assault victims. That said, the levels of rape myth endorsement among police personnel in this sample is a conservative estimate. Future endeavors should include social desirability scales on survey questionnaires to control for this phenomena. Finally, this study examined self-reported, police perceptions of preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS. Existing research, however, has identified the degree to which behavioral intentions to act have been correlated with actual behavior (Kim & Hunter, 1993). Importantly, for the purpose of this study, the type of sexual assault CFS (stranger, intimate-partner, acquaintance, etc.) was not specified. Future studies should consider how victim-offender relationships may moderate the influence of rape myth endorsement on preparedness in responding to

sexual assault CFS. Additionally, it would be fruitful to consider policer officer preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS among sexual minority perpetrators and victims given the prevalence of sexual violence within this community (Rothman, Exner, & Baughman, 2011).

Despite these limitations, findings from the current study have important implications for practice. Existing research has noted shortcomings in police responses to sexual assault (Campbell et al., 2014; Lonsway & Archambault, 2012; Maddox, Lee, & Barker, 2012; Spohn & Tellis, 2012; 2014), particularly as a result of rape myth acceptance (Goodman-Delahunty & Graham, 2011; Mennicke et al., 2014; O'Neal, 2017; Page, 2007; 2008; 2010; Rich & Seffrin, 2012; 2014; Shaw et al., 2017; Venema, 2016). The present study was the first of its kind to not only examine demographic and occupational predictors of rape myth endorsement among police officers, but also to consider the influence of rape mythology, among other factors, on police officer preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS. The aforementioned results, however, demonstrate that when police officers adhere to misconceptions surrounding "appropriate" victim behaviors, officers feel significantly less prepared to appropriately respond to sexual assault CFS. Findings from the current study call for systemic change across law enforcement personnel and highlight that rape myth endorsement continues to be the critical area for intervention and improvement. Indeed, police personnel may benefit from interactive, sex-specific, educational programming focused on dismantling pervasive myths because these methods have received empirical support (Katz, 2006; Smith et al., 2016). Without a doubt, improving officer preparedness in responding to sexual assault CFS would facilitate victim-centered interactions allowing for suspect

apprehension, improved case processing, referral to appropriate social services, and enhanced public safety.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A *Prior Specialized Sexual Assault Training Items, Factor Loadings, and Reliability Estimates*

Reliability α = .869	Loading
1. Have you received any specialized training on the investigation of sexual assault?	.791
2. Have you received any specialized training on victim sensitivity?	.790
3. Have you received any specialized training on the trauma of victimization?	.843
4. Have your received any specialized training on crime victims' reactions and behaviors in dealing with their victimization?	.840
5. Have you received any specialized training in identifying drug-facilitated sexual assault?	.649
6. Have you received any specialized training in identifying the role of alcohol and/or intoxication in sexual assaults?	.734

Appendix B *Preparedness in Responding to Calls for Service Items, Factor Loadings, and Reliability Estimates*

Reliability α = .930	Loading
1. How prepared do you feel to respond effectively to calls for service for sexual assaults involving strangers?	.967
2. How prepared do you feel to respond effectively to calls for service for sexual assaults involving intimate partners?	.967

VITA

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EDUCATION

2018	Master of Arts, *Criminal Justice and Criminology*, Sam Houston State University, Masters Thesis: "Exploring blue lines: An examination of rape myth acceptance and perceived preparedness in responding to calls for service among police officers" Advisor: Cortney A. Franklin, Ph.D.
2016	Bachelor of Science, *Criminal Justice*, Sam Houston State University, with Highest Honors, *Cum Laude*, Honors Thesis: "Assessing responses to sexual assault disclosure: The influence of victim race and perpetrator type" Advisor: Cortney A. Franklin, Ph.D.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

2018 – Present	Doctoral Research/Teaching Assistant, Sam Houston State University
2017 – Present	Graduate Research Assistant, Crime Victims' Institute
2016 – 2017	Graduate Research/Teaching Assistant, Sam Houston State University
2015 – 2016	Research Assistant, Sam Houston State University

ACADEMIC ACCOLADES

Graduate Bridge ASPIRE Scholar
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Victimology; Criminal justice system responses to victimization; Violence against women; Intersectionality and victimization; Gender and crime

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Jan. 2017 – Present	Graduate Research Assistant, *Research and Evaluation of Houston Police Department's Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic*

Violence Survivors. Office of Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. Principle Investigator: Dr. Cortney A. Franklin, $393,049.00

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Franklin C.A., & **Garza, A.D.** (2018). "Sexual assault disclosure: The effect of victim race and perpetrator type on empathy, culpability, and service referral for survivors in a hypothetical scenario." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. DOI: 10.1177/0886260518759656

Manuscripts Under Review

Franklin, C.A., Goodson, A., & **Garza, A.D.**, "Intimate partner violence among sexual minorities: Predicting police officer arrest decisions" submitted to *Criminal Justice and Behavior*. Invited to revise and resubmit.

Franklin, C.A., **Garza, A.D.**, Goodson, A. & Bouffard, L.A. "Police perceptions of crime victim behaviors: The relation between mandatory training on knowledge of trauma responses" submitted to *Justice Quarterly*.

Manuscripts in Progress

Garza, A.D. & Butler, H.D. "The influence of sexual victimization and mental health treatment on female inmate misconduct: Insight from a national jail sample." To be submitted.

Franklin, C.A., Goodson, A., & **Garza, A.D.** "Sexual assault and police case processing: The effect of stereotypical trauma, physical evidence, and victim offender relationship on decisions to arrest" To be submitted.

Garza, A.D. & Franklin, C.A. "Prepared to respond to sexual assault?: The role of prior specialized training and rape myths among police officers" To be submitted.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL REPORTS

2018 Franklin, C.A. & **Garza, A.D.** *Sexual assault disclosure responses*. The Sexual Assault Report. To be submitted.

2018 Franklin, C.A., Goodson, A., **Garza, A.D.**, & Bouffard, L.A. "*Preliminary analysis of post-training data*" Results from Research and Evaluation of Houston Police Department's Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Survivors. Report submitted to Houston Police Department, Special Victims Division.

2017 Franklin, C.A., Goodson, A., **Garza, A.D.** & Bills, M. 2017. *Texas victimization dashboard*. Crime Victims' Institute.

2017 Franklin, C.A., & **Garza, A.D.** *Federal efforts to combat campus sexual violence*. Campus Sexual Assault Series, Vol. 1, Iss. 2. Crime Victims' Institute.

2017 Franklin, C.A., & **Garza, A.D.** *Sexual assault: An overview.* Campus Sexual Assault
Series, Vol. 1, Iss. 1, Crime Victims' Institute.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2018 **Garza, A.D.** & Franklin, C.A. "The effect of rape myth acceptance and specialized training on preparedness in responding to calls for service among officers: A path model" Poster to be presented at the Texas Victim's Service Association Research Symposium, San Marcos, TX.

2018 Goodson, A., Franklin, C.A., & **Garza, A.D**. "Sexual assault and police case processing: The effect of stereotypical trauma, physical evidence, and victim offender relationship on decisions to arrest" Paper to be presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, GA.

2018 **Garza, A.D**. & Franklin, C.A. "Blue lines: An examination of police officer attitudes and preparedness in responding to calls for service". Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, New Orleans, LA.

2017 **Garza, A.D.,** Franklin, C.A., Goodson, & A., Bouffard, L. "Police officer perceptions of crime victims: Deception, hysteria, or trauma responses?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia, PA.

2016 **Garza, A.D.** & Franklin, C.A. "Sexual assault disclosure and help-seeking advice: A path model." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, New Orleans, LA.

2016 **Garza, A.D.** & Franklin C.A. "Exploring college students' responses to sexual assault
disclosure." Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Denver, CO.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Conferences

2018 Texas Victim Services Association, San Marcos, TX.

2018 National Conference on Crimes against Women, Dallas, TX.

2017 National Conference on Crimes against Women, Dallas, TX.

2017 Battered Women's Justice Project Conference: Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias in the Criminal Justice System's Response to Domestic Violence
and Sexual Assault, Jacksonville, FL.

Workshops

2018 Grant Writing, Sam Houston State University

2017 Navigating the Job Market, Sam Houston State University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Undergraduate Courses Assisted

Introduction to the Criminal Justice System 2361
Victimology 3350

Online Undergraduate Courses Assisted

Criminology 2362
Gender and Crime 3340
Victimology 3350

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

2018 Rolando V. del Carmen Student Endowed Scholarship, $1,000

2017 Sam Houston State University Graduate Studies Scholarship, $1,000
Rolando V. del Carmen Student Endowed Scholarship, $1,000
Graduate Criminal Justice Organization ACJS Travel Scholarship, $100

2016 Excellence in Writing at Sam Houston State University
Alpha Phi Sigma, National Criminal Justice Honor Society
Who's Who Among American Colleges and Universities, SHSU
Elliot T. Bower Honors Scholarship, $1000

UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Secretary, Criminal Justice Graduate Student Organization, 2017-2018
Academic Peer Mentor, SHSU, 2017
Job Search Committee Graduate Student Representative, 2017

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
Divisions: Victimology
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Latina Researchers Network
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CERTIFICATIONS

2017 Texas Victim Assistance Training (TVAT)