

**The role of victim and perpetrator gender in shaping rape myths and their
impact on support services for adult survivors: insights from a
socioecological approach.**

Thesis submitted in partial requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Worcester

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2019

Abstract

The concept of the rape myth has been influential in research exploring attitudes towards survivors, and their experiences with legal, medical and support systems. However, much of this work has been conducted from the female-victim-male-perpetrator paradigm. Historically, this has led to the marginalisation of male victims, female perpetrators and same-sex sexual violence in academic, public and political arenas. Despite growing recognition of these issues (particularly within the last 20 years), there are still gaps in our understanding of the way victim and perpetrator gender shape rape myths. While these gaps may currently represent barriers to supporting survivors of sexual violence, they may also hold the opportunity for transformative praxis.

This research explores the role of victim and perpetrator gender in shaping rape myths for adult survivors, and how these myths impact on support services for adult survivors.

A multiphase mixed methods design using a feminist-informed socioecological approach is used. 'Mixing' occurs at both the levels of research design and interpretation of the findings. The research comprises four phases:

Phase 1. A systematic review that explored the findings of existing research in relation to victim gender and perpetrator gender and rape myths, and blame.

Phase 2. Based on findings of phase 1, a quasi-experimental study was conducted that varied victim and perpetrator gender to examine their impact on acceptance of different rape types of myth.

Phase 3. Informed by findings from phase 2, a qualitative study was conducted with sexual violence support specialists using an approach informed

by the Think Aloud method. The study explored, from their experience, the salience of different myths for male and female survivors, and how this was affected by perpetrator gender.

Phase 4. Conducted concurrently with phase 3, a qualitative in-depth interview study was conducted with the phase 3 sample of sexual violence support specialists. The study explored their experiences and beliefs of how gender and rape myths impact on support services for adult survivors of sexual violence.

This research suggests that considering victim gender without the explicit consideration of perpetrator gender can be misleading because it overlooks important contextual information that perceivers use when making judgments about survivors. Recent events in UK (e.g. revelations relating to Jimmy Saville) have led to greater awareness of rape myths and victim blaming. However, although this may have brought about surface level change, rape myths still shape survivors' experiences of seeking support and engaging with the Criminal Justice System. In combination, these factors play important roles in shaping services for male and female survivors of sexual violence (and survivors of other gender identities). The present thesis demonstrates the value of adopting a socioecological approach to explore the role gender plays in shaping challenges faced by specialist victim-survivor support provision.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the people who have helped make this research possible. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisory team – Professor Erica Bowen, Dr Béré Mahoney and Dr Michelle Lowe. Your support and guidance over the years has been greatly appreciated and I have learnt a great deal from you all. Thank you to all my friends, family and office buddies for the coffee, cakes and chats about my research – especially Dr Charlotte Taylor, Emma Roper, Dr Helen Scott, Matthew Jellis, Dr Rosie Erol and Lee Badham. You have helped to make this research a unique and enriching experience. Thank you also to the wonderful Worcester Research School staff, particularly Joanna Jervis and Helen Tabinor, whose skill, compassion and kindness are not recognised nearly enough!

I would also like to thank all the people who gave their valuable time to participate in the research. You have helped me to develop a greater insight into victim-survivors' experiences of help-seeking, and I hope this research has contributed to the evidence base as a result.

Thank you also to Survivors West Yorkshire and the Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group (PsyPAG), for providing bursaries for the qualitative phase of the research. These bursaries allowed donations to be made to participants' chosen charities, in recognition of their invaluable contribution to the research.

Finally, I would like to say a special thank you to my husband Rhys, and my son Rhydian. Thank you for your patience, kindness and support over the years - I really couldn't have come this far without you.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Thesis rationale

Victims of sexual violence are unique in the extent to which they are blamed for their experiences, relative to victims of other interpersonal crimes (Gravelin, Biernat, & Bucher, 2018). Indeed, the phenomenon of victim blame and negative responses to victim disclosure by informal (e.g. family, partners and friends) and formal support networks (e.g. legal, medical and mental health services) is so pervasive it has been termed 'secondary victimisation' or 'the second rape' (Ahrens, 2006; R. Campbell & Raja, 1999; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). A factor believed to significantly influence secondary victimisation is rape myth acceptance (RMA) (R. Campbell & Raja, 1999; Lowe & Rogers, 2017; J. Shaw, Campbell, Cain, & Feeney, 2017). Rape myths are stereotypical beliefs or rigidly applied schemas which shift blame from perpetrators onto victims, deny the existence of rape and sexual violence, or trivialise its seriousness or impact (M. R. Burt, 1980; Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2008; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). RMA has been documented across many groups of professionals who may come into contact with victim-survivors, including those working within the legal, medical and mental health systems (R. Campbell & Raja, 1999; K. M. Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011; Sleath & Bull, 2010, 2012; Turchik & Edwards, 2012). Therefore, rape myths represent both an insidious and pervasive threat to victim-survivor support, but also an opportunity for intervention to improve responses to victim-survivor disclosure.

In England and Wales, the third sector (also referred to as the voluntary sector) is uniquely placed to take up the challenges and opportunities identified

above (Javaid, 2016c; Lowe, 2017; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017; Stern, 2010; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). Indeed, third sector organisations play a pivotal role in supporting victim-survivors of sexual violence, through offering free-to-access services such as: emotional support (such as helplines and counselling), and advocacy, information and advice (such as through the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor role) (Brooks & Burman, 2017; R. Campbell, 2006; R. Campbell & Raja, 1999; Fry, 2007; Henderson, 2012; Javaid, 2016c; Stern, 2010). Many of these organisations also offer support to the families, partners and friends of victim-survivors of sexual violence, run community outreach schemes to support victims from hard-to-reach populations, and deliver educational and bystander interventions to help prevent sexual violence (Brooks & Burman, 2017; Javaid, 2016c). Some services also perform a political, or awareness-raising function, through activism and public engagement activities (Brooks & Burman, 2017; R. Campbell, Baker, & Mazurek, 1998). Therefore, the range of individuals, communities and institutions with whom third sector organisations interact means they can shed light on the experiences of victim-survivors from different backgrounds, with differing degrees of involvement with the criminal justice system (Ullman, Townsend, Filipas, & Starzynski, 2007).

Despite these strengths and opportunities, there are a number of threats to sexual violence support organisations' abilities to provide effective services. The underlying threat which the present thesis is particularly concerned with, is that of gender-inclusivity. In this thesis, gender-inclusivity refers to a position adopted in theory, research and practice which recognises that victims and perpetrators can be of all gender-identities, and the goal is to explain and respond

effectively to sexual violence in all its forms, in relation to victims and perpetrators of all genders. This stance is informed by a range of scholars advocating for discussion of sexual violence using gender-inclusive terms, methodological pluralism and theory knitting in order to develop multifaceted explanations for the perpetuation of sexual violence, including those relating to RMA (Javaid, 2016a; Mahalik, 2014; Maxwell & Scott, 2014; McPhail, 2016; Rumney, 2007; Turchik, Hebenstreit, & Judson, 2016).

Threats to gender-inclusivity may be encountered by services at different levels of analysis, including accessibility of services, and Evidence-Based Practice (EBP). For example, support services are commonly overtly organised around victim gender (Javaid, 2016c); with many more services available for women and girls, than men and boys (Javaid, 2016c, 2017b; Lowe & Balfour, 2015; Lowe & Rogers, 2017). Also, services are either overtly or implicitly organised to support victims of *male* perpetrated sexual violence and as a result some male victims may be turned away from services based on their gender (Javaid, 2016c, 2017b; Lowe & Balfour, 2015). The prevalent conceptualisation of sexual violence as 'gendered', with victims being female and perpetrators being male (Wykes & Welsh, 2009), has also been indicated as negative for female victims. For example, conflating victim/perpetrator role with gender has been implicated in perpetuating a culture that locates the responsibility for preventing sexual with one gender, i.e. women (Christianson, 2015). This may help to explain the low involvement of males in gender-related activism (Harnois, 2017), and the lack of feminist activism in relation to male rape (C. Cohen, 2014; Javaid, 2016c). The present thesis argues that RMA may play a key role in perpetuating these inequalities and threats to services, through shaping people's

perceptions of rape victims and their subsequent responses to them. For example, some research suggests that rape myths may not only increase negative responses to victims (J. Shaw et al., 2017; O. Smith & Skinner, 2017; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010), but may also influence what people *don't do* (i.e. withholding a positive, supportive response) (R. Campbell & Raja, 1999). Indeed, existing research suggests that this delineation between victim/perpetrator and male/female encourages exclusive thinking (Brenda L Russell, 2013), and marginalises male victims, victims of female perpetrators and same-sex sexual violence in research, policy and practice agendas. Furthermore, RMA performs a similar function, through denying and trivialising rape and sexual violence (M. R. Burt, 1980; Chapleau et al., 2008). Therefore, further research within the UK context is required in order to establish the ways in which RMA and gender (victim and perpetrator) interact to influence services for sexual violence survivors.

Indeed, the present thesis argues that the gaps in theory and empirical research evidence, regarding the ways in which victim and perpetrator gender may impact on attitudes, beliefs and responses to victims of sexual violence (Turchik et al., 2016) underpins many threats to sexual violence support organisations. In particular, there are gaps in gender-comparative research which may help to identify both differences and communalities in attitudes toward, and experiences of male and female victims (and victims of male and female perpetrators). For example, to the researcher's knowledge, there is no systematic review available which synthesises findings relating to RMA and victim and perpetrator gender. Systematic reviews play an important role in EBP, scoping activities to identify areas requiring further research, and encouraging academic debate. Thus, this is an important gap in rape myth acceptance

scholarship (RMA) that needs to be addressed, and could be used to enhance third-sector organisations' EBP. Secondly, the theory underpinning the aetiology and transmission of rape myths and RMA is under-developed owing to its historical focus on explaining RMA in gender-specific terms (i.e. male perpetrated rape of females) (Maxwell & Scott, 2014; McPhail, 2016; Turchik et al., 2016). This means that the mechanisms underpinning the influence of gender on RMA are also under-developed. Therefore, providing insight into the ways in which gender shapes RMA may identify the points at which interventions may best be targeted to tackle them. Thirdly, RMA research has typically developed in gender-silos (i.e. examining the structure and transmission of rape myths separately for male and female victims) (e.g. Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). This may distort the understanding of the role of gender in shaping RMA by masking differences and similarities between the genders. Exploring the ways in which gender influences RMA and its subsequent impact on supporting victims of sexual violence may help to inform gender-inclusive theory.

In summary, there is a need to revisit the concept of RMA in a way which can cohere the separate bodies of literature that have developed in relation to male and female victims of sexual violence, and victims of female perpetrated sexual violence. The socioecological approach to gender advocated by Wasco and Bond (2010), Bond and Wasco (2017) and Bond and Allen (2016) offers the potential to achieve this, by reframing gender as a contextual variable, rather than a grouping or socially constructed variable. The present thesis aims to address these gaps, at least in part, and to contribute to the evidence base, which

professionals and volunteers working in the third sector can use to inform their practice.

Thesis research questions and overarching aims. The questions driving this doctoral research are: in what ways do victim and perpetrator gender shape rape myths and RMA, and; how does gendered RMA impact on the challenges faced by support services for adult survivors?

The aims of the research are to:

1. Synthesise existing literature and consider the implications of research quality, theoretical foundations, methods used, analysis techniques applied, on extant knowledge and perspectives on gender and RMA.
2. Consider what “gendered” rape myths mean, and why this is important for research and support practice.
3. Apply a socioecological framework to consider the effects of gendered rape myths across different systems within which survivors and support organisations are embedded.
4. Apply novel methods of data collection and analysis, and inference-making, to draw novel conclusions and make recommendations for future research and support practice.

In order to provide an overview of the present thesis, the context of the research must first be explicated.

Terminology

The language used in relation to sexual violence research and working with survivors of sexual violence is important, as it may shape the way in which

victims, assaults and perpetrators are perceived (Young & Maguire, 2003). For this reason, key terms used in this thesis are explained and justified.

Victim, survivor or victim-survivor? The terms 'victim', 'survivor' and 'victim-survivor' will be used interchangeably throughout this work for a number of reasons. Feminist research advocates the use of proactive terminology to refer to people who have experienced sexual violence (e.g. Kelly, 1988), such as 'survivor' (e.g. reflecting someone who has overcome their victimisation), as the term 'victim' has negative connotations for the affected individual (e.g. passive recipient, irreparably damaged) (Young & Maguire, 2003). However, the term victim denotes that a criminal act has been experienced, and much available research uses this terminology. Furthermore, individuals who have experienced sexual violence may move between victim and survivor identities, and so using the terms in combination, or interchangeably (Jamel, 2008) may help to highlight the tensions between the two labels. To remain consistent with the other work in this field (Abdullah-Khan, 2002), the term victim will therefore still be used in this research. The author recognizes the limitations of all definitions to refer to people who have experienced sexual violence, and will attempt to apply such labels in an appropriate and empathic manner, as advocated by the British Psychological Society's (BPS) code of ethics and conduct (2018).

Adult victimisation vs Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA). The present thesis explores the role of victim and perpetrator gender in shaping RMA and its subsequent impact on services for *adult* survivors. It is beyond the scope of this research to explore gender in relation to both adult and abuse in childhood, as research suggests that there may be key differences in offenders' motivations and strategies for perpetrating sexual violence against adults and children (e.g.

Kramer, 2017), in turn these may feed into stereotypes regarding sexual violence and victims differently (such as the “real rape” stereotype - discussed in further detail in chapter 3). Furthermore, there are differences in the legal handling of cases for individuals below the age of 18 in many countries, including the UK (Rights of Women, 2018) which may impact on support services for victim-survivors in different ways. Research also suggests that acceptance of rape myths differs as a function of victim age, with greater acceptance and victim blaming associated with adult victims than child victims (Davies & Rogers, 2009; Spencer, 1996; Spencer & Tan, 1999). However, the present research also recognises that there may be similarities in the experiences of victims of sexual violence in adulthood, and victims making disclosures in adulthood of CSA. For example, research suggests that individuals whom disclose CSA during adulthood may struggle with decisions of whom to tell, when and how (Tener & Murphy, 2015). They may also experience negative and unhelpful reactions, which impact on their wellbeing (Tener & Murphy, 2015).

Gender-specific vs gender inclusive terminology. An issue highlighted by the present thesis is the conflation of the victim and perpetrator roles with gender-specific terms. As proposed by a number of authors (Pretorius, 2009; Rumney, 2007; Brenda L Russell, 2013), the present thesis argues that this promotes a female-centric notion of sexual violence which marginalises the experiences of male victims, and victims of female perpetrators. In order to counter this gender essentialism, rape myths and sexual violence will be discussed in gender-inclusive terms, through specifying victim and perpetrator gender. Therefore, the following abbreviations will be used throughout this thesis:

- Male-to-Female Rape (MFR) - referring to male perpetrated rape and sexual violence against female victims.
- Male-to-Male Rape (MMR) - referring to male perpetrated rape and sexual violence against male victims.
- Female-to-Male Rape (FMR) - referring to female perpetrated rape and sexual violence against male victims.
- Female-to-Female Rape (FFR) - referring to female perpetrated rape and sexual violence against female victims.
- Same-sex rape - referring to MMR and FFR.
- Mixed-sex rape - referring to MFR and FMR.

The present research will refer to female perpetrated rape, as there is growing recognition in research and activism of the forced-sex and forced-to-penetrate experiences of male and female victims (Clements, Dawson, & das Nair, 2014; Kramer, 2017; Weare, 2018a, 2018b; Weare & Hully, 2019; Weare, Porter, & Evans, 2017), which are not currently recognised as “rape” in England and Wales (Rights of Women, 2018).

The terms same-sex and mixed-sex are used in this thesis to avoid heteronormative assumptions made in some research, which has examined only instances of “heterosexual” rape (Ballman, Leheney, Miller, Simmons, & Wilson, 2016), which conflates gender and sexual orientation. As Kramer (2017) argues, there is a tendency in theories of female perpetrated sexual violence, such as those of Vandiver and Kercher (2004, in Kramer, 2017) and Freeman (2007, in Kramer, 2017), to label females who perpetrate sexual violence against other females as “homosexual” or “hebephiles”, which implies a sexual motivation for the rape/assault. This contributes to the rape myths surrounding female

perpetrated sexual violence, and in particular female same-sex rape and sexual assault. In contrast, typologies of male perpetrated sexual violence tend to avoid this conflation with homosexuality, although much research still implies heterosexual assumptions in relation to mixed-sex dyads (Ballman et al., 2016). For example, the reasons given by some researchers for constraining gender combinations to mixed-sex only (varying the gender of the victim and perpetrator in these situations) is to present them as heterosexual – which implies that the sexual violence is motivated by sexual desire to some extent and therefore sexual orientation (e.g. Berry, 1991). In contrast, contemporary research indicates that motivations for rape are many and varied (McPhail, 2016; Turchik et al., 2016). Furthermore, using any overly simplistic aetiologies (e.g. sex vs power and control) is detrimental to research and practice, because it limits understandings of sexual violence. As rape myths function to delimit what constitutes rape based on *why* it happens (e.g. resulting from sexual desire) (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; K. M. Ryan, 2011) and has been found to influence labelling of incidents as rape (Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004), this theoretical tunnel-vision may contribute to RMA.

Limitations to the gender terms used. The researcher recognises that contemporary theory and empirical evidence highlights that gender is a complex construct (Richards, Bouman, & Barker, 2017). Indeed, the adoption of a socioecological definition of gender (i.e. as a contextual variable, rather than grouping or socially constructed variable, discussed in chapter 3) represents an attempt to embrace this complexity. Such a definition recognises that behaviours, expectations and attitudes relating to gender may form part of an individual's identity and also their interactions with different settings (Bond & Allen, 2016;

Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010). However, this definition still employs the binary labels of 'male' and 'female', and as such may be viewed as reinforcing traditional binary notions of gender (Bosson, 2016). In contrast, contemporary research and activism suggests that gender identity¹ is fluid, non-binary, and can be expressed in diverse ways (e.g. gender-queer and trans identities) (Richards et al., 2017). Therefore, the adoption of binary terms to explore RMA and its impact on support services may seem counter-intuitive. Furthermore, adopting a dichotomous definition may be viewed as seeking to reinforce gender-essentialism (i.e. reifying arbitrary binary gender differences) (Bosson, 2016). This is not the researcher's intention, nor is it the researcher's intention to deliberately marginalise individuals whom identify as non-binary, trans-gender or gender-queer from the research, policy and practice spotlights. Instead the binary definition of gender was adopted because, as stated earlier, it plays a primary role in shaping the organisation and delivery of adult sexual violence support services. As such, the division of "male and female" has important material implications for victim-survivors of sexual violence. Furthermore, it is hoped that exploring the ways in which the gendered qualities and practices of different settings may influence RMA and its impact on services for adult survivors of sexual violence, may also help to shed light on the experiences of individuals who do not identify with the traditional gender-binary labels. Also, it is hoped that the present research will help identify frameworks and methods which may be useful in exploring these issues in relation to non-binary, trans and gender-queer identities in the future.

¹ Gender identity may be contrasted with notions of sex in that it refers to an individual's private sense of being a man, woman or other (Bond & Wasco, 2017).

Rape myth acceptance and rape myth acceptance scholarship. There are numerous terms used in the literature relating to the degree to which individuals agree with rape myth statements, including rape myth endorsement (Gravelin et al., 2018), rape myth adherence (Walfield, 2016) and rape myth agreement (Sleath & Bull, 2010). For the sake of consistency, the present thesis adopts the term “rape myth acceptance”. Furthermore, some authors have argued that the body of research pertaining to RMA (including literature reviews, theory and empirical research) should be termed “rape myth acceptance scholarship” (RMAS; Gurnham, 2016a, 2016b), owing to its shared purpose (i.e. to develop fuller explanations for the existence, transmission and impact of RMA). Therefore, the abbreviation RMAS is used across this thesis to refer to the body of works comprising theory, reviews and empirical research.

Two other terms, rape myth consistency and rape myth congruency are also used in RMAS and are discussed in greater depth in chapter 3. Specifically, these terms refer to the degree to which a victim looks like a stereotypical ‘true’ victim and an assault looks like ‘true’ assault. Research using the term ‘rape myth congruency’ has typically been used to describe an individual who looks more like a ‘true victim’ whereas scholarship using the term ‘rape myth consistency’ has typically been used to denote an individual who looks less like a ‘true victim’. These terms are discussed in greater depth in relation to theory, the Feminist Rape Mythology Hypothesis (FRMH) and the “real rape” stereotype, in chapter 3.

Thesis structure and chapter outline

Chapter 2 provides a brief context for the work of third sector sexual violence support organisations (primarily in the UK), including their role in help-

seeking and advocacy for victim-survivors in relation to statutory services (such as the police, courts and mental health system) in England and Wales. Chapter 3 presents the findings from a literature review and the theoretical grounding and rationale for the empirical research which is discussed in subsequent chapters. Chapter 4 presents the methodology of the research and an overview of the methods used in each phase of the research. These methods are discussed fully in the respective empirical chapters. Chapter 4 also provides a justification for the adoption of the mixed methods approach and the epistemological, ontological and axiological position of the thesis. Chapter 5 presents the findings of a systematic review exploring patterns in existing quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods literature with regards to the influence of victim and/or perpetrator gender on RMA and blame attributions. Setting variables and observer characteristics that may influence the relationship between gender and RMA or blame are also identified. Chapter 6 presents the findings from the quantitative phase of the research; a quasi-experimental study manipulating victim and perpetrator gender, and combinations thereof, to identify patterns of acceptance on different categories of rape myth. Chapters 7-8 present the findings from the qualitative phase of the research, conducted with professionals² from ten third sector organisations from across England. Chapter 7 presents the findings from a Think Aloud informed (TAi) study exploring professionals' perspectives of the relevance and impact of a range of rape myths in light of victim and perpetrator gender. Chapter 8 presents the findings from a semi-structured interview study exploring how gendered RMA may shape the challenges and opportunities to

² The term 'professionals' is used to refer to both paid employees in third sector organisations and volunteers who help to run many of the services offered (e.g. helpline, counselling, ambassadors).

adult sexual violence support service provision, from the perspectives of the professionals working/volunteering within them. Chapter 9 presents a discussion of the meta-inferences generated from reviewing the empirical chapters' findings in the context of the evidence-base reviewed in chapters 1-5. The thesis concludes with recommendations for theory, research and practice arising from the meta-inferences generated from across the phases of the thesis.

Chapter 2. Context for sexual violence support organisations in England and Wales.

Chapter introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide an insight into the context in which the present research was conducted. In particular, it aims to identify the need for sexual violence support organisations, and the role they may play in shaping victim-survivors' experiences and outcomes. This chapter also introduces issues arising in relation to gender, such as differences in reporting rates, in order to contextualise the review of rape myths in chapter 3.

Climate of rape awareness

This research is conducted during a period of heightened awareness of rape, sexual assault and abuse, owing to social events covered extensively in the media in the United Kingdom (NHS England, 2018), and internationally (Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2018). This has raised the profile of sexual violence as a public health and social justice concern. Indeed, some research indicates that feminist discourses (e.g. the radical feminist perspective that rape is motivated by power and control, rather than sex) may be particularly high in the public consciousness (Perilloux, Duntley, & Buss, 2014). Yet, sexual violence continues to be one of the most frequent forms of lived trauma worldwide (World Health Organization, 2013), affecting all cultures, with many adverse consequences for both victims and wider communities (Brownmiller, 1975; Darves-Bornoz et al., 2008; Twinley, 2017; World Health Organization, 2013)

Defining sexual violence

The term “sexual violence” can be defined as “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.” (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002, p. 149). Sexual violence, therefore, represents a diverse range of behaviours and acts. Within this, there remains controversy over what is legally recognised as rape, and also in laypersons’ definitions of what does and does not constitute rape and sexual assault (e.g. S. R. Edwards, Bradshaw, & Hinsz, 2014; Wilson & Miller, 2015). During second-wave feminism, Brownmiller (1975), Feild (1978) and Burt (1980) drew attention to the widely held beliefs and attitudes, labelled rape myths

(defined in chapter 3), which contributed to societal responses that either implicitly or explicitly tolerated sexual violence. This has become known as the 'rape culture' of a society (Klaw et al., 2005).

Prevalence estimates

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is a large, annually collected dataset by the UK Office for National Statistics that measures victimisation experiences in a random stratified sample (Mahoney, Davies, & Scurlock-Evans, 2014; Office for National Statistics, 2018; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2016). Every third year, the dataset collects information on sexual victimisation experiences which may, or may not, have been reported to the police. Based on estimates from the 2017 data, it is estimated that 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16. This is equivalent to 3.4 million females and 631, 000 males in England and Wales. Within the year ending March 2017, an estimated 3.1% of women (510, 000) and 0.8% of men (138, 000) within England and Wales had experienced sexual assault.

These, and other global estimates of prevalence indicate that women disproportionately experience sexual violence (e.g. Powell & Webster, 2018). Owing to this, research aiming to understand the aetiology of sexual violence (particularly rape), its perpetuation, impact for victims and consequences for wider society has focused on female victims (Chapleau et al., 2008; Turchik & Edwards, 2012; Turchik et al., 2016). In particular, this research has also focussed on male perpetrated sexual violence. Indeed, some researchers have argued that due to the prevalence of male-to-female sexual violence, responses should be targeted and focused on violence reduction and prevention in this area

(Powell & Webster, 2018). However, this concentrated focus has meant that gaps in research, awareness and support provision for male victims and victims of female perpetrators abound (Javaid, 2016b; Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Balfour, 2015; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017; Weare, 2018b). Furthermore, the presentation of gender as a clearly delineated issue masks the important intersections which have been identified in research relating to gender, sexuality, age, (dis)ability and ethnicity; each of which has been found to impact on the patterns of victimisation identified (Hickson, Henderson, & Davies, 1997; Kimerling, Rellini, Kelly, Judson, & Learman, 2002; Mont et al., 2013; Peterson, Voller, Polusny, & Murdoch, 2011; Stermac, Del Bove, & Addison, 2004; Stermac, Sheridan, Davidson, & Dunn, 1996). For example, research suggests that the individuals at the nexus of different gender-identity groups and sexual orientation minority groups may be more likely to experience interpersonal violence (Mahoney et al., 2014).

Prevalence estimates indicate that sexual violence is typically perpetrated by males (Office for National Statistics, 2018). However, establishing the prevalence of female perpetrated rape may be challenging owing to differences in definitions used in research. For example, Stemple and colleagues (Stemple, Flores, & Meyer, 2017; Stemple & Meyer, 2014) found evidence to counter the argument that female perpetrated sexual violence, particularly against male victims, is rare. They analysed data from the Centres of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collected on the prevalence of non-consensual sex in a 12-month period, and found that men and women reported nearly equal rates of victimisation. This suggests that the experience of female perpetrated sexual violence may be less rare than previously assumed.

Reporting rape and sexual assault to the police

Of those individuals who experience rape or sexual assault, few are believed to report their experiences to the police. For example, approximately 83% of individuals who disclosed experiencing sexual assault on the 2017 CSEW survey had *not* reported their experiences to the police (Office for National Statistics, 2018). Although statistics were not reported separately for victim gender (or in relation to perpetrator gender), other research suggest that males may be less likely than females to report to the police (Hodge & Canter, 1998; Sleath & Bull, 2010; J. Walker, Archer, & Davies, 2005). Furthermore, some research evidence indicates that perpetrator gender may play a role in men's decisions to report to the police; specifically, that men may be less likely to report sexual violence if it is perpetrated by a female than a male (Hammond, Ioannou, & Fewster, 2017; Weare & Hully, 2019; Weare et al., 2017). Although more female victims may report to the police, it is still estimated that between 75% to 95% of rapes are not reported to the police (Sleath & Bull, 2010). In combination, these figures suggest that under-reporting continues to be a problem in sexual violence.

The gaps between estimates from victimisation surveys and recorded crime have become known as the 'dark' or 'hidden' figure of sexual crime (Neame & Heenan, 2003). Indeed, research with victims of sexual violence (male and female) suggests that many individuals tell no one about their victimisation experiences, with the core reasons why relating to the fear of not being believed, feeling that they are to blame for the incident, and feelings of overwhelming shame and embarrassment (Ceelen, Dorn, Van Huis, & Reijnders, 2019; Navarro & Clevenger, 2017; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). These fears appear valid:

research has identified that many victims experience negative responses to disclosure, from family and friends (Relyea & Ullman, 2015), the police and even counsellors (Kassing & Prieto, 2003).

Prosecuting rape and sexual assault

Although there have been some improvements across recent decades (Stern, 2010), the proportion of sexual assault cases resulting in successful prosecution continues to be of concern. For example, it is estimated that between 73% and 93% of all reported sexual assault cases are not prosecuted (Campbell et al., 2014; Lonsway and Archambault, 2012). The reasons for this are complex, but research suggests that victim-survivors' decisions to pursue the prosecution of their cases are influenced by the responses they experience to disclosure. For example, Anders' (2007) research in relation to female victims of male perpetrators in the US suggested that they were more likely to pursue the prosecution of their cases if they were supported by friends and family. In turn, support from these informal support networks were influenced by perceptions of victims as conforming to stereotypes of a 'real' victim (Anders, 2007).

Of concern is the fact that feminist informed research has consistently identified that victims experience negative and re-victimizing responses when seeking help and/or reporting to the police (C. Cohen, 2014; Conaghan & Russell, 2014; Javid, 2015b, 2016a, 2016c; Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Balfour, 2015; Stern, 2010). This is likely to play a pivotal role in the high attrition rate (i.e. rate of dropout of cases) in the CJS (Liz Kelly, 2005).

Legal reforms relating to rape and sexual assault

Due to the recognition of the attrition rate at different stages of the investigation and prosecution of rape and sexual assault cases has precipitated

a range of reviews and legal reforms (Lovett, Regan, & Kelly, 2004; Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Rogers, 2017; Stern, 2010). Reforms within the UK include: the growth in number of the Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) in the UK since the first centre opened in Manchester in 1987 and their growth in services supporting victim-survivors of any gender-identity (B. Ryan, 2013); development of the role of Independent Sexual Violence Advisers/Advocates (ISVAs) in 2005, and subsequent increase in numbers of ISVAs working across SARCs and the British Voluntary and Community Sector (BVCS) (Anderton, 2017; Goldstraw, 2016); development of the Specially Trained Officer (STO) in the police (also referred to as: Sexual Offence Liaison Officers (SOLO), and Sexual Offences Investigative Technique officers (SOIT) across different police forces) in the 2002 (McMillan, 2015); the implementation of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) role in 2014, to encourage tailored responses to regional priorities (Hall, 2018); the development of rape scrutiny panels, whose remit is to explore the handling of rape cases through the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service, 2015) and; the introduction of a range of special measures in the courts, to try to make giving evidence at trial less intimidating for victims of sexual violence (Rights of Women, 2018). These special measures include: placing a screen in the court room so the defendant and claimant cannot see each other; giving evidence via video link; giving evidence in private; removal of judge and lawyers' wigs and gowns; giving video-recorded evidence; examination through an intermediary (e.g. support with communication) and/or communication aids (such as a symbol book or alphabet board) (Rights of Women, 2018).

Despite these legal reforms, the law continues to reinforce unhelpful gender-related perceptions of sexual violence, as it is not fully gender-neutral

(Rumney, 2008). That is, within England and Wales a victim can be of any gender, but a perpetrator can only be male (Weare, 2018b). This differs from the legal systems in Australia, Canada and the federal level in the US (Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Rogers, 2017; McKeever, 2018; Weare, 2018b; Weare & Hully, 2019). Although cases where male victims are forced-to-penetrate without their consent can be recognised as a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, they are not considered to be rape, but rather causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent (Weare & Hully, 2019). Rape is only recognised as such if a penis penetrates the mouth, vagina or anus of another individual without their consent (i.e. it must be perpetrated by a male) (Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Rogers, 2017; McKeever, 2018; Rights of Women, 2018; Weare & Hully, 2019). However, numerous contemporary scholars are raising the case for changing this, based on a number of important observations. Firstly, research suggests that there are numerous similarities between cases formally recognised as rape in the UK, and forced-to-penetrate cases, with regards to the serious negative mental health consequences experienced by victims and also the aggressive strategies used by perpetrators (Weare, 2018b; Weare & Hully, 2019). This suggests that parity in the law is required to recognise this. Furthermore, recognising this form of sexual violence as rape, impacts on prevalence estimates of sexual violence amongst male and female victims (see prevalence estimate subsection). For example, Stemple and colleagues' (Stemple et al., 2017; Stemple & Meyer, 2014) observed that although similar proportions of men and women experienced non-consensual sex within a 12-month period of data from CDC, this finding was not highlighted in the reports generated from the data, nor was this finding typically publicised by the media (Stemple et al., 2017; Stemple

& Meyer, 2014). Indeed, the focus was on reporting data in line with the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda, providing potential evidence to support the view that the gender-paradigm shapes interpretations of evidence regarding male and female victimisation (Stemple & Meyer, 2014).

Further evidence regarding the invisibility of male victimisation is that these statistics are typically subsumed within wider reports labelled as Violence Against Women and Girls (e.g. Light & Monk-Turner, 2009). For example, Ally Fogg (a co-founder of the men and boys coalition, UK) highlighted in an article in the Guardian that the Crown Prosecution Service's annual 'Violence against Women and Girls Report' that statistics presented were inclusive of crimes against boys and men (Fogg, 2016). This report is invaluable for identifying trends in sexual and domestic violence crimes, and making statements regarding the likely impact of policy and practice on these trends. For example, in the foreword of the 2017-2018 report, the Director of Public Prosecutions implies that a reduction in recent years' fall in domestic abuse prosecutions and convictions has been influenced by new approaches to joint-working between CJS partners, stakeholders and victims' groups (i.e. by creating more joined up services). Therefore, it is likely this documentation will at least feed into discussions that inform policy and practice in the legal and BVCS sectors (e.g. potentially used to help inform funding and commissioning decisions). However, despite concerns raised regarding the marginalisation of male victims and victims of female perpetrators, the report continues to examine victimisation patterns irrespective of gender (2017-2018) (Crown Prosecution Service, 2018). This may seem appropriate, if the report was not so clearly gendered as regarding women and girls.

The impact of this lack of focus on male-victimisation and female perpetration of sexual violence, is that it reinforces unhelpful stereotypes, i.e. rape myths (M. R. Burt, 1980), regarding who can and cannot be a victim or perpetrator of sexual violence (McKeever, 2018). Furthermore, the differentiation between rape and sexual activity without consent definitions, may influence the perceptions of the seriousness of female perpetrated sexual violence, and produces the perception of a hierarchy of seriousness and suffering (McKeever, 2018). In turn, these stereotypes and myths have been implicated in secondary victimisation experiences and both short- and longer-term outcomes for victim-survivors (R. Campbell, 1998; R. Campbell, Dworkin, & Cabral, 2009; R. Campbell & Raja, 1999; Gravelin et al., 2018; Turchik & Edwards, 2012). In combination, these factors also lower recognition of (adult) female perpetrated sexual violence against female victims in the research, social justice and public health agendas (McKeever, 2018).

Although this thesis argues that gender-neutrality (or rather, gender-inclusivity) in rape definitions would be beneficial for the recognition of victims of female perpetrators, some legal reforms that have been implemented appear to have improved the experience of some aspects of the reporting and help-seeking process, for some victim-survivors. For example, the introduction of the STO role was identified as having a positive effect on first responses to reporting (where negative responses had been identified as a leading cause of attrition in the CJS) (McMillan, 2015). Furthermore, SARCs have been identified as able to fulfil vital and multiple roles for victim-survivors, including medical examinations and treatment, crisis support and therapy (Lowe & Rogers, 2017). ISVAs have been identified as a key means of supporting survivors through the provision of

information, practical and emotive support and acting to enhance communication between victim-survivor and the multiple agencies with which they may come into contact (Scottish Government: Justice Directorate, 2017).

Third sector sexual violence support organisations operate within this context. As stated in chapter 1, they perform a vital role in supporting victim-survivors of sexual violence through the provision of a range of information, support and advocacy services. They also have a history of having to provide such services on minimal budgets, relying heavily on volunteers to deliver services, under uncertainty of their long-term funding (Robinson & Hudson, 2011).

In recent years, the profile of sexual violence does appear to have been raised (NHS England, 2018) with some authors suggesting this has had a positive impact on the diversity and number of support organisations for victim-survivors (Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Balfour, 2015). However, this raised awareness has occurred during a changing economic context in the UK (and internationally), following the 2008 recession (UK and internationally). This has impacted on statutory and voluntary support services for sexual violence survivors in numerous ways. For example, in response to the changing economic climate, the previous Coalition Government implemented a range of 'austerity' measures, which resulted in unprecedented funding cuts to the BVCS (Goldstraw, 2016). Indeed, in 2015 it was revealed that 42% of Rape Crisis Centres were struggling to continue operating owing to lack of secured funding (Sandhu, 2015), and Survivors UK (the UK largest gender-specific service for adults identifying as male) had their state funding withdrawn, leading to the need to cease some services in order to remain financially viable (Eleftheriou-Smith, 2015). This

highlights the fragile relationship between growing awareness and support services' sustainability. Furthermore, many services continue to experience a lack of capacity to respond to need, meaning that many survivors may have to travel great distances to access help, or may be placed on long-waiting lists (Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Rogers, 2017). As timely support (particularly psychological support) has been implicated in more positive outcomes for survivors (Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Rogers, 2017), these are barriers that must be addressed. Indeed, in March 2019 the Government pledged additional funding for services (who went through a competitive bidding process), which would be allocated over a three-year period, rather than the 12-month period that had become the norm (Ministry of Justice, 2019). Based on the findings from this research, it is anticipated that this will provide these charities greater opportunity to expand their resources, staff/volunteer teams, and innovate with regards to the services they are able to offer. However, this fluctuation indicates the volatile nature of funding opportunities across England and Wales, and their subsequent impact not only on support organisations, but the survivors they have been created to serve.

Conclusions and future directions

In combination, these factors highlight the challenging context in which sexual violence support organisations operate within the UK. However, research evidence suggests that sexual violence support can make a difference in terms of both victim-survivor recovery and outcomes, and in supporting a case through the CJS. Furthermore, research suggests that gender may influence barriers to reporting and the prosecution of cases in the CJS, and barriers to help-seeking and support. However, there is limited amounts of research in the UK context with sexual violence support organisations that explores how victim and perpetrator

gender shapes these issues. The next chapter will explore the role of the rape myth concept in explaining challenges to victim-survivor support and specifically how gender (victim and perpetrator) may influence these experiences.

Chapter 3. Gender and rape myth acceptance theory

Chapter introduction

This chapter reviews the role ascribed to victim and perpetrator gender in shaping RMA in feminist theory and research. The aim of this is to identify the strengths and limitations of existing approaches to defining and explaining rape myths, and their impact on victim-survivors. This will be used to foreground the choice of a feminist-informed socioecological perspective in this thesis, which has the potential to explain the mechanisms underpinning the influence of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA.

Defining rape myths and explaining RMA

Despite a long history in sexual violence research (stemming from second-wave feminist perspectives in the 1970s and 1980s), defining rape myths is challenging (Krahé, 2013; Reece, 2014).

The term 'rape myth' was coined by Burt (1980), based on the work of Brownmiller (1975) and Feild (1978), to explain the patterns in attitudes toward victims of rape that they had observed. Specifically, Burt (1980, p. 217) defined rape myths as "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists." There have been multiple definitions of rape myths since this germinal work (Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004; Granger, 2008; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), that have been influenced by the feminist perspectives that were dominant at the time. However, a core feature of the definitions is that rape myths have negative consequences for victim-survivors and communities more broadly (Edward & MacLeod, 1999; K. M. Edwards et al., 2011; Javaid, 2016b; Turchik & Edwards, 2012). This is because rape myths function to shift blame from a perpetrator onto a victim, deny sexual violence exists, or trivialise its consequences (Gerger, Kley, Siebler, Bohner, & Siebler, 2007; Granger, 2008; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992).

Although there is some consensus in the core features of rape myth definitions, there is also much debate about the scope of the myth concept. In particular, debates have focused on what the term "myth" actually refers to (Krahé, 2013; Reece, 2013, 2014). Early definitions positioned the "myth" aspect as denoting false, or generally false beliefs about rape, rape victims or rapists (M. R. Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). In these definitions, the term 'myth' was used to highlight inaccurate beliefs about what rape typically looks like, and

who are typically victims. For example, a pervasive rape myth is that most rapes are perpetrated by a stranger to the victim (Anders, 2007), which can be contrasted with the “reality” of rape (i.e. the majority of rapes are perpetrated by someone known to the victim) (Anders, 2007). However, researchers have highlighted that although a greater proportion of rapes are perpetrated by someone known to a victim than strangers, the belief that rape is perpetrated by a stranger is accurate in a proportion of cases (Reece, 2013, 2014). Therefore, to term this a myth based on factual accuracy may be challenging. Furthermore, some authors have questioned what the impact of terming something a “rape” myth may be (Gurnham, 2016b). Gurnham (2016b) questions whether, in some settings (such as law) the term rape myth may presuppose an incident should be labelled in a particular way. This highlights the potential reactive nature of RMA research, and the importance of considering context when interpreting RMA.

Gurnham’s (2016b) consideration of the implications of the term rape myth do highlight another issue in sexual violence research: the terms used to ask about experiences of sexual violence will affect the proportion of people that identify as having had those experiences (Koss, 1993). In particular, asking about experiences of rape is likely to identify fewer victims, than asking about experiences of unwanted sex (Koss, 1993). Furthermore, although the term unwanted sex could include experiences of forced sex and force-to-penetrate sex within a UK context, the term rape may be interpreted in a legal sense (i.e. legally only males can perpetrate rape). As many RMA measures (e.g. Granger, 2008) still contain items that refer to rape, it is unclear what impact this may have on the data they collect. An implication of these debates for the present research is that without a clear definition of rape myths, it is not clear how to demarcate rape

myths from other forms of belief or attitude. In turn this has implications for the usefulness of the concept in interventions to reduce negative responses to victim-survivor disclosures.

Feminist theory has emphasised the importance of the rape myth in victim blaming and secondary victimisation by institutions and laypersons to whom victim-survivors disclose (Relyea & Ullman, 2015). However, another issues that rape myth research must overcome is how to explain the low levels of RMA typically revealed in studies (Reece, 2013, 2014). For example, Reece (2013, 2014) argued that the consistent findings of low RMA suggest that rape myths may have little impact on victim-survivors experiences. However, this does not appear to correspond to the findings of qualitative research exploring victim-survivors' experiences (Javaid, 2016c). Indeed, some authors have advocated eschewing quantitative measures of RMA in favour for qualitative methods, owing to concerns over questionnaire methods (J. Shaw et al., 2017). Instead, this research prioritises data that represents naturally occurring talk, or documentation analysis (J. Shaw et al., 2017). However, the present thesis argues that in order to develop a fuller understanding of the role of gender in shaping RMA, methodological pluralism (rather than limiting research to one paradigm) is required.

An additional challenge to defining rape myths relates to the role that different perspectives of RMA ascribe to victim and perpetrator gender. This reflects the concerns raised in recent years regarding the gender-inclusivity of feminist theories of the aetiology of rape more broadly (Turchik et al., 2016). In this respect, three feminist perspectives have been particularly influential in the development of the concept of rape myths, and RMA research: radical liberal

feminism; intersectionality; and 'doing masculinity'. These perspectives have differed in the emphasis they place on methodologies and methods in RMA, and also the ways in which they incorporate victim and perpetrator gender into theories of the existence and transmission of rape myths.

Gender in radical liberal feminist explanations of RMA

The radical liberal feminist explanation of RMA is rooted in the definition of rape as a political act motivated by power and control (Maxwell & Scott, 2014). Rape is a mechanism by which patriarchy is maintained and women are subjugated within society (Gerber et al., 2004; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, 1995). This definition was based on second-wave feminists' observation of the gender asymmetry of sexual victimisation (predominantly women) and perpetration (predominantly by men) (M. R. Burt, 1980). Therefore, definitions of rape based on the radical liberal feminist perspective advocate the use of gender-specific language to describe victimisation and perpetration (Turchik et al., 2016). This represents a deliberate choice in order to reinforce the perceived gendered nature of sexual violence (Powell & Webster, 2018)

The radical liberal perspective was pivotal in challenging the notion of rape as motivated by sexual desire and therefore a private matter; instead it argued that rape is a serious social, criminal and public health issue (McPhail, 2016). Therefore, this perspective was instrumental in positioning rape as a topic for research and scholarship, and influenced the development of the first generation of RMA scales (Forbes, Adams-Curtis, & White, 2004) and the vignette methodology which continues to dominate RMA research today (Anderson and Beattie, 2001; Turchik and Edwards, 2012).

A strength of the radical liberal feminist definition of rape myths, and theory underpinning the role of gender in RMA is its clarity. Rape myths act as 'neutralising cognitions' (i.e. cognitive techniques) that allow men to justify the violation of socially accepted norms, through denial of a victim, denial of injury, or denial of responsibility (Bohner et al., 1998; Sykes & Matza, 1957). Rape myths also serve to promote and reinforce normative heterosexuality, through the eroticization of violence against women (McPhail, 2016). However, a limitation of the approach is its lack of focus on explaining male rape, or male RMA. Also, this perspective focuses on the context in which rape occurs within a cross-sex dyad, but only where rape refers to penetration of a victim without their consent. It does not seek to explain why cases of forced-to-penetrate incidents happen, or the role RMA plays in perpetuating female perpetrated sexual violence (particularly in relation to female victims).

There is a wealth of literature exploring the correlates and sequelae of RMA in relation MFR from this perspective (Maxwell & Scott, 2014), which provides some evidence to support its definitions of rape myths and the function of RMA. Furthermore, there is evidence to support the assertion of a causal relationship between RMA and men's self-reported rape proclivity (which is a core premise of the radical liberal feminist perspective) (Bohner et al., 1998). Also, research has identified relationships between RMA and dominance (Hockett, Saucier, Hoffman, Smith, & Craig, 2009), tolerance of interpersonal violence (Lanis & Covell, 1995), and sexism and RMA (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). These findings suggest that attitudes toward power and control may influence RMA (and vice versa). Furthermore, a consistent finding in RMA research is that male observers are higher in RMA, tolerance of interpersonal violence and sexism

(Hockett et al., 2009; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Vance, Sutter, Perrin, & Heesacker, 2015).

Two theories that developed during second-wave feminism that have been incorporated by many feminist scholars' explanations of RMA (particularly the observation that women accept rape myths too), are the Belief in a Just World (BJW; Lerner, 1980) hypothesis, and the Defensive Attribution Theory (DAT; Shaver, 1970). The BJW hypothesis posits that people recognise that bad things can happen in life (Lerner, 1980; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015); however, to overcome the anxiety this provokes, many people believe that bad things only happen to bad people. Therefore, if someone experiences rape, they must have done something to deserve it. The BJW hypothesis suggests that people accept rape myths because they shift blame onto a victim for their experiences (Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). In contrast, the DAT suggests that people attribute less blame to a victim when they feel they personally and situationally similar to a them (Levy & Ben-David, 2015; Shaver, 1970). In light of this theory, RMA serves to differentiate an individual from a victim (Grubb & Harrower, 2009). Taken together, these theories suggest that RMA helps men to accept social norm violations they perform, and other men perpetrate. Also, RMA helps women accept that sexual violence happens, but that it happens to other women who have done something to deserve it. That is, RMA helps people to make sense of their environment, and themselves within these settings (Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015).

Neither the BJW nor DAT is not inherently tied to the radical liberal feminist perspective, neither do they conflate victim/perpetrator role with gender. Therefore, these theories have the potential to explain RMA in relation to male

victims and female perpetrators. However, the BJW and DAT have received mixed support (Grubb & Harrower, 2009), suggesting that on their own they are not sufficient to explain the existence of RMA. Neither are they able to explain the differential effect of gender on the content or acceptance of rape myths per se. Instead, these factors appear to be explained, at least in part, by gender-role attitudes (Eyssel, Bohner, & Siebler, 2006).

Gender in intersectional explanations of RMA

The intersectionist perspective developed from a need for more nuanced explanations of differences in women's risk and experiences of sexual victimisation (McPhail, 2016). In particular, feminists from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds highlighted that radical liberal feminist perspectives presented all women's experiences of rape as equal (McPhail, 2016). However, much research during the second-wave of feminism had been conducted by and with white, middle-class, and young women (McPhail, 2016). This perspective was primarily concerned with explaining MFR, and explaining the aetiology of rape and its impact on women from different social group identities (e.g. race/ethnicity, class, age). However, it had implications for the concept of RMA. Specifically, it highlighted the temporal nature of rape-related attitudes and beliefs. Also, it highlighted that the experience of rape occurs at the nexus of identities, thereby raising sexual orientation identity higher on the research agendas, which has had implications in later feminist perspectives for understanding male rape myths (Davies, Austen, & Rogers, 2011; McPhail, 2016). As such, it encouraged feminism to embrace inclusivity to a greater degree. Furthermore, this perspective suggests that gender should be considered as a variable that interacts with other person variables to produce

experiences. It also suggests that conceptualisations of gender are historically-bound.

During this period Estrich (1976, 1987) identified that some rapes were perceived as more 'real' than others. These perceptions were influenced by the characteristics of the victim and their assault. Indeed, a body of research (mainly in relation to male-to-female rape, but some research pertaining to male victims has been conducted) suggests that congruency with the real rape stereotype (i.e. when a victim/assault is more congruent with perceptions of a stereotypical 'true' victim/assault) is associated with more positive responses from the criminal justice system, whereas consistency with the 'simple rape' stereotype (i.e. when a victim/assault shares less in common with a stereotypical 'true' victim/assault) is associated with more deleterious outcomes (Anders, 2007; Anders & Christopher, 2011; Hockett, Saucier, & Badke, 2016; Walfield, 2018). Indeed, research suggests that for both male and female victims, individuals and assaults that more closely resemble the 'simple rape' rather than the 'real rape' are likely to be viewed as less believable or credible, and less deserving by professionals in the criminal justice system (R. Campbell, 2006; Maier, 2008; Martin & Powell, 1994; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006; Venema, 2016). This finding has come to be known as the Feminist Rape Mythology Hypothesis (FRMH).

The present thesis argues that the FRMH reflects a myth template whereby constellations of myths interact to shape laypersons' (and professionals') views on what a "true" victim and assault are. For example, this template reflects a meta-myth; victims and incidents are compared to the template of "realness" in order to make blame and credibility attributions. A 'real rape' is typically identified as having the following mythic features: a victim of

good moral character (e.g. not engaging in any risky or elicit behaviours prior to the incident, and no criminal record indicating a risky lifestyle), is raped by a stranger assailant, resists verbally and physically and sustains physical injuries as a result (Anders, 2007; Anders & Christopher, 2011). In contrast, indicators making up a 'simple rape' include (but are not limited to), the victim being a sex worker, knowing the perpetrator prior to the assault, and not physically resisting the attack (Anders, 2007; Anders & Christopher, 2011). Originally, this was conceptualised in relation to a female victim, male perpetrator dyad. However, this in itself is a feature of the "real rape" stereotype: e.g. real rape involves a female victim and a male perpetrator and all other gender combinations are reflective of the "simple rape" stereotype. The FRMH therefore has important implications for informing policy and practice in relation to victim-survivor support.

Although research has started to explore what the features of a 'real rape' are in relation to male victims of sexual violence, far less is known for this group of survivors. However, there are a number of reasons to expect differences in the real and simple rape templates for male and female victims, and in relation to male and female perpetrators. Namely, myths are argued to be defined along qualitatively different continua for male and female victims. For example, a common rape myth relating to male victimisation is that "only a homosexual male would rape another male" (Granger, 2008). However, how this information would influence the real rape template is unclear. If a victim is raped by a male who identified as homosexual, would this increase or decrease their apparent conformity to the real rape myth, and ultimately how would this affect observer responses to the victim-survivor (i.e. increased or decreased support)? Further research is required to explore whether the real rape myth is relevant to male

victims, and how it is encountered by victim-survivors and professionals whom support them.

As well as reasons needed to explore how male rape myths correspond to the real rape templates, there is also a need to identify the degree to which indicators of the real-rape myth are used in research with female victims are transferable to male victims, because these items tend to be more readily accessible in large victimisation surveys (such as the CSEW), which routinely collect information on a range of victim and assault characteristics that are relevant to the male-to-female real rape template (e.g. (Walby & Allen, 2004).

Gender in “doing masculinity” explanations of RMA

The doing masculinity perspective emerged during the third-wave of feminism, and highlighted that rape could be viewed as a way of *doing* gender (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; McPhail, 2016; Messerschmidt, 2000). That is, gender is a socially constructed variable, which is produced and reproduced through interactions between people (Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010; West & Zimmerman, 1987). This perspective posits that gender-role attitudes, which are the expectations of men and women that guide behaviour in different settings, are socially learnt norms (Baber & Tucker, 2006; McPhail, 2016). Therefore, gender is a socially constructed variable which people learn to perform. Gendered practices are interwoven with power imbalance, such that learning to ‘do gender’ for males and females socialises them to perpetuate these gender imbalances (McPhail, 2016; Messerschmidt, 2000). For example, gender-role attitudes perpetuate the notions of femininity as the gatekeeper to sex, and masculinity as the sexual opportunist (Muehlenhard, 1988). Within this perspective then, rape is a way for men to *achieve* masculinity (McPhail, 2016).

The doing masculinity perspective is therefore better equipped to accommodate explanations of MMR alongside MFR, although it still typically describes rape within gender-specific terms (i.e. perpetrators are male).

In relation to RMA, this perspective suggests that the content of rape myths, may be shaped by (and in turn reinforce) sexism and gender-role attitudes and expectancies (Eyssel et al., 2006). Gender roles reflect social norms which are "rules and standards that are understood by members of a group, and that guide and/or constrain behavior [sic]" (Cialdini & Trost, 1998, p. 152). Norms can be further decomposed into two types: prescriptive/injunctive (i.e. guiding how people should *ideally* behave) and descriptive (i.e. informing how people can judge others' behaviours across different situations) (Kallgren, Reno, & Cialdini, 2000). This distinction in relation to gender roles has important implications for understanding the function of different types of rape myth (although some myths may serve both functions). This perspective suggests that rape myths may serve the function of warning against gender-role transgressions, and punishment for those who do transgress (Angelone, Mitchell, & Lucente, 2012).

Using a socioecological framework to explain the role of gender in shaping RMA

In the last five years there has been an explosion of research exploring male victimisation and female perpetration in relation to rape. This research has challenged assumptions about the motivations of rape, and the lack of gender-inclusive theories of sexual violence. As a result, many feminist scholars now argue for feminist-informed perspectives that are more *integrative* in nature and knit together theories in order to provide more nuanced explanations for sexual violence (McPhail, 2016). This thesis argues that the same arguments apply to

theories of RMA. Furthermore, adopting a feminist-informed socioecological perspective of gender's influence on RMA would help to achieve this.

The socioecological perspective developed from two different strands of psychological and sociological theory and research. One strand developed from the ecological systems theory of human development proposed by Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, 1995). The second strand developed from Kelly's community psychology (1966, 1968, 1971). The two strands share a common premise: an individual's behaviour, attitudes and experiences are shaped through interaction with their environment (R. Campbell et al., 2009). However, they differ in relation to how they conceive of these interactions and environments.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986, 1995) socioecological framework. This model was adapted by Belsky (1980, 1993) to explain child maltreatment, and was in turn adapted by feminist researchers to: explore factors associated with the re-victimization in MFR (Grauerholz, 2000); examine factors at the individual, regional and cultural level that predict reporting decisions in MFR (Ménard, 2005); examine factors at the individual and regional level that predict the investigatory practices and closure of cases in MMR and FMR (Walfield, 2016); and to identify the factors that predict victim prosecution decisions in MFR (Anders, 2007; Anders & Christopher, 2011). This approach argues that human development, and subsequent decision-making, takes places within a series of inter-connected systems. These systems are delineated based on their size, the immediacy of the interaction with the individual, and whether an environment represents a formal or informal setting (R. Campbell et al., 2009).

A strength of this approach is that it can accommodate complexity and can offer a more nuanced account of the factors influencing RMA, and the impact of RMA on victim-survivors. For example, Anders (2007; Anders & Christopher, 2011) used the socioecological framework to model the FRMH and explore the ways in which survivor characteristics, assault characteristics and level of support interacted to influence prosecution decisions. She found that female victims who shared more characteristics with the real rape template (i.e. looked more like a stereotypically 'true' victim and their assault like a 'true' assault), the more support they received, and this predicted their decision to continue with the prosecution of their cases. Thus, the socioecological framework allowed for the empirical testing of the FRMH.

This model has typically been applied to explaining decision-making and outcomes in relation to MFR. To the researcher's knowledge, a variant of this model has been applied to male victimisation and RMA, in only one programme of research - in the thesis and related publications of Walfield (2016, 2018). This research (and much of the research using this model in relation to MFR) was conducted in the US. However, to the researcher's knowledge, this model has not been applied to the study of victim gender (i.e. considering both male and female victims) or perpetrator gender and RMA. Thus, there are substantial gaps in the evidence base regarding the applicability of this model in relation to RMA and MMR, MFR and FFR in a UK context.

Using the Bronfenbrenner informed socioecological approach, victim gender would be located in the individual-level system and perpetrator gender in the assault-level system, alongside other ascribed status variables, such as race (R. Campbell et al., 2009). Victim and perpetrator gender would be identified as

interactive; affecting the ways in which variables at multiple levels of the system interact to contribute to responses to victim disclosures, and victim's decision-making in different environments. Thus, in some respects this shares similarities with the research using 'gender as a grouping variable' discussed earlier in this chapter.

A further limitation of this framework is that it has not been used to compare RMA or outcomes across victim and perpetrator genders. This means that the mechanisms by which gender may influence RMA and its subsequent impact are under-defined. In contrast, a model arising from Kelly's (1966, 1968, 1971) socioecological theory has been developed which may shed light on this; Bond and Wasco's (2017) socioecological model of gender.

Kelly's (1966, 1968, 1971) socioecological framework. Kelly's socioecological model shares many similarities with that of the Bronfenbrenner derived models: it posits that individuals are nested within communities, and their behaviour, attitudes and experiences are shaped by interactions with their environment. However, the ways in which these mechanisms are conceptualised differ (R. Campbell et al., 2009). This framework posits that individuals and community organisations are inter-dependent, and that individuals have differential experiences depending on the *setting* (R. Campbell et al., 2009). According to this approach, a 'setting' consists of person constructs (such as gender) and events (such as the experience of sexual violence) which prompt interaction with, or responses from social support communities (formal and informal), which are embedded within environments.

Environments comprise the structural features of a community (e.g. resources), functional features (e.g. service delivery processes) and the values

and attitudes of that community as a whole (R. Campbell et al., 2009). There is also a growing body of research that adopts Kelly's conceptualisation of socioecology to explicate the mechanisms by which gender specifically affects beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in different settings (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010). Bond and Wasco (2017) argue that settings are associated with gendered qualities and practices, which are mutually influencing.

The gendered qualities of settings are those which: reify distinct gender categories; specify a gendered universe of alternatives for individuals; privilege one group over another through deeming it normative; and obscure and justify historical and current unequal access to resources and power that is influenced by gender. Setting practices include structural features (physical, temporal, social and economic), transactional patterns (social regularities, communication norms and social ties) and embedded values (symbols, rituals and formal policies). Gender, therefore, can be considered a feature of context; in combination, gendered qualities and practices become embedded into settings and daily practices (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010), to the extent that behaviours and attitudes can become unconscious (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010)

The present thesis argues that combining these strands of theory/research would be beneficial to the study of RMA specifically, and its impacts. That is, combining the approaches taken by Campbell and her colleagues and Bond and her colleagues would provide a different approach to theorising and empirically exploring the ways in which gender shapes RMA. It could also provide a framework for exploring how victim and perpetrator gender interact with RMA to

shape the challenges faced by adult victim support services. This would represent an opportunity for more than merely a new way of re-stating or organising previous research findings, but to conceptualise the mechanisms through which gender (victim and perpetrator) influence RMA and its subsequent impacts on supporting victim-survivors.

Conclusions and future directions

The present thesis argue that Bond and colleagues' (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010) focus on setting qualities and practices, is particularly useful for exploring and interpreting the mechanisms underpinning victim and perpetrator genders' influence on RMA.

The tenets of the feminist-informed socioecological approach, which have been outlined in this chapter, will therefore be used to inform the interpretation of data in the empirical chapters, and recommendations for research and practice in chapter 9 of this thesis. Specifically, these tenets are: that gender should be treated as a contextual variable which is influenced by the qualities and practices of different settings; that RMA cannot be considered as 'setting-less' and therefore attention should be paid to the qualities, person constructs and practices that may indicate which settings are influenced particularly by gender and why; that supporting an individual victim-survivor can be conceptualised as a setting, that is embedded within social-ecological systems. That is, support for victim-survivors of sexual violence are time-, macro- (i.e. cultural values), meso- and exo- (i.e. formal social ecologies, including codified practices such as policies), micro- (i.e. informal social ecologies) and event- (including characteristics of the assault and perpetrator) bound.

Chapter 4. Methodology

Chapter introduction

In line with best practice guidance for producing rigorous research (Onwuegbuzie, Johnson, & Collins, 2011), this chapter revisits the questions driving the research, and expands on the questions and objectives of each study.

The chapter will provide an overview of the epistemological, ontological, axiological, methodological and rhetorical beliefs underpinning the approach adopted. It will define mixed-methods designs, and why this was adopted rather than a mono- or multi-method design. The chapter will provide an overview of the methods used across the phases of the research and where 'mixing' in the mixed methods approach has occurred and why. The specific details regarding the procedure for each study will be reported fully in their respective chapters. However, this overview aims to provide a 'birds-eye' view of how the phases of the research fit together and contribute to the thesis. Finally, the role of the socioecological framework (falling between the philosophy and methodology of the research) in cohering the phases of the research will be elucidated.

Epistemological position

The two questions driving the research are: in what ways do victim and perpetrator gender shape rape myths and RMA, and how does gendered RMA impact on the challenges faced by support services for adult survivors? The methodological approach adopted to address these questions aligns with the socioecological perspective, and the pragmatic and feminist philosophical standpoints informing the research. Although feminist research has typically adopted qualitative approaches underpinned by a social constructionist philosophy, there are growing calls from some feminist scholars for methodological pluralism and integrative approaches to strengthen feminist theories and concepts (Bows, 2017; McKenna, 2003; McPhail, 2016). Furthermore, both pragmatism and feminism have in common the value they ascribe to research as a social enterprise that can be conducted in the context of community and for the social good (Maxcy, 2003).

Defining feminist informed pragmatism

Feminist informed pragmatism is challenging to define, as it represents the integration of two worldviews in and of itself. Indeed, questions have been raised regarding the status of both pragmatism and feminism as paradigms (C. Cohen, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Pratt & Frankel Pratt, 2016). For example, Pragmatism is alternatively described as a philosophy, paradigm or worldview, and sometimes a social theory (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Pratt & Frankel Pratt, 2016). In the present thesis the term feminist-informed-pragmatism is used, and reflects that pragmatism is the primary driver of the research, but that the underlying axiological beliefs of the researcher are informed by feminist thinking. In particular, the present research argues for the

approach advocated by Cherryholmes (1992), that researchers' focus should be re-directed from questions of methods and ontological and epistemological quandaries, to the research question(s) as the drivers of the research design. In particular, pragmatism advocates the mixing of methodologies and methods in order to most fully address a research question (Denscombe, 2008). Pragmatism, as does feminism, prioritises action, and situated knowledge that can be used to transform marginalised groups' experiences for the better (Creswell, 2014). It is therefore well aligned with the transformative-paradigm (Biddle & Schafft, 2015), which seeks to recognise power differences and their implications for discrimination, oppression, misrepresentation and marginalisation (Mertens, Bledsoe, Sullivan, & Wilson, 2010). Although the term 'pragmatism' does not refer to a single approach, many pragmatists advocate the position that there is an external world independent of the observer, but there also exists an inner world (i.e. lodged in the mind) (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, pragmatism argues that reality is created through the interactions between the objective world and the socially constructed worlds that humans have created (Mollard, 2015). This has implications for understanding the existence of rape myths, and how rape myths are transmitted and may change over time. Furthermore, Sprague and Kobryniewicz (2004) argue that both post-positivism and constructionism are deleterious for feminist-informed social justice; the one argues there is a single objective truth, which is untenable, and the other argues there is no "truth" which makes advocating social change and prioritising marginalised groups' needs untenable. Therefore, pragmatism offers a vehicle for feminist theories and values to explore RMA using alternative approaches to research. Ultimately, a feminist-informed pragmatic stance is adopted for the present thesis, as feminism

has been instrumental in championing awareness of sexual violence as a public and social justice concern (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2004). Furthermore, the emerging fourth-wave of feminism (Abrahams, 2017) presents an exciting opportunity for the development of integrated theories (such as the Feminist Framework Plus; McPhail, 2016), novel methods in research and advocacy (such as the growth in the use of digital technologies) and for the development of more gender-inclusive rather than gender-specific theories of RMA and sexual violence (Baumgardner, 2011; Jane, 2016; Maxwell & Scott, 2014; McPhail, 2016; Turchik et al., 2016).

Design

A mixed-methods design is adopted consisting of four phases: phase 1 is the systematic review of empirical research (quantitative and qualitative); phase 2 is a quasi-experimental study with 552 adults (60.3% female, 92.9% white, 67.5% student) from Anglosphere countries (91.8% from the UK) examining the influence of victim and perpetrator gender on the acceptance of different categories of rape myth; phase 3 is a Think Aloud informed (TAi) study with 16 professionals from survivor support organisations (working with either women only, men only, or both men and women), to explore the ways in which victim and perpetrator gender shape a selection of rape myths, and how salient these myths were to the groups of survivors they support; phase 4 is a semi-structured interview study conducted with the same participants as the previous phase, and conducted immediately after completion of the TAI task. The semi-structured interviews explored the professionals' perspectives of the challenges that sexual violence support organisations face and how these are influenced by gendered RMA.

Defining mixed methods research

Mixed methods research has been labelled as the third major research approach, alongside qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). There are numerous definitions of mixed methods research, many of which differ in the emphasis they place on mixing occurring at either the level of methods (i.e. this mixing of methods typically associated with quantitative or qualitative approaches) and/or methodologies (i.e. the mixing of paradigms or worldviews) (Johnson et al., 2007). These definitions may disagree regarding the degree to which they assert that the ontological (i.e. what is there to know?), epistemological (i.e. what is the nature of knowing?), and axiological (i.e. what is worthwhile to know?) assumptions of different worldviews can be combined meaningfully (i.e. commensurability) (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011; R. L. Shaw, Hiles, West, Holland, & Gwyther, 2018). The degree to which a researcher considers and can demonstrate commensurability has implications for generating meta-inferences.

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2008, p. 101) describe a meta-inference as “an overall conclusion, explanation or understanding developed through and integration of the inferences obtained from the qualitative and quantitative strands of a mixed method study.” The meta-inference is at the heart of mixed-methods research, and it is this which helps to differentiate it from multi-method research, whereby both quantitative and qualitative methods may be adopted in a programme of research, each representing a complete whole and the results of which are used in a process of triangulation rather than integration (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008). Triangulation refers to the approach whereby inferences from the quantitative and

qualitative elements of a study, or programme of research, are made separately and contrasted in order to either achieve a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon, or test the validity of conclusions through convergence (Carter et al., 2014).

Choosing between mixed-, multi- and mono- method designs

Arguably either a mixed-methods, multi-method or mono-method (i.e. purely quantitative or qualitative) design could have been adopted, as the research questions can be explored from multiple perspectives (i.e. critical multiplism; Cook, 1985). However, a mixed-methods design was identified as providing the greatest potential to address the research questions optimally (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011). This is because the meta-inferences generated through mixed-methods research provide the opportunity for significance enhancement (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Sutton, 2006). That is, for enriching and augmenting interpretation and the usefulness of findings generated from mono- or multi-method research (Collins et al., 2006).

Elements of both quantitative and qualitative research design were identified as necessary to address the research questions and generate practically useful recommendations. For example, considering victim and perpetrator gender comparatively by extending the quantitative methodology typically adopted in RMA (e.g. (Carlson, 2013; Granger, 2008; Reitz-Krueger, Mummert, & Troupe, 2017), was identified as a key means of contributing to the RMA evidence-base. It offered an opportunity to help consolidate and cohere existing bodies of research which had developed somewhat in silos. However, qualitative methods were identified as necessary to explore the gendered patterns that emerged from this research, particularly in identifying how gender

may influence acceptance and how this emerged to affect the work of professionals from sexual violence support services. Adopting a qualitative approach to these components allowed for rich data and description that offered an opportunity for greater consideration of the role of context in RMA. Also, exploring professionals' perspectives on the rape myths they encountered in their work, and how they considered these in relation to victim and perpetrator gender, could shed light on how common approaches to RMA measurement reflect the attitudes and beliefs encountered by professionals supporting survivors of sexual violence. Furthermore, meta-inferences, generated from considering findings from across all phases of the research offer the opportunity to identify new insights. For example, a contradiction was identified regarding the role of socially desirable responding in RMA between the quantitative and qualitative research phases. Although the quantitative findings of the research indicated that socially desirable responding was not a consistent predictor of gender-dynamics related rape myths, the qualitative research identified that finding ways of addressing impression management (i.e. observers not wishing to be identified as "victim blamers") was a particular challenge for support organisations. There was a perception that this had somewhat forced RMA "underground", so that it may be harder to identify, but is nonetheless still present and impacting on the experiences of survivors disclosing to both informal and formal support networks. This meta-inference has implications for identifying challenges that should be considered when designing bystander interventions, informing policy and practice of organisations who may encounter sexual violence survivors (e.g. mental health system), deploying or developing quantitative measures and developing specific measures of socially desirable responding in relation to sexual violence related

attitudes. Therefore, the meta-inferences generated from mixed-methods research provides the opportunity for fresh insights into ongoing debates in RMAS.

Overview of the mixed methods research design adopted

The research was originally developed to align with the complex, multiphase mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This design comprises multiple phases of quantitative and qualitative research components that may be conducted sequentially or concurrently, or combinations of both. In the present thesis phases 1 and 2 were conducted sequentially, prior to conducting phases 3 and 4 (which were conducted simultaneously) (see figure 1).

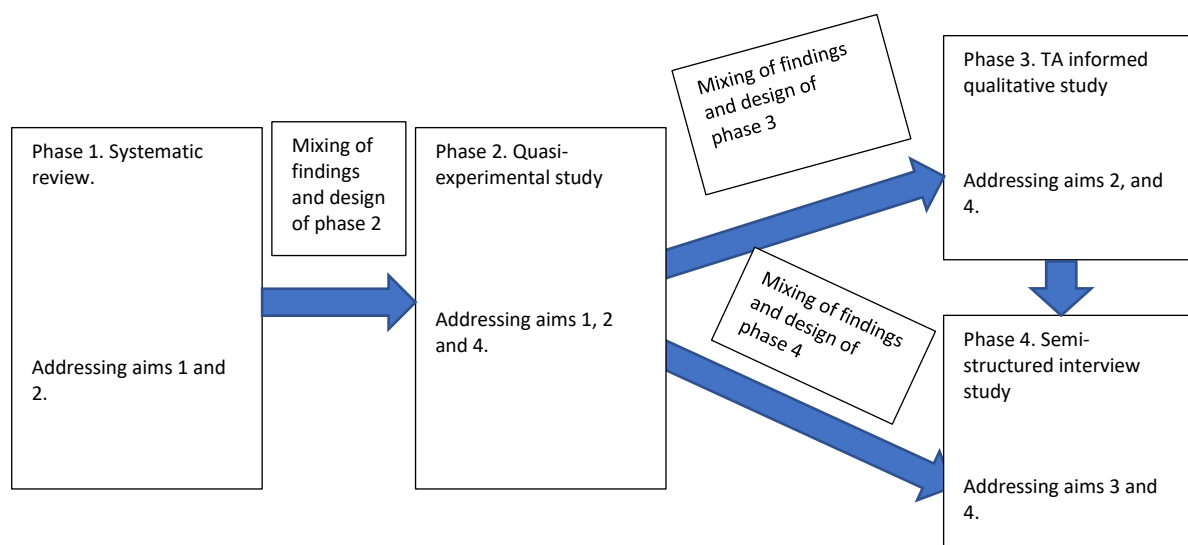


Figure 1. Flow-diagram illustrating overview of phases within the PhD research, with unidirectional arrows to demonstrate how mixing will occur.

The methods selected were identified as appropriate for addressing the overarching research questions in combination, and aims and objectives of the phases of each research more specifically.

Legitimation

Legitimation refers to the process of conducting legitimate checks at all stages of the research and is specific to mixed, rather than mono-methods (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). This process is advocated as an approach to assessing and assuring validity in mixed-methods designs, which differs from the validity checks that are used purely in relation to quantitative and qualitative research. That is, it is a process through which the accuracy and appropriateness of meta-inferences generated from findings from quantitative and qualitative research which is specific to mixed methods research. However, some authors advocate that legitimation checks are performed in addition to performing the traditional validity on the quantitative and qualitative elements of the research (Ivankova, 2014). However, the need to perform legitimation checks specific to the mixed methods design adopted, indicates that it is important to make explicit the points at which ‘mixing’ occurs in the research design, and the nature of this mixing undertaken will be explained. Threats to legitimation for meta-inferences will then be addressed, and the validity checks adopted separately for the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research are outlined in the overview of the methods adopted later in this section.

Locations and nature of “mixing” in the present research design

The present thesis argues that timing and priority are still important features of a mixed methods design for identifying potential threats to legitimation, as they identify the points at which ‘mixing’ occurred (i.e. one stage informed another). This is particularly relevant when judging the quality of meta-inferences derived from across the quantitative and qualitative components of the study. The impact of mixing points on legitimation and meta-inference quality are discussed more fully in the next section.

A mixed methods approach was adopted from the outset, however, the design was emergent (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This term refers to the process by which the researcher uses findings from earlier phases of the research to inform the direction and nature of later phases. Although this can present challenges to ensuring legitimation due to the nature of the influence of one stage of the research on interpretations of the findings from later stages (discussed later), it was felt this was vital for the present research. Through adopting an emergent design, the researcher was able to identify features of victim and perpetrator gender that were salient to RMA, allowing for a more tailored approach to be adopted in the qualitative research exploring the challenges these factors pose to survivor support organisations. It was felt that this would provide a greater opportunity for developing recommendations that were practically useful and relevant for support organisations, and may help to enhance future practice.

Overview of methods for each study

Study 1: Systematic review (chapter 5)

In line with the first two overriding aims of the thesis the following questions were used to shape the systematic review.

1. To what extent do perpetrator and victim gender influence RMA and blame attributions to victims and perpetrators?
2. What methods are employed to explore the relationships between perpetrator and victim gender, RMA and blame attributions?
3. What person constructs have been identified as influencing the study of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA and blame attributions?

4. What other rape-related attitudes/beliefs do researchers examine in conjunction with RMA or blame, and how do victim and perpetrator gender influence these attitudes/beliefs?
5. Where are the gaps in knowledge and evidence with regards to the role victim and perpetrator gender play in RMA and blame attributions?

Methods

Bibliographic databases were searched (up to and inclusive of May 2018) to identify published literature (CINAHL plus, APA databases, Medline, JSTOR, Academic Search Complete, and Science Direct) and ProQuest and Google Scholar to identify grey literature including theses. Hand searching of reference list of included articles were also conducted. Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research were included.

Search terms and inclusion/exclusion criteria were developed from scoping activities and using an adapted PECOSo search tool (Participants, Exposure, Comparisons, Outcomes, Study type, Other) (Armosti, 2017).

The review identified 57 articles that met eligibility criteria ($n = 53$ quantitative, $n = 2$ qualitative, $n = 2$ mixed-methods).

Procedure

Data were extracted using a template developed by the researcher based on Fleeman and Dundar's (2017) guidelines. Articles were quality appraised by the researchers using the relevant Joanna Briggs checklists for systematic reviews (Moola et al., 2017; Tufanaru, Munn, Aromataris, Campbell, & Hopp, 2017).

Synthesis strategy

Findings across quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research were synthesised thematically, following the approach advocated by Dixon-Woods, Agarwal, Jones, Young and Sutton (2005).

Study 2: quasi-experimental study (chapter 6)

This quasi-experimental study was conducted to inform overriding research aims 1, 2 and 4. It was informed by the findings from the systematic review, which identified a number of methodological flaws (i.e. use of global measures of RMA only, use of bespoke measures of male RMA with little or poor psychometric validation properties) and gaps in the existing evidence-base for RMA. In particular, the lack of methodologically robust research that systematically manipulates victim and perpetrator gender in relation to different categories of rape myth. Furthermore, a number of observer characteristics (i.e. traditional gender roles endorsement and socially desirable responding) were identified as warranting further exploration in relation to the impact of victim and perpetrator gender influence on RMA.

In line with these aims, the following research questions were formulated for this study:

- 1) What person constructs identified in the literature predict rape myths relating directly to victim and perpetrator gender (i.e. who can, and cannot be a victim or perpetrator based on their gender)?
- 2) After including key person constructs that predict RMA, to what extent do victim and perpetrator gender influence the acceptance of *different categories* of rape myth (rather than global RMA scores)?

Methods

Design. An online quasi-experimental study.

Participants. An opportunity sample of five-hundred-and-fifty-two adults participated in an online quasi-experimental study (60.3% female, 92.9% white, 67.5% student) from Anglosphere countries (91.8% from the UK), and were randomly allocated to one of six versions of the survey, in which victim gender (male/female) and perpetrator gender (male/female/unspecified) were varied.

Materials. For details of the battery of psychometric measures used see materials section of chapter 6.

Procedure. All participants completed the questionnaires in the same order.

Analysis strategy. The research analysis progressed in two stages: 1) hierarchical multiple linear regression analyses were used to identify predictors of myths relating to the gender dynamics of sexual violence; 2) the strongest predictors of RMA were incorporated into a mixed-methods ANOVA examining the influence of victim and perpetrator gender, and interaction effects, by rape myth type.

Study 3: Think Aloud informed qualitative study (chapter 7)

This qualitative study was conducted to inform overarching research aims 2 and 4, and was informed by the findings from the systematic review and quasi-experimental study. The following research question was used to guide this study: How do ecological settings, gendered setting qualities and setting practices influence RMA?

Methods

Design. A selection of rape myths were used in a TA informed task (Koro-Ljungberg, Douglas, Therriault, Malcom, & McNeill, 2012). Items were selected to represent myths that may be accepted more for male or female victims, or

victims of male or female perpetrators, or that were accepted to similar degrees (based on findings from the quasi-experimental study). These rape myths were used as a stimulus for discussion regarding how professionals' encountered them in their work with victim-survivors, in relation to victim and perpetrator gender.

Participants. For details of participants see participants section in chapter 7.

Procedure. For details of the procedure see procedure section in chapter 7.

Analysis strategy. Deductive-inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data from the TAI study. For further details, see analytical strategy section in chapter 7.

Study 4: semi-structured interview study.

This qualitative study was conducted to inform overarching research aims 3 and 4, through conducting a semi-structured interview. The research questions guiding the study were: 'What are the challenges facing adult sexual violence support services?' and 'in what ways does gendered RMA impact on these challenges?'

Methods

Design. A semi-structured interview study was conducted.

Participants. See participants section in chapter 7.

Procedure. See procedure section in chapter 8.

Analysis strategy. Deductive-inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data from the TAI study. For further details, see analytical strategy section in chapter 7.

In summary, mixing occurs at the research design level (e.g. findings of phase 1 informed the design of phase 2 and 4, and preliminary findings of phase 2 informed the design of phase 3), and the interpretation level through generating meta-inferences from findings across all phases of the research.

Ethical approval of research

Ethical approval for phase 2 was granted by the University of Worcester's Institute of Health and Society Ethics review committee in 2013. Ethical approval for phases 3 and 4 were granted by the same ethics committee in 2015. All research adhered to the British Psychological Society's code of human research ethics (2014). The details of the ethical challenges and strategies adopted to manage them are discussed in further detail in the chapters reporting the studies in more depth.

Quality assurance in mixed-methods research

The approach to ensuring rigor of this mixed method research was informed by the approaches described by Ivankova (2014) and Onwuegbuzie and colleagues (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011). These authors advocate the use of quality assurance strategies specific to each mono-method (i.e. within each phase), and to the mixed methods projects as a whole. That requires validity checks specific to mixed-methods research, referred to as legitimation (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011), to be applied at the point at which meta-inferences from across the phases of research are generated.

Mono-method quality assurance

Quality assurance in the mono-method phases of the research were informed by good practice guidelines in quantitative and qualitative research. The

conduct and reporting of the systematic review and research was shaped by validated quality assurance tools (Lockwood, Munn, & Porritt, 2015; Moola et al., 2017; Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007; Tufanaru et al., 2017) (see table 1).

Table 1

Mono-method standards/best practice guidelines adopted for each empirical phase of the PhD research

Phase 1	Systematic review	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (PRISMA; (Moher et al., 2015) Joanna-Briggs Institute (JBI) guidelines for conducting systematic reviews (Aromataris et al., 2015).
Phase 2	Quasi-experimental research	JBI checklist for quasi-experimental studies (Tufanaru et al., 2017)
Phase 3	Think-Aloud informed qualitative study	JBI checklist for qualitative research (Lockwood et al., 2015); approach to Think Aloud informed task, and analysis of Think Aloud data adapted from Koro-Ljungberg et al.'s (2012) guidance.
Phase 4	Semi-structured interview study	JBI checklist for qualitative research (Lockwood et al., 2015); consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ) (Tong et al., 2007).

The quantitative research checklists recommend the reporting of reliability and validity evidence (e.g. for tools used), clear descriptions of hypotheses, methods used, sample characteristics and data assumption-checking. The findings of these strategies are reported in detail in chapters 5 (systematic review) and 6 (quasi-experimental study).

Authors in the field of qualitative methods recommend the use of multiple strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings (V. Clarke & Braun, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004; Willig, 2013). Core features of trustworthiness are: credibility (confidence in the interpretation of findings), transferability (degree to which findings have applicability in other contexts), dependability (degree to which

findings are consistent and could be repeated) and confirmability (the extent to which study findings are shaped by the respondents and researcher) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Quality assurance strategies are inherently tied to the philosophical perspective adopted in the research (Creswell, 1998). In particular, the degree to which emphasis is placed on objectivity vs subjectivity affects the ways in which quality assurance criteria are defined and applied (V. Clarke & Braun, 2013). For example, triangulation is advocated by many authors as a means of establishing credibility of qualitative findings. However, individuals operating from a realist perspective will typically view triangulation as a means of achieving consensus/agreement of findings (i.e. striving to accurately present an objective "truth") whereas researchers operating from a constructionist perspective may view triangulation as a means of exploring multiple "truths" that exist (V. Clarke & Braun, 2013; Shenton, 2004; Willig, 2013). Therefore, the criteria used to assure quality in qualitative research should be made explicit, and explicitly linked to the worldview adopted by the researcher (Creswell, 1998). Given the emphasis placed on the 'inter-subjective' by the feminist-informed pragmatism perspective adopted in this research, quality assurance criteria used need to recognise that reality exists both in the external world, and in the internal world of the individual. That is, there is both an objective element (but we may not be able to observe it directly) and a subjective element (i.e. shaped by one's own experiences). Therefore, criteria to ensure trustworthiness were not applied in order to converge on a single, more 'valid' interpretation of the findings (e.g. Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999). Instead, emphasis is placed on striving for a richer, deeper and more nuanced knowledge of a social setting of phenomenon (V. Clarke & Braun, 2013; Creswell, 1998; Flick, 2017). To this end, practices were

informed by the quality assurance strategies recommended by Creswell (1998, 2014). Namely: thick-description, analysis audit trail, analyst triangulation, member-checking, and reflexivity.

Thick description involves providing a sufficiently detailed account of the social phenomenon, so that others can draw conclusions about the degree to which the findings of the study can be transferred to another context (i.e. differing in setting and people) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the present research this involved providing a description of the context in which survivor support organisations operate (chapter 2), and providing a detailed description of the characteristics of participants' roles, the organisations they work for (whilst still preserving participants' anonymity) and the survivors they support.

Developing an audit trail was used in ways. Firstly, it allowed the PhD research student to develop a clearer definition of themes and how they were structured while ensuring they remained grounded in the data. This was achieved through developing coding trees (i.e. themes with examples of codes and illustrative data extracts) and conceptual maps which meant that the PhD student constantly returned to the data when reviewing and refining themes in light of guiding theory. Secondly, the audit trail provided material for thorough analyst triangulation with a PhD supervisor (BM) to be conducted.

As stated earlier, analyst triangulation was used to explore multiple perspectives of the data and identify potential researcher 'blind spots' of the PhD student (rather than arrive at a consensus on the product of the analysis) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Different perspectives were explored and used to inform the refinement and reporting of themes. However, the audit-trail allowed for BM to explore the PhD students' interpretation and whether it was transparent and

credible (e.g. Flick, 2017). Owing to the complexity of this process, it is reported in full alongside the findings of the process, in the respective qualitative chapters of this thesis.

Member-checking is the process whereby products of the data analysis are shared with participants to explore their perspective on whether they have captured the meaning the participant intended, and what their perspective on the findings are (Creswell, 1998, 2014). Again, this is to inform the refinement of the themes and to help produce a more nuanced interpretation of the data (rather than achieving consensus *per se*). Member checking was performed as part of the semi-structured interview study, and a description of the process and findings is provided in chapter 8.

Reflexivity is identified as vital to both qualitative methods and mixed-methods design. There are two forms of reflexivity: prospective (i.e. reflecting on the role of the researcher, through their lens of experience, in shaping the research) and retrospective (i.e. reflecting on the ways in which the research impacts on and changes the researcher) (Attia & Edge, 2017). Therefore, a prospective reflexive statement is presented later in this chapter, and a retrospective reflexive statement is contained with the thesis discussion (chapter 9).

Managing threats to legitimation: reconciling epistemological, ontological and axiological beliefs

Although quality assurance remains a hotly debated topic in mixed-methods research (Ivankova, 2014), there is some consensus regarding the characteristics of research that may inhibit high quality meta-inferences (Onwuegbuzie & Corrigan, 2014; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011). The characteristics

relate to three key domains of research design: philosophical assumptions and stances; logics of inquiry and; socio-political commitments.

Legitimation threats from the domain of philosophical assumptions and stances. There are a number of threats to legitimation which stem from the challenges arising from mixing philosophical assumptions (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011). These include the extent to which emic (insider) and etic (outsider) views are adequately and accurately incorporated to produce meta-inferences that reflect a coherent whole (labelled emic-etic legitimation); the extent to which a researchers' epistemological, ontological, axiological, methodological and rhetorical beliefs are merged to allow research questions to be addressed optimally (termed paradigmatic mixing) and; the extent to which the assumptions of quantitative and qualitative research paradigms are deemed compatible (termed commensurability).

Pragmatism addresses emic-etic, paradigmatic mixing, and commensurability challenges in a number of ways. Firstly, the term pragmatism does not refer to a single unified approach, but many different approaches that are defined by their position relating to epistemology and ontology (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Lohse, 2017; Shannon-Baker, 2016; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). However, Creswell (2014) and Teddlie and Tashakkori (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008) argue that a defining feature of Pragmatism is its attempts to counter unhelpful dualisms in philosophy and research. This position, termed dialectical pragmatism (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2008), argues that both qualitative research approaches (e.g. associated with constructivism) and quantitative research approaches (e.g. associated with positivism) are of equal value and importance, but that a synthesis of both

enhances research. Indeed, some proponents of pragmatism extend this to argue that focussing on reconciling the epistemologies and ontologies of apparently conflicting paradigms is misguided and unnecessary (Cherryholmes, 1992). Instead, researchers should be focusing on the research question as the driver for research design and the methods identified as optimal for address the research question. This perspective advocates for an anti-conflationist stance, in which methods, methodologies and paradigms are disentangled from each other, allowing the researcher greater flexibility in adopting a research design which allows them to respond to a research question optimally (McEvoy & Richards, 2006).

However, Pragmatism does have ontological and epistemological stances and considering these helps to strengthen the case for mixed-methods research designs. Specifically, whereas constructivism prioritises the subjective, and positivism prioritises the objective, pragmatism prioritises the intersubjective (D. L. Morgan, 2007).

An intersubjective perspective on reality acknowledges that there is an external, independent world, but that an individual's interpretation of that world is shaped by their experiences with it (D. L. Morgan, 2007). Therefore, questions regarding the commensurability of methods are unnecessary, as it can be argued that through examining a research question from multiple perspectives (quantitative-qualitative, etic-emic) allows researchers to communicate and share ideas across paradigms (D. L. Morgan, 2007). This allows for new insights. However, some researchers, notably Morgan (2007) have argued that mixed methods research should seek to enhance the transferability of research and results. That is, researchers are encouraged to identify the factors that affect

whether the knowledge gained using one research method in a particular context can be used in other contexts. Furthermore, Pragmatism's focus on developing practical theory that can inform action to improve the social world also aligns with the values across feminism, and quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Creswell, 2014; Rorty, 1990; Sprague & Kobryniewicz, 2004). However, ethical dilemmas regarding axiological beliefs between pragmatism and feminism do arise. For example, Parr (2015) identifies a dilemma in reconciling the feminist principle of 'hearing' (women) participant's voices, whilst prioritising the voice of the researcher when analysing, interpreting and drawing conclusions from data. Although this dilemma was considered in relation to critical realism, rather than pragmatism per se, the issue is still applicable to understanding paradigm-mixing legitimization threats to the present research. To address this issue, the choice was made to lend equal weight to the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research (i.e. equal weight given to the etic and emic viewpoints), and that from switching from one perspective to the other in order to generate meta-inferences would help to understand the topic both from the participants' perspective and "...from the language and perspective of social science" (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011, p. 1258).

Legitimation threats from the logics of inquiry domain and the socio-political domain: the value of the socioecological framework

According to Onwuegbuzie et al. (2011), threats to legitimation from this domain reflect challenges posed by: the extent to which the weakness of one approach are compensated by the strengths of the other approach (weakness minimization); the extent to which the ordering of the phases in the sequential aspect of the research impact on data interpretation (sequential threat); the extent

to which quality inferences emerge from any data that has been transformed, such as through the quantitising of qualitative data (conversion threat)³; the extent to which generalisations from the sample to the wider population from which the sample was selected can be made (sample integration) and; the extent to which all pertinent legitimation strategies for the separate quantitative and qualitative phases of the research, and from the mixing of the phases, yield quality meta-inferences. Threats arising from the socio-political domain refer to the extent to which readers and consumers of the research value meta-inferences stemming from both the quantitative and qualitative phases of research (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011).

Issues regarding the value of mixing methods to enrich the findings of the research (i.e. beyond what would be possible with mono-method research) have already been discussed.

The present thesis argues that challenges arising from the sequential threat and sample integration are addressed through the use of the socioecological framework. This framework specifically aims to situate knowledge. That is, consider the role that context plays in shaping the findings identified. As well as providing a framework for synthesising and explaining patterns, the socioecological framework will allow the researcher to explicitly consider the extent to which the findings of the research are transferable (D. L. Morgan, 2007). This will allow for the consideration of the role that context, including the sample characteristics as they relate to the wider population characteristics from which they were drawn and the impact of this on transferring knowledge gleaned from the different phases of the research and meta-

³ Not performed in this programme of research.

inferences to other contexts. For example, the extent to which findings from the research can be used to inform practice and policy in the third sector.

The socioecological model offers a frame on which the inferences and meta-inferences of the thesis can be organised in order to inform the evidence-base. However, in order for this to be effective, the specific version of the socioecological model adopted must first be clarified.

Reflexive statement

A further process concerning both axiological beliefs and quality of inferences, is that of *reflexivity*. Reflexivity is also recommended to assure the quality of qualitative research (Creswell, 1998, 2014; Flick, 2017). Indeed, reflexivity has been found to be an important tool in qualitative research but is not typically associated with quantitative methods (S. Walker, Read, & Priest, 2013). This posed challenges to being a reflexive mixed-methods researcher. However, research indicates that reflexivity has benefits for both the qualitative *and* *quantitative* elements of the research (S. Walker et al., 2013).

Prospective reflexivity. Rhetorical beliefs are those which relate to whether formal or informal writing styles, using impersonal or personal voices should be used to report research (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011). These can be in conflict when considering the epistemological, ontological and axiological positions of different worldviews (e.g. post-positivism vs. constructionism) (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006) and challenging to recognise. Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) suggest that being clear about the philosophy underpinning the mixed methods research will help to identify an appropriate strategy for managing this. For the sake of clarity and consistency, I adopt the impersonal style throughout the research, except in these

sections involving reflexive statements. However, as outlined in chapter one, I believe that language plays an important role in shaping understandings of sexual violence, and this is particularly important when considering the use of labels when referring to people who have experienced sexual violence (Papendick & Bohner, 2017). I recognise that any label applied to an individual, such as 'victim', 'survivor, or 'thriver' - is limited. For example, some authors advocate the use of the term 'victim-survivor' to "...retain the empowerment conveyed by the word *survivor* and the outrage implied by the word *victim*." (Koss, 2010, p. 219). Owing to the recognition that any one term is not sufficient in and of itself, I adopted Nichol's (2014)'s approach of using terms interchangeably. I feel this may also help to highlight that individuals may move between different perspectives on their identity at different times.

The use of these terms is not intended to influence the ways in which anyone who has experienced sexual violence assigns terms to their experiences; some individuals who have experienced sexual violence may not want to assign a label to themselves, that may shape their view of their identity through the future. Indeed, this idea of carrying a label of "victim" or "survivor" following victimisation is something which participants in phase four of the research spoke of. However, I recognise that labels are required for the purpose of this research.

I feel that my experiences have shaped the research in a number of ways. Firstly, my experience of volunteering with a rape and sexual abuse centre with women and girls, supporting the helplines, and acting as a trustee for the organisation has shaped my understanding of the invaluable work undertaken by these organisations, often under extreme financial and social pressures. Furthermore, through my experience I developed an insight into what I will term

'regional' rape myths. I mention this here, as this was something that came out of participants talk in phases 3 and 4 of the research and resonated with my experience. I feel this experience helped me to develop rapport with participants, but legitimisation checks were important when analysing data - to ensure that my interpretation of the data was reflective of the participants voices rather than my own.

Similar to Cohen (2014) I emphasise that my critiques of feminist thinking or theory should not be viewed as an argument for denigrating or eschewing feminism, but rather as opportunities for conversation regarding complex issues, and opportunities to expand and develop feminism as a result. As Cohen (2014) argues, dualisms (e.g. for or against feminism) are unhelpful and misguided, this also represents a fundamental tenet of pragmatism - which I subscribe to.

Another challenge that has arisen during the course of the research relates to a dualism. Specifically, whether gender comparative research reinforces binarized and essentialist thinking. I was informed greatly by Bosson's (2016) consideration of this ethical dilemma, and ascribe to the position she adopted. I recognise that my research is limited, in that it explored gender as a binary concept (male/female) and that this excludes issues pertaining to trans-gender, non-binary gender and gender-queer communities. This may reinforce perceptions of the gender-binary. However, my argument for adopting this approach is firstly that to explore gender in all its complexities was beyond the scope of the present research. However, I believe that the socioecological model adopted here, integrating Bond and colleagues' position that gender is a quality of settings and practices (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010) may be helpful in informing future research with different gender

identity groups. Secondly, victim gender is explicitly used in a (primarily) binary fashion to organise and mobilise service provision for adult survivors of sexual violence. Furthermore, implicit in some service's approach to provision is the assertion of perpetrator gender as binary (i.e. specifically, services are oriented towards supporting adult victims of male perpetrators). Therefore, the binary division has real-world implications for victim-survivors and warrants further exploration.

Conclusions and future directions

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodology adopted in the present research. Further detail regarding the methods of each phase of the research is provided in chapters 5-8.

Chapter 5. The influence of victim and perpetrator gender on rape myth acceptance and blame attributions: a systematic review of the literature.

Chapter introduction

Despite a growing body of comparative research examining Female victim RMA (FRMA) and Male victim RMA (MRMA) and blame attributions based on victim and perpetrator gender, a systematic review that synthesises and evaluates this literature has yet to be completed.

Systematic reviews can be of great benefit for an immature research field, through scoping available literature, identifying gaps in knowledge and exploring research questions (EPPI-Centre, 2010; Margalot & Chung, 2007; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Therefore, a review of research exploring the influence of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA and blame attributions is warranted, but missing. This chapter presents a systematic review that aims to address this gap.

Background

Despite the reforms to law and service provision outlined in chapter 2, victim-survivors continue to experience negative responses when reporting to the police (Parratt & Pina, 2017). Furthermore, the UK has been identified as having the lowest conviction rate for rape cases in Europe (Hohl & Stanko, 2015). Rape myths have been identified as playing a key role in the under-reporting of rape and high levels of attrition through the criminal justice system, including as a result of victim withdrawal (Parratt & Pina, 2017) and case outcomes owing to police investigative approach (J. Shaw et al., 2017; Walfield, 2016). Therefore, rape myths continue to have real-world implications for victim-survivors, and consequences for criminal justice outcomes.

Gaps in theory and evidence pertaining to RMA persist. This is particularly the case for male victimisation and female perpetration, as evidenced by the limited range of multi-dimensional, psychometrically validated measures of male RMA (Chapleau et al., 2008; Granger, 2008; Sleath, 2011), and the lack of gender-inclusive theories of wider motivations for sexual violence that can explain the existence and function of RMA (C. Cohen, 2014; Javaid, 2015a; Maxwell & Scott, 2014; Turchik et al., 2016). Where gender is considered outside of the male-to-female paradigm (Rumney, 2007) research has tended to develop in silos (e.g. Snyder, 2009). For example, female perpetrator rape myths are typically examined in relation to male victims only (e.g. Snyder, 2009; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). This ultimately means that the degree to which victim and perpetrator gender influence RMA is unclear.

Differences in RMA based on victim and perpetrator gender are anticipated for a number of reasons. Feminist theory and empirical research

suggests that gender role attitudes may play an important role in shaping RMA (Kopper, 1996; Obierifu & Ezeugwu, 2017). As outlined in chapter 3, gender role attitudes represent the traditional social beliefs and expectations of how males and females should behave. When an act of sexual violence is perpetrated, traditional social roles may be violated or confirmed based on a victim's or perpetrator's gender. For example, a commonly reported myth in research is that it is impossible for men to be victims of sexual violence (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992), perhaps because traditional social role attitudes suggest that "true men" are "tough" and should be able to defend themselves against rape (Graham, 2006; Javaid, 2017d, 2017c). Indeed, endorsing more traditional social role attitudes has been identified as a predictor of greater RMA in previous research (Kopper, 1996; Parratt & Pina, 2017). This myth is likely to be compounded when a perpetrator is female (Granger, 2008; Hammond et al., 2017; Weare, 2018b). However, the lack of historical focus on male victims and female perpetrators ultimately means that there are very few studies available which explore victim and perpetrator gender simultaneously, and combinations thereof in relation to either RMA or blame attributions.

Interpreting the limited empirical evidence available is made more challenging because the results of some research are contradictory. For example, Meyers-Dashefsky (1982) conducted a study in the US in which a young male or female victim was hitch-hiking and was assaulted by either a male or female perpetrator. She found no significant main or interaction effects for victim gender or perpetrator gender on blame attributions to victims or perpetrators, perceived credibility or seriousness of the incident, labelling of the incident as rape, or whether the incident should be reported to the police. In

contrast, research conducted by Smith et al. (1988) in a similar context (i.e. in the US at a similar period of time) identified statistically significant effects of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA. Male victims and victims of female perpetrators were viewed as more likely to have encouraged and experienced pleasure from the sexual assault than were female victims, or victims of male perpetrators. However, neither victim nor perpetrator gender influenced judgements of victim responsibility.

An explanation for the contradiction in findings may lie in the contextual information introduced in the scenarios used, which differed on key elements. Meyers-Dashefsky's (1982) scenario involved a victim who was 16 years old and a perpetrator who was 31 years old, thereby introducing age as a contextual variable. Furthermore, the adolescent was hitch-hiking which may introduce contextual information regarding victim engagement in 'risky behaviour' that has been identified as a feature of rape mythology (Granger, 2008). In contrast, the scenario used by Smith et al. (1988) involved adults (no ages were given), in which the victim's car had broken down and he/she accepted a lift from two individuals (either both males, or both females) to a local garage. However, these individuals drove to a different location and held the victim at gunpoint and forced him/her to engage in sexual activity. In this scenario, the contextual information introduced were the involvement of weapons, and multiple perpetrators. These have both been identified as aligned with rape mythology (Granger, 2008). It is unclear the extent to which contextual information relating to 'risky behaviour' of the victim or the use of weapons or involvement of multiple perpetrators may differentially affect the role of victim and perpetrator gender on blame or RMA. However, both studies are identified as containing information that makes them

congruent with rape myths (i.e. similarity with the real rape stereotype; Anders & Christopher, 2011) and consistent with rape myths (i.e. similarity with the simple rape stereotype; Hockett et al., 2016) It is possible that the differences in findings may be influenced by differences in characterological and behavioural blame attributions, which have been found to be associated differentially with victim gender (I. Anderson, 1999; Howard, 1984).

Two further issues are highlighted by Meyers-Dashefsky's (1982) and Smith et al.'s (1988) studies. Firstly, the discrepancy in Smith et al.'s (1988) finding of the significant impact of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA, but not responsibility attributions. Indeed, the relationship between RMA and blame as constructs is contested (Gurnham, 2016b). The present research subscribes to the position that RMA and blame attributions are distinct but related constructs (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), and specifically that RMA acts as a vehicle for blame attributions (to victims, perpetrators and external factors) (e.g. Idisis, Ben-David, & Ben-Nachum, 2007). Secondly, the contrasting use of the terms "blame" and "responsibility" in the two studies. The degree to which these terms are deemed interchangeable is disputed (Gurnham, 2016b). For example, Gurnham (2016b) argues that the boundaries of the terms 'victim' and 'blame' may confuse scholarship aiming to unpick the relationship (causal or otherwise) between these two constructs. That is, some variables are being conflated in existing literature, namely victimhood with complainant status (i.e. before victimhood has been established but is being considered) and blame with responsibility. Indeed, the question of the equivalence of terms such as blame, responsibility, fault and cause has received diverse responses. Some research has indicated that blame and responsibility reflect different underlying attributions: responsibility is more

closely associated with questions regarding the extent to which a victim's behaviour may have increased the likelihood of experiencing sexual violence, whereas blame contains an evaluative element (Gurnham, 2016b). This highlights the debates regarding the concept of RMA and its impact on support for survivors that may also influence or be influenced by victim and perpetrator gender. However, little research has examined these in relation to victim and perpetrator gender specifically.

Without a systematic review to synthesise the research evidence and identify patterns in the empirical findings, it is difficult to assess why contradictions in RMA exist. A systematic review is required to identify the points of consensus and contradiction in the literature, and whether these may be explained by the research methods used, the context of the research (e.g. scenarios used, specific type of sexual violence described, approaches to measurement or qualitative analysis) that could be used to inform further research. Therefore, the present review seeks to include quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research, in relation to adult victim-survivors and perpetrators of sexual violence. Furthermore, research has highlighted a gradual shift in overall RMA levels in male-to-female rape research, suggesting less acceptance of RMs over time. A systematic review would be useful to explore whether this trend is observed in comparative research also, and to consider the explanations for this trend, and its implications for RMAS.

Literature concerning both RMA and blame (and synonyms of blame) will be included in the present review for four reasons. Firstly, scoping searches revealed little victim/perpetrator comparative research relating specifically to RMA, and it was felt that inclusion of the blame attribution could further shed light

on the interactions between victim and perpetrator gender to shape attitudes towards victims and perpetrators more broadly (e.g. Ayala, Kotary, & Hetz, 2018). Secondly, a systematic review may help to identify points of consensus and contention in relation to the terms used (i.e. blame, responsibility, fault and cause) that could inform the questions typified by those raised by Gurnham (2016b). Thirdly, exploring the methods used in blame attribution research relating to victim and/or perpetrator gender may identify novel approaches to research that may benefit future RMA research. Finally, scoping searches revealed that research examining the influence of victim and/or perpetrator gender on blame attributions often explores this in relation to factors associated with RMA. For example, some research manipulated scenarios so they shared characteristics with either the 'real rape' or 'simple rape' stereotypes, and then measured the impact of this manipulation on blame ratings (e.g. Sleath & Bull, 2010). Including blame attributions literature in this review could therefore also incrementally inform the over-arching research questions of the thesis relating to RMA.

Scoping searches also revealed that many studies that were primarily concerned with the impact of victim and/or perpetrator gender on blame attributions, also measured the influence of gender on other outcomes (e.g. Shu, 2015). These outcomes were typically referred to as either rape-related attitudes or beliefs, or rape supportive attitudes. Although not explicitly labelled as rape myths, these variables appeared theoretically similar as they shared core features with rape myths (e.g. trivialising rape or its consequences, denying rape, or shifting blame from a perpetrator onto a victim). An example of this is ratings of 'perceived encouragement' by a victim. In Smith et. al.'s (1988) study, this is explicitly labelled as a rape myth. However, in Seaman et. al.'s (2001) study it is

measured alongside blame but not explicitly labelled as a rape myth (despite using a measure of attitudes adapted from Smith et al.'s (1988) study). This means that a variable may be explicitly 'badged' as a rape myth in one research study but not in another, and highlights the inconsistency in researchers' definitions of myths. Therefore, these variables were also included in the review as they can help to shed further light on the state of the literature and the role that victim and perpetrator gender may play in shaping rape myths.

In combination, this suggests that a systematic review is urgently required to guide future research and service development in the field of male sexual violation support, and support for victims of female perpetrators and same-sex sexual violence. Furthermore, a systematic review would provide a means of identifying the methods and materials commonly used to study gender and sexual violence. In turn, this greater understanding can be used to help shape research, services and reporting procedures for victims. Indeed, EBP is being recognised as important for enhancing "transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency" (Laforest & Orsini, 2005, p. 481) and that third sector organisations can contribute to the development of policy in this area. However, EBP in the third sector is at a much earlier stage (Dillenburger, Fargas, & Akhonzada, 2008) and so the development of a sound research base which can be utilised by organisations is required.

Review questions

1. To what extent do perpetrator and victim gender influence RMA and blame attributions to victims and perpetrators?
2. What methods are employed to explore the relationships between perpetrator and victim gender, RMA and blame attributions?

3. What person constructs have been identified as influencing the study of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA and blame attributions?
4. What other rape-related attitudes/beliefs do researchers examine in conjunction with RMA or blame, and how do victim and perpetrator gender influence these attitudes/beliefs?
5. Where are the gaps in knowledge and evidence with regards to the role victim and perpetrator gender play in RMA and blame attributions?

Method

This review followed the PRISMA protocol (Moher et al. 2009) and the Joanna Briggs Institute checklist for systematic reviews and research syntheses (Aromataris et al., 2015). A rigorous search strategy was developed using an adapted version of PICO search tool (Methley, Campbell, Chew-Graham, McNally, & Cheraghi-Sohi, 2014). The search tool was adapted to recognise the inclusion of quasi-experimental and correlational quantitative research and qualitative and mixed methods research, as traditional search tools have been identified as problematic with these different research designs. The PECO/TSo (participants, exposure, comparisons, outcomes or themes, study type, other; (Armosti, 2017)) search tool was adopted to identify relevant search terms and their synonyms from the literature, MeSH and subject-term thesauruses, and develop inclusion/exclusion criteria. Academic liaison librarians were consulted to ensure the search strategy developed was appropriate (see table 2).

Table 2

Initial PECO/TS strategy for scoping searches

PECO/Tso criteria	Inclusion criteria
Participants	Adults (18 yrs+) from Western, Anglosphere countries.
Exposure	Exposure to rape myths in relation to: adult male/female survivors of sexual violence
Comparisons	Victim gender, perpetrator gender or both
Outcomes or themes	Quantitative: degree of RMA (global or type scores); blame, fault, responsibility or cause attributions. Theoretically similar constructs to RMA, not explicitly labelled as such (e.g. attitudes towards victims) Qualitative: themes pertaining to gender (victim/perpetrator combinations) and rape/sexual assault/sexual coercion myths. Theoretically similar constructs to RMA, not explicitly labelled as such (e.g. attitudes towards victims)
Study type	Quantitative, qualitative or mixed method.

This review focuses on adult victimisation (18 years and older).

Scoping searches

Search terms and strategies were piloted with PsycINFO and Medline in the first instance. They revealed that the use MeSH headings and thesaurus terms (e.g. (MH "Rape")) did not improve the sensitivity of the results obtained and negatively impacted on the specificity of the hits returned (i.e. large numbers of unrelated literature identified). Therefore, similar to Parratt and Pina's (2017)'s approach, search terms were based on key-terms identified through the literature.

Final search strategy

Search terms used included synonyms of gender (e.g. sex), synonyms of victim (e.g. survivor), synonyms of perpetrator (e.g. offender) and combinations of rape of sexual assault myth acceptance and similar terms (e.g. myth adherence). Truncation and wildcard symbols were used to ensure spelling variants were included. (e.g. myt* to include myth, myths, mythology). The search strategy piloted to ensure an effective balance between specificity and inclusivity of results. An example search strategy for the PsycInfo database can

be found in appendix A. Similar to Fisher and Pina (2013) and Obierefu and Ezeugwu (2017) the search terms were purposely broad; as a result, many articles were not relevant and could be Deemed ineligible from the title.

Information sources searched consisted of: bibliographic databases and search engines (CINAHL plus, APA databases (PsyARTICLES, PsycINFO), Medline, JSTOR, Academic Search Complete, Science Direct, ProQuest, Google Scholar); and hand searches of reference lists of articles included for review.

Inclusion criteria

1. Primary quantitative research or secondary data analysis (excluding book chapters);
2. Published up to and including May 2018;
3. Published in English;
4. Focus on adult sexual victimisation (18+) only;
5. Research conducted with adult (18+) participants only;
6. Research from "Anglosphere" countries (i.e. English-speaking nations with similar cultural heritage: UK, Ireland, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand) only, to minimise the impact of potential cultural differences on RMA and remain aligned to the context of the present programme of PhD research;
7. Considers victim gender (male/female) and/or perpetrator gender (male/female) in same study;

8. Quantitative: provides statistical significance for either a global RMA score, or myth subtype, or myth item, or blame attribution rating (victim, perpetrator or both)⁴.
9. Qualitative: statement of research aims as exploring gender (victim and/or perpetrator) in relation to either RMA or blame attributions, or; research exploring RMA or blame attributions with substantive themes arising from either victim or perpetrator gender in analysis.

Exclusion criteria

1. They only examined a specific victim-perpetrator gender combination (e.g. male-victims of female perpetrators only);
2. Testing of effects could not be broken-down by victim/perpetrator gender (i.e. only possible to examine “same” and “other” sex combinations but not differentiate further);
3. Research did not explicitly refer to RMA or blame as an outcome variable (i.e. articles only referring to perceptions of victims and not necessarily myths, or only examining theoretically related but distinct constructs such as guilt attributions (Johnsson et al., 2014).

Search results

Fifty-three quantitative research studies, three mixed methods studies and one qualitative research study from 58 sources, met the inclusion criteria for the review (see figure 2 below and tables B1-B3 in appendix B). Twelve studies examined both victim and perpetrator gender (two in relation to both RMA, three

⁴ Synonyms of blame (responsibility, cause, and fault) were also included in the present review. Although it is recognised there is some contention in the literature regarding whether these constructs are equivalent, it is far from clear whether differences exist. Therefore, terms were included to ensure the review did not exclude any pertinent literature and subsequently influence conclusions drawn from the evidence synthesis.

in relation to RMA only, and seven in relation to blame only). Forty studies examined victim gender only (four in relation to both RMA and blame, eight in relation to RMA only, and 25 in relation to blame only). In all but two studies (Berry, 1991; Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017) this was within the context of a male perpetrator. The two exceptions studied victim gender within the context of cross-gender sexual assault. For example, Berry (1991) adopted the scenario created by Smith et al. (1988) however, whereas Smith et al. manipulated perpetrator gender and examined its unique impact on RMA and blame attributions, Berry (1991) manipulated perpetrator gender so that the scenario depicted a cross-sex combinations (labelled as “heterosexual” in the research) which implies the heteronormative assumptions, but is an attempt to avoid the possible confound of attitudes shaped not by gender of victim, but by potential sexual orientation assumptions participants hold in same-sex rape scenarios. In Reitz-Krueger et al.’s (2017) research, rape myths for male victims were considered only in relation to female perpetrators. However, the reason for doing this was not fully explained.

Six studies examined *perpetrator gender* only (one in relation to both RMA and blame, one in relation to RMA only, and four in relation to blame only). In all cases, this was examined in the context of a male victim.

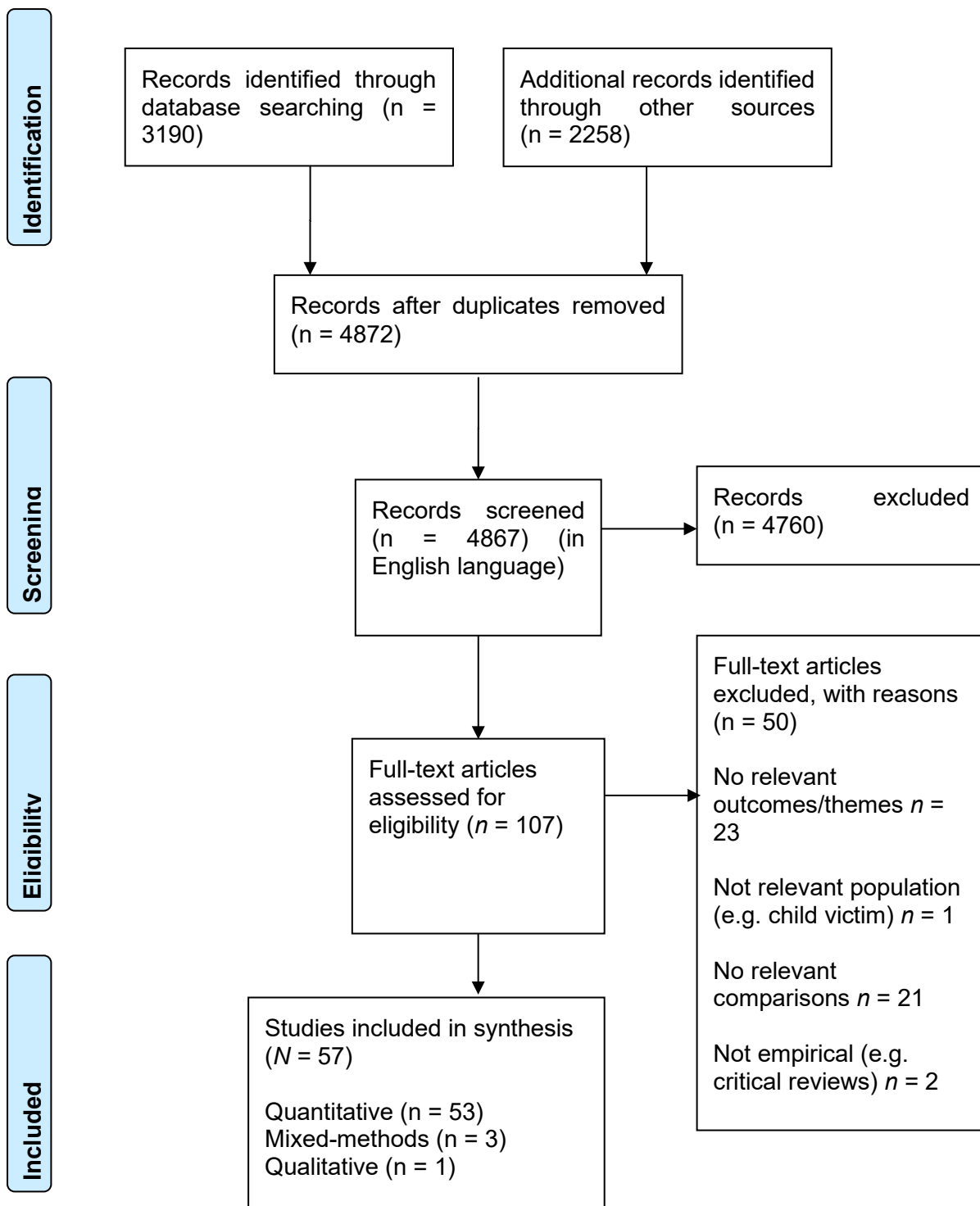


Figure 2 PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram of search results

From: Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. PLoS Med 6(6): e1000097. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed1000097

Note. Two of the quantitative articles reported two separate, relevant studies in the single paper and so were separated into separate records in the review; in 3 cases (2 x quantitative articles, 1 x qualitative articles), two articles reported the findings from the same study (e.g. unpublished doctoral thesis and published article) and so were combined into one record for each instance this occurred.

Data extraction

Data were extracted by the research student and coded for study quality. Templates were used to ensure consistency in data extraction, and all information relevant to the review questions was collected (see appendix C for quantitative and qualitative research templates). For quantitative research, information was extracted for: publication year, country of origin, sample size and characteristics, observer characteristics measured in relation to either RMA or blame attributions, methods used, effects investigated (i.e. main, interaction, simple effects between victim gender and perpetrator gender, and other characteristics manipulated in the study (i.e. such as contextual variables). The protocol for qualitative data extraction was similar, but rather than extracting information in relation to “effects” assessed, the main aims of the research, and themes pertaining to victim and perpetrator gender and rape myths or blame were extracted.

Quality assessment strategy

The quality of each article was appraised using the relevant critical appraisal tools available from the Joanna Briggs Institute: specifically, the checklist for quasi-experimental research ($n = 45$) (Tufanaru et al., 2017), checklist for analytical cross-sectional studies ($n = 9$) (Moola et al., 2017) and the checklist for qualitative research ($n = 4$) (Lockwood et al., 2015). These tools advise against developing ratings of study quality, and instead use patterns in the presence/absence of indicators of quality to make overall judgements of the quality of the research (Moola et al., 2017; Tufanaru et al., 2017). Quality appraisal ratings were used to assess the confidence with which conclusions from the review could be drawn, rather than as an inclusion criterion.

Data synthesis

Initially, the methods and measures/stimuli used in the studies were reviewed. Next, thematic analysis was performed on the data extracted, to identify themes relevant to the systematic review questions. A combination of *a priori* codes were used to begin with (i.e. victim gender, perpetrator gender and interactions; contextual factors and observer characteristics) and inductive coding within these to identify the patterns across the reviewed literature arising (i.e. participant gender in relation to observer characteristics).

Description of retained studies

Ninety-five percent of the research reviewed was quantitative in nature, indicating that there is a dearth of comparative literature examining the influence of victim and/or perpetrator gender from qualitative and/or mixed-methods perspectives. In relation to qualitative research, some studies were identified that examined rape myths and rape-related attitudes in relation to specific combinations of victim and perpetrator gender dyads (i.e. female-to-male rape), such as Levy and Adam's (2018) research exploring online commenting in relation to news articles reporting the female perpetrated rape of a male celebrity. The lack of qualitative research of a comparative nature may reflect the dominance of the feminist and social constructivist perspectives in this field, which has tended to eschew comparative research designs over concerns of reinforcing gender binaries or gender essentialism (Bosson, 2016), or owing to the focus of the gender paradigm in explaining male perpetrated sexual violence against women (Fisher & Pina, 2013; Graham, 2006). However, four studies adopting qualitative research elements were identified, and their findings help to explain some of the patterns identified by reviewing the quantitative research (and

vice versa). Therefore, the aim of this review to explore both quantitative and qualitative research findings to address the research question is warranted.

Summary of samples/populations and sources of research findings

Most of the research was conducted in the US ($n = 32$), followed by the UK ($n = 18$), Canada ($n = 4$) and Australia ($n = 3$), and was reported in peer-reviewed journal articles ($n = 35$). However, 17 studies reported in unpublished dissertations/theses were included, alongside three studies reported in both peer-reviewed and unpublished sources. Although two studies were published in online journals (i.e. journals of undergraduate research), it was unclear whether these were peer-reviewed or not (James, 2018; Seaman et al., 2001)

Forty-four of the quantitative studies and all three of the mixed methods research studies were conducted with college/university student samples. Other samples included, general population samples (e.g. Granger, 2008), the police and support sector professionals (e.g. Javaid, 2017a, 2017b), and samples of friends and family (e.g. Carlson, 2013). Forty-two of the quantitative studies, and the three mixed methods studies used opportunity/convenience sampling methods only; three studies used opportunity/convenience sampling methods alongside another method (i.e. snowball, random); two used random samples and; six studies' sampling methods were ambiguous (but anticipated to have used opportunity/convenience sampling). The qualitative research used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods.

Of the quasi-experimental studies conducted with opportunity/convenience samples, many ($n = 27$) specified that participants were randomly allocated to study conditions, to reduce the potential of sampling bias. Thirty-nine of the quantitative studies used blocking based on participant gender,

however, only 11 provided comparative information to check whether males and females were similar on key characteristics that may influence observer gender effects on outcome variables (e.g. age).

Summary of methods and materials used

Of the quantitative research, 43 studies used vignettes in conjunction with questionnaires to collect data, and 10 used questionnaires only. There was a tendency in more recent research to utilise online data collection methods, in comparison to hard-copy approaches. Two of the mixed methods studies (I. Anderson, 1999; I. Anderson, Beattie, & Spencer, 2001) used a newspaper style article excerpt (varying victim gender) as a stimulus for dyads to discuss issues relating to rape, and then analysed their recorded conversational data both qualitatively and quantitatively. One of the mixed methods studies (Tomkins, 2016) used a sexual assault scenario (varying victim gender and alcohol consumption) to collect qualitative data using open-ended questions (alongside closed questions that were analysed quantitatively) in a questionnaire booklet. The qualitative research collected data via semi-structured interviews.

Overview of vignettes used. In relation to the vignettes used by researchers, 26 were developed bespoke for the study, and 16 used or adapted existing scenarios for reliability, validity and replicability reasons (see table D1, appendix D). It was unclear whether the vignette used in Coble's (2017) research was developed bespoke for the study, or adapted from existing scenarios. Of the studies using vignettes, four explicitly manipulated the context of victimisation in relation to victim-perpetrator relationship (e.g. stranger vs acquaintance vs date rape). However, many studies ($n = 39$) did not explicitly examine victim-perpetrator or other contextual variables such as this in their research (i.e. only varying victim

and/or perpetrator gender). Examining contexts used in these studies' vignettes revealed a diverse range of characteristics used. Scenarios differed on: the number of perpetrators involved (one vs. multiple); the use of weapons (e.g. guns); alcohol use (none, implied by situation, explicitly manipulated); level of physical force used (i.e. description of victim being physically overpowered, experiencing physical injuries, not specified, or verbal coercion only used); the context in which sexual violence took place (e.g. victim jogging, hitch-hiking, accepting a lift because their car had broken down, walking home from work, or two their partner's home, at a party or night club); the type of sexual violence perpetrated (e.g. unwanted touching, forced oral sex, vaginal/anal penetration, forced-to-penetrate, multiple sex acts); location in which sexual violence took place (e.g. in perpetrators car, on public transport, victim taken by perpetrator to another location, perpetrator's home, victim's home, at a house party, in a night club) and; type of acquaintance (e.g. friend at college, a friend's flatmate) or date (e.g. first date, someone the victim is in a relationship with); and whether the sexual violence involved same-sex or cross-sex dyads (if research manipulated only victim gender, or perpetrator but not both). Some research (e.g. James, 2018) did not provide enough information to be able to reliably identify the context in which the sexual violence was said to have taken place.

The approaches to delivering this information varied in length (i.e. from a single sentence, to a description of hundreds of words), and format (e.g. a victim character profile; a transcript of an interview between victim and police officer; case report; newspaper article; victim EvoFit photograph and case report). Furthermore, some research examining victim/perpetrator gender effects on RMA or blame was embedded within wider studies exploring other variables in

relation to male-to-female rape (e.g. Felson & Palmore, 2018; McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, & Crawford, 1990).

Overview of questionnaires/measures used. Of the quantitative research, 22 studies used or adapted existing measures of RMA for male and female rape/sexual assault victims and three studies document the development of new (gender-specific) RMA measures (Granger, 2008; Sleath, 2011; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). The most commonly used measures of FRMA were the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999) and its short-form ($n = 7$), and the most commonly used measures of MRMA were Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson's (1992) and Melanson's (1999) Male Rape Myth Acceptance Scales (both used in six studies). Three used bespoke measures of RMA owing to a lack of measures that asked questions in relation to specific victim-perpetrator gender combinations (I. Anderson & Quinn, 2009; Carlson, 2013; Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017). One used a bespoke measure of MRMA (Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017) but did not clearly state why this approach was adopted (see table D2).

Of the 44 studies that used measure of blame attributions: seven were developed bespoke for the study but specified how items from existing blame measures were used/adapted; 18 were developed bespoke for the research but did not specify whether items were taken/adapted from existing measures, and; 19 used or modified existing whole scales/subscales.

Summary of analysis strategies adopted in quantitative research (including quantitative elements of mixed-methods research)

Of the 11 studies which examined victim and perpetrator gender, three examined effects at the multivariate and univariate level (two examined RMA and

Blame, and one blame only) (Ayala et al., 2015; R. E. Smith et al., 1988; Trangsrud, 2010), four at the univariate level (all examined blame only) (Ayala et al., 2015; Gerber et al., 2004; Kahn et al., 2011; Rylands & Nesca, 2012), four examined simple effects only (i.e. differences between victim-perpetrator gender combinations, two on both RMA and blame, and two on blame only) (Carlson, 2013; Doude, 2008; James, 2018; Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017) and two studies examined correlations between male and female RMA (Sleath, 2011) and differences in acceptance of myth-type within victim genders (Walfield, 2016). Of this research, only three studies (Gerber et al., 2004; Kahn et al., 2011; R. E. Smith et al., 1988) identified a main effect of victim gender (one study on RMA only, two studies on blame only); one (R. E. Smith et al., 1988) an effect of perpetrator gender (on RMA only) and; four (Gerber et al., 2004; Kahn et al., 2011; Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017; R. E. Smith et al., 1988) identified an interaction effect (or simple effect) between victim and perpetrator gender (two on RMA only, and two on blame only).

Of the 39 studies⁵ which examined victim gender only, most studies adopted mean difference testing approaches (e.g. ANOVA, MANOVA) or regression analyses to predict RMA or blame. Of these, 15 identified significant main effects for victim gender, or identified victim gender as predictive of RMA or blame (I. Anderson et al., 2001; I. Anderson & Lyons, 2005; I. Anderson & Quinn, 2009; Coble, 2017; Cruz & DeLamarter, 1988; Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2001; Davies, Smith, & Rogers, 2009; Ford, Liwag-McLamb, & Foley, 1998; Granger,

⁵ 6 studies examined effects in a different way to tests of main effects: i.e. correlations between MRMA and FRMA.

2008; Howard, 1984; Judson, Johnson, & Perez, 2013; McCaul et al., 1990; Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017; Schneider, Ee, & Aronson, 1994; Shu, 2015).

Of the six studies which examined perpetrator gender only, five identified significant effects of perpetrator gender ($n = 1$ RMA, $n = 4$ blame) (Davies & Boden, 2012; Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006; Parkinson, 2014). However, this research identified a range of interactions between perpetrator gender and other independent variables (such as observer gender).

Summary of analysis strategies adopted in qualitative research (including qualitative elements of mixed-methods research)

The analysis strategies adopted in the qualitative elements of the included research were diverse, drawing on different theoretical frameworks and analysis techniques in order to address research questions.

Analysis of the conversation data collected by Anderson (1999) involved the use of Schiffrin's (1987 cited in Anderson, 1999) concept of 'idea units' in discourse, in which discourse markers are used to conjoin, contrast and orient 'idea units' in talk. Anderson (1999) used the theoretical concepts of characterological and behavioural blame to explore the ways that blame was attributed to male and female victims of rape. Each repetition of a blame attribution, unless it was obviously a self-correction by the participant, was counted as an individual occurrence. The accuracy of analysis was assessed through inter-rater reliability of the use of the coding scheme by two individuals coding the data independently. Analysis of the conversation data in Anderson et al.'s (2001) research used a different framework, covariation information, and analysed the data using discursive psychology principles. Using this approach, the researchers explored the ways in which covariation information was used in

everyday talk-in-interaction to accomplish social activities, such as the distribution of blame and responsibility. This is in contrast to other approaches, which may seek to use explain participants' talk in relation to internal mental states.

Tomkins (2016) used qualitative content analysis to analyse textual data gathered in response to three open-ended questions (What is your initial reaction to the events just described. Your answer may include a description of the characters involved; What does it mean for someone to be responsible for something and; What does it mean for someone to be blameworthy for something?). The process adopted allowed for categories to be generated inductively from the data, whilst allowing their development to be framed and focused by existing knowledge of the phenomena and theoretical framework adopted (Forman & Damschroder, 2015). Tomkins (2016) adopted the process outlined by Forman and Damschroder (2015), including: immersion (initial engagement and identification of main ideas), reduction (using main ideas, data is coded in a more systematic manner, and data is reorganised into emerging themes and concepts, and further separated between the three original questions) and interpretation (the analysis is situated within the empirical and theoretical literature, drawing connections between responses to the questions asked).

Javaid (Javaid, 2017c, 2017d) used inductive thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step approach to semi-structured interview data and data collected using qualitative questionnaires. The analysis was informed by two theoretical frameworks to make sense of male sexual victimisation: hegemonic masculinity and the social ideal of gender.

Quality appraisals of findings

The appraisals indicated that studies included in the present review suffered from a number of methodological limitations, including: lack of psychometrically validated questionnaires assessing male RMA (e.g. (Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017)); potential over-reliance on college/university students (e.g. 46 of the 57 studies conducted research with student samples, although two of these related to specific populations – naval academy and active therapists); and an over-reliance on the vignette methodology (i.e. used by 43 of the studies included). In relation to this, there was a lack of consideration in many studies regarding the potential influence of the contextual factors, or the mode of delivery (i.e. case report, vs newspaper article, vs unspecified format) inherent to the sexual violence scenarios used that were not the focus of the research. Where this was carried out, the contextual factors that were unrelated to the main hypotheses of research were found to influence observer responses on outcome variables (McCaul et al., 1990). With regards to the qualitative research and mixed methods research, some studies did not adequately locate their epistemological/ontological position and reflexivity (e.g. Anderson et al., 2001). With regards to the quantitative research, limitations of the methods and reporting of the research included: lack of consideration of similarity of comparison groups based on observer gender on potential confounding variables; a lack of reporting of data assumption checks, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to substantiate claims made (e.g. Smith et al. (1988) did not report descriptive statistics for non-significant univariate effects in their analysis).

Empirical findings

Synthesising the empirical findings across the 57 studies is complex. Therefore, this section is divided into five subsections which are informed by the socioecological model (i.e. individual, assault and social support ecology levels, and gender a quality of social settings and practices). Firstly, the influence of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA and blame is considered, as this is the primary concern of the review. Secondly the influence of contextual variables (including victim characteristics and assault characteristics) is considered. Thirdly, observer characteristics that moderate RMA and blame in the context of victim and/or perpetrator gender are discussed. Next, the impact of victim and/or perpetrator gender on cognitions relating to RMA (but not explicitly labelled as rape myths) are examined and finally, a section in which the 'linkages' between gender, RMA and blame that were included in research is presented.

With regards to victim and perpetrator gender in relation to RMA and blame (subsection one) are considered in relation to the *context* in which they were studied, specifically in research that considered them simultaneously, or examined them individually (i.e. victim gender only and perpetrator gender only). This is to allow for any differences in patterns across the research to be identified, which may shed further light on how gender as a context (i.e. considered together or separately) may influence research findings.

Individual level

Victim and perpetrator gender interactions: findings. Smith, Pine and Hawley (1988) identified multivariate univariate and interaction effects for victim and perpetrator gender on a series of items, in response to a vignette depicting a stranger sexual assault with multiple perpetrators, relating to RMA and blame attributions. Although univariate analyses failed to identify a significant main

effect of victim or perpetrator gender (or interaction effect) on attributions of victim responsibility, significant differences were observed on the RMA variables: perceptions of likelihood of being forced into the sex act, encouraging the sex act, perceived stressfulness and degree of pleasure experienced by the victim. Male victims, and victims of female perpetrators were associated with stronger acceptance of mythic beliefs. For example, male victims were perceived as being more encouraging and less likely to have been forced into the sex act than females. Victims of female perpetrators were perceived as more likely to have experienced pleasure and experienced less stress following the incident. Furthermore, a significant interaction between victim and perpetrator gender on perceived stressfulness of the event was identified for the victim: male victims of female perpetrators were perceived as experiencing less stress than all other victim/gender combinations. This suggests that male victims of female perpetrators may encounter more negative stereotypic attitudes and beliefs than other victim and perpetrator gender combinations.

In a similar vein, Gerber, Cronin and Steigman (2004) reported that male victims were blamed more than female victims, and perpetrators of assaults against male victims were attributed less blame than were perpetrators of assault against female victims. Although there was no significant main effect for perpetrator gender (i.e. male and female perpetrators were blamed to the same extent when not accounting for victim gender), an interaction was evident on victim and perpetrator gender. However, this partially contradicted Smith et al.'s (1988) findings: when the victim was male, more blame was attributed to the *female* perpetrator than the male perpetrator. However, there was no difference in the level of blame of male and female perpetrators of female victims.

Rylands and Nesca's (2012) research failed to identify a significant main effect of victim gender on victim blame. However, like Gerber et al. (2004), they identified a significant main effect of victim gender on perpetrator blame: perpetrators of assaults against female victims were attributed greater blame. Perpetrator gender did not impact significantly on either victim or perpetrator blame attributions. Although Walfield (2016) explored the impact of gender on RMA, he did not explore main effects of victim or perpetrator gender or interactions per se. However, his research indicated differences in the level of agreement of male rape myths and female rape myth subtypes: although all but one subscale score mean for FRMA by female participants was less than 4 (representing "strongly disagree"), only one subscale score for male participants scored over 4 ("it wasn't really rape").

Although Smith et al. (1988) and Gerber et al. (2004) identified significant victim-perpetrator gender interactions on RMA and blame, findings from the research examining simple effects (i.e. specific combinations of victim-perpetrator genders) were mixed. Schulze and Koon-Magnin (2017) identified differences in the types of myths which appeared most salient for different combinations. For example, for male-to-female rape myths - most salient subscales was "he didn't mean to" and "she lied", whereas the least salient related to physical resistance. Male rape myths (including myths pertaining to male perpetrators and female perpetrators) and adapted female-to-female rape myth results indicated that participants were more likely to believe "it is impossible for a woman to rape a man", than for a man to rape a man, or a woman to rape a woman. However, respondents were less likely to believe that, "even a big strong man can be raped by a woman than", than "a big strong woman can be

raped by a woman". Respondents were less likely to believe that men raped by a woman (as opposed to another man, or women who were raped by a woman) would "very upset by the incident". In contrast, Carlson (2013) found no differences in the mean RMA scores pertaining to sexual assault scenarios in which victim and perpetrator gender were varied, either in relation to each victim-perpetrator combination, or when findings were collapsed across "same-sex" and "cross-sex" comparisons.

Victim gender only studies: findings. Fifteen studies identified a significant main effect of victim gender ($n = 3$ RMA, $n = 12$ blame) (I. Anderson et al., 2001; I. Anderson & Lyons, 2005; I. Anderson & Quinn, 2009; Coble, 2017; Cruz & DeLamarter, 1988; Davies et al., 2001, 2009; Ford et al., 1998; Granger, 2008; Howard, 1984; Judson et al., 2013; McCaul et al., 1990; Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017; Schneider et al., 1994; Shu, 2015). However, the directions of these findings were contradictory.

The RMA studies (Coble, 2017; Granger, 2008; Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017) identified complex patterns of effect for victim gender, which differed depending on the level of analysis: item level, level of myth category or global score. At the item level Granger (2008) identified that many significant differences were in the direction of lower rejection for male victims than female victims. This was particularly evident with items pertaining to victims' unconscious desire to be raped and the assertion that rape isn't a serious act, which were rejected less for male than female victims. However, this pattern was not uniform and some items (particularly those pertaining to victim vulnerability and victims lying), were rejected less for female victims than male victims. However, differences in patterns of the acceptance of different rape myth *categories* may provide clearer

insights into the role of gender than examining differences at the item level. For example, the influence of the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity for male victims which positions men as “tough” and always actively seeking opportunities for sex (Javaid, 2017c, 2017d), may be more observed in the patterns of categories of rape myths accepted for male victims in Granger’s (2008) research. In contrast, other research has highlighted the important role of perceived foreseeability in predicting blame of female victims (i.e. they should be more aware than males of the dangers of potential victimisation and have taken better steps to avoid their assault) (I. Anderson et al., 2001; McCaul et al., 1990; Tomkins, 2016). The potential impact of these underlying constructs on RMA might be observed in the different patterns of the *types* of myth which were identified as most salient to men and women victims. Within male victim myths, participants tended not to endorse myths relating to significance of rape, or victim deservedness, but were less rejecting of rape myths relating to rape claims and victim resistance and character. However, within female victim myths: participants tended not to endorse “significance of rape” subscale items, but were less rejecting of myths in “rape claims” and “victim deservedness”. This highlights the value of adopting a more nuanced approach to RMA research (i.e. at the level of category of rape myth, rather than global scores alone).

At the global level, Reitz-Krueger et al.’s (2017) identified greater acceptance of rape myths in the direction of female victims. However, Coble (2017) reported low levels of both FRMA and MRMA, but identified that lower levels of agreement were evident for FRMA compared to MRMA. Furthermore, when examining the relationship between gendered RMA and victim and

perpetrator blame, Coble identified that higher levels of both FRMA and MRMA predicted both victim and perpetrator blaming attitudes, even after controlling for variables identified as potential confounds in the literature (e.g. observer characteristics such as age, and gender-role attitudes). Coble (2017) reported that there were no significant differences in effect sizes between male RMA and female RMA and victim and perpetrator blame, suggesting rape myths for men and women exerted similar influence on victim and perpetrator blame attributions. However, in contrast with the findings relating to RMA Coble (2017) found that female victims were blamed less than were male victims. Furthermore, although gendered RMA predicted perpetrator blame, victim gender alone did not influence perpetrator blame attributions. In combination, this suggests that the relationship between gender, RMA and blame is not straightforward. Indeed, the complexity of the relationship between victim gender and RMA and blaming attitudes was elucidated in Granger's (2008) research, which employed a repeated measures design, and explicitly asked participants about the role they felt that victim gender had played in their responses. Despite 49.5% of sample stating that victim gender was not important, 31.8% stating somewhat important, 9.1% stating important, and only 4.3% and 2.7% stating very and extremely important respectively, clear differences in participants patterns of responses were attributable to victim gender. This suggests that participants are not necessarily aware of the role that victim gender plays in shaping their attitudes towards victims.

As indicated earlier in this chapter, studies operationalised rape myth acceptance in different ways. In particular, some research (Chapleau et al., 2008) measures RMA as a global or subscale score from a questionnaire, whereas other research examines a series of individual myth items

simultaneously (e.g. Berry, 1991), as multivariate dependent variables using statistical techniques such as Multivariate Analysis of Variance. No clear pattern in findings was identified based on approach adopted, suggesting that contradictions in the RMA findings based on victim gender are not necessarily based on the analytical strategies adopted in quantitative research.

Findings of the impact of victim gender on blame attributions were contradictory. Some of the research, such as Schneider et al. (1994), found no significant main effects of victim gender. However, roughly half of the studies which identified significant main effects found they were in the direction that male victims were blamed more than female victims (I. Anderson & Quinn, 2009; Davies et al., 2001, 2009; Judson et al., 2013; Shu, 2015), whereas the remaining studies found the opposite to be the case and female victims were judged to be more responsible for their assaults (Cruz & DeLamarter, 1988; Ford et al., 1998; Howard, 1984; McCaul et al., 1990). This lack of consensus is complicated by findings regarding the impact of victim gender on attributions to the perpetrator: whereas Howard (1984) found that more blame was attributed to attackers of male than female victims on 3 out of 4 dimensions of blame, Shu (2015) found less blame was attributed to the attackers of male rather than female perpetrators. This may suggest a see-saw type relationship between victim blame and perpetrator blame. However, this does not explain the overall differences per se. Furthermore, Shu's (2015) research suggests that the route between victim gender and blame attributions is not straight-forward; Indirect mediation analysis revealed that the relationship was mediated through gender 'stereotypicality'. That is, when the victim was female, the perpetrator was blamed

more (and victim deemed more credible, perpetrator more likely to be guilty, offence perceived as less likely to be consensual).

The reviewed literature suggests that the *source* to which blame is attributed may be important when understanding the role of victim gender. This may be explained in part, by previous research which has suggested differences in the degree to which male and female victims of crime are attributed characterological and behavioural blame (Howard, 1984). Characterological blame refers to blame attributed to relatively nonmodifiable sources of an individual (i.e. victim character) whereas behavioural blame refers to modifiable sources (i.e. victim behaviour) (Janoff-Bulman, 1979). Myths that were accepted more in relation to female victims may be indicative of character-related blame (i.e. victim propensity to lie). Indeed, in research combining scenarios involving victims of rape and victims of robbery, Howard (1984) found that more characterological blame was attributed to female victims, and more behavioural blame was attributed to male victims (although victim gender did not influence blame to the offender). Furthermore, Tomkin's (2016) analysis of responses to open-ended questions in a survey identified that blameworthiness in relation to female victims was based on the degree to which they should have been able to anticipate and prevent their experiences of sexual violence and failing to do this resulted in the attribution of blame to their character. These beliefs appeared to be informed by female rape myths regarding foreseeability. In contrast, male victims were expected to have been able to prevent their assault through physical force and resistance (rather than pre-emptive strategies expected of female victims), which appeared to relate to greater behavioural blame of male victims. These beliefs appeared to be informed by male rape myths pertaining to

masculinity. Furthermore, Tomkins (2016) highlighted that these perceptions of male and female victims were underpinned by heteronormative expectations, which guided participants' sexual scripts, which in turn guided judgements regarding what male and female agents in a situation should be expected to anticipate and how they should be expected to respond. These findings are congruent with Bond and colleagues' conceptualisation of gender as context, rather than merely an individual attribute (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017).

However, findings of Anderson's (1999) and Anderson, Beattie and Spencer's (2001) research indicate that patterns of blame (i.e. behavioural and characterological) and the attributional processes underlying this (i.e. the use of covariance information) in relation to victim (and observer) gender are complex. Anderson (1999) examined the ways in which male and female observers blamed male and female victims in conversation data stimulated by a newspaper style extract detailing an incident of either male or female rape. She identified that female victims were blamed more on both characterological and behavioural blame by both male and female observers. Furthermore, although men blamed men and women victims in roughly similar ways on behavioural and characterological blame, and women blame men and women victims equally on characterological blame, both men and women made more behavioural attributions to female victims. Anderson et al.'s (2001) research indicated that covariation information (information that is related to a sexual assault, but is not pertinent to the current incident) was used equally in conversations of both male and female rape and formed a meta-commentary in which participants recognised how covariation information could be used to blame victims, but that

they were resisting this. This process was used by participants to demonstrate that they were logical, rational and reasonable individuals, and balanced their judgements of accountability with of the victim, with their own accountability. Victims were identified as accountable when they were perceived as the antithesis of logical, rational and reasonable (i.e. 'stupid'), leading to blame attributions. Anderson et al.'s (2001) research therefore sheds light on Anderson's (1999) findings; greater behavioural blame was attributed to female victims, and this was indicative of judgements that victims had behaved foolishly and were therefore accountable to some extent for the sexual violence they had experienced.

Tomkins (2016) found that women victims were expected to be more able to anticipate and prevent their own sexual victimisation. However, this led to a dilemma whereby female participants tried to balance their exceptions of risk management and individual responsibility, and avoiding characterological victim blame of female victims. Cruz and DeLamarter (1988) decomposed blame attributions into three types, and found no impact of victim gender on characterological, behavioural or external blame perpetrator judgements, but female victims received more characterological blame than did male victims, but were similar in judgements regarding behavioural and external blame attributions.

The differences across blame attributed to different sources by victim gender may reflect changes in attitudes towards female victims of sexual violence across the research. That is, research conducted in the 1980s identified greater characterological blame attributed to female victims (i.e. Cruz & DeLamarter, 1988; Howard, 1984) but changes in attitudes toward female victims may be evident by the Noughties (i.e. Anderson, 1999) in which greater emphasis is

placed on the sources of blame that are perceived as modifiable (i.e. behaviour) than non-modifiable (i.e. character). However, speculations to this end should be made tentatively, as this research differed in several respects regarding methodology and methods which may also have affected the results found.

Finally, contradictory victim gender findings may arise owing to differences in the methodological quality of the research. Although overall quality rating did not appear to vary consistently with victim gender findings (e.g. in direction or statistical significance of results), a number of specific methodological limitations do appeared influential. This includes how male rape myth acceptance is operationalised and measured. For example, it is notable that one of the studies (Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017), whose measurement of male rape myths was more limited in comparison to the measurement of female rape myths (i.e. only including 3 item unvalidated scale, where perpetrator gender was constrained to be female) contradicted other contemporary research findings in identifying that female victims were blamed more than male victims.

One serious methodological issue which may impact on victim gender comparisons, is how research handled perpetrator gender. That is, studies in this section only *explicitly* varied victim gender in their designs. However, their handling of perpetrator gender differed drastically. Some studies controlled for perpetrator gender by keeping perpetrators male in all vignettes used (e.g. D. L. Burt & DeMello, 2002). In contrast, others constrained perpetrator gender within a heterosexual frame (i.e. male perpetrator of female rape, female perpetrator of male rape) (Beyers, Leonard, Mays, & Rosén, 2000). Others still (e.g. Rosenstein, 2015) used scales that constrained perpetrators to be male for female victims (e.g. IRMAS short form by Payne et al., 1999), but allowed

perpetrators to be both male and female for male victims (e.g. Melanson's (1999) MRMA scale). Therefore, apparent contradictions in studies' victim gender findings, may reflect the confounding effects of perpetrator gender and/or attitudes towards heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Perpetrator gender

In one study, although a main effect of perpetrator gender was identified on victim blame (and reactions to the perpetrator), descriptive statistics were not reported because the main effect was qualified by an interaction with participant gender and victim sexual orientation (Davies et al., 2006). However, the findings from the other studies were supportive of each other: in each case, victims of female perpetrators were blamed more for their assault (Davies & Boden, 2012; Parkinson, 2014), and their perpetrators blamed less (Parkinson, 2014). This pattern was also evident when considering global scores on RMA, and even RMA subtypes. Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1992) identified a multivariate main effect of perpetrator gender on RMA: means suggest this was in the direction of greater acceptance of myths in relation to female perpetrators than male perpetrators. A significant multivariate interaction effect of perpetrator sex on myth type was also identified, with post hoc tests revealing significant differences between male and female perpetrators on all except one type of myth (male rape is not possible; accepted by 22% of male participants and 18% of female participants). Although the strength of the effect varied, the direction was the same across all myth types: participants' rejection of myths was stronger when a man was raped by another man as compared to a woman. For example, 23% of men and 9% of women agreed that a strong man cannot be raped by another man, whereas 30% of men and 18% of women agreed that a strong man

cannot be raped by a woman. When the perpetrator was male 22% of men and 5% of women agreed with the myth that most men are to blame for not being more careful. However, when the perpetrator was female 44% of men and 12% of women agreed with this item. Twenty-two percent of men and 8% of women agreed that a man should be able to escape when a perpetrator was male, but this rose to 9% of men and 27% when the perpetrator was female. When exploring the myths which were least likely to be agreed with, a similar pattern was identified: 4% of men and 3% of women agreed a man raped by another man would not be upset by the incident, where 35% and 22% of men and women agreed with this statement when the perpetrator was female. 7% of men and 2% of women agreed a man raped by another man would not need counselling, but 22% of men and 13% of women agreed when the perpetrator was female. This may suggest that at least for male victims, RMA and victim blame may be moderated by perpetrator gender. However, with little research to draw on to know whether this would be the case for female victims too (as so few studies examine female perpetrator female victimisation).

Although few studies identified significant main or interaction effects for victim and perpetrator gender on RMA or blame attributions, many did identify significant effects between these variables on other attribution dimensions (e.g. perceptions of pleasure experienced, consent given, victim credibility, perpetrator guilt) or other independent variables (i.e. other contextual or observer-related variables which were not specifically labelled as either RMA or blame per se). These factors are considered in the next two sections of this review.

Contextual factors manipulated in the research. Research manipulated a range of contextual factors in relation to victim and/or perpetrator gender, which

will be considered in relation to victim characteristics (i.e. individual level of the socioecological system; Anders and Christopher, 2011) and assault characteristics (i.e. micro-system of the socioecological system; Anders and Christopher, 2011).

Victim characteristics. Victim characteristics examined in the research included: victim gender role conformity ($n = 3$); victim behaviour leading up to or during the incident ($n = 2$); perceived social support of the victim ($n = 1$); victim sexual orientation ($n = 12$); victim sexual experience ($n = 1$); victim attractiveness ($n = 1$) and; victim race ($n = 1$).

Victim sexual orientation. This represented a key variable manipulated in the studies, either in relation to victim gender ($n = 9$) or perpetrator gender and male victims specifically ($n = 4$).

Burt and DeMello (2002) found that perpetrator blame was significantly lower for homosexual male victims than heterosexual male victims, or female victims (heterosexual or homosexual). However, this relationship was influenced by observers' homophobic attitudes. Homophobic participants tended to blame the homosexual male victim more than other victim gender/sexual orientation combinations and more than non-homophobic participants. Furthermore, homophobic participants tended to blame the perpetrator in the homosexual male victim less than did non-homophobic respondents. This suggests that gender and sexual orientation are particularly salient with regards homophobia, and particularly in relation to male victims. This highlights the different ways in which attitudinal variables can be primed and studied in RMAS and blame attribution research: either explicitly as a feature of observer characteristics (see observer

related variables in section below) or implicitly through manipulation of contextual information such as victim-sexual orientation.

Wakelin and Long (2003) did not find a significant main effect of victim sexual orientation, however, they did identify a significant interaction between victim sexual orientation and victim gender; gay male victims received more blame than did heterosexual male victims and gay female victims. Heterosexual victims were blamed more than heterosexual male and gay female victims. In all cases, the perpetrator of the sexual assault was described as male. Significant interactions between victim gender and sexual orientation were also identified on character blame (but not behavioural blame); female victims who were heterosexual were seen as having more unconscious desire to be raped than either gay female or heterosexual male victims. Gay males too were perceived as having greater unconscious desire than lesbians or male heterosexual victims. They also found that chance factors were perceived as more to blame when the victim was a gay male than a heterosexual male, although no differences were identified between gay and straight female victims. Participants rated perpetrators of gay men less responsible than perpetrators of lesbian or heterosexual male victims, and perceived gay men and women victims as having had greater power to avoid the situation than heterosexual male or female victims. Wakelin and Long (2003) also identified a further three-way interaction with participant gender. Women participants attributed a higher percentage of blame to gay male and female victims than heterosexual victims, whereas male participants attributed a higher percentage of blame to heterosexual female victims than male victims. Lawler also failed to find a significant main effect of victim sexual orientation, or an interaction with victim gender. However, a three-

way interaction with observer sexual orientation was identified (which was not examined in Davies, Smith and Rogers' (2009) research); gay men attributed more blame to gay male victims and straight female victims than straight male victims and female gay victims. The perpetrators were male in all the scenarios used. However, similar patterns of findings were identified in relation to manipulations of perpetrator gender and male victims. Davies and Boden (2012) found that more blame was attributed toward heterosexual than gay victims (all victims were male). However, this was qualified by an interaction with perpetrator gender: whereby greater blame was attributed toward heterosexual victims of female perpetrators than heterosexual victims of male perpetrators, or gay male victims of female perpetrators. Furthermore, a three-way interaction was identified with observer gender. Although female participants' blame attributions scores appeared unaffected by victim sexual orientation or perpetrator gender, male participants' attributions varied greatly across combinations of these factors. Male participants blamed gay victims of male perpetrators more than heterosexual victims of male perpetrators and heterosexual victims of male perpetrators and gay victims of female perpetrators. They also blamed heterosexual victims of female perpetrators more than heterosexual victims of male perpetrators and gay victims of female perpetrators.

Davies, Pollard and Archer's (2006) research exploring perceptions of male victims, identified a significant two-way interaction between victim sexual orientation and perpetrator gender on victim blame (direction not specified) but not perpetrator blame attributions, which was qualified by a three-way interaction with participant gender. Again, although female participants' scores were unaffected by victim sexual orientation and perpetrator gender (and were all lower

than male participants' scores), male participants' scores varied across combinations of these factors. Specifically, male participants blame the gay victim more than the heterosexual victim when the perpetrator was male. However, they blamed the heterosexual victim more when they were assaulted by a female compared to a male perpetrator.

Davies, Pollard and Archer (2001) found that gay male victims and heterosexual male victims were blamed more than lesbian and straight female victims. Furthermore, (male-perpetrated) attacks on gay males were considered less severe than attacks on either male or female heterosexual victims, or gay female victims. Ford et al. (1998) also found that heterosexual female victims were perceived as more at fault than homosexual female victims in male perpetrated sexual assaults. However, no significant differences were identified between heterosexual and homosexual male victims (main effects indicated that male victims were blamed less overall than female victims). In combination, these findings provide support for the *sexual preference effect* (Davies & Boden, 2012). This effect refers to the phenomenon whereby greater blame is attributed to a victim (and less to a perpetrator) in a scenario in which the victim is assaulted by a member of the gender group they are attracted to.

However, findings regarding the impact of victim/perpetrator gender and victim sexual orientation were by no means uniform. Davies, Smith and Rogers (2009) identified no significant main or effect of victim sexual orientation, or interaction with victim gender on victim or perpetrator blame attributions. Furthermore, although Sheridan (2005) found that sexual assault of heterosexual males (by male perpetrators) was perceived as less common than any other victim gender/sexual orientation, she identified no corresponding effect on

perceptions of the seriousness of sexual assault. Furthermore, examining a broader array of outcomes, Vincent (Vincent, 2009) found no significant interaction between victim gender and sexual orientation on victim responsibility attributions, or perceived victim trauma, control over the incident, preventability of the attack or believability of the incident. Although Parkinson (2014) identified a significant main effect of victim sexual orientation on victim blame, no interaction with perpetrator gender was identified (i.e. gay men were blamed more than heterosexual men). However, Parkinson (2014) did identify a significant interaction between victim sexual orientation and perpetrator gender on perceptions of severity of assault: a male-perpetrated assault against a heterosexual male victim were considered more severe than assaults perpetrated against a homosexual male victim. However, assaults perpetrated by a female were viewed as similarly severe regardless of victim sexual orientation. This suggests that in relation to male victims, sexual orientation may influence victim blame attributions to a greater extent than perpetrator gender, but victim gender may interact with sexual orientation to affect other perceptions of sexual violence.

Victim conformity to gender-role stereotypes. Victim gender-role conformity was manipulated in a variety of ways, including: varying gender stereotypicality of the male and female victims' occupation (engineer versus nurse) (Shu, 2015); manipulating the facial masculinity of (fictional) images of male victims of sexual violence (masculine vs feminine features) (Parkinson, 2014); varying victim behaviour during an assault to correspond to the 'ideal' sex roles for males (active) and females (passive) (Cruz & DeLamarter, 1988).

Shu (2015) and Parkinson's (2014) findings were broadly supportive of each other, and indicated that victims who were more gender stereotypical were

blamed less than gender atypical victims. Shu (2015) found that when the victim was described as a female nurse, the perpetrator was blamed more, the victim was perceived as more credible, and the offence more likely to be perceived as non-consensual than in any other gender/occupation combinations. Furthermore, gender stereotypicality was identified as mediating these relationships between victim gender and outcomes. Parkinson's research (2014) identified that male victims with feminine features were blamed to a greater extent when their perpetrator was female compared to male. However, no differences were identified for the male victims with masculine features. This suggests that perpetrator gender may be taken into consideration when determining gender stereotypicality and blame attributions for male victims.

In contrast, Cruz and DeLamarter (1988) found that the impact of gender-role stereotypicality was only evident when a third factor was considered (perceived similarity of the victim and observer). In the similar conditions, passive males received more external blame than active males, whereas gender-role stereotypicality in the similar condition had no influence on blame attributions for female victims. However, in the dissimilar condition, passive females received more blame than active females, whereas there was no difference in relation to male victims. This suggests that the influence of gender and gender stereotypicality on blame attributions is influenced by how similar an observer may feel the victim is to them.

However, some research failed to identify significant relationships between sex role perceptions of survivors' masculinity and femininity and RMA, arguing that more complex relationships may exist than simple pairwise comparisons can reveal (Spencer, 1996; Spencer & Tan, 1999).

Other victim characteristics. Seaman, Werlinger and Wolter (2001) identified that unattractive males (in comparison to attractive males and female victims) were perceived as more provoking of, and more likely to have initiated the sex acts experienced. Davies, Pollard and Archer (2006) found a significant main effect of victim sexual experience; victims with greater sexual experience were blamed more than victims with no sexual experience. This was the case regardless of perpetrator gender or victim sexual orientation. So, this view may still be relevant to male victims, although it has historically been associated with female victims in relation to sexual double standard beliefs and continues to identify their prevalence across cultures and contexts (e.g. Jamshed & Kamal, 2019). This highlights the communalities in perceptions of male and female victims, and may indicate that the development of theory in silos regarding male and female rape (Graham, 2006) may mean that other communalities (as well as differences) may not have been fully explored.

Only one study explore the role that victim race played in shaping perceptions of blameworthiness; However, Piatak (2015) found no significant main effects of victim race or interactions with victim gender on blame attributions.

Assault characteristics. The research manipulated factors relating to a range of assault characteristics, including: victim status ($n = 2$); victim-perpetrator relationship ($n = 2$); offender motivation ($n = 1$); impact of type of victimisation ($n = 3$); severity of victimisation ($n = 1$) and; impact of the crime ($n = 1$).

Victim-perpetrator relationship. In two studies (Ayala et al., 2015; Carlson, 2013) the victim-perpetrator relationship was manipulated as an individual variable in relation to victim and victim and perpetrator gender. One study manipulated victim-perpetrator relationship only in relation to a male-to-female

rape scenario. The findings of the research are mixed. Carlson examined the relationship between victim and perpetrator gendered RMA and level of agreement with the statement that the incident of rape should be reported. Although agreement with the decision to report the incident to the police was high across all scenarios (i.e. stranger rape, acquaintance rape, date rape) and victim-perpetrator gender combinations, slight differences were identified. A consistent pattern was identified across all victim-perpetrator gender combinations (through comparison of descriptive statistics, rather than inferential testing) that level of agreement with decision to report was highest in the stranger scenario, followed closely by the acquaintance scenario and the lowest level of agreement evident for the dating scenario. Within victim-perpetrator gender combinations, the relationship between RMA and agreement with the decision to report to the police was complex. Patterns of correlations between the two variables indicated that RMA was more salient to agreement with reporting decisions in relation to some victim-perpetrator gender combinations than other. For example, no significant correlations between RMA and decision to report any of the three scenarios (stranger, acquaintance or dating) were identified in the male-to-female rape or male-on-male rape victim-perpetrator gender combinations. However, correlations indicating that as RMA scores increased agreement with the decision to report the incident decreased, were identified in the female-on-male rape and female on female rape scenarios. This indicates that the influence of RMA on agreement with reporting decisions may be greater in relation to scenarios involving female than male perpetrators. However, this influence was not uniform, as the correlations between RMA and reporting-decision agreement were identified in relation to different victim-perpetrator relationships: in the

female-on-male rape the significant correlation was identified in relation to date rape only, whereas in the female-to-female scenario significant correlations were identified in the stranger and acquaintance rape scenarios, but not the date rape scenario. This indicates that the relationship between victim and perpetrator gender, RMA and observer attributional is complex. Furthermore, characteristics of the assault (i.e. victim-perpetrator relationship) may interact with victim and/or perpetrator gender to differentially affect perceptions of an incident as an offence warranting reporting to the police. In contrast, Ayala et al. (Ayala et al., 2015) found no significant impact of the victim-perpetrator relationship on victim or perpetrator blame attributions, and no significant multivariate interactions between victim-perpetrator relationship and victim and/or perpetrator gender and/or RMA (although significant interactions between RMA and victim and perpetrator gender were identified - as discussed in previous section). This suggests that victim-perpetrator gender and RMA may be more influential in blame attribution processes than with contextual information such as victim-perpetrator relationship. However, victim-perpetrator relationship, RMA and victim-perpetrator gender may be more influential with respect to other cognitive processes (e.g. reporting decisions) than blame attributions per se.

Felson and Palmore (2018) examined the influence of the victim-perpetrator relationship only in relation to a scenario describing male-to-female rape, however, this too may shed light on the influence of victim-perpetrator gender on blame attributions. They identified that observers were more likely to assign both direct and indirect blame to the female victim of a stranger rape than an acquaintance rape. However, this finding may be influenced by the nature of the scenario: which involved the victim accepting a lift from either a

stranger/acquaintance in their car. Owing to gender role stereotypes and foreseeability may explain why female victims of male perpetrators would be blamed more in a stranger rather than acquaintance rape, when the opposite is typically observed (e.g. Anders, 2007). This highlights the potential influence of situational variables in relation to the role victim and perpetrator gender may play in shaping attributional processes.

Victim behaviour prior to and during assault. The discussion of Cruz and DeLamarter's (1988) findings earlier in this chapter suggests that victim behaviour (e.g. passive vs active) may influence blame attributions. Indeed, although qualified by the interaction described above, participants tended to blame passive victims more than active victims. The findings from two further studies (Howard, 1984; Tomkins, 2016) supports this. Howard (1984) found that the influence of victim gender on victim blame attributions was salient only in the context of a victim hitch-hiking rather than jogging, and resulted in perpetrators of male victims being blamed more than perpetrators of female victims. This may be due to factors such as foreseeability that have been identified as more salient to female victims than male victims (Tomkins, 2016). Tomkins (2016) explored the perceptions of male and female participants separately in the quantitative elements of her mixed methods research. She identified that female participants held male perpetrators less responsible in an alcohol condition (where both the victim and perpetrator were consuming alcohol) compared to a soda condition. Male participants viewed victims in the alcohol condition as having contributed more to, more likely to have chosen and be responsible, accountable and blameworthy for their assault than victims in the soda condition. Male participants in the alcohol condition also rated perpetrators as being less aware of

consequences and consent, and less responsible than perpetrators in the soda condition.

Victim status, crime type and injury. Burczyk and Standing (1989) present participants with a profile description of a male or female which either indicated they had been a victim of sexual violence or did not. They found that victim gender and victim status interacted to influence participants' evaluations of the victim's profile. Specifically, that profiles of female victims were evaluated more positively than either female non-victims, or male victims or non-victims. However, no differences were evident between male victims and non-victims were identified. This pattern was the same regardless of observer gender. This suggests that gender and victim status influence perceptions of the same profile traits and therefore influence evaluative judgements.

Four studies (Beyers et al., 2000; Felson & Palmore, 2018; Howard, 1984; Schneider et al., 1994) examined the role of crime type on perceptions of victims and perpetrators. Felson and Palmore (2018) found that contrary to expectations, victims of rape were blamed less than victims of robbery. Within this, observers also favoured assigning indirect, rather than direct blame. However, this effect was not considered in relation to victim or perpetrator gender. In contrast, Howard (1984) explored victim gender and crime type in combination and identified that in a hitch-hiking scenario, female victims of rape and robbery were blame more in comparison to male victims of rape and robbery. However, female victims of rape were blamed less than female victims of robbery (no significant difference between male victims reported). Furthermore, rape was perceived overall as more serious than robbery. However, these significant differences disappeared

when gender and crime type were considered in relation to jogging rather than hitch-hiking.

Beyers et al. (2000) examined the influence of the type of violence within the context of dating violence (i.e. sexual, emotional or physical), and the severity of the abuse (high versus low). They found no significant interaction between victim gender and type of abuse on victim blame or responsibility attributions. However, a significant effect of victim gender and type of abuse was identified on perceptions of the severity of abuse between male and female observers. When the victim was female, there were no differences in severity ratings between male and female observers. However, when the victim was male, male observers rated the abuse as less serious than female observers.

Schneider et al. (1994) examined the impact of injury type (physical, psychological or vague description of both) on blame attributions. They found no main effect of injury type, or two-way interaction between injury type and victim gender, or three-way interaction with observer gender. However, they did identify a three-way interaction was identified on recommended prison length, with male observers recommending longer prison terms for assaults on male than female victims when the trauma was primarily physical or unspecified, but assigning longer prison terms to female victims' perpetrators when the harm was primarily psychological. In contrast, female observers assigned longer prison terms to perpetrators of female rather than male victims, regardless of the type of injury.

Role observer is instructed to adopt. One study (Coble, 2017) examined the impact of the role of mock-juror on decision-making. Coble (2017) anticipated that participants in a juror condition, would use more schematic rather than data-driven information processing approaches, which would result in greater

influence of extra-legal information and greater blame victim blame and less perpetrator blame. However, Coble (2017) found that jury membership did not predict either victim or perpetrator blame, and neither did it moderate the impact of victim gender, level of resistance, victim-perpetrator relationship or gender attitudes on either victim or perpetrator blame.

Observer characteristics investigated in relation to RMA and blame attributions. A range of observer characteristics were measured and explored in relation to either RMA or blame attributions. A large number of studies ($n = 47$) examined the influence of one or more demographic variables on either RMA or blame attributions. These variables included gender, age, education, income, years of practice (in relation to practicing counsellors), race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and marital status. Seventeen studies examined the influence of attitudinal variables, including gender-role attitudes, sexism, homophobia, BJW, attitudes toward punishment, political and religious views, socially desirable responding and empathy. Eight studies also examined the impact of different indicators of sexual assault awareness on RMA and victim blame including: attendance of training programmes ($n = 3$) and/or either having experienced sexual violence or knowing someone who has experienced sexual violence ($n = 7$).

Observer gender. Observer gender was the observer characteristic most commonly examined in relation to RMA and blame attributions ($n = 35$) (I. Anderson, 2004; I. Anderson & Bissell, 2011; I. Anderson & Lyons, 2005; I. Anderson & Quinn, 2009; Berry, 1991; Beyers et al., 2000; Carlson, 2013; Chapleau et al., 2008; Coble, 2017; Davies, Gilston, & Rogers, 2012; Davies et al., 2001, 2006, 2009; Doude, 2008; Felson & Palmore, 2018; Ford et al., 1998;

Gerber et al., 2004; Granger, 2008; Howard, 1984; James, 2018; Judson et al., 2013; Kahn et al., 2011; McCaul et al., 1990; D. Mitchell, Angelone, Kohlberger, & Hirschman, 2009; Parkinson, 2014; Piatak, 2015; Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017; Rosenstein & Carroll, 2015; Rylands & Nesca, 2012; R. E. Smith et al., 1988; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992; Trangsrud, 2010; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Walfield, 2016; White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002). This is somewhat unsurprising given the role that observer gender has played in the feminist perspectives underpinning RMA and blame attribution research (Fisher & Pina, 2013; Maxwell & Scott, 2014; Turchik et al., 2016).

This review identified that male participants, in comparison to females, were typically more accepting of both male and female rape myths, and more blaming of victims and less blaming of perpetrators. This was most commonly identified through the comparison of global scores of RMA or blame (e.g. Coble, 2017). However, similar patterns were identified when a more nuanced approach was adopted. For example, Granger (2008) examined the role of observer gender in relation to four categories of rape myth in relation to male and female victimisation. She identified that male observers were more accepting of all four myth types (significance of rape, claims of rape, victim deservedness, and victim resistance and character), for both male and female victims. This research did not examine the role of perpetrator gender in relation to these four myth categories. However, male RMA research by Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1992) identified that participant gender and perpetrator gender and categories of rape myths interacted to influence RMA. Perpetrator and participant gender interacted on the “most men who are raped ... are somewhat to blame for not being more careful” (careful myth); “most men who

are raped... are very upset by the incident" (upset myth; reverse scored) and "most men who are raped... do not need counselling after the incident." (Counselling myth) myths. On each myth the pattern was similar: male and female participants' scores were higher in the female perpetrator condition than the male perpetrator condition, with the male participants in the female perpetrator conditions' scores the highest (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992).

The patterns identified in relation to observer gender were not uniform across all research. Indeed, three over-arching patterns were observed, firstly patterns that indicated that participant gender was independently influencing of victim and perpetrator blame and RMA; a second pattern that indicated that participant gender was relevant only in consideration with victim and/or perpetrator gender; and thirdly, a pattern that indicated that participant gender played no role in shaping either RMA or blame attributions.

Participant gender as acting independently. Research by fourteen studies identified main effects of participant gender, and either no or weak interactions with other variables, suggesting that participant gender played an influential role in RMA or blame attributions (I. Anderson & Lyons, 2005; I. Anderson & Quinn, 2009; Berry, 1991; Burczyk & Standing, 1989; Davies et al., 2012; Felson & Palmore, 2018; Gerber et al., 2004; Granger, 2008; Howard, 1984; Parkinson, 2014; Rosenstein, 2015; Rylands & Nesca, 2012; Wakelin & Long, 2003; Walfield, 2016). For example, research by Rosenstein (2015) found that women reported lower levels of both female and male RMA, and Parkinson (2014, study 1) found that female participants blame perpetrators more and victims less than did male participant. However, the consistency of this finding differed across

studies; Felson and Palmore (2018) found that although men were more likely than women to assign direct blame to victims, men and women did not differ in the amount of indirect blame they assigned. Furthermore, Howard's (1984) research found that in a hitch-hiking rape scenario, men were more likely to blame the attacker than did women. In a second study by Parkinson (2004), a main effect of participant gender was found to be qualified by a significant interaction effect between participant gender, perpetrator gender and male victim facial masculinity, this was found to be driven the interaction between perpetrator gender and facial masculinity. This change in the pattern of findings across Parkinson's (2004) studies are likely arising to the changes in the methodology she used (owing to the recognition of the limitations of the first study), including a resized photograph of the fictional victim to enhance the salience of facial characteristics to victim blame attributions. This highlights the impact of vignette methodology and format of information delivery on subsequent perceptions of and attitudes towards victims and perpetrators of sexual violence. Furthermore, whereas some research indicated a strong relationship between participant gender and RMA and victim-blame (e.g. Davies, Gilston and Rogers, 2012), other research identified only weak relationships (e.g. Anderson and Lyons, 2005 between participant gender and victim-blame).

Although the research identified above explored the impact of gender as a binary variable, Burczyk and Standing (1989) examined sex-role identity somewhat differently. They found that observers classified by the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) as feminine and androgynous did not differ from masculine and undifferentiated individuals in their evaluation of a character description in which victimisation status was manipulated (either a victim of sexual assault or

not). However, they found that masculine and undifferentiated participants rated victims more positively than non-victims.

Observer gender as acting in combination with victim and/or perpetrator gender. Research examining the influence of both victim and perpetrator gender on RMA or blame attributions identified complex patterns with participant gender. Smith et al. (1988) found no significant main effect of observer gender on victim responsibility attributions. However, they identified that female observers endorsed a range of rape myths to a lesser extent than male observers, including the level of stress and pleasure perceived as being experienced by a victim as a result of rape. Also, they identified a three-way interaction between victim, perpetrator and observer gender on perceived pleasurable-ness of the incident for the victim: most pleasure was attributed by male observers to male victims of female perpetrators. However, Trangsrud (2010) identified a two-way interaction between observer gender, and perpetrator gender only (i.e. no other two-way or three-way interactions with victim gender). The results of the study indicated that male observers assigned more victim blame to victims of male rather than female perpetrators. However, female observers' blame scores did not differ by perpetrator gender. Also, observer sex ceased to be a significant predictor after sexism scores (benevolent and hostile) were taken into account.

Research that examined the influence of victim and perpetrator gender combinations through simple effects analysis observed some differences across male and female observers, and some similarities in RMA and blame attributions: Carlson (2013) found that male observers recorded higher global scores of RMA for male-to-female and male-to-male conditions than female observers. However, there were no significant differences identified between male and female

observers' RMA for female-to-male and female-to-female conditions. Furthermore, differences in acceptance of individual rape myths could be discerned across victim-perpetrator gender combinations. Specifically, male observers were more accepting of the "it wasn't really rape" and "she lied" sub-myths than female observers in the male-to-female rape myth condition. Male observers were more accepting of the "it wasn't really rape" compared to female observers for the female-to-female rape and male-to-male rape conditions. Two studies, Anderson and Bissell (2011) and Chapleau et al. (2008) examined the differences in acceptance of different types of myth within female victimisation and male victimisation respectively. They identified that participant gender influenced the degree to which categories of myth were accepted. Specifically, men endorsed the sex-role stereotyping scale and victim subscale of the RMAS (M. R. Burt, 1980) than did women in relation to female victims (I. Anderson & Bissell, 2011). In relation to male victims, Chapleau et al. (2008) identified a hierarchy of acceptance of myth types: male victims endorsed blame myths the most, followed by trauma and then denial myths. However, female observers endorsed the different myths types to the same extent (and all lower than male observers). Furthermore, Doude (2008) found that responsibility attributions interacted with participant gender on three of the four victim-perpetrator gender combinations, including: male-to--male rape, female-to-female rape, and female-to-male rape. In each case, male observers rated the perpetrator as less responsible than females. Furthermore, both male and female observers rated the female offender in the male victim as the least responsible, and the male offenders against the female victims as most responsible. Simple effects analysis indicated that female participants found the victim more responsible in the male-

to-female condition, whereas male participants found the victim more responsible in the female-to-female condition. Female participants found the male victim of female offenders to be the least responsible, whereas male participants found the female victim of male offenders to be the least responsible. Female participants were least likely to state alcohol was responsible for the abuse in the male-male condition, whereas male participants were least likely to state alcohol was responsible in the female-female condition. Both male and female participants were most likely to state alcohol was responsible in the male-female condition. Female participants were more likely than male participants to say that alcohol was responsible in conditions involving female offenders (for both male and female victims) and incidents with male offenders and female victims. Furthermore, male observers were less likely than female observers to label the incident as rape in all the victim-perpetrator conditions, except the male-to-female rape condition (where male and female observers responded similarly). This may support the notion of the “real rape” stereotype, and that male-to-female rape is considered to be more “real” than other victim-perpetrator gender combinations. James (2018) also examined the role of alcohol and perceptions of responsibility and attitudes toward victims in relation to victim and perpetrator gender. Although she identified no significant main effect of observer gender on victim blame, an interaction between observer gender and victim-perpetrator gender combination was identified. Female observers held more victim blame in the female-to-male vignette than male observers. In comparison, no differences were identified between male-to-female, male-to-male or female-to-female conditions by observer gender. James (2018) also identified that observer gender influenced alcohol and consent attitudes, with men evincing more negative views that

women. Furthermore, men held more negative attitudes towards recovery from sexual assault, although these were not affected by victim-perpetrator gender combination.

In contrast to studies that identified that female observers' RMA may be higher than male observers' in some victim-perpetrator combinations, studies which examined victim gender only revealed a relatively consistent pattern of results. Specifically, that male observers' RMA and victim-blame scores were higher than female observers (Davies et al., 2001; Ford et al., 1998; D. Mitchell et al., 2009; Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017). For example, Ford et al. (1998) identified that men perceived a female victim to be more at fault than a male victim, although female observers' scores were similar across male and female victims. However, inconsistencies within this, with regards to which victim gender was attributed more blame, or was associated with greater RMA were identified. In support of Ford et al.'s (1998) study which indicated that male observers attributed greater blame to female victims, Reitz-Krueger et al.'s study (2017) indicated that both female and male rape myths were accepted more by male than female observers, but that overall female victim myths were less strongly rejected by either men or women. Mitchell et al.'s study also (2009) found whereas differences in blame attributions of male and female participants to male victims were not statistically different, male participants blamed female victims more than did female participants. However, Davies, Pollard and Archer (2001) found that male respondents blamed male victims more than female victims, and more than female respondents blamed either male or female victims.

These findings were qualified by a further interaction with victim sexual orientation; male respondents blamed the gay male and heterosexual male

victims more than the lesbian and heterosexual female victims, and more than the female observers did. Furthermore, male respondents blamed the gay male victim more than they did the heterosexual male victim. There were no differences in female observers' blame ratings of the gay and heterosexual male victim, or lesbian or heterosexual female victims. Also, there were no differences between male and female observers' blame ratings of female victims, indicating that the interaction effect was primarily driven by male observers' perceptions of male victims.

Of those studies which examined perpetrator gender only (i.e. not manipulating victim gender), three identified main effects of observer gender on RMA and blame (Spencer, 1996; Spencer & Tan, 1999; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). However, these were qualified by interactions with other variables. Davies et al. (2006) identified a three-way interaction between observer gender, perpetrator gender and victim sexual orientation on both victim blame and reactions to the perpetrator. Male participants blamed a gay victim more than a heterosexual victim when a perpetrator was male. Furthermore, male participants blamed a heterosexual victim assaulted by a female perpetrator more than a heterosexual victim assaulted by a male. In contrast, there were no significant differences in blame attributions by female participants across the conditions (which were all equally low). Male and female participants blame attributions to the heterosexual victim assaulted by a man were equally low. With regards to perpetrator perceptions, male participants viewed the female perpetrator more favourably, regardless of the victim sexual orientation than they did the male perpetrator. There was no difference between male and female participants' views of the male perpetrator (i.e. both held negative views about

the male perpetrator). Similar patterns were evidence in Spencer and Tan's research (Spencer, 1996; Spencer & Tan, 1999), which also examined the ways observer gender influenced blame attributions in relation to the *sources* of blame being considered (i.e. victim behaviour, characteristics and perpetrator). They identified that male and female observers' scores differed to the greatest extent in relation to attributions of victim responsibility, followed by perpetrator responsibility and finally responsibility to victim characteristics. Male participants assigned more responsibility to survivor characteristics and behaviour and less responsibility to perpetrators than did female participants. Furthermore, male participants held more negative attitudes towards victims and less punitive attitudes toward offenders than female participants. With regards to RMA, an interaction was identified between perpetrator and observer gender: female participant female offender group had lower scores on the RMA than the male-participant-female offender and female participant-male offender groups.

Similar to Spencer and Tan's research (Spencer, 1996; Spencer & Tan, 1999), Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1992) found a three-way interaction between perpetrator gender, observer gender and acceptance of different *types* of rape myth. Post hoc tests indicated that perpetrator and participant gender interacted on the "most men who are raped ... are somewhat to blame for not being more careful" (careful myth); "most men who are raped... are very upset by the incident" (upset myth; reverse scored) and "most men who are raped... do not need counselling after the incident." (Counselling myth) myths. On each myth the pattern was similar: male and female participants' scores were higher in the female perpetrator condition than the male perpetrator condition, with the male participants in the female perpetrator conditions' scores

the highest. For example, 23% of men and 9% of women agreed that a strong man cannot be raped by another man, in comparison 30% of men and 18% of women agreed that a strong man cannot be raped by a woman. Myths that were least likely overall to be agreed with also reflected this pattern when considering differences across participant and perpetrator gender. For example, although only 4% of men and 3% of women agreed a man raped by another man would not be upset by the incident, 35% and 22% of men and women agreed with this statement when the perpetrator was female.

Observer gender as independent of RMA and/or blame attributions. In contrast to the research above six studies (I. Anderson, 2004; Beyers et al., 2000; Davies et al., 2009; Judson et al., 2013; McCaul et al., 1990; Piatak, 2015) found no main or interaction effects of observer gender on victim-blame attributions. Variables with which interactions were explored included: victim gender, type of abuse (emotional, sexual, physical) (Beyers et al., 2000); victim gender and homophobia (Judson et al., 2013); victim gender and victim race (Piatak, 2015); victim gender, perceptions of pleasurable vs violence of rape and foreseeability of rape (McCaul et al., 1990); victim gender and victim sexual orientation (Davies et al., 2009) and; victim gender only (I. Anderson, 2004).

Summary

The variety of findings within this section highlights the complex role that gender (victim, perpetrator and observer) play in in shaping RMA. Further complexity is rendered by the findings that participant gender was associated with or predictive of a range of other attitudinal variables, such as gender-role attitudes (Walfield, 2016), sexism and homophobia (Davies et al., 2012). Each of these in turn were identified as being either correlated with or predictive of RMA or blame

attributions (Davies et al., 2012; Walfield, 2016). For example, Walfield (2016) identified that male participants endorse traditional gender-linked social roles to a greater extent than female participants. In turn, these gender-linked social roles were strongly correlated with greater acceptance of male rape myths. Therefore, identifying the unique role of participant gender, and its interaction with victim and/or perpetrator gender in shaping RMA or blame attributions is challenging. However, the findings do indicate that observer gender is an important feature of the context in which RMA should be considered.

Age, education and income. These variables are considered together, as literature indicates they are closely interwoven (Walfield, 2016). Complex patterns were evident: Granger (2008) identified that younger and older observers rejected rape myths to a similar extent for significance of rape, claims of rape and victim deservedness rape myths, but that older participants were *more rejecting* of victim character and resistance for both male and female victims, than were younger participants. Younger participants were also more likely to perceive themselves, or someone known to them, as being likely to experience rape than older participants. Rosenstein (2015) also identified age as a significant predictor of RMA, even after controlling for the number of sexual assault awareness training programmes participants had engaged with (in the context of recent entrants to the US Naval academy), again indicating that the older participants are the lower their acceptance of rape myths. Rosenstein (2015) identified similar patterns for both female and male RMA, although the relationship was stronger between age and male RMA. In contrast, Walfield (2016) found that age was only a significant predictor of male RMA until attitudinal variables were also considered (i.e. female RMA and attitudes toward gay men).

However, age initially demonstrated a positive relationship (i.e. older participants evincing greater RMA). Similarly, Coble (2017) found that age was not a significant predictor of either victim or perpetrator blame for either male or female rape victims, when considered in the context of either RMA, other observer demographics, attitudinal variables and contextual variables, such as level of victim resistance. Indeed, age was not found to be a significant predictor of blame in Piatak's (2015), or Schneider et al.'s (1994) research. Although Both Lawler (2002) and Ford et al. (1998) identified that age correlated with their dependent variables, the directions of these relationships were not specified.

With regards to educational attainment, Lawler (2002), Piatak (2015) and Walfield (2016) found that highest educational qualification was not a consistent predictor of RMA or blame attribution scores. Vincent's (2009) research with counsellors, found no statistically significant relationship between educational level or years of experience practicing and attribution of responsibility, victim trauma, victim control, or believe ability of the incident. A weak positive relationship was identified between years of practice and preventability of the attack, but not educational level.

Only one study (Granger, 2008) examined the relationship between observer income and male and female RMA; Granger (2008) identified in an Australian general population survey, that significant differences were evident between low-, moderate- and high-income participants in relation to female RMA, but not male RMA. Specifically, low income participants were less rejecting of the "Rape Claims" and "Victim Resistance and Character" myths for female victims than either moderate- and high-income participants.

Race/ethnicity. Race/ethnicity was not identified as a consistent predictor of blame attributions or RMA. For example, Coble (2017) found that individuals identifying as 'other race' demonstrated significantly higher scores on victim blame in a male rape regression model examining the effect of different levels of victim resistance. However, race/ethnicity was not predictor of victim or perpetrator blame in attributions in female rape (in relation to either RMA or levels of victim resistance). Rosenstein's (2015) research indicated that ethnicity was not a significant predictor of either female or male or RMA. Although Piatak (2015) identified that white respondents' mean scores on victim blame differed significantly from black and other race respondents scores, race ceased to be a statistically significant predictor of victim blame once attitudinal variables (such as RMA) and contextual variables (e.g. victim gender and victim race) were also considered.

Sexual orientation. Sexual orientation was not identified as a consistent predictor of RMA or victim and/or perpetrator blame attributions on its own (Coble, 2017; Walfield, 2016). However, there were some consistent findings when observer sexual orientation was considered in relation to observer gender, and in relation to victim sexual orientation (Granger, 2008; Lawler, 2003; Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017). There was some evidence to indicate that LGBTQ- identified female participants were less likely to accept rape myths than male LGBTQ identified male participants (Granger, 2008; Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017). However, Schulze and Koon-Magnin (2017) identified complex patterns of RMA across sexual orientation minority groups, with the most consistent finding identified between gay and queer respondents: gay respondents were significantly higher in RMA than were queer respondents. Lawler identified

interactions between participant sexual orientation, victim sexual orientation and victim gender: Gay men identified with the gay male victim more than the straight male victim or other types of victim. However, straight male participants perceived the gay male victim as significantly less similar to them compared to the straight male victim: sexual orientation appeared to be a salient factor in participants' ability to identify with the victim. Three-way interaction suggested that straight men responded differently to the victim when the victim was gay and male compared to any other type of victim (sexual orientation/gender combination). Gay men attributed more blame to the victim when the victim was a gay male compared to a straight male.

Marital status. Two studies (Granger, 2008; Walfield, 2016) explored differences in RMA across marital status, but found no consistent patterns, indicating that marital status per se is not predictive of RMA acceptance at either the global (Walfield, 2016)⁶ or sub-category (Granger, 2008)

Sexual assault awareness. Sexual assault awareness was explored from two main angles: participant involvement in sexual assault awareness training (Rosenstein, 2015; Walfield, 2016) and participant's personal experience of sexual victimisation (or knowing someone who has experienced sexual victimisation) (Beyers et al., 2000; Coble, 2017; Granger, 2008; Walfield, 2016). Although some other research also collected information on victimisation experiences and training attendance, this data was used to explore prevalence and characteristics of victimisation experiences and their impact on RMA or

⁶ Walfield examined this only in relation to MRMA. However, Granger examined marital status across male and female victim RMA.

blame attributions were not considered (Carlson, 2013; Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017).

Impact of training. Five percent of Walfield's (2016) participants had taken part in sexual assault awareness programmes in the past 12 months. However, this was not found to impact on RMA scores. In contrast, Rosenstein (2015) identified a negative association between number of interventions participated in and RMA, with people who had received two interventions have lower RMA than people who had received only one intervention. Although this was found to be the case for both male and female RMA, the relationship appeared to be a little stronger between number of interventions and female RMA than male RMA. Rosenstein (2015) also identified cohort effects for the naval academy students that were not attributable to company effects (i.e. not due to leadership influence) for either FRMA or MRMA. Specifically, they identified that the 2014 cohort had higher levels of RMA than the 2013 cohort of students, on both female and male RMA.

Impact of victimisation experiences (self or other). Contradictory findings were identified in relation to the impact of victimisation experiences on RMA and blame attributions. For example, Walfield (2016) found that personal experience of victimisation was not associated with RMA scores, however, knowing a victim of sexual violence was associated with lower RMA. However, Granger (2008), found that either having experienced sexual violence personally, or knowing someone who was a victim-survivor was associated with lower levels of RMA. Somewhat in support of Walfield's (2016) findings, Granger's (2008) research indicated that differences in RMA were more strongly associated with knowing someone who was a victim-survivor than being a victim-survivor themselves. In

contrast Coble (2017) and Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1992) found that neither personal experience nor knowing someone who had experienced sexual violence was not predictive of perceptions of either male or female rape.

Religious and political views. Neither Walfield (2016) nor Granger (2008) found religious or political orientations (or schedule of praying) to be consistent predictors of RMA. Although King and Hanrahan (2015) and Spencer and Tan (Spencer, 1996; Spencer & Tan, 1999) examined attitudes toward crime and punishment, these were not considered in relation to either RMA or blame attributions.

Perceived similarity to victims and/or perpetrators. Two studies examined or manipulated observers' perceived similarity to victims and perpetrators, and the influence of this on blame attributions (Cruz & DeLamarter, 1988; Kahn et al., 2011). Kahn et al. (2011) found that greater identification with the assailant was associated with lower levels of assailant blame and higher levels of victim blame. However, identification with the victim did not correlate with victim or perpetrator blame attributions. These findings were qualified by an interaction with observer gender and perpetrator gender: men identified with the assailant more than did women, and women identified more with the victim than did men. This was particularly the case when the assailant was a man than when the assailant was a woman. Men identified more with the victim when the assailant was a woman than when the assailant was a man. Similar patterns were identified when participants were asked to consider themselves in either the position of an assailant or victim: men could imagine being in the assailant's position more than women could. Women could imagine being in the position of

the victim more than could men. Furthermore, victim-perpetrator gender combination influenced the degree to which participants could imagine themselves more in the position of assailant and victim. Participants could imagine themselves more in the situation of the assailant when they were of the same gender as the assailant (for both male and female participants). Furthermore, participants could imagine themselves as the victim more in cross-gender situations than same-gender situations. However, no interaction was identified between victim and perpetrator gender on identification with assailant.

Cruz and DeLamarter (1988) manipulated perceived similarity between their participants and the victim in a sexual violence scenario through description of the victim's characteristics. Cruz and DeLamarter's (1988) study was conducted with university students mostly aged in their late teens and early twenties. Therefore, in the similar condition the victim was described as a student of this age group, whereas the dissimilar condition described an 'older' clerk. The manipulation was identified as successful, in that those in the high similarity group viewed themselves as significantly more similar to the victim, than observers in the low similarity condition. Cruz and DeLamarter (1988) found that perceived similarity influences a range of attributions: more victim blame was attributed to dissimilar than similar victims, and dissimilar victims received more behavioural blame than similar victims. Furthermore, perceived similarity influenced the interpretation of victim behaviour (passive vs active resistance) and its impact on blame attributions (i.e. the attacker was perceived as taking more advantage of the situation when the victim was a similar male or dissimilar female, than a dissimilar male or similar female). Furthermore, in the dissimilar condition, passive females received more external blame than did active females. Finally,

victimisation of similar females and dissimilar males were perceived as more serious crimes than victimisation of similar males or dissimilar females. This pattern of findings may help to explain the patterns identified regarding observer and victim sexual orientation, described earlier. That is, perceived similarity to victims may have been influenced through identification with a victim's sexual orientation identity.

Observer attitudinal variables. A range of attitudinal variables were considered in relation to either RMA or blame; most common factors included: gender-roles/sex-role attitudes, sexism, belief in a just world, homophobia or attitudes towards lesbian or gay individuals, socially desirable responding and empathy.

Attitudes toward gender-/sex-roles. Eight studies provided information on associations between gender- or sex-role attitudes (referred to as gender-role attitudes from hereon) in relation to either RMA or blame attributions (I. Anderson & Bissell, 2011; Burczyk & Standing, 1989; Coble, 2017; Davies et al., 2012; Kahn et al., 2011; Rylands & Nesca, 2012; Spencer, 1996; Spencer & Tan, 1999; White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002). Similar patterns of findings were evident, with greater endorsement of traditional gender-role attitudes associated with greater victim blame (I. Anderson & Bissell, 2011; White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002). Some of this research also highlighted the relationship between gender-role attitudes and observer gender and/or victim gender. For example, Davies et al. (2012) identified that men held more stereotypical attitudes regarding gender transcendence, and higher scores on this scale (and the gender-linked subscale of the Social Roles Questionnaire; Baber and Tucker, 2006) were associated with higher levels of MRMA. Coble (2017) found that

despite her sample holding overall egalitarian gender views, participants still appeared to be less accepting of some facets of traditional gender-role attitudes. Specifically, they were less accepting of female sexual initiative, female casual sex, and homosexuality. However, they tended to be less accepting of interpersonal violence. Overall Coble (2017) found that greater *female* victim blame, and less perpetrator blame was associated with higher levels of tolerance to interpersonal violence and higher feminine initiative scores. In contrast, *male* victim blame was associated with tolerance of interpersonal violence, and perpetrator blame was predicted by tolerance to interpersonal violence and feminine initiative scores.

White and Kurpius (White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002) found that traditional gender-role attitudes were associated with greater blame, but this relationship was strongest in relation to male rather than female victims. Furthermore, gender-role attitudes were related to observer gender. Indeed, mediation analysis performed to examine the predictive power of participant and social roles attitudes: although men attributed more blame to rape victims than did women, they were also higher in traditional social roles endorsement. When running a mediation analysis controlling for social roles endorsement, participant gender was no longer a significant predictor of victim blame - suggesting that differences in blame attributions were primarily the product of social roles endorsement rather than participant gender. Rylands and Nesca (2012) identified that acceptance of masculinity norms interacted with victim and perpetrator blame to influence perceptions of penalties to perpetrators that were identified as appropriate: Men high in power over women awarded significantly lower penalties to male perpetrators of female victims, participants high in heterosexual self-

presentation awarded significantly higher penalties to male perpetrators than observers low in heterosexual self-presentation and; males high in primary of work awarded female perpetrators a higher penalty than males low in primacy of work.

Kahn et al. (2011) examined whether identification with the role of assailant or victim was a result of identification with gender, or gender-role. Their research indicated that regardless of the gender of a victim or perpetrator, women identified more with the victim and men identified more with the perpetrator. This provides stronger evidence for perceived similarity and identification based on gender roles, rather than gender per se.

Sexism. Researchers examined RMA and blame in relation to ambivalent sexism, which can be separated into the two underlying constructs of benevolent and hostile sexism (Chapleau et al., 2008; Davies et al., 2012; Judson et al., 2013; Trangsrud, 2010). Findings were mixed: Judson et al. (2013) found that hostile sexism but not benevolent sexism predicting victim blame when considering this in relation to victim and observer gender in a regression. However, there was no significant interaction between victim gender and hostile sexism. In contrast, Trangsrud (2010) found that hostile sexism was a better predictor of female RMA, whereas benevolent sexism was a better predictor of male RMA. Furthermore, once sexism was entered into a regression predicting RMA, observer gender ceased to be a statistically significant predictor. This suggests that benevolent and hostile sexism may vary as a function of observer gender. Indeed, Davies et al. (2012) found that male observers endorsed more hostile sexism than female, although male and female observers endorsed similar degrees of benevolent sexism. In relation to male RMA only, Chapleau et

al. (2008) found that sexism and attitudes towards interpersonal violence may influence male and female observers' RMA differently. For men, Chapleau et al. (2008) found that the only significant predictor of the denial myth was acceptance of interpersonal violence; benevolent sexism was the only predictor of the blame myth; and acceptance of interpersonal violence was the only significant predictor for the trauma myth. In contrast, for women: benevolent sexism and acceptance of interpersonal violence were predictors of denial myth, benevolent sexism and acceptance of interpersonal violence were significant predictors of the blame myth and; benevolent sexism and acceptance of interpersonal violence were significant predictors of the trauma myth (Chapleau et al., 2008). However, adversarial sexual beliefs was not a significant predictor of male RMA for either male or female observers, which is in contrast to the findings of female RMA research (Chapleau et al., 2008).

Belief in a just world. Only one study examined the role of beliefs in a just world in relation to victim gender; Ford et al. (1998) found no main effect of belief in a just world on fault or responsibility attributions. However, a three-way interaction with observer sex and victim sexual orientation was identified on both perpetrator fault and responsibility scores. Simple effects identified that female participants with high BJW were more likely than women with a low belief in just world to believe the perpetrator was responsible when the victim was heterosexual. Female respondents low in BJW perceived the perpetrator as more responsible when the victim was homosexual than heterosexual. Male participants with high BJW were less likely than male participants with a low belief in a just world to consider perpetrator responsible and at fault when the victim was heterosexual. Female participants with a high BJW were more likely than

male participants with a high BJW to find the perpetrator at fault when the victim was heterosexual. Women with a low BJW in a just world were more likely than men with a low BJW to find the perpetrator at fault when the victim was homosexual.

Homophobia and attitudes toward gay men and lesbian women.

Homophobic attitudes consistently predicted greater RMA and more negative attitudes toward male rape victims, particularly in relation to homosexual male victims, and male observers (I. Anderson, 2004; D. L. Burt & DeMello, 2002; Davies et al., 2012; Walfield, 2016). However, homophobia and attitudes towards lesbian and gay men, and lesbian and gay marriage were also found to predict victim blame and perceived seriousness of an incident (Sheridan, 2005); greater blame of homosexual victims (regardless of victim gender) (White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002); greater blame of victims (regardless of victim sexual orientation) (Judson et al., 2013); and perpetrator blame in relation to male victims (Coble, 2017). Indeed, both Walfield (2016) and Judson et al. (2013) found that homophobia remained a statistically significant predictor of male RMA, and victim blame (regardless of victim gender) even after controlling for other demographic and attitudinal variables, including victim gender and observer gender, and female RMA. However, findings in relation to the predictive power in relation to female RMA and female perpetrated victimisation are less clear.

Socially desirable responding. Two main approaches to measuring and controlling for socially desirable responding were adopted, those using the Marlowe-Crowne (Reynolds, 1982) model of socially desirable responding (i.e. unidimensional) (e.g. Walfield, 2016), and the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding model (Hart, Ritchie, Hepper, & Gebauer, 2015), which is

bidimensional and includes a measure of self-deceptive enhancement and impression management (Sheridan, 2005). Despite socially desirable responding being identified as a concern across RMA research (e.g. Spohn, 1993; Stephens, George, KA, & WH, 2009; Walfield, 2016) none of the research studies reviewed identified a significant relationship between socially desirable responding and RMA or blame attributions (D. L. Burt & DeMello, 2002; Sheridan, 2005; Walfield, 2016). One studies did not report the findings of the socially desirable responding data they collected (D. Mitchell et al., 2009).

Empathy. Granger (2008) found that participants felt significantly more empathy for victims of sexual violence than individuals accused of rape. However, they also felt significantly more empathy for individuals accused of rape compared to individuals convicted of rape. Participants felt significantly less empathy for male compared to female victims, and less empathy for males accused and convicted of rape (compared to females accused and convicted). This may reflect the debates in the literature regarding the blurriness of the 'victim-blame' and 'perpetrator-blame' concepts that were identified by Gurnham (2016b). Also, it may relate to the observers' need to be/represent themselves as rational, logical and fair individuals (I. Anderson et al., 2001; Tomkins, 2016), which may reflect the underpinning concept of looking for blame on both sides of an incident as a representation of fairness (i.e. 'the fair play' model of equity) (Christianson, 2015). This approach to equity has been highlighted as a barrier to changing gendered practices that are embedded into different context, that may influence an individual's access to resources and opportunities (Christianson, 2015). This indicates that socioecological approaches, which aim to identify these gendered expectancies, practices and communication norms in

order to improve victim-survivors responses and prevention efforts in sexual violence research and practice (Christianson, 2015).

Influence of victim and perpetrator gender on other theoretically relevant outcomes

Many studies examined attributions along dimensions which appeared theoretically related or similar to RMA (e.g. rape supportive attitudes) but were not badged as such by the authors (Berry, 1991; Beyers et al., 2000; Burczyk & Standing, 1989; Cruz & DeLamarter, 1988; Davies et al., 2001, 2006; Doude, 2008; Ford et al., 1998; Granger, 2008; James, 2018; Judson et al., 2013; McCaul et al., 1990; D. Mitchell et al., 2009; Parkinson, 2014; Schneider et al., 1994; Seaman et al., 2001; Sheridan, 2005; Shu, 2015; Tomkins, 2016; Vincent, 2009; Wakelin & Long, 2003; White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002). Examining the findings of research across all studies identified a number of themes, including: victim foreseeability and preventability of sexual violence; perpetrator guilt and punishment; victim credibility, believability and labelling of rape; victim encouragement, consent and experience of pleasure and; perceived seriousness, stress and trauma resulting from sexual violence.

Victim foreseeability and preventability of sexual violence. When exploring female and male participant ratings separately, Tomkins (2016) found that female participants rated a female victim as having greater awareness of the potential consequences of the scenario in comparison to male victims (but no differences in male participants' ratings of female and male victims on this outcome) referred to as the foreseeability effect. This may represent an internalisation of rape myths, that is, that women internalise myths regarding avoiding 'risky' situations, or behaving in ways that 'provoke' rape. They therefore

judge the female victim more harshly than the male victim as a result. However, if this is the case, one might expect to see an impact of foreseeability on victim and/or perpetrator blame scores between male and female victims, which was not the case. In contrast, Vincent (2009) found no significant differences between perceptions of the preventability of an assault for male and female victims, or by observer gender. Wakelin and Long (2003) also found that neither victim gender or sexual orientation or the two factors in combination influenced perceptions that victims could have avoided the situation in which they found themselves, or that they place themselves in these situations. However, they did identify an interaction between victim gender and sexual orientation on the perception of the role played by chance factors in the rape: chance factors were perceived as more to blame when the rape victim was a gay man than a heterosexual man, but no differences in the perceived role of chance factors were identified between heterosexual or lesbian women. These findings suggest that the role of foreseeability or perceived preventability in relation to victim gender and blame attributions may require further investigation.

Perpetrator guilt and punishment. Perpetrators were perceived as more guilty, and observers were more certain of perpetrator guilt, in scenarios involving female victims compared to male victims (Berry, 1991; Seaman et al., 2001). Shu (2015) found similar results, and identified that perpetrators of male victims were judged to be likely to be guilty than perpetrators of female victims. However, this research indicated that victim gender did not predict the *extent* to which perpetrators were perceived as guilty, although this was predicted by victim gender stereotypicality. Shu (2015) argues that this indicates that different attributional processes may underlie ratings of guilt and guilt likelihood. In contrast,

Mitchell et al. (2009) found no impact of victim gender (or interaction effect with observer gender, or perpetrator motivation type) on degree of perpetrator guilt. Some research identified that the impact of perpetrator gender on perceptions of perpetrators was moderated by observer gender. For example, Davies et al. (2006) found that male participants viewed female perpetrators more favourably, regardless of victim sexual orientation (victims were all male) than they did a male perpetrator. However, there was no difference between male and female participants' views of the male perpetrator (i.e. equally negative).

Although victim gender appeared to influence perceptions of perpetrator guilt, study findings in relation to perpetrator penalties awarded by observers were mixed. Berry (1991) found that longer sentences were recommended for perpetrators of female than male victims, and Smith et al. (1988) found that male perpetrators received longer recommended prison sentences than female perpetrators. However, Rylands and Nesca (2012) and Schneider et al. (1994) found that the influence of victim and perpetrator gender were moderated by other variables. Rylands and Nesca (2012) identified a two-way interaction with observer gender, such that female observers' scores were similar across male and female perpetrator and victim conditions, but male participants were more lenient toward female perpetrators of male victims than female perpetrators of female victims. Schneider et al. (1994) identified a three-way interaction between victim and observer gender and type of injury inflicted by the rape (physical, psychological or a vague description of both): Male observers recommended longer prison terms for assaults on male than female victims when the trauma was primarily physical or unspecified in nature. However, when the description of harm was psychological, males assigned longer prison terms to the female

victim's assailants. Female participants assigned longer prison terms to those who chose a female rather than a male victim regardless of injury description. Differences in females' assessment of prison terms were most pronounced when the injury was primarily physical and perpetrated against a female as opposed to a male. However, White and Kurpius (White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002) and Smith et al. (1988) found no impact of victim gender on length of prison sentence recommended.

Victim credibility, believability and labelling of rape. Victim gender appeared to influence ratings of victim credibility, believability and labelling of incidents as sexual violence. Seaman et al. (2001) and Shu (2015) found that incidents involving female victims were viewed as more credible and more believable than those involving male victims, and perpetrators of female victims were perceived as less credible (i.e. more likely to be lying) than perpetrators of male victims. However, male victims were perceived as more likely to have been forced to engage in sex acts than were female victims (Berry, 1991).

Two studies suggested that victim gender interacted with other factors to influence the labelling of an incident as sexual violence. Doude (2008) found a significant effect of victim and perpetrator gender on labelling of an incident as acquaintance rape: specifically, scenarios involving same-sex victims/perpetrators, and female offenders of male victims were more likely to be labelled as consensual sex rather than rape. Male victims of male perpetrators were viewed as most likely to have not consented to the sexual acts in comparison to all other victim-perpetrator combinations. The scenario depicted an acquaintance rape in which the victim had consented to *some* sexual activity, but not the highest level of activity (either vaginal/anal penetration with either

fingers/penis). Ford et al. (1998) identified a three-way interaction between victim sex, victim sexual orientation and observer gender in relation to the labelling an incident as rape: women were more likely than men to define the incident as rape when the victim was a homosexual female. If the victim was heterosexual, men were more likely to define the incident as rape if the victim was a female than if the victim was a male. If the victim was male, men were more likely to define the incident as rape if the victim was homosexual than heterosexual. Women were less likely to define the incident as rape if the victim was a homosexual man than a heterosexual woman. Javaid's (Javaid, 2017c, 2017d) qualitative research identified that the pervasive myth that men cannot be raped may be a product of the challenge that male rape presents to *masculinity*. Specifically, that male rape challenges gender expectations which become embedded into different social contexts and are enacted, sometimes unconsciously. Male rape victims are contrasted with female victims, and are perceived as emasculated or feminised by rape. This leads men to occupy different masculinities, such as subordinated or marginalised masculinities, which places male victims at the bottom of a gender hierarchy. Ultimately, this contributes to rape myths which affect the perceived credibility and deservedness (and very existence) of male rape victims.

However, a number of studies found no significant impacts of victim gender, or victim-perpetrator gender combinations on the labelling of an incident as rape (D. Mitchell et al., 2009), evaluations of a victim's character (Burczyk & Standing, 1989), believability of an incident (Vincent, 2009) or perceptions of or attitudes toward alcohol and consent (James, 2018).

Victim encouragement, consent and experience of pleasure. One study, by Mitchell et al. (2009) found no significant effect of victim gender (or

interaction with observer gender, or perpetrator motivation type) on the degree of pleasure a victim was perceived to experience from sexual victimisation. However, six studies' findings indicated that perceptions of victim encouragement, consent and experience of pleasure were influenced by victim gender (Berry, 1991; McCaul et al., 1990; Shu, 2015), perpetrator gender (Parkinson, 2014), and interactions between: victim gender and attractiveness (Seaman et al., 2001); victim gender and victim sexual orientation (Wakelin & Long, 2003) and; victim gender, victim sexual orientation and observer gender (Sheridan, 2005). Significant main effects for victim gender indicated that male victims were perceived as being more likely to have consented to sexual acts than were female victims (Shu, 2015). However, female victims were perceived as more likely to have encouraged and derived pleasure from a sexual act than were male victims (Berry, 1991; McCaul et al., 1990). Furthermore, when perceptions of victim pleasure were included in a regression model alongside perceived degree of foreseeability, victim gender ceased being a significant predictor of victim blame. In relation to perpetrator gender, female perpetrated assaults were perceived as more *resistible* than male perpetrated assaults (Parkinson, 2014). These patterns suggests that perceptions related to victim gender (i.e. degree of pleasure they are perceived as experiencing, and the extent to which they should have recognised the danger of sexual violence) may be more predictive of victim blame than victim gender itself, and may be influenced by perpetrator gender (although these factors were not considered in combination, and therefore only tentative inferences can be made here).

Wakelin and Long (2003) identified a significant interaction between victim gender and sexual orientation on perceived unconscious desire ratings: female

victims who were heterosexual were perceived as having more unconscious desire for rape, than either lesbian females or heterosexual male victims. However, when male victims were gay, they too were perceived as having more unconscious desire to be raped than either lesbian or heterosexual male victims. This provides further evidence for the sexual preference effect (Davies & Boden, 2012). Furthermore, this may provide insight into how settings (i.e. sex acts in relation to gender expectancies and practices) may shape rape-related attitudes. That is, gender may be considered as the context in which these judgements are implicitly or explicitly formed.

Sheridan (2005) also identified a significant interaction between victim gender and sexual orientation, but only when considering their interaction with a third variable: observer gender. Although there were no differences across female observers' ratings of victim encouragement or pleasure by victim gender or sexual orientation, male participants judged both gay male and heterosexual female victims as more encouraging than heterosexual male and lesbian victims, and believed both the gay male and heterosexual female experienced greater pleasure than the heterosexual male and lesbian female victims. Furthermore, male participants judged the heterosexual male victim less compliant than gay male, heterosexual female or lesbian victim. However, a significant difference was identified on female observers' ratings of perceived compliance: women judged the heterosexual male victim to be significantly more compliant than the heterosexual female victim. However, there were no differences in their ratings of compliance between gay male and lesbian female victims. As each of these scenarios featured a male perpetrator, this suggests that male observers may be more influenced by the sexual preference effect than female observers, and that

perceptions of victim compliance may be influenced by victim gender and sexual orientation in a different way for female observers. This highlights the complexity in understanding attribution processes, which cannot be disentangled from key observer characteristics and contextual information.

Perceived seriousness, stress and trauma resulting from sexual violence. In Schneider et al.'s (1994) research, differences in estimates of the length of time needed to recover pre-rape functioning were significant: participants estimated longer times for emotional recovery than physical, and length of time required for maximum benefit from treatment were longer for emotional problems than physical injury. This finding was not moderated by victim gender or observer gender (or combinations thereof).

Beyers et al. (2000) explored perceptions of abusiveness across observer and victim gender, and the type of dating abuse experienced (physical, sexual and emotional). They found that although male and female participants' ratings of abusiveness for female victims were similar for each type of abuse (physical, sexual and emotional), and similar for male victims in the context of physical and emotional abuse, female participants rated sexual abuse of males as significantly more abusive than did male participants. When considering abusiveness ratings of the different types of abuse, physical abuse was rated highest, followed by sexual abuse and finally emotional abuse. This may inform the concept of the 'real rape' stereotype (Krahé, 2016) as this indicates that physical abuse within dating is still perceived as the most serious in comparison to sexual and emotional abuse. Also, that male observers may be more likely to perceive a hierarchy of suffering for male victims than females (i.e. perceiving sexual victimisation of men as less abuse than the victimisation of women). For example,

research by Sleath (2011) identified a subscale of a new measure of MRMA (the Male Rape Myth Acceptance Scale; MRMAS) reflected this hierarchy of suffering. This subscale indicated that statements regarding which victims would experience greater trauma based on victim gender and male sexual orientation. Other myth categories identified related to the masculinity and invulnerability of men to rape, coping skills of men in response to rape (contrasted with women victims) and the conflation of male victimisation and homosexuality (referring to either victim and perpetrator sexual orientation).

Davies et al. (2001) and Sheridan (2005) identified complex patterns in perceptions of severity of and trauma inflicted by rape, relating to victim gender, victim sexual orientation and observer gender. Davies et al. (2001) found that male observers considered the attack on a gay male victim as less severe than the attack on the heterosexual male victim, lesbian victim and heterosexual female victim. However, no difference between female observers' ratings of the severity of the attacks on the gay male victim, heterosexual male victim, lesbian victim, or heterosexual female victim were identified, or between male and female respondents' judgments of severity toward all victim groups, excluding gay male victims. However, in a similar study with a sample of police officers, Davies, Smith and Rogers (2009) found no significant difference in perceived assault severity between male and female victims. This may indicate that greater contact with individuals who have experienced sexual violence may increase perceived seriousness of rape and sexual assault (e.g. Davies et al., 2001 study involved university students in comparison). However, a significant effect of victim gender was identified in this study on victim blame, with male victims being blamed more

than female victims, suggesting that perceptions of seriousness are not enough to ameliorate blame attributions.

Parkinson (2014) found that perpetrator gender also impacted on perceptions of severity, and interacted with sexual orientation too: assaults perpetrated by females were perceived as less severe than assault perpetrated by males (in relation to male victims), however, male perpetrated assault of a heterosexual victim was considered more severe than a male perpetrated assault of a gay victim. This reinforces the notion of a hierarchy of suffering which places male perpetrated sexual violence at the top. Indeed, Sheridan (2005) found that male participants believed a heterosexual male victim experienced greater trauma, and need psychological treatment more, than the gay male, heterosexual female, or lesbian victim. However, no significant differences were identified across female participant scores. However, Mitchell et al. (2009), Vincent (Vincent, 2009) and James (2018) found no impact of victim gender on perceptions of trauma experienced by the victim, or in attitudes toward support and recovery for victims.

Cruz and DeLamarter (1988) found that the perceived seriousness of the rape of males and females was moderated by perceptions of similarity between observer and victim: the rape of similar females and dissimilar males were perceived as more serious than those perpetrated against similar males or dissimilar females. This may provide support for the defensive attribution theory (Shaver, 1970).

Relationship between RMA and blame attributions

A strong correlation was evident between MRMA and FRMA at the global level in Walfield's (2016) research, suggesting that those who adhere to one set

of mythic beliefs also tend to adhere to the other (Walfield, 2016). This finding was also evident in Sleath's (2011) research in which a new measure of MRMA (the Male Rape Myth Acceptance Scale; MRMAS) was developed. Sleath (2011) identified moderate to strong correlations between the questionnaire's four subscales of male rape myth (masculinity/invulnerability of men to rape; coping skills of men as rape victims; association of male rape with homosexuality; hierarchy of suffering) and the seven subscales of the IRMAS (Payne et al., 1999; she asked for it; she wanted it, he didn't mean to; rape is a trivial event, she lied, rape is a deviant event, and it wasn't really rape). The strongest correlations between male and female RMA were evident between the masculinity/invulnerability to rape subscale of the MRMAS and the 'it wasn't really rape' subscale of the IRMAS ($r = .75$) and the masculinity/invulnerability to rape subscale and the 'rape is a trivial event' subscale of the IRMAS. The lowest correlations ($r = .41$) between the coping subscale of the MRMAS and the 'she lied' IRMAS subscale, and the MRMAS homosexuality subscale and the 'she lied' IRMAS subscale ($r = .41$). The global scores of the MRMAS and IRMAS were very strongly correlated ($r = .79$).

Ayala et al. (Ayala et al., 2015) highlighted that within their sample, overall levels of victim blame were low, perpetrator blame was high and average level of RMA was low. This may indicate that these factors vary systematically with each other, although this was not examined explicitly within their research. However, Ayala et al. (Ayala et al., 2015) also noted that the female participants in their sample were significantly less endorsing of RMA than the original IRMA-SF scale development sample. This may indicate a decrease in the overall levels of RMA over this intervening period.

Findings regarding the relationships between RMA, blame attributions and other rape-related perceptions were provided by some research (I. Anderson & Bissell, 2011; Ayala et al., 2015; Carlson, 2013; Judson et al., 2013; Parkinson, 2014; Piatak, 2015). Although some of this research (e.g. Parkinson, 2014) indicated that RMA and blame attributions were related in the directions that were anticipated (i.e. higher levels of RMA were associated with greater victim blame), inconsistencies were identified. For example, Anderson and Bissell (2011) found that only the victim section of the IRMAS significantly predicted victim blame. However, no other significant relationships between the IRMAS subscales were identified in relation to victim or perpetrator blame or fault attributions. This may indicate some differences with regards to the interpretation of blame and fault attributions. However, the victim subscale only weakly predicted victim blame (I. Anderson & Bissell, 2011), and so inferences must be made tentatively. In contrast, Parkinson (2014) identified a strong negative correlation between RMA and perception of assault severity, indicating that individuals higher in RMA perceived assaults to be lower in severity. Also, a strong positive correlation was identified between RMA and perceptions of victim resistance: individuals higher in RMA believed more strongly that a victim could/should have resisted the act of sexual violence more. Piatak (2015) also found that RMA was a significant predictor of victim blame, even after controlling for victim gender and a range of observer characteristics, including observer gender. Specifically, this was in the direction of higher levels of RMA being predictive of greater victim blame. Of note, this was explored in the context of acquaintance rape, which also involved scenarios that referred to male rape in terms of forced penetration and forced-to-penetrate (Piatak, 2015), which was not typical of the research reviewed. This

may indicate that within the context of acquaintance rape, RMA may be particularly salient in relation to victim blame. However, Carlson (2013) examined the relationship between RMA and definitions of rape, and perceptions of likelihood of reporting an incident in relation to victim and perpetrator gender. She found that relationships between RMA and definitions of rape, and perceptions of likelihood of reporting were similar across all victim-perpetrator gender combinations, indicating that they were no more salient to one victim-perpetrator gender combination than the others. Furthermore, this indicates that the relationship between RMA and how incidents are labelled, and whether someone would agree that an incident should be reported is unclear. This may influence the ways in which observers feel it is appropriate to respond to disclosures of sexual violence. For example, Judson et al. (2013) identified a complex relationship in which the relationship between victim gender and observer recommendations for support, such that male victims of sexual violence were offered fewer recommendations for support. Although RMA was not examined in relation to these variables, the tentative findings of the relationship between RMA and blame identified earlier indicate that it may play a role in shaping the support provided or deemed necessary to provide, by observers. That is, RMA may influence provision and quality of support provided to victim-survivors of different genders (although less is known from this review regarding the influence of perpetrator gender on these decision-making processes).

Discussion

This review has examined a range of literature, both published and unpublished, and has identified some areas of consensus, several areas of contention and gaps in the knowledge and evidence-base regarding the impact

of victim and perpetrator gender, RMA and blame attributions. These findings will now be considered in relation to the questions that guided the systematic review, and the limitations of the review, and will be used to identify recommendations for research and practice.

To what extent do victim and perpetrator gender influence RMA and blame attributions to victims and perpetrators?

The roles of victim and perpetrator gender in RMA and blame attributions are complex, and may be affected by a variety of factors, including whether victim and perpetrator gender are examined in combination, or separately; other contextual factors examined (i.e. victim and assault characteristics); and the ways in which RMA and blame attributions are operationalised. Also, the extent to which victim and perpetrator gender influence RMA and blame attributions depends on a range of observer-related characteristics (discussed in next subsection). Therefore, this review indicates that a 'view from no-where' approach to researching and drawing conclusions regarding gender, RMA and blame is neither feasible nor desirable. Instead, situated knowledge should be prioritised, in line with feminist, pragmatic and socioecological thinking.

Although research findings were not unanimous, there is some consensus that male victims of female perpetrators may encounter more stereotypic thinking (i.e. in line with RMA), greater victim blame, and less perpetrator blame than other victim/perpetrator gender combinations.

This was identified primarily in research that was conducted examining victim and perpetrator gender simultaneously and was supported by the research which examined perpetrator gender only (although this research only examined the impact of perpetrator gender on blame attributions in the context of male

victims). These contradictions highlight a long-standing contention in the literature regarding the differential perceptions of male and female perpetrators of sexual violence. Specifically, female perpetrators are viewed as violating traditional gender-role stereotypes (i.e. femininity and females as nurturers and carers) (S. Hayes & Baker, 2014) whereas male perpetrators may not be (Kahn et al., 2011). However, research indicates that the violation of traditional gender roles may result in differential perceptions of female perpetrators such that: 1) their behaviour is not recognised as sexual violence perpetration and is explained in other ways, and rendered somewhat invisible, or 2) their actions are deemed *more abhorrent* and blameworthy than the same behaviour perpetrated by males (S. Hayes & Baker, 2014). Therefore, the violation of traditional gender roles that is represented by female perpetration of sexual violence could be predicted to affect observers' perceptions in either direction. The present review found support for both hypotheses. However, these findings indicate that the impact of perpetrator gender is *contingent* on victim gender, and this is particularly pronounced in relation to male victims of sexual violence. However, conclusions drawn from these patterns must be tentative, as the review identified a dearth of literature regarding female same sex RMA and blame attribution research.

In contrast to the studies which manipulated victim and perpetrator gender in combination, those studies which varied victim gender only produced markedly conflicting results. Of this research, just under 40% found *no differences* between male and female victims. Of the remaining studies, approximately half found that male victims were blamed to a greater extent (or their perpetrators blamed less), and the other half found the reverse to be the case. These findings may be explained in a variety of ways.

A temporal trend can be seen, such that the research which identified that female victims were perceived more negatively than male victims was conducted earlier (i.e. 1980s-1990s) than the research which identified the reverse pattern (i.e. 1990s-current), with one exception (i.e. Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017). However, there are several issues with regards to the measurement of MRMA in this study which may have influenced this finding (see below). Rather than this reflecting an increase in male victim RMA or blame, it may demonstrate the positive impact of feminist discourse on perceptions of female victims (of male perpetrated sexual assault). For example, Ayala et al. (2018) identified lower RMA in their sample in comparison to the original scale development data for the IRMAS. Furthermore, research indicates that laypersons are becoming increasingly aware of the feminist discourse pertaining to rape (i.e. motivated by power and control - an act of violence rather than sex) in relation to male-to-female rape (Perilloux et al., 2014; Tomkins, 2016). However, discourse around male victims and female perpetrators may be less common (Graham, 2006; Tomkins, 2016), and rape myths for this group in particular may be less strongly rejected (Javaid, 2017d).

Although there may be a downward trend in global score of RMA for female victims (which may not be influenced by perpetrator gender to the same degree as male victims), negative perceptions of female victims and victim blame was still evident. With some research indicating that characterological blame related attributions (and types of rape myth, such as “she lied”) may still be pervasive (e.g. Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017). Further research is required to explore the complex ways in which victim and perpetrator gender influence

different types of rape myths, including those which relate to victim character and behaviour. However, this may not be straightforward.

Howard (1984) provides an example of the challenge to measuring perceptions of carelessness attributed to a victim, may be attributed to their character (i.e. representing a pattern in choices that reflect carelessness) or their behaviour (i.e. a particular instance that implies carelessness). Howard (1984) argues that the only way to differentiate this is through context presented to the observer. Therefore, the extent to which character-based blame and behaviour-based blame RMA can be measured using questionnaires (as opposed to scenarios) needs to be examined further. If this is possible, this may help to identify another means of systematically measuring the influence of victim and perpetrator gender RMA.

An important finding of the present review is that the impact of victim and perpetrator gender (and their interaction) are influenced by a range of victim and assault related characteristics. Victim sexual orientation (e.g. Wakelin & Long, 2003), victim-perpetrator relationship (e.g. Carlson, 2013), and victim gender stereotypicality (e.g. Shu, 2015) appear to moderate the relationship between victim and/or perpetrator gender and RMA, blame and related cognitions. The research indicates that this may be due to the influence of sexual scripts, which are informed by traditional gender role attitudes and expectancies (including masculinity and femininity norms), homophobia and heteronormative assumptions (Axsom & Littleton, 2003; Javaid, 2017c, 2017d; Sasson & Paul, 2014; Tomkins, 2016). For example, the concept of 'foreseeability' (i.e. capacity for a victim-survivor to identify potential threats and avoid them) may be particularly salient to female victims based on traditional gender role attitudes,

which position women as gatekeepers to sex. Furthermore, this may be most salient when a heterosexual female victim, or gay male victim are assaulted by a male perpetrator (i.e. the sexual preference effect is demonstrated). In contrast, traditional gender role attitudes, and masculinity norms suggest that 'real men' are 'tough' and can fight off attackers (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992). As a result, the physical resistance myth may be more salient to male victims (and particularly in relation to heterosexual male victims and female perpetrators) (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992; Tomkins, 2016). This highlights the complex role of victim and assault level characteristics on the potential relationship between victim and perpetrator gender and RMA or blame. However, many of these factors were not consistently examined in relation to victim and perpetrator gender and RMA (although more so for blame attributions), and therefore further research is required to systematically unpick the relationships between these constructs.

What person constructs have been identified as influencing the study of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA and blame attributions?

Although there is some disagreement in the literature regarding the extent and nature of influence of victim gender on RMA, there is some consensus with regards to the relationships between FRMA and MRMA. The findings of Walfield (2016) and Sleath (2011), which identified strong correlations between FRMA and MRMA support the research evidence presented in chapter two, that indicates RMA is underpinned by sexism and a wider system of intolerant beliefs (Aosved & Long, 2006). Various studies have linked RMA with ageism, classism, racism, religious intolerance, and homophobia (Black & McCloskey, 2013; Coble, 2017; Davies et al., 2012; Krahe, Temkin, & Bieneck, 2007; Krahe, Temkin,

Bieneck, & Berger, 2008; Monson, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Binderup, 2000; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). It is anticipated then, that some categories of rape myth may be identified as more salient to male and female victims (or victims of male and female perpetrators) in conjunction with other oppressive-belief systems.

Similar to the findings of previous reviews examining male rape victim, female rape victim and female perpetrated rape (e.g. Gravelin, Biernat, & Bucher, 2018; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Sleath, 2011; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Turchik & Edwards, 2012), the strongest consensus was in relation to participant gender: male participants tended to blame victims more and endorsed RMs to a greater extent than female participants. Also, male observers may also blame perpetrators less than female observers (e.g. Doude, 2008). This was evident at both the global score (e.g. Coble, 2017) and category level of rape myths (e.g. Granger, 2008), and in relation to different forms of blame (Doude, 2008; James, 2018; Spencer, 1996; Spencer & Tan, 1999). However, the extent to which observer gender influences these attributions is debated. For example, some research identified that when other demographic and/or attitudinal variables were considered, the role of observer gender in predicting RMA/blame was diminished. Judson et al.'s (2013) research indicated that level of homophobia (which was correlated with observer gender) was a better predictor of RMA, and research by Walfield (2016) indicated that rather than observer gender, endorsement of traditional social roles predicted RMA.

The observation that participant gender may influence attributions to male and female victims and perpetrators through attitudinal variables mirrors that identified previously in relation to age (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) argue that chronological age is unlikely to influence RMA.

Rather, factors which correlated with chronological age are likely to influence this relationship. Therefore, some demographic variables, such as observer gender and age may serve as 'proxies' for attitudinal variables that are the driving forces behind RMA and blame attributions. Indeed, White and Kuprius' (White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002) found that traditional gender role attitudes mediate the relationship between observer gender and victim blame, such that observer gender was no longer a significant predictor of victim blame. However, further research is required to explore these factors in relation to perceptions of gender and RMA specifically. For example, White and Kurpius (White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002) also found that the relationship between traditional social roles endorsement and victim blame was strongest in relation to male rather than female victims. White and Kuprius' (White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002) findings have implications for tailoring sexual violence awareness and bystander interventions and for supporting victims who may be more likely to encounter these views when disclosing.

It should be highlighted that a not inconsequential number of studies found *no* differences between male and female observers' scores on a range of RMA, blame and related cognitions. This suggests that interventions with both men and women would potentially be useful for improving responses to victim-survivor disclosures. Furthermore, in a very few instances, female observers' victim blaming was observed to be greater than male observers. James (2018) identified that female observers held more victim blame in a female-to-male rape vignette than male observers. Also, Tomkins (2016) found that female observers viewed a female victim as having greater awareness of the potential consequences of a scenario leading to sexual violence more so than a male victim, whereas there

were no differences evident in male observers' ratings. Indeed, some research indicate that female-centred sexual violence support services (i.e. which operate women only staff/volunteer policies) may respond in disparaging and negative ways to male victims seeking support (Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996; Weare, 2018b).

The research indicates that in some circumstances, female observers' RMA and victim-blaming may be greater than male observers. Has implications for traditional theories underpinning RMA. Although some previous research indicates that female RMA can be explained by internalisation of RMA, and heteronormative assumptions underpinning sexual scripts, this review identified that in some instances, women may be more likely to blame male victims than men (and more than female victims). As research indicates that a higher proportion of victims disclose to female friends and family, this has implications for support services who may need to work with organisations, communities to raise awareness of sexual violence, to lessen the chance of male victims receiving negative responses to disclosures. However, many studies found that female victims are likely to encounter blaming and RMA when disclosing, and that although this may be lessened over time, and female victims of female perpetrators may not experience more negative responses (than female victims of male perpetrators), this highlights the continued role of RMA and victim blame in perceptions of females. Although things may have improved, they have not improved enough. Furthermore, there is a dearth of literature regarding the contextual and observer related factors that influence perceptions of female victims of female perpetrators. Patterns regarding this subgroup of victim-survivors must therefore be interpreted cautiously, as knowledge and evidence is patchy in this area.

Finally, findings in relation to a range of other demographic (e.g. age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, educational qualification) and attitudinal variables (e.g. BJW hypothesis and socially desirable responding) were mixed. This indicates further research is required to explore how they predict myths specifically relating to victim and perpetrator gender to identify observer-related variables that should be controlled for in future RMA research.

What other rape-related attitudes/beliefs do researchers examine in conjunction with RMA or blame, and how do victim and perpetrator gender influence these attitudes/beliefs?

Many studies measured rape-related attitudes and beliefs that were not explicitly labelled as rape myths, such as foreseeability, credibility attributions, perceived victim encouragement and experience of pleasure, and perceived lack of serious impacts of sexual violence. These variables clearly share features with rape myths (e.g. rape myths as attitudes/beliefs that shift blame from a perpetrator to a victim; minimise the seriousness or impacts of sexual violence; deny the existence of rape). Findings reflected those research explicitly badged as rape myths: complex relationships between rape-related attitudes, victim gender and person constructs (e.g. observer gender) were identified. For example, female victims may be expected to foresee risky situations more than male victims (Tomkins, 2016). However, perpetrator guilt is perceived as more certain, and victims more credible, in situations where a victim is female than male (Berry, 1991; Seaman et al., 2001). Incidents may be more likely to be labelled as rape (than consensual sex) where scenarios involve a male perpetrator and female victim (Doude, 2008). Findings from research suggest that gender-role attitudes, heteronormative assumptions and hegemonic

masculinity influence attitudes towards victims of male perpetrated sexual violence, and FMR. However, patterns in relation to FFR are less clear, as few studies explored rape-related attitudes and beliefs specifically in relation to this group. There is some evidence to suggest that female perpetrators may be viewed more favourably than male perpetrators (Davies et al., 2006; R. E. Smith et al., 1988). This may be particularly so in relation to male victims, even when compared to female victims (Rylands & Nesca, 2012). Furthermore, female perpetrated assaults against males may be perceived as more resistible than male perpetrated assaults (Parkinson, 2014). This supports the notion of hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity - whereby males are expected to be sexual opportunists. Therefore, sexual violence is not perceived to be rape - as it is a sexual encounter which a 'real man' won't refuse, and is also therefore perceived as less serious and has fewer negative consequences. Further research into female same-sex sexual violence is needed in order to identify whether the concepts of heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity are adequate to explain patterns in rape-related attitudes and beliefs relating to this group.

The findings of the review highlight the challenges in defining the boundaries of the rape myth concept; it is difficult to identify where the boundaries of rape-supportive attitudes and rape myths lie. This confusion and lack of consistency is hampering the developing RMA research base.

What methods are employed to explore the relationships between victim and perpetrator gender, RMA and blame attributions?

The majority of research reviewed used vignettes in combination with single or multi-item measures of RMA and blame specific to the scenario

presented (e.g. Carlson, 2013). In all but one instance (i.e. Parkinson, 2014), vignettes were presented as purely written statements (although the format of these statements differed greatly). It is unclear the extent to which these scenarios may be considered as valid and reliable. Furthermore, to what extent they represented 'typical' experiences of sexual violence for men and women victims, men and women perpetrators, is unclear. There is some evidence to suggest that typical assaults of men and women victims differ on key elements, including the use of force, weapons and injuries (Graham, 2006; Lundrigan, 2014). Therefore, the impact of the assault characteristics used in scenarios on the interpretation of findings, or for informing the real rape myth meta-myth and socioecological research also unclear.

Several authors have noted the over-reliance on vignettes in studying perceptions and attributions in rape research (Anderson and Beattie, 2001; Turchik and Edwards, 2012). If one considers Greene's (2012) argument that multiple perspectives are required to examine sensitive or critical issues, then a greater diversity of methods would benefit research in this field. There are two main arguments for adopting a design other than scenario-based for future research: 1) there is little explicit research examining the validity of vignettes to manipulate RM exposure and therefore there are concerns over their appropriateness (Burt and Albin, 1981; Anderson and Beattie, 2001; Hughes and Huby, 2002; Sled, Durrheim, Kriel, Solomon and Baxter, 2002) and 2) there is a need to develop improved measures of RMA (Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994). In combination this suggests that a psychometric scale-based research design may be of great benefit for the evidence-base in sexual violence research.

Much research has focused on university/college samples, within this, many recruited primarily from individuals enrolled on introductory psychology courses. This potential over-reliance on student samples has been noted in other reviews (e.g. van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). There is therefore a need for more diverse samples. However, exploring this group may be important, owing to the findings of research that suggest college aged men and women are at heightened risk of experiencing sexual violence (Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017). Also, although there is a wealth of research exploring victim gender, RMA and blaming with this population, there are also gaps in knowledge regarding this population. For example, no studies which systematically varied victim and perpetrator gender at the myth category level, which used purely questionnaire methods were identified in the present review. This has implications for cohering existing literature, and for RMA measure development. Furthermore, the majority of research was conducted in the US. Although there may be similarities in victim experiences in the US and UK, further knowledge in this area in this context would be beneficial for informing survivor support service provision in the UK.

A common limitation identified in the research, like that of the unvalidated scenarios used, related to the RMA measures used. For example, Reitz-Krueger et al.'s (2017) research used only an un-validated, three-item measure of male RMA (in comparison to Payne et al.'s (1999) IRMAS for male-to-female RMA) which constrained perpetrator gender to be female. Although this is encouraging in that it recognises that attitudes towards female perpetrators of male rape are under-researched, it is unclear why this "either or" approach to male RMA was adopted (i.e. why male perpetrated rape myths were excluded). In relation to the measurement of RMA, although there is still some debate regarding the number

of myth categories underpinning RMA for female victims of male perpetrated sexual violence, there is far less consensus regarding the structure of male rape myths (and none for female-female rape myths). This has led many authors to develop bespoke measures, adapt existing measure of either female RMA, or male RMA for purposes of their research (e.g. Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017). Although some examined internal reliability of measures/subscales, and some examined psychometric properties more thoroughly (e.g. Granger, 2008; Sleath, 2011), the impact of the use of such a variety of measures is a somewhat fragmented RMA literature.

There is little consensus still regarding the dimensionality of male RMA, with scales used in the research reviewed that proposed a single factor (Melanson, 1999) or multi-dimension (e.g. Chapleau et al., 2008). Within the multi-dimension factors, there was little consensus regarding the number of factors that are required to adequately explain patterns in male RMA. Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1992) measure proposed three myth types (impossibility of male rape; blame myths; trauma myths) measured by six items, which were repeated with male and female perpetrators. Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1992) compared differences by perpetrator and observer gender across the six items, which were labelled as measuring: impossible myth; strong myth; careful myth; escape myth; upset myth and counselling myth. However, when the psychometric properties of this questionnaire were examined by Chapleau et al. (2008), they proposed a three-factor structure (i.e. two items per subscale) represented a better (although still not ideal) fit. The myth types were re-labelled denial, blame and trauma myths. In contrast, Granger (2008), Rosenstein and Carroll (2015) and Sleath (2011) identified four factors, although

the nature of these factors differed. Granger's (2008) subscales were labelled: significance of rape; rape claims; victim deservedness, and; victim resistance and character. These factors were identified as representative of both male and female victims' experiences, but were represented by different items (i.e. items identified as most salient to male and female victims). Rosenstein and Carroll's (2015) research combined Melanson's (1999) and Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson's (1992) male RMA scales and identified subscales labelled 'his fault', masculinity; 'not a big deal' and strength myths. Finally, Sleath's measure (2011) identified masculinity and invulnerability of men to rape myths; coping skills of men as rape victims; association of male rape with homosexuality; and the hierarchy of suffering. Although conceptual overlaps can be seen across the subscales (e.g. trauma myths, significance of rape myths, and 'not a big deal' myths), the measures clearly differ in the degree to which they place emphasis on masculinity.

This may in part be due to the role that victim and perpetrator gender played in the construction of the scales. For example, Granger's (2008) approach was to administer the same pool of items in relation to male and female victims, and identify those myths which appeared most salient to each group, or equally salient, in order to construct subscales. In contrast, Sleath's (2011) measure was developed such that items comprising some of the subscales contrasted male with female victims' experiences or responses explicitly (e.g. "male victims of rape don't suffer as much emotionally as female victims" and "it's physically worse for a man to be raped than a woman", Sleath, 2011, p. 220), in order to measure perceptions of male victims of sexual violence (i.e. situating 'male' within the context of gender more broadly). This highlights how different approaches to the

consideration of gender can affect the development of measures of male RMA, and their potential implications for the interpretation of findings of research using different measures of RMA.

However, the reviewed research indicates that observers may accept rape myths and attributed blame through making *comparisons* (either implicitly or explicitly) and that approaches to the measurement of these cognitions need to be aware of this.

Operationalisation of RMA (i.e. global, category, and item level) and blame attributions (e.g. indirect vs direct, characterological, behavioural external) play an important role in findings generated in relation to victim and perpetrator gender. There is a need to investigate further victim and perp gender in relation to types of RM that reflect characterological and behavioural blame elements, as well as descriptive vs proscriptive gender role elements (not examined by research in present review). Mixed methods research may be ideally placed to achieve this, through identifying quantitative patterns in RMA, and exploring why myths accepted qualitatively. A similar approach to this has been adopted in relation to blame attributions (I. Anderson, 1999; I. Anderson et al., 2001) and this approach may be beneficial to the RMA literature. However, the vast majority of comparative research included in this review employed purely quantitative research methodologies. As quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research may be better suited to answering different types of research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), and can explore the same topic from multiple perspective, this presents a clear gap in the literature.

Review Limitations

Only studies published in English and conducted in "Anglosphere" countries were included: although this reflected an effort to minimise the impact of cultural differences on research findings included, it also means that the findings of the review are limited to Anglosphere countries. Both grey literature and peer reviewed journals were included, to reduce the impact of publication bias (Song et al.2010).

Owing to the inclusion of research with diverse methodologies, textual (rather than statistical) synthesis was performed. Although this approach may be subject to greater confirmation bias (i.e. selection/interpretation of information which confirms pre-existing beliefs), the adoption of a systematic review methodology (i.e. systematic search strategy, quality appraisal, and data extraction procedures) may mitigate this issue.

Gaps in knowledge and evidence: implications for research and practice

Implications of this review are four-fold: theoretical, methodological, empirical and applied. Theoretical implications are that the complex patterns of findings in relation to victim and perpetrator gender, contextual and observer-related factors, RMA and blame attributions can be cohered through using the socioecological framework. This indicates that gendered expectancies and practices are embedded into different social settings. In turn, these inform the acceptance of rape myths and blaming of victims and perpetrators. Thus, a myth that may be accepted to a greater extent in one situation for female victims (e.g. in a stranger rape) may appear salient in relation to male victims (e.g. in relation to victim sexual orientation) in another. The extent to which an individual adheres to traditional gender roles, heteronormative assumptions, the greater the

potential influence of these gendered practices on influencing RMA and victim blame.

Methodological implications are that there is an over-reliance on student populations and opportunistic samples in the literature, without justification of why this population is important to consider in relation to RMA. There is also a lack of systematic exploration and control of key confounding variables which may impact the relationship between gender and RMA or gender and blame attributions.

Regarding empirical implications, gender clearly does affect RMA and blame attributions; specifying and controlling for different combinations of gender may therefore be beneficial in future RM and blame research. Also, there is still too little research into the different combinations of gender to be able to draw clear conclusions regarding the interaction between victim, and perpetrator gender on different categories of RMA (particularly in relation to observer characteristics too).

The applied implications of the review are that further work needs to be done to raise awareness of RMs and facts amongst males, and victims of female perpetrators. Furthermore, male survivors may need support in recognizing RMs and facts themselves, as this could be an important barrier to help-seeking. Police and support organisations need to be aware that male victims may encounter greater stereotypical thinking when disclosing their experiences. Finally, perpetrators of male sexual violence may be viewed more leniently by the public and may impact on the CJS' effectiveness in prosecuting cases of male sexual victimization. Although RMA and victim-blame appear to have lowered in relation to female victims of male perpetrated sexual violence over the past thirty years,

it is still present. Research which adopts a more nuanced (i.e. myth category level) approach to RMA will better help to inform interventions to increase awareness of and responses to sexual violence experienced by women.

Conclusion. This review indicates that victim and perpetrator gender may influence cognitions (both RMA and blame) in relation to both victims and perpetrators. For example, victim gender may influence perceptions of perpetrators as well as, or independently of perceptions of the victims themselves. However, the patterns identified as complex and at times contradictory. The patterns of influence of victim and perpetrator gender are affected by a range of other victim, perpetrator and situational factors, as well as observer-related characteristics. This suggests that a feminist-pragmatic viewpoint, which argues for situated knowledge and interpretation of findings is relevant, that is not a 'view from nowhere' approach (Sullivan, 1992). Furthermore, this review argues that the patterns identified in this review can be best understood by adopting a socioecological framework, which considers gender as a quality of settings and practices, rather than as attribute of an individual (either victim, perpetrator or observer). This incorporates the findings and theories of the research reviewed, i.e. regarding the influence of traditional gender roles, sexism, hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity and may explain why victim and perpetrator gender appear more *salient* in relation to some rape myths and blame attributions than others.

Therefore, this thesis argues for a slight re-shifting rather than major reconceptualization of theories underpinning rape myths, that would benefit the gender-inclusivity agenda. That is, observer gender may be considered a proxy for the macro-level cultural variables which prime an individual to identify gender

attitudes and expectancies of different contexts. These macro-level factors include cultural values regarding traditional gender roles vs egalitarian roles, sexism and interpersonal-relationship norms, masculinity norms, and heteronormativity, that have been identified in this review as influencing RMA and blame attributions in relation to victim and perpetrator gender. In turn, the context in which sexual violence is considered (relating to the features of the sexual violence, such as victim and perpetrator gender, behaviours/environment leading up to and during the incident) prime the gendered expectations and attitudes, that may in turn shape the degree to which rape myths are accepted or rejected. That is, gender shapes the interpretation of context, and vice-versa, and influences RMA. This is essentially what feminist perspectives have argued in relation to male-to-female rape (e.g. Ward, 1995) and wider theory, such as the belief in a just world hypothesis and defensive attribution theory, however, this thesis argues that *gender* in and of itself is a context. Therefore, comparative research examining the way that similar myths are accepted, is required in order to understand societal responses to victims of sexual violence and ultimately, to contribute to discussions regarding the ways in which gender should shape sexual violence survivor support services. That is, this thesis is arguing that integrating findings of existing research using the socioecological conceptualisation of gender would ultimately inform research and practice, and enhance the quality of support available for victim-survivors.

Chapter 6: quasi-experimental study exploring the impact of victim and perpetrator gender on acceptance of different types of rape myth.

Chapter introduction

This chapter represents the second, quantitative, phase of the mixed methods research, which involved exploring the relationship between victim and perpetrator gender on RMA. Specifically, exploring the influence of gender alongside a selection of person constructs identified as potentially relevant in the systematic review, and the acceptance of different categories of rape myth. Findings are considered in light of the socioecological theory of gender proposed by Bond and colleagues (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010).

Background

Previous chapters have illustrated that the relationships between victim and perpetrator gender and RMA are complex, and may be contingent on a range of person constructs. Some research has identified that male victims (compared to female victims) are associated with greater acceptance of RMA (Walfield, 2016). However, others have identified the opposite (e.g. Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017), or no pattern (e.g. Carlson, 2013), or have identified that greater RMA or blame is contingent on perpetrator gender, participant gender and/or other attitudinal or belief systems (e.g. R. E. Smith et al., 1988).

Contradictions in the literature may be due to the lack of consistency regarding the variables manipulated and the outcome variables measured in research. For example, Anderson and Quinn (2009) found, using the Attitudes Toward Rape Victims Scale (ARVS; Ward, 1988), that male victims were viewed more negatively than female victims and that male respondents viewed victims more negatively than female respondents). However, no interaction was identified between the two variables. Indeed, research in the related fields of victim blame and responsibility attributions has identified similar patterns when considering the impact of participant gender and victim gender alone (e.g. Gerber et al., 2004).

There are indications that attitudes towards victims may be contingent on observer gender when perpetrator gender is also considered. For example, Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (1992) found an interaction between participant gender and perpetrator gender, such that male respondents' scores were higher than female respondents' on some types of rape myth (i.e. the "careful", "upset" and "counselling" myths), when the scenario depicted a

female (rather than male) perpetrator. Furthermore, although Smith et al. (1988) found that male respondents endorsed a range of myths to a greater degree than did female respondents, when victim and perpetrator gender were also considered, male observers agreed most strongly with some myths when the victim was male and the perpetrator was female.

Although important, observer gender is not the only person construct that may impact on RMA relating to victim and perpetrator gender. Indeed, some research indicates that when gender role attitudes, or sexism related attitudes are considered, observer gender is no longer relevant (Trangsrud, 2010). Although this finding is by no means universal (cf White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002). Other person constructs, including respondent sexual orientation, level of educational attainment, and ethnic background have also been identified as potentially relevant to understanding attitudes towards victims and perpetrators (Coble, 2017; Granger, 2008; Lawler, 2003; Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017; Walfield, 2018). However, they have tended to be less comprehensively studied in relation to both victim and perpetrator gender.

The systematic review presented in chapter 5 indicates that although there is a body of research that explores victim and perpetrator genders' influence on attitudes relating to rape (e.g. blame attributions, sentencing judgements) – there is a lack of research exploring the impact of victim and perpetrator genders' influence on types of RMA specifically. This issue, alongside the compartmentalised nature of the variables studied in relation to victim and perpetrator genders' influence on RMA, is coupled with a range of methodological and methods issues. For example, some studies have been identified as employing overly simplistic, or psychometrically under-developed measures of

RMA for male victims (Chapleau et al., 2008; Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017), or are overly reliant on either the vignette methodology (I. Anderson & Beattie, 2001; Turchik & Edwards, 2012) or analytical cross-sectional (rather than quasi-experimental) designs if adopting survey methods.

One further potential limitation of the RMA identified in the systematic review presents a quandary for the present research: the perceived over-reliance of RMA research on student samples. This over-reliance is concerning because it may over-represent individuals with more liberal attitudes, greater rejection of stereotypes and more supportive attitudes towards victim-survivors (Idisis et al., 2007; van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014; Ward, 1995). Also, some research suggests that higher levels of education may be associated with greater awareness of sexual violence - particularly in relation to female perpetration (Kramer, 2017). Therefore, findings derived from student samples may not be representative of the general population.

Despite these concerns, other researchers argue students represent an important group to continue exploring rape-related attitudes and beliefs with, because of their unique characteristics (van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). For example, students (particularly female students) may be at higher risk of experiencing sexual violence themselves (Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017). Research also suggests that individuals at university may be more likely to receive peers' disclosures of sexual violence experiences (Navarro & Clevenger, 2017). Finally, psychology students, who are particularly likely to be recruited in RMA research (van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014) may be more likely to ultimately work in professions that bring them into contact with victim-survivors. That is, students may be more likely to be victimised and/or support others who have been

victimised, making RMA particularly salient to them. Therefore, although recruiting more diverse samples is an important goal in RMA research, the student population remains an important group with which to explore gender and RMA.

To summarise, there is a need for rigorous empirical research into the impact of victim and perpetrator gender on the acceptance of different types of rape myth, whilst controlling for (and exploring) the influence of relevant observer person constructs. This study aims to address this need. Specifically, this phase of the research will address two research questions: 1) Which person constructs are the strongest predictors of myths about the dynamics (including victim and perpetrator gender) and perceived likelihood of experiencing rape? And; 2) After controlling for the strongest person construct predictors of the dynamics of rape myths, to what extent do victim and perpetrator gender influence acceptance of different categories of rape myth?

In relation to research question 1, the following hypotheses will be tested:

1a. Observers reporting higher levels of traditional social roles endorsement will record lower levels of 'dynamics and perceptions of rape' myths and perceive themselves and others known to them as being less vulnerable to experiencing rape.

1b. Female observers will reject 'dynamics and perceptions of rape' myths to a greater degree than male observers.

1c. Female observers will indicate they perceive themselves (and known others) to be more vulnerable to rape than male observers.

1d. Observers higher in social desirability will report higher levels of rape myth rejection for 'dynamics and perceptions of rape' myths.

1e. Observers with high uncertainty of their sexual orientation will report lower rates of the 'dynamics and perceptions of rape' myths. There will be a difference by sexual orientation identity on 'likelihood of rape' subscale scores (no direction specified).

1f. Observers from sexual orientation minority groups will record higher rape myth rejection rates for the 'dynamics and perceptions of rape' myth. There will be a relationship between by sexual orientation uncertainty and 'likelihood of rape' subscale scores (no direction specified).

1g. Higher qualification attainment will be related to greater rejection of 'dynamics and perceptions of rape' myths.

1h. Observer ethnicity will predict rape myth rejection (no direction specified).

In relation to research question 2, the following hypotheses will be tested (after identification of relevant observer variables in the earlier stage of analysis):

2a. There will be a main effect of victim gender: rape myth rejection will be highest in conditions where the victim is female compared to male. This pattern will apply across all myth types.

2b. There will be a main effect of perpetrator gender: rape myth rejection will be highest in conditions where the perpetrator gender is specified to be male.

2c. There will be a main effect of myth type on RMA.

2d. There will be a main effect of observer social roles endorsement score: observers higher in traditional social roles attitudes will record lower rejection of rape myth scores.

2e. There will be a main effect of observer gender: female observers will record higher rejection of rape myths than male observers.

2f. There will be an interaction between victim gender and myth type.

2g. There will be an interaction between perpetrator gender and myth type.

2h. There will be an interaction between victim gender and perpetrator gender: rape myth rejection will be highest in conditions where the victim is female, and the perpetrator is specified to be male compared to other gender combinations.

2i. There will be an interaction between observer gender and social roles attitude score: the highest rape myth rejection scores will be associated with female observers low in traditional social roles attitudes compared to all other groups.

2j. There will be an interaction between myth type and observer gender role attitudes.

2k. There will be an interaction between victim gender, perpetrator gender and myth type.

2l. There will be an interaction between victim gender, observer gender role attitudes and myth type.

2m. There will be an interaction between perpetrator gender, observer gender role attitudes and perpetrator gender.

2n. There will be an interaction between traditional social roles endorsement, victim gender and perpetrator gender (both overall and interacting with rape myth type).

2o. There will be an interaction between observer gender, social roles endorsement, victim gender and perpetrator gender (both overall and interacting with rape myth type).

2p. There will be an interaction between observer gender, observer gender role attitudes, victim gender and perpetrator gender (both overall and interacting with rape myth type).

Methods

Design

A quasi-experimental study was conducted in which participants were randomly allocated to one of six conditions, in which the stated gender of victim and perpetrator was varied as part of a measure of RMA. The conditions were as followed:

- A. Male victim, Neutral perpetrator;
- B. Male victim, Male perpetrator;
- C. Male victim, Female perpetrator;
- D. Female victim, Neutral perpetrator;
- E. Female victim, Male perpetrator;
- F. Female victim, Female perpetrator.

The Joanna Brigg's quality appraisal checklist for quasi-experimental studies was used to ensure rigor in reporting the research (Joanna Briggs Institute, 2017).

Participants

Participants were recruited opportunistically and through snowball sampling using a University psychology department's email distribution lists, Facebook and Twitter accounts (and asking other psychology organisations to share) and a staff weekly news blog, online psychological study websites (e.g. www.onlinepsychresearch.org), a male psychology network webpage, and through a psychology postgraduate email forum (similar to the approach by

Schulze and Koon-Magnin (2017)). Psychology students at the University of Worcester were offered research participation scheme credits for taking part in the study. No other incentives were used.

Initially, 670 individuals visited the online study page. However, 12.5% of these individuals provided insufficient data to include them in the analyses (i.e. substantial amounts of missing data across the questionnaires). As the handling of missing data has important consequences for the accuracy of inferential statistical estimates, the approach to assessing and imputing missing data is described further in the results section of this chapter. However, the following are key characteristics of the sample of participants whose data was used in the main analyses of the study (see table 3).

Table 3

Demographic characteristics of the sample (N = 552).

Characteristic	Statistic
Age	M (SD)
Male	31.0 (12.7)
Female	25.9 (10.2)
Whole sample	27.9 (11.5)
Gender^a	%
Female	60.3
Male	39.7
Ethnicity	%
White	92.9
Black/Black British	1.6
Asian/Asian British	2.5
Mixed ethnicity	1.1
Other ^b	1.8

Sexual Orientation Identity^c	%
100% heterosexual	69.2
Mostly heterosexual	19.2
Bisexual	4.7
Mostly homosexual	2.7
100% homosexual	4.2
Sexual Orientation uncertainty^d	M (SD)
Male	2.80 (2.6)
Female	3.08 (2.8)
Whole sample	2.97 (2.7)
Highest Qualification held	%
Up to further education qualification (i.e. A-level, NVQ)	57.4
Up to Higher Education (i.e. degree)	22.5
Up to Postgraduate Education (i.e. MSc, PhD)	20.1
Current student status	%
No	30.4
Yes - Undergraduate	52.5
Yes - Postgraduate	15.0
Yes - Other	1.8

Note. ^a Initially, 6 individuals identifying their gender as 'other' (4 out of 6 stated "non-binary", 1 indicated different from biological sex and 1 did not say) participated in the research. However, owing to small sample sizes and the individuals not being distributed evenly across cells in the design, these individuals' data were excluded from the main analyses⁷. ^b Middle Eastern and Chinese specified. ^c Adapted from the Kinsey Scale (1948 in Sell, 1997). ^d measured on a scale of 1 low level of uncertainty to 10 high level of uncertainty adapted from Epstein, McKinnery, Fox and Garcia (2012).

Sample size calculations. Sample size requirements for regression analyses were calculated using Tabachnick and Fidell's (2016) guidelines ($N > 50 + 8m$; where m is the number of predictors included in the model), which

⁷ Similar to (Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017), this decision was made out of methodological necessity rather than an intention to reinforce the gender binary or exclude non-binary individuals.

indicated that a sample greater than 162 participants would be necessary for detecting a medium-sized effect between predictors and outcomes if it exists. Sample size requirement for mixed methods ANOVA with 24 subgroups (i.e. High/low SRQ group, male/female participants, male/female victim conditions, male/female perpetrator conditions), four within repeated measures, anticipating a moderate effect size and some correction for violation of the assumption of sphericity, and setting power to 80% was calculated using G*Power. A minimum of 120 participants was indicated as required to detect the most complex interaction term in the model (if one existed).

Characteristics by observer gender. Comparisons between male and female observers on demographic variables which have been identified as related to RMA were performed. Male participants (*Mdn* = 27.0 years) were significantly older than female participants (*Mdn* = 21.0 years) ($U = 25989.50$, $Z = -5.74$, $p < .001$). Similar proportions of male and female participants held postgraduate degrees (49.5% and 50.5% respectively), undergraduate degrees (40.7% and 59.3% respectively), and GSCE level qualifications (55.6% and 44.4% respectively). However, a higher proportion of females held AS and A-levels (70.0%) than male participants (30.0%) ($\chi^2(4) = 22.06$, $p < .001$). Approximately similar proportions of male and female participants identified as 100% heterosexual (40.3% and 59.7% respectively) and mostly homosexual (40.0% and 60.0% respectively). However, a higher proportion of females than males identified as mostly heterosexual (67.9% and 32.1% respectively), bisexual (76.9% and 23.1% respectively). A higher proportion of male participants than female identified as 100% homosexual (82.6% and 17.4% respectively) ($\chi^2(4) = 23.33$, $p < .001$).

Materials

The research collected demographic information and used three self-report measures in the following order: the Rape Attitudinal Questionnaire (RAQ; Granger, 2008), the Social Roles Questionnaire (SRQ; Baber and Tucker, 2006) and the Reynolds Short Forms of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, Form A (SDR; Reynolds, 1982). All data was collected online via SurveyMonkey®.

Demographics. Information was collected on: country of residence, age, gender, sexual orientation (conceptualised as identity and identity uncertainty), educational background and ethnicity (using collapsed census categories).

The RAQ (Granger, 2008). The original RAQ was designed to measure RMA for male and female victims of sexual violence. It comprises three core sections: section 1 (containing two subscales: dynamics and perceptions of rape, and likelihood of rape), and section 2 and 3 containing four subscales (significance of rape, rape claims, victim deservedness, and victim resistance and character) that are equivalent save wording to gender the victim in the item as either female or male. Granger identified these four myth types following factor analysis; although comprising slightly different combinations of items, the subscales were identified as comparable overall for male and female victims.

Dynamics and perceptions of rape. This subscale contains questions relating to the dynamics between the victim and perpetrator (including questions about male victims, female perpetrators, and relationship between victims and perpetrators). An example is “females cannot be guilty of rape”.

Likelihood of rape. This subscale contains questions about the likelihood of rape occurring to particular individuals (i.e. people known to the respondent) and to the respondent. An example is “I am unlikely to be raped in my lifetime”.

Significance of rape. Items related to minimising the seriousness of rape and responsibility of the perpetrator. An example item on both the male and female versions of the subscale is “If she can’t remember the rape (e.g., because she was asleep, unconscious, or intoxicated by alcohol or drugs), then no real harm is done”.

Rape claims. Items related to victims falsely claiming rape, or secretly wanting to be rape. An example item on both the male and female versions of the subscale is “Women/men often claim rape to protect their reputations”

Victim deservedness. Items related to victims provoking rape, or deserving to be raped. An example item on both the male and female versions of the subscale is “A woman/man who goes out alone at night puts herself in a position to be rape.”

Victim resistance and character. Items related to victim’s resistance during rape and her behaviour (i.e. promiscuity) relating to character. An example item on both the male and female versions of the subscale is “The extent of a female/male victim’s resistance should determine if a rape has occurred”.

The perpetrator gender in almost all of these items is left unspecified. In the 2 items it is specified, the perpetrator gender is stated as female in the female rape myth section and male in the male rape myth section. The original questionnaire was intended to be used such that a participant would complete all sections (i.e. section one of general myths and perceptions of vulnerability to rape and both the female victim and male victim version of the remaining rape myths),

thus a participant would record their responses to 2 items pertaining explicitly to female perpetrators and 2 items pertaining explicitly to male perpetrators.

Items are scored on a scale of one to six, with higher scores indicating higher levels of rape myth *rejection*. Thus, a higher score indicates lower levels of RMA. Subscale scores represent average scores rather than total scores, making subscales for female and male victim versions and myth types comparable, regardless of the number of items they comprise. The original instructions to complete the questionnaire are as follows: "Please read the following statements carefully and then respond to every statement by circling the number which best describes your feelings about the statement. When completing the questionnaire do not dwell too long on any one question."

The split-half reliability, internal reliability, face validity and convergent validity of the original RAQ subscales have been found to be acceptable in an Australian general population sample (Granger, 2008).

Adapting the RAQ. The dynamics and perceptions of rape and likelihood of rape subscales were used without adaptation. However, the significance of rape, rape claims, victim deservedness and victim resistance and character were adapted, such that six versions were created, varying victim gender (male/female) and perpetrator gender (male/female/not-specified). The instructions to the questionnaire in the new versions were amended to include reference to victim and perpetrator gender, for example:

"Please read the following statements carefully and then respond to every statement by ticking the box which best describes your feelings about the statement. When completing the questionnaire do not dwell too long on any one

question. **Please keep in mind that in each statement the victim of the attack was female and the perpetrator was male.**

Validity and reliability of the adapted RAQ. The adapted versions of the questionnaire were piloted in the present study with an individual with experience in criminal victimisation research and an individual with experience in questionnaire design and use, to identify ambiguities in wording in questions and instructions (i.e. content and face validity). No issues identified were identified.

As the manipulation of the survey included conditions in which the rapist was proposed to be female, something which is technically not recognised in UK law, a validity check was performed using one item from the dynamics and perceptions of rape subscale which all participants completed ("Females cannot be guilty of rape", $N = 552$). The check identified that overwhelmingly (97.6%) participants stated that they disagreed (somewhat disagreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed) with the item. Patterns across participant gender were similar for each response option, suggesting the female perpetrator conditions would have face validity for participants and should be included in the study. However, this highlights the need to interpret these items differently to the original study: Granger's (2008) research used this item as a factual knowledge check, as women can legally be guilty of rape in Australia. However, in the UK this item assesses a different dimension (i.e. *perceptions of female perpetrated rape*) because legally in this context only males are recognised as perpetrating rape.

In the present study the reliability estimates also indicated adequate internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011), for all myth subscales (and gendered versions of subscales) (see tables 4 and 5).

Table 4

RAQ1 subscale reliability estimates for whole sample (N = 552)

Subscale	M (SD)	Min-Max	Cronbach's alpha
Dynamics of Rape	5.74 (0.52)	2.36-6.00	.795
Likelihood of Rape	4.44 (0.89)	2.00-6.00	.778

Table 5

RAQ2 subscale reliability estimates for female and male victim versions, by perpetrator gender,

	Significance of Rape			Rape Claims			Victim Deservedness			Victim Resistance and Character		
	M (SD)	Min-Max	α	M (SD)	Min-Max	α	M (SD)	Min-Max	α	M (SD)	Min-Max	α
Female Victim Scale												
Original version (n = 95)	5.70 (0.40)	4.40- 6.00	.812	4.95 (0.72)	2.38- 6.00	.828	5.53 (0.50)	4.25- 6.00	.877	5.08 (0.63)	3.27- 6.00	.769
Male Perpetrator (n = 93)	5.71 (0.47)	3.50- 6.00	.896	5.05 (0.75)	2.63- 6.00	.873	5.52 (0.50)	3.50- 6.00	.876	5.01 (0.73)	3.09- 6.00	.734
Female Perpetrator (n = 96)	5.74 (0.35)	4.10- 6.00	.791	5.01 (0.77)	2.63- 6.00	.853	5.57 (0.50)	3.25- 6.00	.849	5.15 (0.63)	3.45- 6.00	.647
Male Victim Scale												
Original version (n = 89)	5.49 (0.52)	4.10- 6.00	.841	5.08 (0.78)	2.75- 6.00	.801	5.19 (0.50)	2.67- 6.00	.786	5.26 (0.71)	2.33- 6.00	.821
Male Perpetrator (n = 90)	5.50 (0.57)	3.50- 6.00	.853	5.06 (0.83)	3.25- 6.00	.785	5.21 (0.50)	2.78- 6.00	.805	5.25 (0.70)	2.83- 6.00	.829
Female Perpetrator (n = 89)	5.57 (0.44)	4.10- 6.00	.758	5.06 (0.76)	3.25- 6.00	.783	5.26 (0.50)	2.78- 6.00	.804	5.30 (0.62)	2.83- 6.00	.806

The Social Roles Questionnaire (Baber & Tucker, 2006). The SRQ is a measure of attitudes toward social roles, comprising two factors: Gender Transcendent and Gender-Linked (Baber & Tucker, 2006). The Gender Transcendent items assesses the roles and tasks which people believe should be based upon gender. The Gender -Linked subscale assesses specific social roles and behaviours which people feel are appropriate for either men or women, but not both. Participants are asked to rate the degree to which they agree (strongly disagree to strongly agree) with statements on a scale of 0% to 100% (in 10% increments). Items 1-5 are reverse scored. Baber and Tucker (2006) found that men and women respond differently on the measure, with men scoring higher on the gender-linked subscale, and women scoring higher on the gender-transcendent subscale.

The Cronbach's alphas reported in the original research were $\alpha = .65$ for the Gender-Transcendent subscale and $\alpha = .75$ for the Gender-Linked Subscale (Baber & Tucker, 2006). The reliability estimates for the present sample were similar (see table 6);

Table 6

SRQ subscale reliability estimates for whole sample (N = 552)

Subscale	M (SD)	Min-Max	Cronbach's alpha
Gender-linked attitudes	10.254 (11.95)	0.00-80.00	.830
Gender-transcendent attitudes	28.754 (19.42)	0.00-100.00	.648

A lower Cronbach's alpha for the gender-transcendent subscale as it comprises fewer items. The intra-class correlation for this scale (recommended for scales with fewer items) was 0.51, which indicates moderate reliability (Koo & Li, 2016).

The Reynolds Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Forms A (Reynolds, 1982). The Reynolds' short form A of the Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scale is an 11 item self-report questionnaire which uses a forced choice, "True" – "False" format for responding to items. Items are designed to measure an individual's propensity to endorse items depicting socially approved, but uncommon behaviours and denial of socially disapproved, but common behaviours. Total scores range from zero (low) to 11 (high social desirability). The short form A was selected for the present study because it is not influenced by respondent gender (Loo & Thorpe, 2000), the full version was used to check the validity of the SRQ in Baber and Tucker's (2006) original research and has reported good internal reliability (Kuder-Richardson₂₀ estimate=.74; Reynolds, 1982). Although the Kuder-Richardson₂₀ estimate for the present sample was lower (0.67), it demonstrates adequate internal consistency.

Procedure

Participants completed all aspects of the study in the same order, to minimise priming effects (Trangsrud, 2010) on the RMA scale responses. The study took approximately 25 minutes to complete.

Ethics

The British Psychological Society's (2009, 2014) code of human research ethics was adhered to and ethical approval awarded by the University of Worcester Institute of Health and Society (in 2013). Owing to the sensitive nature of the research and because it did not directly pertain to the aims of the research, no questions regarding personal experience of sexual violence were asked of participants.

Analysis Strategy

Data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) version 24, and the missMDA package in R.

To test hypotheses 1a to 1h (relating to research question 1), a series of hierarchical multiple linear regressions (MLRs) were performed. Variables were entered in two steps: firstly, attitudinal and demographic variables (excluding observer gender) were entered. Secondly, observer gender and a term for each of the conditions in the study were entered (see pre-manipulation check under next section). To test hypotheses 2a to 2p (relating to research question 2), the strongest predictors identified in relation to research question 1 were selected for further analysis using mixed methods ANOVA.

Pooling data. Owing to slower recruitment of male participants (and very unbalanced design), data were collected in two waves. Wave 1 was collected in December 2013-March 2014, and Wave 2 was collected in February - July 2016. Data were compared across the two waves of data collection on key variables (i.e. the dependent variables and covariates) and no significant differences between the two were identified (see table E1, appendix E).

Participants from a range of countries participated. To improve interpretability only countries which research suggests should have substantial cultural similarities were included (21 individuals were excluded). These countries included: UK ($n = 507$), Ireland ($n = 4$), US ($n = 29$), Canada ($n = 4$) and Australia ($n = 8$), typically referred to as Anglosphere countries for this reason. To ensure responses were similar for participants across these countries of residence, non-parametric tests (owing to very unbalanced cell sizes; Dancey and Reidy, 2001) were performed (see table E2). No

significant differences were identified between UK vs. non-UK samples and therefore analyses were conducted on the pooled data.

Missing data strategy. Missing values analysis was therefore performed to identify whether patterns in the missing data could be detected. Based on variables to be included in analyses (at the item level), 11.59% of observations were missing, which is within expected bounds for questionnaire data (Van Ginkel, Kroonenberg, & Kiers, 2014). Little's MCAR test: $\chi^2(5857) = 70004.188$, $p < .001$ indicated that data were not missing at random. Indeed, missing values analysis indicated that the highest proportion of missing data were for the SRQ and the SDR questionnaire (which were presented at the end of the study). This suggests that participant fatigue may have played a role in drop out. However, no other clear patterns in the data (based on participant age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, highest qualification held or current student status) were identified. In combination this suggests it was appropriate to treat the data as missing at random (i.e. missing data is not related to the value of the missing data).

A method of imputing data at the item-level was conducted using the missMDA package in R, following Josse and Husson's (2016) guidelines. Data is imputed via an iterative algorithm which takes into account relationships between individuals and variables (Audigier, Husson, & Josse, 2016; Josse & Husson, 2016). This approach resulted in complete data being available for 552 participants, exceeding the minimum sample size requirements for all analyses.

Pre-manipulation checks. Terms were entered into the regression analyses which represented the different conditions to which participants were randomly allocated to. If random allocation was successful, then none of these terms should significantly predict the dynamics and perceptions of rape and perceived likelihood of

experiencing rape subscale scores (as the manipulation had not yet been performed in the questionnaire). The findings revealed no significant result for any of the conditions, suggesting that at baseline, the groups adhered to myths in on these subscales to a similar degree.

To check the extent to which the female perpetrated conditions may be perceived as credible, respondents' answers to the item "females cannot be guilty of rape". In the UK context, this is factually accurate (i.e. perpetrators of rape are only recognised to be male in England and Wales, Scottish and Northern Irish law (Lowe, 2017). However, in Australia and some states in the US females can be charged with rape (Granger, 2008). In the present study 94.7% of participants disagreed with this statement. This suggests that the law in the UK may not match with lay definitions of rape, although this may not be representative of the general population views (i.e. sample was composed mostly of students).

Six individuals somewhat to strongly agreed with the statement "if I really wanted to, I would have sex with someone against their will, if I knew I wasn't going to get caught". However, 92.2% of the sample strongly disagreed with this statement. Six individuals also somewhat to strongly agreed with the statement "as long as I didn't hurt the person it would be ok for me to have sex with them against their will". However, 94.7% of the sample strongly disagreed with this statement. However, does indicate that some participants may differentiate between different forms of "hurt" to victims (i.e. physical vs emotional or psychological).

Data assumption checking for regression analyses (testing hypotheses 1a-1h). Parametric assumptions of regression were checked following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013), Pallant's (Pallant, 2016) and (A. F. Hayes, 2018) guidance, for a model predicting 'dynamics of rape' and 'perceived likelihood of experiencing rape' myths.

Outliers. Univariate and multivariate outliers can cause substantial bias in MLR (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Box plots of all predictors and outcome variables were inspected. Although a number of mild outliers (1.5 times the interquartile range) were identified, no extreme outliers (3 or more times the interquartile range) were recorded. Multivariate normality was inspected via Mahal. and Cook's distances (Pallant, 2016). With 12 degrees of freedom, the critical Mahal. distance is 21.03 at an alpha of 0.05. The maximum Mahal. distance recorded in the present regression models was 60.91 indicating the presence of multivariate outlier(s). However, inspection of the maximum Cook's distance for this model was 0.15 (below the level of 1.00; Pallant, 2016) which indicates that these multivariate outliers are not exerting undue influence on the model.

Normality, Linearity and Homoscedasticity of Residuals. Although there is no requirement for univariate normality (of either predictor or outcome variables) in MLR, multivariate normality is required (A. F. Hayes, 2018). This assumption can be checked simultaneously with the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity by inspecting plots and descriptive statistics associated with model residuals (Pallant, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Histograms and normal P-P plots of the standardised residuals for the most skewed distribution ('dynamics of rape' myths) provided support of a normal distribution (skew = -1.1,

kurtosis 'proper' = 6.38; (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012; Kim, 2012)). Scatterplots of standardised predicted values and residuals were inspected, and revealed no evidence of non-linear relationships (e.g. as indicated by curvilinear patterns to the residuals) between variables for either outcome variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). However, the plots indicated the potential presence of heteroscedasticity; with slightly greater dispersion of residuals at the lower predicted values of the outcome variables. This was most pronounced for the 'dynamics of rape' myth model. Although heteroscedasticity does not invalidate the results of regression analysis, it can lead to reduced power (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Therefore, the extent of heteroscedasticity was assessed using Fox's (1991, cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) approach. The spread of the standard deviations of residuals around predicted values were inspected; the value at the widest spread was only 1.7 times that of the narrowest spread – well within the 3 times recommended by Fox (1991, cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Multicollinearity/singularity. This assumption was assessed by inspected the correlation coefficients of pairs of the predictors and the VIF and Tolerance values for each predictor. The strongest correlation was between the post 16 qualification term and the degree term of the educational attainment variable ($r = .63$). However, inspection of the VIF values revealed no scores greater than 10 (largest VIF value = 1.8) and no Tolerance values below 0.1 (smallest Tolerance value = 0.56). Suggesting that there are no issues with multicollinearity/singularity.

In combination, the findings of these assumption checks suggest it is appropriate to conduct MLRs with both outcome variables proposed.

Data assumption checking for Mixed Methods ANOVA (testing hypotheses 2a-2p). Initially, an ANCOVA was planned to be performed. However, the potential covariates violated the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes and therefore this method of analysis was deemed inappropriate (see appendix F for test results). Therefore, a mixed methods ANOVA was performed instead, using a smaller number of covariates (i.e. the strongest two) that were categorised following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) advice.

Parametric data assumption checks were performed in line with Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), Pallant (2016) and Ghasemi and Zahediasl's (2012) guidance for Mixed Methods ANOVA, with some violations identified. ANOVA is robust to violations in balanced designs, but is more vulnerable to some data assumption violations when cell sizes are unequal. Owing to the difference in numbers of male and female participants recruited, the present study's design is somewhat unbalanced (ratio = 1:1.5). Therefore, thorough assumption checking was performed in relation to: normality (including detecting outliers), homogeneity of error variances and equality of covariance matrices, and sphericity.

Normality. Owing to the complex factorial nature of the analysis design, the assumption of normality was assessed using the residuals (error) of the analyses. This allows for an inspection of a single histogram and normal P-P plot, rather than traditional approaches which examine the distribution of the raw data for each subgroup in the design. The standardised residuals (between data point and cell mean) for all cases on each of the myth types were calculated and their distributions examined. Inspection of the histograms and normal P-P plots

suggested some deviation from a normal distribution for all myth types. Owing to the large size of the sample ($N = 552$) and the sensitivity of tests of normality (and Z-scores of skew and kurtosis values), absolute values of skew and Kurtosis were inspected (Kozak & Piepho, 2018). With sample sizes of > 300 , data is said to approximate a normal distribution if values of skew fall within $-2/+2$ and values of Kurtosis ('proper' rather than 'excess') are < 7 (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012; Kim, 2012). The maximum values identified (both in relation to the Significance of Rape myth type) were skew = -1.35 and absolute kurtosis = 5.37 .

Outliers were examined using box-plots of the residuals. A number of mild outliers ($1.5 \times$ the interquartile range) were identified on all myth types. Differences between the means and trimmed means of each variable indicated the impact of these mild outliers were minimal (i.e. largest difference = 0.03 points) (Pallant, 2016).

Homogeneity of error variances and equality of error covariance matrices. The Levene's test for equality of error variances also returned statistically significant results for the Significance of Rape, Victim Deservedness, and Victim Resistance and Character variables (see table F1).

Box's Test of equality of covariance matrices returned a statistically significant result ($Box's M = 586.907$, $F(230, 78971.94) = 2.357$, $p < .001$). In line with Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) guidance for inspecting significant results of Box's test in unbalanced designs, the variances associated with the smallest ($n = 12$) and largest cells ($n = 30$) were compared. As the smallest group was not associated with larger variance than the largest group, this assumption violation was not identified to be problematic (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Sphericity. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated by the data ($W = 0.87$, $X^2(5) = 72.21$, $p < .001$). Therefore, multivariate test statistics (which do not require the assumption of sphericity) would be more suitable for interpretation (Pallant, 2016).

In combination, these findings suggest that the data is suitable for the use of a mixed methods ANOVA. Pillai's trace statistic was used to interpret test results, as it offers more robust estimates in light of assumption violations and unbalanced designs (Field, 2018; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). To counter the associated risk of increased type 1 error resulting from the violation of the Levene's test, statistical significance for between subjects effects was judged at an alpha level of 0.025 rather than 0.05, (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Interactions involving a between-groups element were also interpreted with greater caution.

Results

Research question 1 – hypotheses 1a-1h

Gender-linked social roles gender-transcendent social roles endorsement were consistent significant predictors of the dynamics of rape myth sub-type and perceived likelihood of experiencing rape (self or other person known to them) (see table 17 for model and predictor coefficients).

Table 7

Hierarchical, multiple linear regression models predicting dynamics of rape myth type and perceptions of likelihood of experiencing rape (using weighted effect coding).

	Dynamics of Rape					Likelihood of Rape				
	<i>b</i> (<i>SE b</i>)	β	<i>p</i>	% Unique variance	VIF	<i>b</i> (<i>SE b</i>)	β	<i>p</i>	% Unique variance	VIF
Step 1 - Control Variables	Adj. R2 = .243, <i>F</i> (9, 542) = 20.61, <i>p</i> < .001					Adj. R2 = .099, <i>F</i> (9, 542) = 7.71, <i>p</i> < .001				
Constant	5.467 (0.019)	-	< .001	-	-	4.437 (0.036)	-	< .001	-	-
Gender Linked SR	-0.009 (0.001)	-0.321	< .001	8.552	1.20	-0.011 (0.002)	-0.230	< .001	4.402	1.20
Gender Transcendent SR	-0.011 (0.002)	-0.254	< .001	5.536	1.16	-0.009 (0.003)	-0.123	.005	1.312	1.16
Socially Desirable Responding	0.015 (0.008)	0.072	.056	0.505	1.03	-0.025 (0.015)	-0.072	.081	0.500	1.03
Sexual Orientation Uncertainty	0.019 (0.007)	0.100	.010	0.921	1.09	0.039 (0.014)	0.118	.005	1.280	1.09
Sexual Orientation Identity										
Heterosexual	-0.010 (0.007)	-0.065	.188	0.239	1.74	-8.801E-05 (0.014)	< .001	.995	< .001	1.74
Bisexual	0.052 (0.088)	0.022	.556	0.048	1.04	-0.072 (0.165)	-0.018	.663	0.031	1.04
Homosexual	0.087 (0.072)	0.046	.229	0.200	1.06	0.050 (0.136)	0.015	.711	0.022	1.06
Ethnicity										
White	0.002 (0.005)	0.012	.755	0.013	1.02	-0.008 (0.010)	-0.032	.440	0.098	1.02
BAME	-0.012 (0.070)	-0.006	.868	0.013	1.03	0.102 (0.132)	0.032	.440	0.098	1.02
Highest Qualification										

Up to post 16 (e.g. A-levels)	-0.018 (0.017)	-0.053	.279	0.162	1.73	0.004 (0.032)	0.007	.897	0.003	1.72
Up to degree-level	-0.011 (0.036)	-0.014	.766	0.012	1.67	-0.082 (0.067)	-0.063	.225	0.241	1.67
Postgraduate	0.064 (0.039)	0.077	.100	0.374	1.58	0.080 (0.073)	0.055	.277	0.194	1.58
Step 2- Gender Main effects	$\Delta R^2 = .019, p = .003, Adj. R^2 = .258, F(12, 539) = 16.98, p < .001$					$\Delta R^2 = .105, p < .0031, Adj. R^2 = .201, F(12, 539) = 112.57, p < .001$				
Constant	5.467 (0.019)	-	< .001	-	-	4.437 (0.034)	-	< .001	-	-
Gender Linked SR	-0.008 (0.001)	-0.313	< .001	8.065	1.21	-0.010 (0.002)	-0.210	< .001	3.633	1.21
Gender Transcendent SR	-0.011 (0.002)	-0.248	< .001	5.276	1.17	-0.008 (0.003)	-0.113	.006	1.099	1.17
Socially Desirable Responding	0.018 (0.008)	0.089	.019	0.747	1.05	-0.012 (0.014)	-0.035	.371	0.116	1.05
Sexual Orientation Uncertainty	0.017 (0.007)	0.090	.020	0.736	1.10	0.032 (0.013)	0.096	.017	0.829	1.10
Sexual Orientation Identity										
Heterosexual	-0.012 (0.007)	-0.079	.107	0.352	1.75	-0.008 (0.013)	-0.033	.518	< .001	1.74
Bisexual	0.029 (0.087)	0.013	.737	0.015	1.05	-0.159 (0.156)	-0.040	.308	0.151	1.05
Homosexual	0.129 (0.072)	0.068	.075	0.427	1.08	0.216 (0.129)	0.066	.096	0.402	1.08
Ethnicity										
White	0.001 (0.005)	0.006	.868	0.004	1.03	-0.010 (0.009)	-0.042	.273	0.175	1.03
BAME	-0.012 (0.070)	-0.006	.868	0.004	1.03	0.137 (0.125)	0.042	.273	0.175	1.03
Highest Qualification										
Up to post 16 (e.g. A-levels)	-0.029 (0.017)	-0.084	.090	0.389	1.80	-0.042 (0.031)	-0.070	.169	0.274	1.80
Up to degree-level	0.005 (0.036)	0.007	.884	0.003	1.70	-0.014 (0.064)	-0.011	.829	0.007	1.70

Postgraduate	0.077 (0.039)	0.092	.048	0.531	1.60	0.136 (0.070)	0.094	.052	0.552	1.60
Observer Gender										
Female	0.060 (0.016)	0.144	< .001	1.903	1.09	0.242 (0.029)	0.334	< .001	10.276	1.09
Male	-0.092 (0.024)	-0.144	< .001	1.903	1.09	-0.367 (0.044)	-0.334	< .001	10.276	1.09
Victim*Perpetrator Gender condition										
Female Victim*Male Perpetrator	0.006 (0.027)	0.009	0.830	0.006	1.37	-0.018 (0.048)	-0.016	.715	0.019	1.37
Female Victim* Female Perpetrator	0.006 (0.026)	0.010	0.823	0.007	1.36	0.052 (0.046)	0.050	.263	0.182	1.36
Female Victim* Unspecified Perpetrator	-0.012 (0.026)	-0.019	0.661	0.026	1.35	-0.035 (0.047)	-0.034	.450	20.217	1.35
Male Victim*Male Perpetrator	-0.006 (0.028)	-0.009	0.830	0.006	1.367	0.018 (0.050)	0.016	.715	0.019	1.37
Male Victim* Female Perpetrator	-0.006 (0.028)	-0.010	0.823	0.007	1.36	-0.056 (0.050)	-0.050	.263	0.182	1.36
Male Victim* Unspecified Perpetrator	0.012 (0.028)	0.019	0.661	0.026	1.35	4.437 (0.036)	0.034	.450	0.083	1.35

The weighted effect coded coefficients indicated that individuals higher in traditional social roles endorsement were less rejecting of the rape dynamics myth and less likely to perceive themselves (or persons known to them) as being susceptible to rape. These variables each uniquely accounted for approximately 1.2% of the variance in scores in rape dynamics myths, but accounted for over 4% and 1.3% of the variance in likelihood of rape respectively.

However, even after controlling for this, observer gender was still identified to significantly predict myths about rape dynamics in the direction anticipated: female observers were more rejecting of rape myths than male observers. Furthermore, observer gender was the strongest predictor of rape likelihood scores, with female observers rating themselves (and people known to them) as more susceptible to rape than male observers.

Socially desirable responding was not a consistent predictor of rape dynamics; it narrowly failed to reach statistical significance in the first step of the model, but was predictive of rape dynamics myth scores when also taking into account participant gender. It was not associated with perceived likelihood of experiencing rape scores. Coefficients indicate that as socially desirable responding scores increase, rejection of rape myths also increases.

Sexual orientation identity itself was not a predictor of either rape dynamics myths, or perceived likelihood of rape scores. However, greater uncertainty over sexual orientation was statistically significantly associated with greater rejection of rape myths.

Highest qualification held was predictive of dynamics of rape scores, such that individuals with postgraduate qualifications were more rejecting of rape myths. However, other education levels (up to secondary school/further education qualifications and up to degree level qualifications) were not associated with rape myth scores. Holding a postgraduate qualification was also associated with higher scores on the likelihood of rape variable, although the size of this effect was small (accounting for only 0.6% of variance in scores).

Ethnicity was not predictive of dynamics of rape myth scores, or perceived likelihood of rape scores.

Research question 2 – hypotheses 2a-2kp

The previous section identified seven potential variables which could be used as covariates to improve estimates of the impact of victim and perpetrator gender (and combinations thereof) on the rejection of four myth subtypes: significance of rape, claims of rape, victim deservedness, and victim resistance and characteristics. However, the strongest predictors were observer gender, and gender role attitudes (gender-linked and gender-transcendent). Therefore, these variables were included in analyses testing hypotheses 2a-2p.

Mixed Methods ANOVA results. In line with Cohen's (2014) recommendations for interpreting complex disordinal interactions, adjusted means (and their associated standard error) and plots of adjusted means are provided to interpret the direction of differences identified.

Main effects (hypotheses 2a-2e). No significant main effects were identified for victim or perpetrator gender.

A significant main effect of myth type (with large effect size) was identified (see tables 8-9), with pairwise comparisons indicating significant differences between all possible pairs of myths (at $p < .001$). Specifically, participants were most rejecting of the significance of rape myth-type ($M = 5.6$, $SE = 0.19$), followed by the victim deservedness myth type ($M = 5.35$, $SE = 0.27$), the victim resistance and character myth type ($M = 5.14$, $SE = 0.26$) and least rejecting of the rape claims myth type ($M = 5.01$, $SE = 0.32$). A significant main effect of Gender linked social roles endorsement (with large effect size) was also identified, with high scoring individuals being less rejecting of rape myths overall ($M = 5.02$, $SE = 0.03$) than low scoring individuals ($M = 5.53$, $SE = 0.31$). The main effect for participant gender was statistically significant (with large effect size), with

descriptive statistics indicating that male participants were less rejecting of rape myths overall ($M = 5.19$, $SE = 0.03$) than female participants ($M = 5.36$, $SE = 0.03$).

Table 8

Mixed Methods ANOVA results: within subjects main and interaction effects

Effect	Pillai's trace	F-ratio	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Myth Type	0.596	F(3, 526) = 258.507	< .001	0.596
Myth Type * Gender Linked SRQ	0.076	F(3, 526) = 14.500	< .001	0.076
Myth Type * Participant Gender				
Myth Type * Victim Gender	0.270	F(3, 526) = 64.960	< .001	0.270
Myth Type * Perpetrator Gender				
Myth Type * Gender Linked SRQ * Participant Gender				
Myth Type * Gender Linked SRQ * Victim Gender	0.033	F(3, 526) = 5.985	.001	0.033
Myth Type * Gender Linked SRQ * Perpetrator Gender				
Myth Type * Participant Gender * Victim Gender	0.014	F(3, 526) = 2.498	.053	0.014
Myth Type * Participant Gender * Perpetrator Gender				
Myth Type * Victim Gender * Perpetrator Gender				
Myth Type * Gender Linked SRQ * Participant Gender * Victim Gender				
Myth Type * Gender Linked SRQ * Participant Gender * Perpetrator Gender				
Myth Type * Gender Linked SRQ * Victim Gender * Perpetrator Gender	0.025	F(6, 1054) = 2.267	.035	0.013
Myth Type * Participant Gender * Victim Gender * Perpetrator Gender				
Myth Type * Gender Linked SRQ * Participant Gender * Victim Gender * Perpetrator Gender				

Note. Only results significant at alpha = 0.05 are presented for ease of interpretation.

Table 9

Mixed Methods ANOVA results: between subjects main and interaction effects.

Effect	F-ratio	p	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	F(1, 528) = 57540.966	< .001	0.991
Gender Linked SRQ	F(1, 528) = 134.758	< .001	0.203
Participant Gender	F(1, 528) = 15.512	< .001	0.029
Victim Gender			
Perpetrator Gender			
Gender Linked SRQ * Participant Gender	F(1, 528) = 6.263	.013	0.012
Gender Linked SRQ * Victim Gender			
Gender Linked SRQ * Perpetrator Gender			
Participant Gender * Victim Gender			
Participant Gender * Perpetrator Gender			
Victim Gender * Perpetrator Gender			
Gender Linked SRQ * Participant Gender * Victim Gender			
Gender Linked SRQ * Participant Gender * Perpetrator Gender	F(2, 528) = 4.031	.018	0.015
Gender Linked SRQ * Victim Gender * Perpetrator Gender			
Participant Gender * Victim Gender * Perpetrator Gender			
Gender Linked SRQ * Participant Gender * Victim Gender * Perpetrator Gender			

Note. Only results significant at alpha = 0.025 are presented for ease of interpretation.

Interaction effects (hypotheses 2f-2p). Several significant interaction effects were identified. As these can render main effects less meaningful (i.e. as they are contingent on other variables), the focus on interpretation of the results will be placed on these effects.

Two-way interactions. Examining the multivariate interaction effects suggested that victim gender and myth type significantly interacted, with a very large effect size. Specifically, patterns in descriptive statistics (see table 10 and figure 3) suggest that rape claims myth scores are similar for male and female victims, and are the myth that is rejected to the least extent of all the myths. However, scores on victim resistance and character appear to be rejected to a lesser degree for male victims than female victims. This pattern is reversed for victim deservedness, where participants are less rejecting for female victims. Finally, for both male and female victims there is a relatively high rate of rejection for the significance of rape myth type, although this is most pronounced for female victims.

Table 10

Adjusted means for the interaction between victim gender and myth type

	Victim Gender	
	Male	Female
Myth Type	M (SE)	M (SE)
Significance of Rape	5.492 (0.027)	5.700 (0.026)
Rape Claims	5.033 (0.045)	4.984 (0.044)
Victim Deservedness	5.502 (0.038)	5.199 (0.037)
Victim Resistance and Character	5.028 (0.038)	5.255 (0.037)

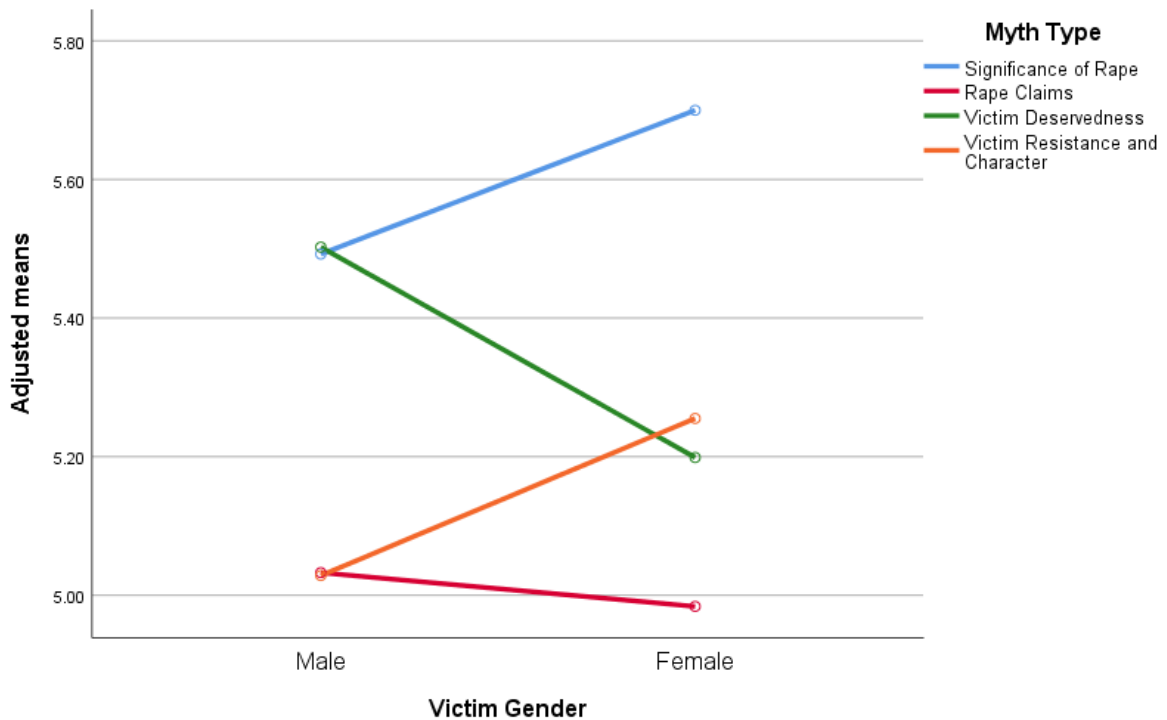


Figure 3. Adjusted means plot displaying the interaction between victim gender and myth type. Patterns suggest that rape claims myth scores are similar for male and female victims, and are the myth that is rejected to the least extent of all the myths. However, scores on victim resistance and character appear to be rejected to a lesser degree for male victims than female victims. This pattern is reversed for victim deservedness, where participants are less rejecting for female victims. Finally, for both male and female victims there is a relatively high rate of rejection for the significance of rape myth type, although this is most pronounced for female victims.

A two-way interaction was identified between gender linked social roles and participant gender (see table 9), with a medium sized effect; examining adjusted means for these variables suggest that male ($M = 4.87$, $SE = 0.05$) and female ($M = 5.16$, $SE = 0.04$) individuals high in gender-linked social roles endorsement was less rejecting of rape myths than male ($M = 5.5$, $SE = 0.05$) and female ($M = 5.56$, $SE = 0.049$) individuals low in traditional social roles endorsement. However, the difference between high gender-linked SRQ males and females was more pronounced than the difference than males and females in the low gender-linked SRQ group.

A further significant interaction between myth type and gender-linked social roles (small sized effect) was identified, but no equivalent interaction between myth type and participant gender. Descriptive statistics (see table 11) and profile plots (see figure 4) indicated that individuals high in traditional social roles endorsement were typically less rejecting of rape myths than individuals low in traditional social roles endorsement, with the lowest rape myth rejection observed for high gender linked social roles endorsement group in relation to the victim resistance and character myth type.

Table 11

Adjust means for the Interaction effect for gender-linked social roles endorsement and myth type

Gender linked SRQ score	Myth type	Mean	Std. Error
Low	Significance of Rape	5.776	0.026
	Rape Claims	5.291	0.044
	Victim Deservedness	5.605	0.037
	Victim Resistance and Character	5.446	0.037
High	Significance of Rape	5.416	0.027
	Rape Claims	4.726	0.045
	Victim Deservedness	5.097	0.038
	Victim Resistance and Character	4.838	0.038

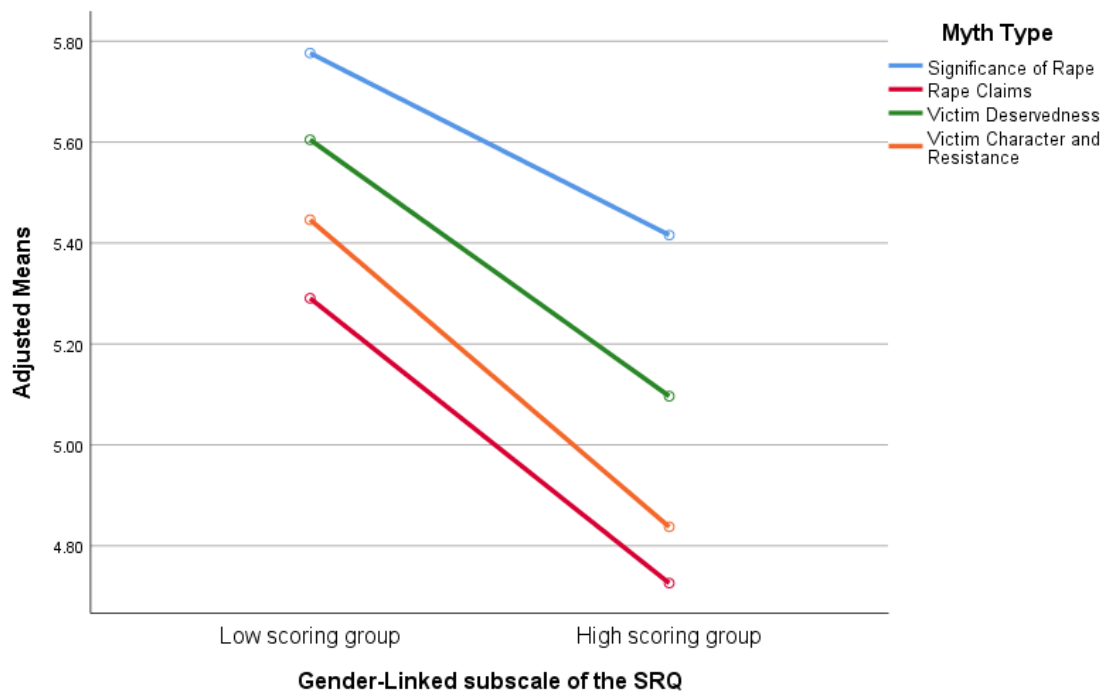


Figure 4. Plot of adjusted means displaying the interaction effect between gender-linked SRQ group, and myth type. The figure indicates that differences between victim resistance and character myth scores are more pronounced, and significance of rape myth scores are more similar between the low and high gender-linked SRQ scoring groups.

No further significant two-way interactions (e.g. between victim and perpetrator gender, perpetrator gender and myth type) were identified.

Three-way way interactions. A borderline significant interaction ($p = .053$) between myth type, participant gender and victim gender was identified. Descriptive statistics (see table 12) and profile plots (see figures 5 and 6) suggest that male observers are most rejecting of the significance of rape myth for female victims, and least rejecting of the victim resistance and character myth for male victims. The most marked difference in male participants scores between male and female victims are for the victim resistance and victim deservedness myths. In contrast, female observers are most rejecting of the significance of rape myth for female victims, and least rejecting of the rape claims myths for male and female victims. The most pronounced differences in female observer scores

between male and female victims, are in the significance of rape myth and victim deservedness myth.

Table 12

Adjust means and standard error for interaction between participant gender, myth type and victim gender condition.

		Myth Type							
		Significance of Rape		Rape Claims		Victim Deservedness		Victim Resistance and Character	
Observer gender	Victim Gender	M	SE	M	SE	M	SE	M	SE
Male	Male	5.434	.042	4.962	.071	5.401	.060	4.882	.059
	Female	5.620	.041	4.900	.069	5.113	.058	5.189	.057
Female	Male	5.551	.034	5.103	.057	5.604	.048	5.175	.047
	Female	5.780	.032	5.068	.055	5.284	.046	5.321	.046

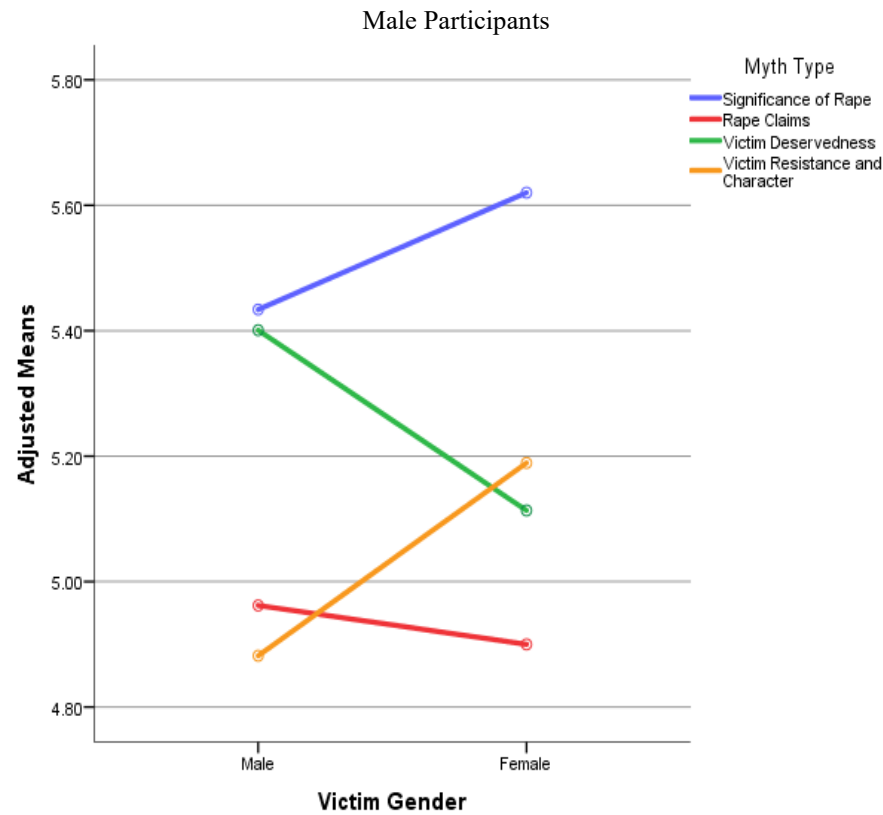


Figure 5. Plot of adjusted means displaying the interaction effect between victim gender, and myth type for the male participants group ($N = 219$). The figure indicates that men are most rejecting of the significance of rape myth for female victims, and least rejecting of the victim resistance and character myth for male victims. The most marked difference in male participants scores between male and female victims are for the victim resistance and victim deservedness myths.

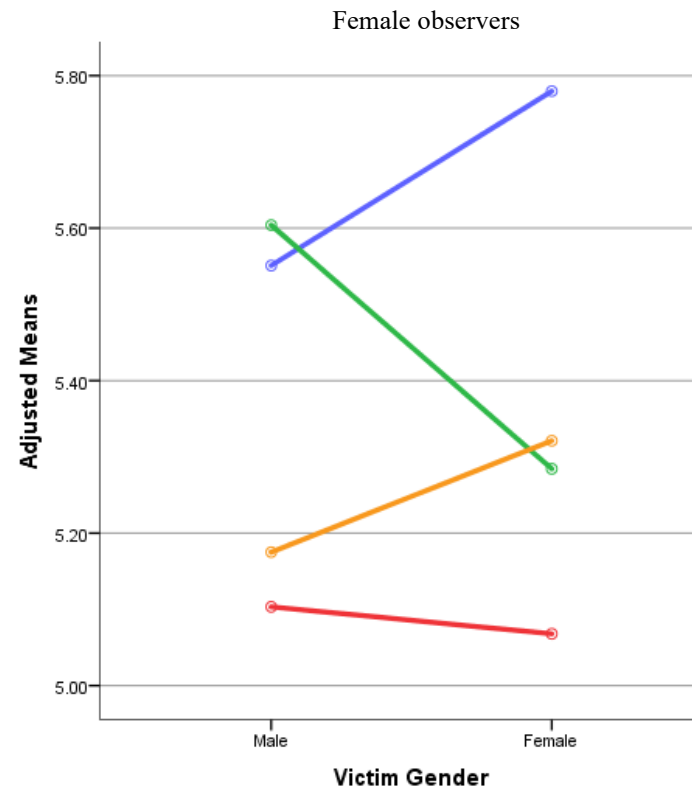


Figure 6. Plot of adjusted means displaying the interaction effect between victim gender, and myth type for the female participant group ($N = 333$). The figure indicates that women are most rejecting of the significance of rape myth for female victims, and least rejecting of the rape claims myths for male and female victims. The most pronounced differences in female observer scores between male and female victims, are in the significance of rape myth and victim deservedness myth.

A further significant interaction between myth type, gender linked social roles and victim gender was identified, with a small effect size. Examining adjusted means (see table 13) and profile plots (figures 7 and 8) suggested that this may relate to the high gender linked social roles, male victim category in relation to myth type 4: although the patterns of rape myth rejection are similar for victim gender across SRQ for myth types 1, 2 and 3, when the observer is high in gender linked social roles, and in the male victim category, they are less rejecting of the victim resistance and character myths than any other combination of SRQ and victim gender. Furthermore, the profile plots suggest that myths tend to be rejected to a greater extent for female victims, than male victims (across both low and high SRQ groups). However, the pattern reverses somewhat for the rape claims myth type (across both high and low SRQ) where scores are very similar for male and female victims, and the victim deservedness myth (across both high and low SRQ), where the pattern is reversed and myths are rejected more strongly in relation to male victims compared to female victims.

Table 13

Adjust means and standard error for interaction between SRQ, myth type and victim gender condition.

SRQ group	Victim Gender	Myth Type							
		Significance of Rape		Rape Claims		Victim Deservedness		Victim Resistance and Character	
		M	SE	M	SE	M	SE	M	SE
Low	Male	5.691	0.037	5.309	0.062	5.694	0.052	5.348	0.052
	Female	5.862	0.037	5.272	0.063	5.516	0.053	5.544	0.053
High	Male	5.294	0.039	4.756	0.066	5.311	0.056	4.709	0.055
	Female	5.538	0.036	4.696	0.061	4.882	0.051	4.966	0.051

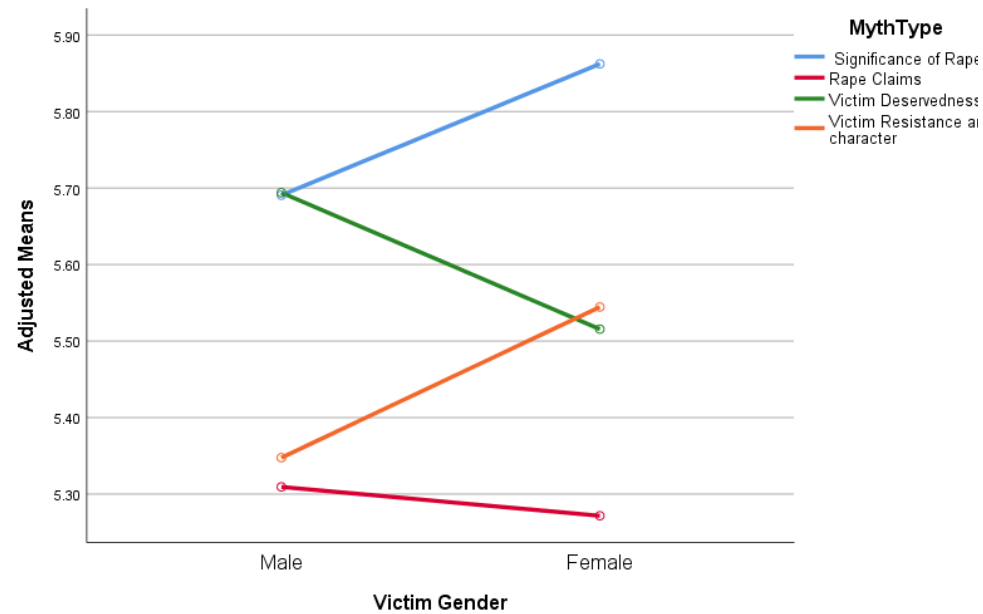


Figure 7. Plot of adjusted means displaying the interaction effect between victim gender, and myth type for the low gender linked social roles group ($N = 281$). The figure indicates that Individuals low in gender linked social roles endorsement are most rejecting of the significance of rape myth for female victims, and least rejecting of the rape claims myth for female and male victims.

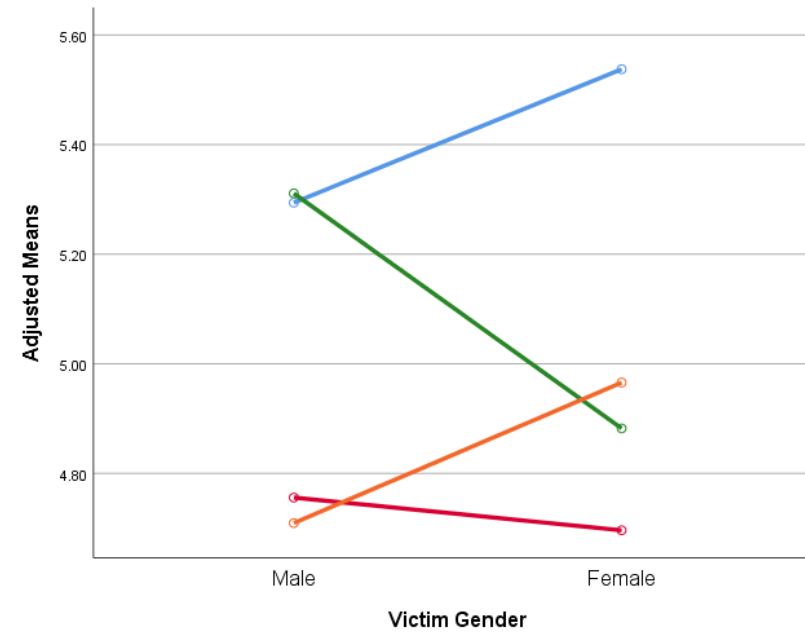


Figure 8. Plot of adjusted means displaying the interaction effect between victim gender, and myth type for the high gender linked social roles group ($N = 271$). The figure indicates that Individuals high in gender linked social roles endorsement are most rejecting of the significance of rape myth for female victims, and least rejecting of the rape claims myth for female victims and victim resistance and character myth for male victims.

Furthermore, a significant interaction effect was also identified between gender-linked social roles, participant gender and perpetrator gender, with a small sized effect. Examining the descriptive statistics (see table 14) and plots of adjusted means for these variables (figures 9 and 10) suggests that again, there are complex patterns. Specifically, the profile of scores between male and female participants in the low and high SRQ groups differ markedly in the direction of scores on the male perpetrator conditions: male participants high in SRQ are the least rejecting of the male perpetrator conditions, whereas male participants in the low gender-linked social roles endorsement group are the most rejecting of these myths. Furthermore, while scores on neutral and female perpetrator conditions are somewhat similar between high SRQ males and again between high SRQ females, scores for neutral and female perpetrator conditions differ markedly for low SRQ males and females.

Table 14

Adjusted means for the interaction between SRQ, Participant gender and perpetrator gender.

		Perpetrator gender		
		Non-specified	Male	Female
SRQ group	Participant Gender	M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)
Low	Male	5.432 (0.086)	5.561 (0.075)	5.500 (0.088)
	Female	5.522 (0.065)	5.478 (0.075)	5.683 (0.088)
High	Male	4.944 (0.080)	4.706 (0.075)	4.982 (0.088)
	Female	5.187 (0.069)	5.179 (0.075)	5.116 (0.088)

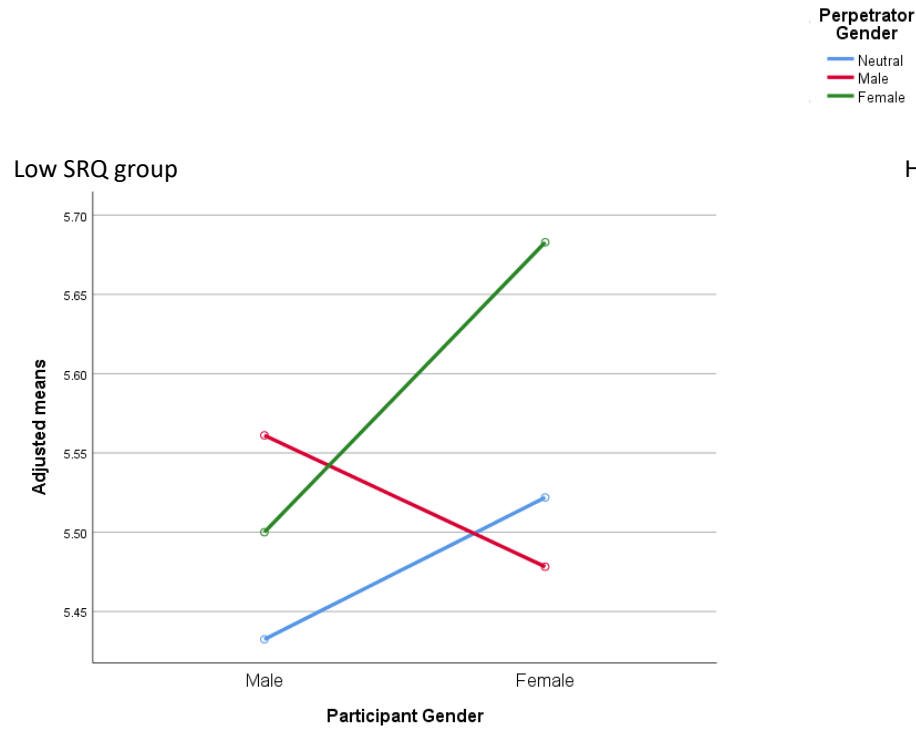


Figure 9. Adjusted means plots of different interactions between participant gender and perpetrator gender on RMA scores for the low gender-linked social roles group (N = 281). This plot suggests a higher degree of impact of perpetrator gender for male and female victims in the low gender-linked social roles group. Female observers are lower in rape myth rejection for male perpetrator conditions in comparison to male observers, but higher in rape myth rejection for the other perpetrator conditions.

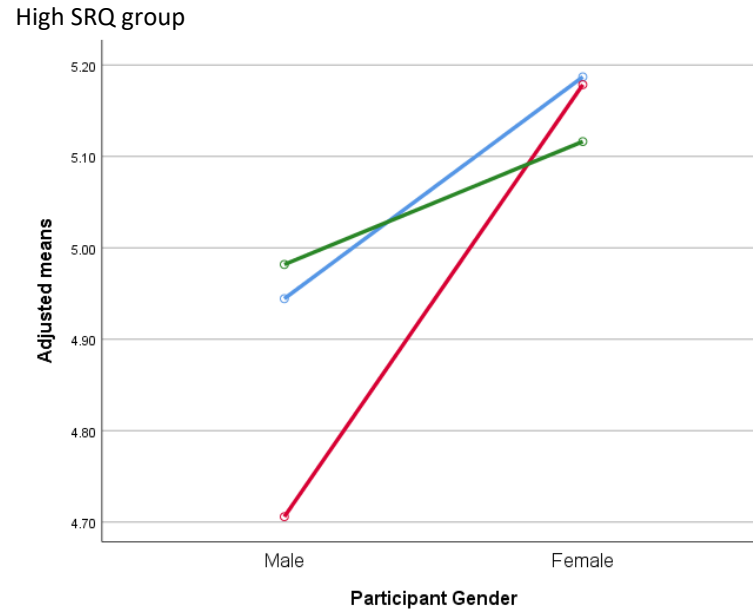


Figure 10. Adjusted means plots of different interactions between participant gender and perpetrator gender on RMA scores for the high gender-linked social roles group (N = 271). This plot suggests that Female participants are more rejecting of myths in all perpetrator conditions in comparison to male participants. The largest difference in scores between the participant genders is the male perpetrator conditions, where rape myth rejection is much lower for male participants.

No further three-way interactions were identified.

Four-way interaction. A four-way interaction effect was identified between myth-type, gender linked social roles, victim gender and perpetrator gender, with a small sized effect. As this is a complex interaction effect, descriptive statistics and profile plots breaking down the interaction first by low and high gender-linked social roles groups and then layering the line graphs by victim and perpetrator gender see table 15 for descriptive statistics and figure 11 for profile plots of adjusted means).

Rejection of rape myths appears to be affected by perpetrator gender in the direction that individuals low in SRQ typically reject rape myths in the female victim, female perpetrator condition to a greater extent than the high SRQ group, or when comparing the patterns within the low SRQ to the male victim conditions. However, this pattern appears to be reversed for the high gender linked social roles group, whereby myths are typically rejected to a lesser extent for female perpetrator conditions, particularly in relation to the victim deservedness myth and rape claims myth. The 'significance of rape' myths are particularly strongly rejected for female victims (across both high and low SRQ groups) in comparison to the other three myths types. In contrast, 'significance of rape' myths are rejected to a similar extent for male victims to victim deservedness myths, but to a greater extent than victim-resistance and character, and rape claims myths (across both high and low SRQ groups). The profiles of the significance of rape claims and victim resistance and character myths across low and high SRQ groups tend to remain similar within victim genders.

Table 15

Adjusted means for the interaction between gender-linked social roles, victim gender, perpetrator gender and myth type.

SRQ group	Victim Gender	Significance of Rape			Rape Claims			Victim Deservedness			Victim Resistance and Character		
		Non-specified perpetrator	Male Perpetrator	Female Perpetrator	Non-specified perpetrator	Male Perpetrator	Female Perpetrator	Non-specified perpetrator	Male Perpetrator	Female Perpetrator	Non-specified perpetrator	Male Perpetrator	Female Perpetrator
		M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)	M (SE)
Low	Male	5.653 (0.066)	5.666 (0.061)	5.753 (0.064)	5.213 (0.111)	5.350 (0.102)	5.366 (0.108)	5.618 (0.094)	5.654 (0.086)	5.810 (0.091)	5.252 (0.093)	5.309 (0.085)	5.481 (0.090)
	Female	5.830 (0.064)	5.889 (0.061)	5.868 (0.064)	5.194 (0.107)	5.299 (0.102)	5.322 (0.108)	5.538 (0.094)	5.451 (0.086)	5.558 (0.091)	5.520 (0.093)	5.539 (0.085)	5.575 (0.090)
High	Male	5.297 (0.065)	5.202 (0.061)	5.383 (0.064)	4.898 (0.109)	4.598 (0.102)	4.771 (0.108)	5.407 (0.094)	5.248 (0.086)	5.277 (0.091)	4.851 (0.093)	4.498 (0.085)	4.779 (0.090)
	Female	5.552 (0.062)	5.463 (0.061)	5.597 (0.064)	4.716 (0.104)	4.726 (0.102)	4.647 (0.108)	4.820 (0.094)	4.914 (0.086)	4.912 (0.091)	4.984 (0.093)	4.888 (0.085)	5.026 (0.090)

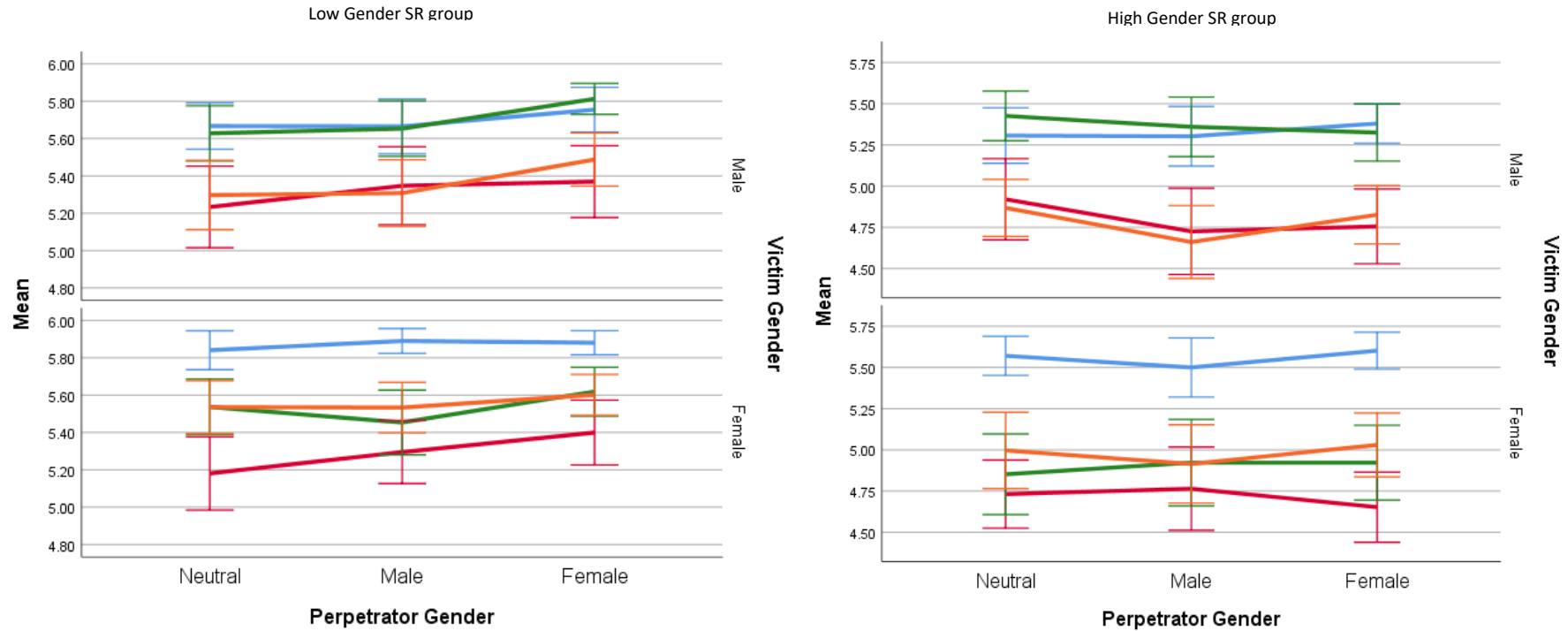


Figure 11. Adjusted means plots displaying interactions between victim and perpetrator gender and myth type, for individuals low and high in gender-linked social roles endorsement. The plots suggest complex patterns, with rejection of rape myths affected by perpetrator gender (i.e. for individuals low in SRQ, in the female victim and female perpetrator condition, typically rejecting myths to a greater extent than the neutral and male perpetrator conditions or in the male victim condition). However, this pattern appears to be reversed for the high gender linked social roles group, whereby responses indicate myths are typically rejected to a lesser extent for female perpetrator conditions. These patterns are particularly evident in relation to the victim deservedness myth and rape claims myth. The profiles of the significance of rape claims and victim resistance and character myths tend to remain more similar within victim gender.

— SignificanceOfRape
— RapeClaims
— VictimDeservedness
— VictimResistance_Character

No further four- or five-way interactions were identified.

Discussion

Similar to other research (Granger, 2008), participants in this study rejected rape myths to a large extent (i.e. mean scores of items and subscales approached the maximum score of 6). However, there were fluctuations. In relation to person constructs, mixed support was identified for hypotheses 1a-1h: only observer gender, gender-role attitudes and sexual orientation certainty were identified as consistently predictive of myths about the dynamics and perceptions of rape (i.e. specifically relating to gender and relationships between victim and perpetrator) and perceived likelihood of experiencing sexual violence.

With regards to the impact of victim and perpetrator gender on different categories of rape myth (hypotheses 2a-2p), mixed support was also identified. Although main effects of myth type, gender-linked social roles attitudes and observer gender were identified, no main effects of victim or perpetrator gender were recorded. Instead, the impact of victim and perpetrator gender was found to be contingent on myth type, observer gender, and gender-role attitudes. These findings will now be considered in light of existing research and the socioecological theory of gender proposed by Bond and colleagues (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010).

Person constructs

Few studies have considered observer characteristics in relation to RMA that considers victim and perpetrator gender, sexual orientation and relationships (i.e. rape dynamics and perceptions myths) and perceptions of the likelihood of experiencing rape (either self- and known-other). Therefore, part one of this quantitative research was important for identifying potential confounds which

need to be considered when unpicking the impact of victim and perpetrator gender on the acceptance of different types of rape myth.

Participant gender and traditional social roles endorsement. The main effects of participant gender and traditional social roles endorsement will be considered here. The complex interactions they recorded with victim and perpetrator gender will be considered in the next section.

Consistent with much of the existing RMA literature, participant gender and endorsement of traditional social roles (operationalised as gender-linked and gender-transcendent beliefs and attitudes) were predictive of RMA (Berry, 1991; Davies et al., 2012; Rosenstein, 2015; Rosenstein & Carroll, 2015; Walfield, 2016, 2018). Specifically, male participants (as compared with female participants) and individuals who were higher in gender-linked and gender-transcendent social roles were less rejecting of rape myths.

Findings from part one indicated that the strongest predictor of scores on both the dynamics and perceptions of rape myths and of perceived likelihood of rape subscale score, was gender-linked social roles endorsement, followed by gender-transcendent social roles endorsement scores. This is important, as the SRQ was developed to capture different views of gender role attitudes that are not typically measured by other gender-role attitude questionnaires (Baber & Tucker, 2006). That is, many measures of gender-role attitudes constrain participants' response options to a binary system, by contrasting a role or task as being the domain of males or females. However, the SRQ measures these perceptions (via the gender-linked subscale) as well as capturing those views which perceive tasks as being dichotomous or not (i.e. gender-transcendent) (Baber & Tucker, 2006). This research suggests that gender role attitudes that

perceive roles to be the domain of one gender, but not the other (i.e. dichotomous) are more predictive of gendered RMA than gender transcendent attitudes.

The finding that gender-linked attitudes were more strongly related to RMA than gender-transcendent attitudes contradicts that of Davies et al. (2012) whose research exploring the relationships between MRMA and FRMA, gender-role attitudes, ambivalent sexism and attitudes toward gay men identified that gender transcendence was the stronger predictor of the SRQ subscales. Differences may arise owing to the combinations of variables entered into regression analyses (i.e. in controlling for other variables, the unique relationship between different aspects of gender-role attitude may change). Also, this research used a different measures of MRMA (Melanson, 1999) and FRMA (Payne et al., 1999). These were used to produce global scores for male and female RMA, whereas part one examined myths specifically relating to victim-perpetrator gender and relationships, and perceived likelihood of experiencing sexual violence (personally, or to a known other). This may indicate that myths which specifically ask about the gender of victims and perpetrators may be better predicted by gender-linked gender role attitudes. This suggests that there is something about the “mutually exclusive” nature of role allocation measured by the gender-linked SRQ subscale which may particularly underpin, or relate to RMA. Finally, the original research and Davies et al.’s (2012) study identified a strong correlation between the two subscales of the SRQ. However, the present research identified only a moderate correlation. This may indicate that questionnaire did not perform in the same way in the present study as those in previous research. This may be an artefact of the fact that the greatest amounts of missing data were found on

the SRQ (and socially desirable responding measures). As this questionnaire was presented toward the end of the quasi-experiment, this may indicate that participant fatigue effects are present.

Findings from part two of this study indicate that in some circumstances, observer gender and gender-role attitudes may influence RMA independently, but in others gender-role attitudes may moderate the relationship between observer gender and RMA (i.e. considering RMA at a multivariate level, rather than by myth type). Results from part two of this study identified a main effect of observer gender, but no interaction between observer gender and myth type; although men rejected myths less than women, men and women responded in similar ways across the myth types (when ignoring victim and perpetrator gender). Significance of rape myths were rejected to the greatest extent, followed by victim deservedness myths, victim resistance and character myths and rape claims myths. Similarly, a main effect of SRQ was identified. However, an interaction between gender-linked SRQ group and myth type was observed. Although the pattern of RMA was broadly similar across low and high gender-linked SRQ groups, differences in scores between the groups were slightly more pronounced on the victim resistance and character myth type, and slightly less pronounced for the significance of rape myth type. However, differences were slight (i.e. less than a single unit).

No significant interaction was identified between observer gender, level of gender-linked social roles endorsement and myth type. However, a significant interaction between observer gender, and gender-role attitudes on RMA at the multivariate level (i.e. when not divided into myth types) was identified; male observers were less rejecting of rape myths than were female observers in both

groups, however, the difference between male and female observers' scores was more pronounced in the high gender-linked SRQ group. An interaction between observer gender, gender-role attitudes and perpetrator gender (considered further in next section). This suggests that considering rape myths at a global level may identify a moderating effect of gender-role attitudes on RMA, and differences in RMA based on perpetrator gender. However, when taking a more nuanced approach to RMA through the use of scores on myth types, this moderating effect may disappear. This may relate to the level of power of the analysis (i.e. complexity of the interaction). However, the detection of a four-way interaction with small sized effect suggests that this is not the case.

Sexual Orientation identity and uncertainty. The results indicated that identifying as bisexual was associated with greater rejection of RMA scores, although the percentage of unique variance accounted for decreased when observer gender was included in the model. However, identifying as bisexual was not predictive of perceived likelihood of experiencing rape. Furthermore, identifying as heterosexual or homosexual was not found to predict scores on either the 'dynamics and perceptions of rape' or 'perceived likelihood of experiencing rape' subscale. This finding is similar to many of the studies reviewed in chapter four, which indicated that findings are contradictory in relation to observer sexual orientation on its own (Coble, 2017; Walfield, 2016). The present research differed from some of the literature in that it explored sexual orientation as three identities (heterosexual/mostly heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual/mostly homosexual) rather than two (i.e. straight versus gay). However, a number of other studies examined sexual orientation in relation to observer gender, which was not explored in the present study. However, this

research suggested that even when considering the two variables together, patterns of RMA remained complex and non-uniform. In contrast to this body of research, the present study also examined sexual orientation uncertainty. The results indicate that greater uncertainty of sexual orientation identity was predictive of greater rejection of rape myths, and of perceiving the risk of experiencing sexual violence to be higher (for self and others known to the observer). This may indicate that sexual orientation uncertainty, rather than identity that may explain differences in RMA relating to victim and perpetrator gender, and victim-perpetrator relationships. This may relate to the findings of some victim-survey research that indicates that individuals from some sexual orientation groups, including bisexuals and those whom state 'don't know' regarding sexual orientation, may be more likely to experience interpersonal crimes, including sexual assault (Mahoney et al., 2014). In turn, this may influence RMA, leading to greater rejection of rape myths. However, conclusions of this nature are tentative, as findings are mixed in relation to the impact of experience of sexual assault on RMA. For example, although Granger (2008) identified that personal experience of sexual violence, or knowing someone who was a victim-survivor was associated with lower levels of RMA, other research has failed to identify a relationship between either experience and RMA (Coble, 2017; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992; Walfield, 2016).

Further research is required to understand the role of sexual orientation identity uncertainty, and RMA, as the findings from this research are somewhat contradictory to patterns observed in related research. For example, some research has identified that sexual identity uncertainty is associated with more sexuality essentialist thinking, and greater internalisation of homophobia (leading

to greater homonegativity) (Morandini, Blaszczyński, Ross, Costa, & Dar-Nimrod, 2015). As homophobia has been associated with increased RMA, it may be reasonable to predict sexual orientation uncertainty to be associated with greater RMA. However, it may be that questioning of sexual orientation may relate to different views of sexual orientation (such as the fluidity of sexuality) which may involve hypothetical thinking and perspective taking (E. M. Morgan, Steiner, & Thompson, 2010). As perspective taking has been found to play a protective role against stereotypic thinking (Vescio, Sechrist, & Paolucci, 2003), this may explain the findings identified in the present research. However, conclusions must be tentative, as these suppositions were not explicitly tested. However, these findings do indicate that those who have questioned their own sexual orientation to a greater extent may perceived themselves, and other differently in the context of sexual violence. Understanding the mechanisms would help to inform interventions and may identify mechanisms through which perceptions of victims and perpetrators of different genders could be changed.

Socially desirable responding. The present study found mixed support for the usefulness of socially desirable responding as a predictor of RMA: although in the direction anticipated (i.e. higher RMA associated with greater rejection of rape myths), this was only the case when also controlling for participant gender (alongside other demographic variables). This was despite there being no significant differences in scores for male and female observers' scores on socially desirable responding. Furthermore, the relationship between socially desirable responding and RMA was very weak, suggesting that it had minimal impact. In combination, this suggests that socially desirable responding may not be a useful predictor or control variable in future RMAS. This supports

the findings of research exploring the relationship between socially desirable responding and RMA, and blame attributions (D. L. Burt & DeMello, 2002; Sheridan, 2005; Walfield, 2016).

A number of explanations are possible for this finding. Two relate to the opportunistic nature of the sample: many individuals were recruited from psychology courses, or online psychology research participant pages, suggesting the sample may be more homogenous than a general public sample. For example, previous research has identified that psychology undergraduates may be more similar in demographic and attitudinal variables than general public samples (Foot & Sanford, 2004; Hanel & Vione, 2016). This may have affected social desirability scores, leading to floor and/or ceiling effects which can be problematic, as they result in range restriction. However, inspection of histograms for this variable identified an appropriate range of scores and normal distribution, suggesting that this was not responsible for the findings. However, the homogeneity of respondents may have instead been reflecting in ceiling effects in rape myth rejection scores (i.e. range restriction in RMA scores), which may mean that differences in socially desirable responding were not sufficient to differentiate between individuals on the outcome variables. Indeed, the mean rape myth rejection scores for all rape myths was high, with comparatively small standard deviations, suggesting overall the sample was strongly rejecting of all rape myth types.

A further issue may lie in the theoretical underpinnings of the social desirability concept; in the Marlow-Crowne measures of socially desirable responding, the authors highlight that it is not possible to differentiate between high scores on the measure resulting from high levels of “impression

management” and high levels of “prosocial” attitudes (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Reynolds, 1982). Therefore, high scores on both measures may simply reflect individuals with high levels of prosocial attitudes. Nevertheless, if this were true, we would perhaps expect to see a stronger relationship between socially desirable responding and rape myth rejection scores, which this research did not identify. Furthermore, although some researchers (Li & Bagger, 2007) have argued recently that unidimensional measures of SDR should be rejected in preference for multidimensional measures (such as the BIDR; Li & Bagger, 2007), not all authors agree with this. For example, Lambert, Arbuckle and Holden (2016) have argued that the unidimensional Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scale measure is more effective at identifying individuals who are intentionally misrepresenting themselves in self-report data collection methods. Also, the Marlow-Crowne full and short scale versions have been used effectively in relation to forensic topics whereas other socially desirable responding measures have not (Andrews & Meyer, 2003). This suggests that the present measure was relevant for inclusion, but that on its own, socially desirable responding is not enough to understand patterns of rape myth rejection.

A final issue may be the role that socially desirable responding was allocated in analysis (i.e. predictor), whereas it may play a mediating role. Further research is required to explore whether this variable does indeed mediate the relationship between different observer characteristics and types of rape myth.

Victim and perpetrator gender, and acceptance of different myth types

The present analysis found no main effects for victim gender, or perpetrator gender. If taken alone, this suggests that victim and perpetrator gender do not prove useful for understanding perceptions of and attitudes toward

rape, and survivors of rape. However, when victim gender and perpetrator gender were considered in relation to different *types* of myth, or observer characteristics, their importance is clear. As gender-linked social roles endorsement and participant gender were the strongest predictors of myths about the dynamics of rape in part one of the study, these were the observer-related variables controlled for when examining the relationship between victim and perpetrator gender. Although gender-linked social roles endorsement was dichotomised in order to do this (which can lead to a loss of information), compelling evidence for its influence on RMA and patterns of interaction with myth types, victim, perpetrator and participant gender was still identified. These patterns will now be considered.

Main effects for level of gender-linked social roles endorsement, observer gender and myth type were identified (discussed above). However, these were qualified by a series of two-way, three-way interactions and a four-way interaction. The highest order level interaction effects are described here that represent unique relationships, these include the three-way interaction between observer gender, victim gender and myth type; the three-way interaction between perpetrator gender, observer gender and level of gender-linked social roles endorsement; and the four-way interaction between gender-linked social roles endorsement level, victim and perpetrator gender and myth type. Other interactions reported in the results section were contingent on these higher order interactions and so are not considered here.

Three-way interactions. A significant interaction between perpetrator gender, observer gender and level of endorsement of gender-linked social roles was identified; males in the high gender-linked SRQ group rejected rape claims myths in relation to male perpetrators far less than all other observer and

perpetrator conditions, and across all other types of myths. However, scores for male and female observers in the high gender-linked social roles endorsement group responded similarly on overall RMA in the male and neutral perpetrator conditions. In contrast, male and female observers' scores differed based on perpetrator gender, with female observers rejecting rape myths to a lesser extent than male observers. The patterns differed for this group too; for females, again the scores between neutral and male perpetrator conditions were more similar than were the scores of either of these groups to the female perpetrator condition. However, in the male observer condition, the pattern differed: they rejected myths to the least extent in the neutral perpetrator condition. This provides partial support for the hypotheses. For example, the females in the high social roles group may be affected by heteronormative assumptions to a greater extent and assume a perpetrator is male, if not otherwise stated. This may explain the similarity in scores for the female observers in the high gender-linked social roles endorsement group. In contrast, drawing the attention of high gender-linked SRQ scoring male observers to a perpetrator through stating their gender as *male* appears to *trigger* RMA. In contrast to the anticipated pattern for this group, they were more rejecting of myths in which a perpetrator was identified as female. In contrast to expectations, the female observers in the low SRQ were less rejecting of rape myths involving a male perpetrator than were males. This may indicate that gender-role attitudes may act differentially on RMA for males and females when considering perpetrator gender. However, it is important to remember that although the patterns within SRQ group differed, scores in the low SRQ group were more rejecting across all myth types (for both genders) than observers in the high SRQ group.

Observer gender was found to interact with victim gender and myth type; men were less rejecting of myths than female observers overall, but this was most pronounced in relation to victim resistance and character myths for male victims in comparison to female observers. Males were also less rejecting of victim deservedness for male victims than they were of significance of male rape - this pattern was reversed for female observers. An interaction between observer gender, gender-linked social roles endorsement and perpetrator gender on RMA (regardless of myth type) was identified. Within the high gender-linked SRQ group, female observers were similarly rejecting of rape myths in relation to all perpetrator genders. Although high gender-linked SRQ male observers' myth scores were similarly rejecting in the female and neutral gender conditions, they were far less rejecting of myths in the male perpetrator gender condition. Women in the high SRQ were more rejecting of myths than were male observers. In comparison, the pattern in the low gender-linked SRQ group were less uniform. Although female observers were more rejecting of myths in the female and neutral perpetrator conditions than males, they were less rejecting in the male perpetrator condition than male observers.

Four-way interaction. The four-way interaction between gender-linked social roles endorsement, victim gender, perpetrator gender and myth type indicated that gender-role attitudes may be the driving the interaction. The high scoring gender-linked attitude group consistently rejected rape myths less than the low scoring gender-linked attitude group. Within this, the pattern of myths accepted by victim and perpetrator gender differed; for male victims, significance of rape and victim deservedness were rejected to a stronger degree than were rape claims, and victim resistance and character myths. In contrast, the pattern

of RMA for female victims, across perpetrator gender suggested that the significance of rape myths was rejected more strongly than were victim deservedness, victim resistance and character, and rape claims myths. These patterns between victim and perpetrator gender varied slightly between high and low gender-linked SRQ scoring groups. For example, in the male victim, female perpetrator condition victim deservedness was rejected more strongly in the low scoring group, but significance of rape myths was rejected more strongly in the high scoring group). Whereas this pattern was reversed in the male and non-specified perpetrator conditions. In the female victim, male perpetrator condition, victim resistance and character myths were rejected to a slightly greater degree than were victim deservedness myths in the low scoring gender-linked SRQ group, but scores were similar on these myth types in the high scoring gender-linked SRQ group. In the female victim female perpetrator and female victim non-specified perpetrator conditions, this pattern was reversed. These patterns suggest that gender-role attitudes that suggest that tasks, acts and behaviours are divisible between two gender categories influence acceptance of victim and perpetrator gendered rape myths in different ways.

The present study's findings differ from those of Smith, Pine and Hawley (1988) who identified multivariate main effects of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA-related cognitions: with male victims and female perpetrators associated with stronger RMA. The present research indicates that there were no overall differences in RMA by victim and perpetrator gender. However, Smith et al.'s research also identified a significant interaction between victim and perpetrator gender at the multivariate level, and on individual myths. In contrast to the present research, Smith et al.'s findings indicated that male victims and victims

of female perpetrators were believed to have experienced less stress than other victim-perpetrator combinations. Furthermore, findings by Schulze and Koon-Magnin (2017) found that participants believed that men who were raped by a woman were less likely to be very upset by the incident than all other victim-perpetrator gender combinations. However, the present research identified complex patterns, with the profile of RMA across myth type varying - particularly in relation to victim deservedness, and victim resistance and character. However, significance of rape myths was strongly rejected across all gender-linked role attitude groups, victim and perpetrator gender, but rape claims myths were typically rejected to a lesser extent across the subgroups. These findings partially replicate those of Granger's (2008) research, supporting the conclusion that the myths endorsed for male and female victims differ. However, the present study's findings suggest that perpetrator gender does influence RMA, but it is secondary to victim gender, and dependent on the gender role attitudes held by the observer.

When considering all the findings in light of the socioecological theory of gender (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010), they suggest that more rigid thinking in terms of gender may be associated with greater RMA. For example, greater endorsement of traditional (gender-linked) social roles was consistently associated with greater RMA. This suggests that the stronger someone holds to norms and expectations of behaviour as *different* between the genders, the more accepting of rape myths they are, and the more they are influenced by victim and/or perpetrator gender and myth type too. Similarly, Wasco and Bond (2010) argue that, although clearly distinct, gender and sexual orientation may interact and influence each other. It is reasonable to

speculate that this may extend to sexual orientation uncertainty. If sexual orientation uncertainty does also influence gender identity, this may lead to greater questioning of gender identity and stereotypes, which may lead to greater rejection of RMA.

Framed in the language of the socioecological theory of gender, it appears that gender-linked social roles and RMA may perform similar functions: they both reify gender as distinct categories, and reinforce a gendered universe of alternatives. As RMA has been posited as a vehicle for characterological and behavioural blame onto individuals who transgress gender norms (Angelone et al., 2012), this may suggest that the stronger that someone subscribes to gender-linked roles (i.e. norms), the more salient rape myths are to that individual and the more they are accepted.

Limitations

There are a number of sources of potential bias in the study, in particular regarding the sampling strategy used (opportunistic and snow-balling using social media). Random allocation of participants to the different conditions was performed, to mitigate this issue. Owing to the nature of the sampling method utilised response rates cannot be ascertained and it is anticipated that the sample recruited will be heavily biased towards people studying or working in Psychology. However, this method of opportunistic and snowball sampling was identified as the most feasible means of distributing the questionnaire as widely as possible, whilst ensuring the survey remained anonymous. Although there is a need to continue exploring RMA with student samples (as outlined in the introduction to this chapter), the present study may be argued as perpetuating the *over-reliance* of RMAS on student samples.

Recruiting male participants proved to be much harder than female participants, which is ultimately reflected in the unbalanced design (1 male: 1.5 females). However, the statistical analyses selected the sample size for all analyses ranged from adequate to good, suggesting that they had sufficient power to identify statistically significant differences/relationships should they have existed. Furthermore, the statistical tests selected are reasonably robust to unbalanced designs (Dancey & Reidy, 2001; Nieuwenhuis, te Grotenhuis, & Pelzer, 2017; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

A post manipulation check was not performed, which means that it is not possible to know whether participants were cognisant of the manipulation or perhaps had forgotten it as they completed the questionnaires. However, the pre-manipulation checks suggest that there were no differences between the groups prior to the manipulation, but differences based on victim-perpetrator gender combinations were evident post manipulation. However, future research should contain a post-manipulation check as well as a pre-manipulation check.

There are some issues with regards to the interpretation of some of the myth items, based on the context in which the RAQ (Granger, 2008) was originally developed (Australia) and the context of the present research. The original purpose of some of the questions in the RAQ was to check factual knowledge, such as a question regarding the number of individuals who strongly agreed with the statement “females cannot be guilty of rape” (Granger, 2008). In the original research, accepting this item would reflect a factual inaccuracy, however, in the present research this may reflect a moral or normative position on the status of female perpetrated rape.

There is limited reliability and validity evidence for the RAQ (Granger, 2008). However, the RAQ was selected because it was designed to have a section exploring gender-related and victim-perpetrator relationship related rape myths. This subscale (the dynamics and perceptions of rape) could function as a baseline check of the equivalence of groups, as well as explore observer factors that may interact with victim and perpetrator gender to alter RMA. The present research provides further information regarding the psychometric properties of the RMA, suggesting it may be suitable for examining victim-gendered RMA in a (predominantly) UK context for future RMAS. For example, The means of item scores for male and female participants on the original versions of the questionnaire were similar to those of the original research conducted by Granger (2008) in Australia, suggesting the RAQ may be valid for use with UK populations.

Conclusion and future directions

The present research suggests that different myth types are more salient for different victim genders, and in relation to different perpetrator genders. Specifically, victim resistance and character myths are rejected less for male victims, and victim deservedness myths are rejected less for female victims. Rape claims myths are rejected to a similar extent for male and female victims (lowest levels of rejection overall), as are significance of rape myths (highest levels of rejection overall). This suggests that rape claims myths may be particularly problematic, regardless of victim gender whereas participants may be more aware of the significant, negative impact of rape on victims (again, regardless of gender). Again, this should inform support practice, interventions, but also research practice, as this suggests a more nuanced approach to the measurement of RMA is required. That is, research using overall or total scores

for measuring RMA in relation to victim and perpetrator gender (and even within victim/perpetrator genders) are missing important patterns that could help develop gender inclusive theory and practice.

Chapter 7. Exploring gendered setting qualities and practices and rape myth acceptance: A Think Aloud informed study with sexual violence support professionals.

Chapter introduction

The findings of the systematic review and quasi-experimental study identified gaps in theory and research, regarding the mechanisms through which victim and perpetrator gender shape RMA. Such gaps include explanations for why some types of myth may be accepted to differing degrees when victims and perpetrators are specified as being either male or female. This chapter presents a Think Aloud informed (TAi) qualitative study exploring the ways in which setting characteristics (i.e. gendered qualities and practices) influence RMA, from the perspective of professionals supporting adult victim-survivors of sexual violence.

Background

Professionals providing support to victim-survivors are a unique and invaluable group with whom to explore the roles of victim and perpetrator gender in shaping RMA. Previous research suggests that these individuals have a wealth of experience supporting survivors of different genders, from diverse backgrounds, whom have diverse motivations for, and experiences of disclosure (Abdullah-Khan, 2008; R. Campbell, 1998; R. Campbell et al., 2009; R. Campbell, Wasco, Ahrens, Sefl, & Barnes, 2001; Henderson, 2012; Javaid, 2016c; Leclerc, 2018; Logan, Evans, Stevenson, & Jordan, 2005; Maier, 2007, 2008, 2011b, 2011a; Mihelicova, Wegrzyn, Brown, & Greeson, 2019; J. N. Mitchell, 2016; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). Therefore, these professionals are in a unique position to offer insight into the way that victim-survivors of different gender identities experience RMA and its consequences.

Previous chapters have identified that traditional theories of RMA are under-developed in relation to gender-inclusivity. However, the socioecological theory of gender proposed by Bond and colleagues (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010) has the potential to act as a framework for exploring professionals' insights into the *mechanisms* through which victim and perpetrator gender influences RMA. Specifically, this framework could be used within a qualitative approach to explore the gendered qualities and practices of settings that influence RMA. In turn, this would help to identify opportunities for intervention to challenge RMA in diverse contexts.

The systematic review (see chapter 5) indicated that there is a dearth of research using qualitative methods to explore how gender influences RMA. However, these approaches would be beneficial for generating insight into the

nuances that some quantitative research (e.g. see chapter 6) has indicated exists when considering RMA in light of victim and perpetrator gender.

A novel method which may generate the rich qualitative data required to explore RMA in the context of a socioecological theory of gender, is the Think Aloud (TA) technique. Think Aloud (TA) is an approach to accessing people's 'inner speech' and has been used in a range of disciplines, such as education, in order to explore the way that people approach a task (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012; Lundgrén-Laine & Salanterä, 2010) and in health to evaluate questionnaires (Drennan, 2003). However, it has not been used in RMA research. Utilising TA to capture people's 'inner speech' whilst considering rape myth statements in relation to victim and perpetrator gender would therefore be beneficial. It would help to elucidate the ways in which gender (victim/perpetrator) shapes the expression and acceptance of different types of rape myth.

Identifying appropriate stimuli for a TA task is challenging, particularly when applied to a novel area of research. However, there are broad guidelines which should be followed for designing an effective study (Drennan, 2003; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012; Phillips, 2014). Firstly, the task should be relevant to the 'real world' phenomenon of interest, with content informed by theory and previous research findings (Phillips, 2014). Secondly, the complexity and cognitive load and the potential impact of verbalisation on the thoughts and behaviours relating to the task must be considered (Drennan, 2003; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012; Phillips, 2014). Finally, the TA method should be adapted to match the nature of the research questions and the type of data required to answer these questions (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012).

The present study used a Think Aloud informed (TAi) task, using items from a theoretically informed measure of RMA (the RAQ; Granger, 2008) as stimuli. Myth statements were presented to victim support professionals in order to generate talk of how their expression and acceptance were influenced by victim and perpetrator gender. The research question driving the study was “how do ecological settings, gendered setting qualities and setting practices influence RMA?”

The aim of the research is to contribute to debates regarding gender-inclusive theories and measures of RMA.

Methods

Design

Data was collected using an approach informed by the TA method (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012) conducted either via the telephone or Skype. The TA method was modified to generate the type of qualitative data required to explore the research question (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012), as it was felt the full TA method would be too unwieldy and constraining in the present context. Instead, a more conversation and dyadic style of talking was deemed preferable. Therefore, participants were presented with stimuli and asked to discuss them in relation to victim and perpetrator gender, rather than being asked to complete a measure of RMA as a respondent per se.

The design of this phase of the research was informed by preliminary findings from the systematic review and quasi-experimental study. A sample of items from the RAQ (Granger, 2008) were selected as stimuli for a Think Aloud informed (TAi) task (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012). The procedure used for

selecting items is described in the materials section of this chapter. The TAI task acted as a primer for a semi-structured interview which participants completed immediately afterwards (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012) and is reported in chapter eight.

A combination of deductive and inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; V. Clarke & Braun, 2013; Hoskin, 2019; Willig, 2013) was performed to generate qualitative findings. All data was collected between February 2016 and June 2017.

Participants

As the sample was the same across the two qualitative studies, the participant details are provided here for both chapters.

Recruitment methods. Purposive and snowball sampling methods were used to recruit 16 participants working or volunteering with sexual violence support organisations (referred to as professionals from hereon).

Two recruitment methods were used. First, permission was obtained from the National Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence⁸ to contact all students currently enrolled on courses held at the University of Worcester relating to supporting survivors of sexual violence. In the second route, centre managers at survivor support organisations were approached and their organisation invited to participate. Interested parties contacted the researcher via the email address provided. They were sent further information about the study, and a convenient interview time arranged. The researcher had no relationship with any participant or their organisation prior to them participating.

⁸ In 2018 the centre was absorbed into the new School of Psychology, at the University of Worcester.

Participant characteristics. Of these sixteen individuals, six supported male survivors only, four supported women survivors only and six supported both (see table 16). Nine participants were female, six were male and one individual identified as non-binary gender. The participants worked for 10 organisations from across England, with participants' experience in their role ranging from less than one year to over 22 years. However, many individuals had previously worked in related fields or roles (e.g. private practice, domestic violence voluntary sector organisations). Professionals' were recruited from organisations supporting large urban areas, rural areas, and combinations of both.

Table 16

Survivor gender-groups supported by participants

Participant number	Survivor gender groups supported
1	Male and female
2	Male and female
3	Male and female
4	Female
5	Female
6	Male and female
7	Female
8	Male
9	Male
10	Male and female
11	Male
12	Male and female
13	Male
14	Male
15	Male
16	Female

Organisation characteristics. Organisations operated a range of different service models, including generic crime victim support organisations, feminist-informed organisations and other independent charities. Furthermore, some charities provided support to adults only, adults and children, and to anyone

who made contact or was referred to their service, whereas others only support individuals' whose cases were progressing through the CJS. Further participant details in combination are not provided, as they would render some individuals identifiable.

Incentives. Funding for £25 donations to a charity of each participant's choice (including their own) for participants recruited within West Yorkshire (from Survivors West Yorkshire) was obtained, and a research grant from the Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group, was awarded for £25 donations for all other participants. The donations were made anonymously by the researcher to protect the participants' identities.

Materials

Myth statements from the RAQ (Granger, 2008) were identified as suitable stimuli for a TAI task seeking to explore the gendered setting qualities and practices that influence RMA, for several reasons. The RAQ (Granger, 2008) is a theoretically informed measure of RMA, with evidence to support its reliability and validity (see materials section of chapter 6 for further details). Furthermore, findings from chapter 6 indicate it can detect nuances in acceptance of different *types* of rape myth arising from victim/perpetrator gender. However, using all items on the questionnaire would be too burdensome for participants, owing to its length. Therefore, a subset of items from each of the myth-type subscales ('dynamics of rape', 'perceived likelihood of rape', 'significance of rape', 'rape claims', 'victim character and resistance', and 'victim deservedness' myths) needed to be selected.

The aim of the selection process was to identify approximately 20 myth statements that would work effectively as discussion materials, and facilitate talk

of victim, perpetrator gender and rape myth acceptance. It was felt that this number of items this would provide a good balance between generating rich data, without being too fatiguing for participants given the semi-structured interview planned following the TAI task.

Identification of relevant items for inclusion in the task followed a two-stage process; firstly, item-level analysis was performed with data collected using the RAQ as part of the quasi-experimental study. Items were then scrutinised in light of the findings of the systematic review, to ensure coverage of the key myth-types (including myths that contained elements of both characterological and behavioural blame). It was felt that including both items whose acceptance appeared to be influenced by gender and items which appeared to be uninfluenced by victim and/or perpetrator gender would help participants to reflect on the ways in which they felt these factors manifested. In turn, this could be used to explore the gendered qualities and practices of settings that influence the expression and acceptance of rape myths.

Item-level analysis. Owing to the Likert-Scale response options used for each item on the questionnaire, data were treated as ordinal and non-parametric tests performed (i.e. Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests). To control the risk of inflating the family-wise (type 1) error rate owing to multiple testing, a Holm-Bonferroni correction (Eichstaedt, Kovatch, & Maroof, 2013; Holm, 1979)⁹ was applied to significance values.

The intention was to identify a set of variables that were accepted differently based on victim and/or perpetrator gender, and items that were

⁹ The Holm-Bonferroni correction is recommended to control family-wise error, rather than the Bonferroni correction which is overly conservative.

accepted to a similar degree - regardless of victim and/or perpetrator gender. This approach was adopted for items across those subscales which had been modified in the quasi-experimental study to vary victim and perpetrator gender, namely the: 'significance of rape', 'rape claims', 'victim resistance and character' and 'victim deservedness' myth subscales (see materials section of chapter 6 for details).

Mann-Whitney U tests for victim gender identified six items from the subscales that demonstrated significant differences in acceptance for male and female victims after applying the Holm-Bonferroni correction (see table G1, appendix G). However, Kruskal-Wallis tests for perpetrator gender indicated that no items were accepted significantly differently based on perpetrator gender alone (see table G2). Only one item (Q8) approached statistical significance. This supports the finding of the quasi-experimental study, which suggests that perpetrator gender may only become salient when other factors (such as victim gender or gender-linked social roles attitudes are considered in combination). Therefore, an additional level of analysis was performed: items were scrutinised based on the degree to which they were accepted based on combinations of victim and perpetrator gender. Kruskal-Wallis analyses by victim-perpetrator combination identified five items across the subscales that were statistically significant following application of the Holm-Bonferroni correction (see table G3).

The approach outlined above was not possible with the two remaining RAQ subscales, which were unmodified in the quasi-experimental study ('dynamics of rape' and 'perceived likelihood of experiencing rape'). Indeed, many of these items ask explicitly about the role of gender in the degree to which a myth should be accepted (i.e. "females cannot be guilty of rape"). Therefore,

these items were scrutinised in light of the degree to which people high and low in gender-linked social roles responded differently and similarly to them (see table G4). This was based on the key finding from the quasi-experimental study, which suggested victim and perpetrator gender influences RMA differently based on the degree to which you endorse gender-linked social roles. It was felt that identifying items that appeared to be affected by gender-role attitudes may help to identify the ways in which social role attitudes may shape responses to rape myths that explicitly refer to victim or perpetrator gender. For example, Bond and colleagues' socioecological theory of gender suggests that setting qualities and practice may act together to influence expectations of and attitudes towards people of different genders. Therefore, including these items in the present research may shed further light on the gendered setting qualities and practices that influence RMA.

Mann-Whitney U tests identified statistically significant differences across all items of the 'dynamics of rape' and 'perceived likelihood of rape' subscales after applying the Holm-Bonferroni correction (see table G4); myths were consistently rejected to a greater degree by individuals low in gender-linked social roles attitudes. However, effect sizes suggested most differences were of a small to moderate size. Therefore, items were selected based so that some items with weak effects and some with moderate effects were selected, and based on the content of the myth statements themselves.

Myth content scrutiny. Following the item-level stage of analysis, the content of the myths was scrutinised in light of the theory reviewed in chapter 3, and the findings of the systematic review in chapter 5. The aim was to ensure that different types of myth were included, without too much repetition in specific

content, as well as myths that appeared to be influenced to differing degrees by victim and perpetrator gender.

Scrutiny of the items on the subscales identified some gaps which were potentially relevant to victim and/or perpetrator gender, but were not measured as part of the subscales. Therefore, the data collected on a further three items as part of the quasi-experimental study were analysed. These items were Q6 “People who have had prior sexual relationships should not complain about rape” (e.g. myth about perceived impact of sexual experience on trauma of rape; accepted more in relation to male than female victims, and particularly in relation to male victims when perpetrator gender not specified); Q9 “It would do some people good to be raped (e.g. rape as punishment, elements of BJW; accepted more in relation to male than female victims, and particularly in relation to male victims when perpetrator gender not specified)”, and; “Q38 A man or woman can control their behaviour no matter how aroused they are at the time” (e.g. loss of control myth; accepted more when perpetrator gender not specified, and particularly in relation to female victim-neutral perpetrator combination), also to explore the potential impact of a positively worded item (see tables G5-G7 for descriptive and inferential statistics).

Therefore, 22 items in total were identified for inclusion in the TAI task (see tables 33 and 34 for description of myth statements; role of victim/perpetrator gender or gender-linked social role attitudes in acceptance, and; justification in light of theory and the systematic review findings).

Items from the ‘significance of rape’, ‘rape claims’, ‘victim character and resistance’, and ‘victim deservedness’ subscales were modified to be gender neutral, to reduce the repetition that would be entailed in presenting the same

item multiple times with different victim and perpetrator genders. Also, items were presented in the form of a self-report questionnaire, so that participants could see how the rape myth statements are typically presented to respondents in RMA research (see appendix H for the TAI task materials as presented to participants).

Table 17

Description of items selected from the 'significance of rape', 'rape claims', 'victim character and resistance', and 'victim deservedness RAQ subscales.

Myth		Justification				In light of systematic review findings and theory
Item no.	Statement	Victim gender differences?	Perpetrator gender differences?	Victim-perpetrator combination differences?	Subscale of RAQ	
2	The extent of a victim's resistance should determine if a rape has occurred	Accepted similarly for males and females	Accepted similarly across perpetrator genders Borderline non-significant result - suggests accepted more when perpetrator gender is not specified-	Accepted similarly for all victim/perpetrator gender combinations	Victim resistance and character	Reflects elements of behavioural blame
8	Intoxicated people are usually willing to have sexual relations	Accepted more for male than female victims	rejected most in relation to female perpetrators	Accepted more in relation to male victims of neutral perpetrators than other combinations	Male victims: victim resistance and character, female victims: Victim deservedness	Reflects elements of behavioural blame and potentially miscommunication/consent myth
10	People who feel guilty or regret having had sex are likely to falsely claim rape	Accepted more for female victims than male victims	Accepted similarly across perpetrator genders	Accepted more in relation to female victims of neutral perpetrators than other combinations	Rape Claims	Reflects elements of characterological blame

15	If a person doesn't physically resist sex, even when protesting verbally, it really can't be considered rape	Accepted more for male victims than female victims	Accepted similarly across perpetrator genders	Accepted similarly for all victim/perpetrator gender combinations	Victim resistance and character	Reflects elements of behavioural blame
16	A person who goes out alone at night puts himself in a position to be raped	Accepted more for female victims than male victims	Accepted similarly across perpetrator genders	Accepted most for female victims of male perpetrators	Victim deservedness	Reflects elements of behavioural blame
21	Many people who report rape are lying because they are angry or want revenge on the accused	Accepted similarly for males and females	Accepted similarly across perpetrator genders	Accepted similarly for all victim/perpetrator gender combinations	Rape Claims	Reflects elements of characterological blame
22	People who wear revealing or provocative clothing are inviting rape	Accepted more for female victims than male victims	Accepted similarly across perpetrator genders	Accepted similarly for all victim/perpetrator gender combinations	Victim deservedness Male victims: victim resistance and character,	Potentially reflects elements of both characterological and behavioural blame and BJW.
29	A person who goes to the home of a partner on their first date implies that they are willing to have sex	Accepted similarly for males and females	Accepted similarly across perpetrator genders	Accepted similarly for all victim/perpetrator gender combinations	female victims: victim deservedness	Potentially reflects elements of both characterological and behavioural blame and BJW.

36	If a person only says "no" but does not physically resist, it is still ok to have sex with them as long as you don't hurt them	Accepted similarly for males and females	Accepted similarly across perpetrator genders	Accepted similarly for all victim/perpetrator gender combinations	Significance of rape Male victims: victim resistance and character,	Reflects elements of behavioural blame
37	Rape really only occurs when a rapist has a weapon, or if there is a number of attackers	Accepted similarly for males and females	Accepted similarly across perpetrator genders	Accepted similarly for all victim/perpetrator gender combinations	female victims: significance of rape	Reflects elements of behavioural blame and impossibility myth
40	When a person is very sexually aroused, they could be excused for not noticing that the other person is resisting sex	Accepted similarly for males and females	Accepted similarly across perpetrator genders	Accepted similarly for all victim/perpetrator gender combinations	Male victims: victim deservedness, female victims: significance of rape	Reflects notion of miscommunication myth/not the perpetrator's fault myth

Table 34

Description of items selected from the 'dynamics of rape' and 'perceived likelihood of experiencing rape' RAQ subscales.

Item number	Myth		Justification	
	Statement	Impact of gender-linked social role attitudes	Subscale of RAQ	In light of systematic review findings and theory
5	Most rapes would occur when the victim has engaged in risky behaviours	Weak effect size	Perceived likelihood of rape	Reflects elements of Just World Hypothesis, behavioural and characterological blame.
7	In a committed relationship, if a partner requests sex, you have an obligation to agree	Moderate effect size, visible difference in median scores	Dynamics of rape	Reflects consent myths and impossibility myth
9	If a person appeared controlled and calm the day after their alleged rape, it probably isn't true	Moderate effect size, visible difference in median scores	Dynamics of rape	Reflects trauma myths
10	Outside all-male settings, the rape of men is too rare to be worth worrying about	Weak effect size	Dynamics of rape	Reflects the impossibility myth and homophobia myths
15	Only a homosexual man would rape another man	Weak effect size, but visible difference in median scores	Dynamics of rape	Reflects the impossibility myth and homophobia myths
19	A report of rape several days after the act is probably a false report	Weak effect size	Dynamics of rape	Reflects trauma myths
21	Females cannot be guilty of rape	Weak effect size	Dynamics of rape	Reflects the impossibility myth
22	Males rape other males only in all-male institutionalised settings	Weak effect size, but visible difference in median scores	Dynamics of rape	Reflects the impossibility myth and homophobia myths

Procedure

To build rapport, participants were asked first to talk about their role and experience of supporting survivors and were asked an introductory open question “Do you feel there is still stigma around victims of sexual violence”. Following this, participants were asked if they had a copy of the RMs at hand and were asked to describe how they interpret these myths in relation to their experience of supporting survivors and in particular whether they feel gender impacts on how they are viewed. The essence of the TA method was therefore be retained whilst not enforcing the rigid (and potentially off-putting) steps which are a typical feature of this approach (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012). Indeed, a core concern of TA research is whether or not the requirement of verbalisations affects the interpretative or decision-making processes of interest in much of TA research (Lundgrén-Laine & Salanterä, 2010).

Participants were directed by the researcher to read through the materials and identify those which they had encountered in their work, or those they felt were relevant, and to describe why. To encourage more detailed and open ‘inner speech’, the researcher advised the participant that their personal acceptance/rejection of the myths was not the purpose of the study and that their transcripts would be anonymised to ensure they would not be identifiable from any quotes presented in analyses. The researcher used prompts, such as “Could you say more why you feel that way”, if a participant said they felt an item was particularly relevant but not why. However, as is typically advised in TA tasks (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012), the researcher kept prompts and clarifications to a minimum in order to not disrupt the flow of the participants’ verbalisations. Therefore, participants completed this part of the interview in slightly different

ways. For example, some participants worked through each item one by one, considering gender of victim primarily in relation to each, whereas others identified the myths they felt were most important first and talked about these in relation to victim and perpetrator gender.

Completion of the task took between 20 to 45 minutes, depending on the approach adopted by the participant. All TAI tasks were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim by an external company that guaranteed confidentiality and compliance with GDPR. Transcripts were anonymised by the researcher. Qualitative data analysis was performed NVivo 12 and Microsoft Excel.

Analytical strategy

TA data is typically analysed in one of two ways, either via protocol analysis to identify underlying cognitive processes in a task, or thematic analysis to explore themes arising from the data. The choice of approach depends on the goal of the analysis (Lundgrén-Laine & Salanterä, 2010). Owing to the nature of the present study's research question, qualitative data analysis was performed using a combination of deductive and inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; V. Clarke & Braun, 2013; Willig, 2013) to identify the victim- and perpetrator- gendered qualities and practices of settings that shape RMA.

Deductive-inductive thematic analysis represents a hybrid approach: whereby coding is data-driven but informed by relevant theoretical frameworks (Hoskin, 2019). In this instance, the concepts informing the analysis were those of the socioecological theory of gender proposed by Bond and colleagues (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010). There are many approaches to deductive-inductive thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), which differ mainly in the degree to which they emphasise bottom-up or

top-down approaches to coding, and the degree to which they employ code-books.

The present study adopted an approach similar to that of Hoskin (2019), which involved inductive coding, which paid particular attention to identifying the mechanisms that may help to explain how gender (victim and perpetrator) influences RMA. That is, all features of talk that shed light on the ways in which gender, setting characteristics and practices appeared to influence RMA were coded. A preconceived *codebook* was not used. Instead, the socioecological theory of gender was referred to in order to revise and refine sub-themes, within the *a priori* themes of gendered setting qualities and setting practices. This also allowed for consideration of how the themes and subthemes were interconnected in relation to gendered RMA.

TA methodologists argue that it is important to clarify the ways in which the stimuli in a task are used in the analysis of data produced (Drennan, 2003; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012; Phillips, 2014). In the present study, the TAI stimuli (myth statements) were used to contextualise participants' verbalisations, and considered in light of the gendered setting qualities and practices contained in these verbalisations.

To illustrate the structure and nature of themes, coding trees and a thematic diagram are presented at relevant points in this chapter.

Quality assurance strategies

The quality assurance strategies adopted for the TAI study and semi-structured interview study (reported in chapter 8) were similar, and so are reported here for both.

Trustworthiness of the qualitative findings were assured using several strategies, informed by guidelines proposed by Creswell (1998, 2014), including: reflexivity, thick description, developing an audit trail and analyst triangulation. As the approach to reflexivity and thick description have already been described in chapter 4, this section will focus on explaining the approach to auditing and analyst triangulation adopted for both qualitative studies. Also, the impact of the quality assurance strategies on the conduct and reporting of the findings will be described.

Developing an audit trail. The PhD student coded all transcripts, reviewing and refining themes in light of research questions and guiding theory. During this process the PhD student created an audit trail based on the recommendations of Lincoln and Guba (1985), including examples of coded transcripts (25%/n = 4) selected to represent participants supporting different groups of participants and working across different types of services, coding trees (with definitions of themes, subthemes, example codes and data extracts), example memos, and the final reports (i.e. chapters).

Analyst triangulation. The research student developed an analyst triangulation workbook, explaining the steps taken in the analysis, and providing questions based on Flick's (2017) discussion of quality assurance strategies in qualitative research (to explore the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the data analysis and reporting of findings (see appendix I for a copy of the workbook for chapter 7 and appendix J for chapter 8). Next, a knowledgeable other (supervisor Dr Mahoney) read through the selected transcripts (independently) and noted down impressions of important patterns they identified. Dr Mahoney then read through the transcripts as coded by the

PhD student, and the audit materials, and responded to the questions in the analyst triangulation workbook (see appendix I for chapter 7 and appendix J for chapter 8). The findings from the process were discussed in a meeting between Dr Mahoney and the research student, paying particular attention to areas where diverging perspectives arise. The impact of this discussion on the interpretation and reporting of the analysis are detailed in the discussion section of this chapter.

Ethics

Ethical approval was granted by the University of Worcester's Institute of Health and Society's ethics committee in 2016. The research complies with the British Psychological Society's code of human research ethics (2014).

Findings

Four themes were identified in relation to gendered setting-qualities: the real rape myth; risk and vulnerability; motivations for rape; and motivations for disclosing. These influenced, and were influenced by, three themes relating to setting-practices: shared identities; surface vs deep RMA; and performances of victimhood. Figure 12 illustrates the structure and connectedness of these themes. These themes will be defined and interpreted, and the relationships between them discussed. First, the settings which participants spoke of as relevant to RMA are briefly described, to provide context for the interpretation of the gendered setting-qualities and setting-practices.

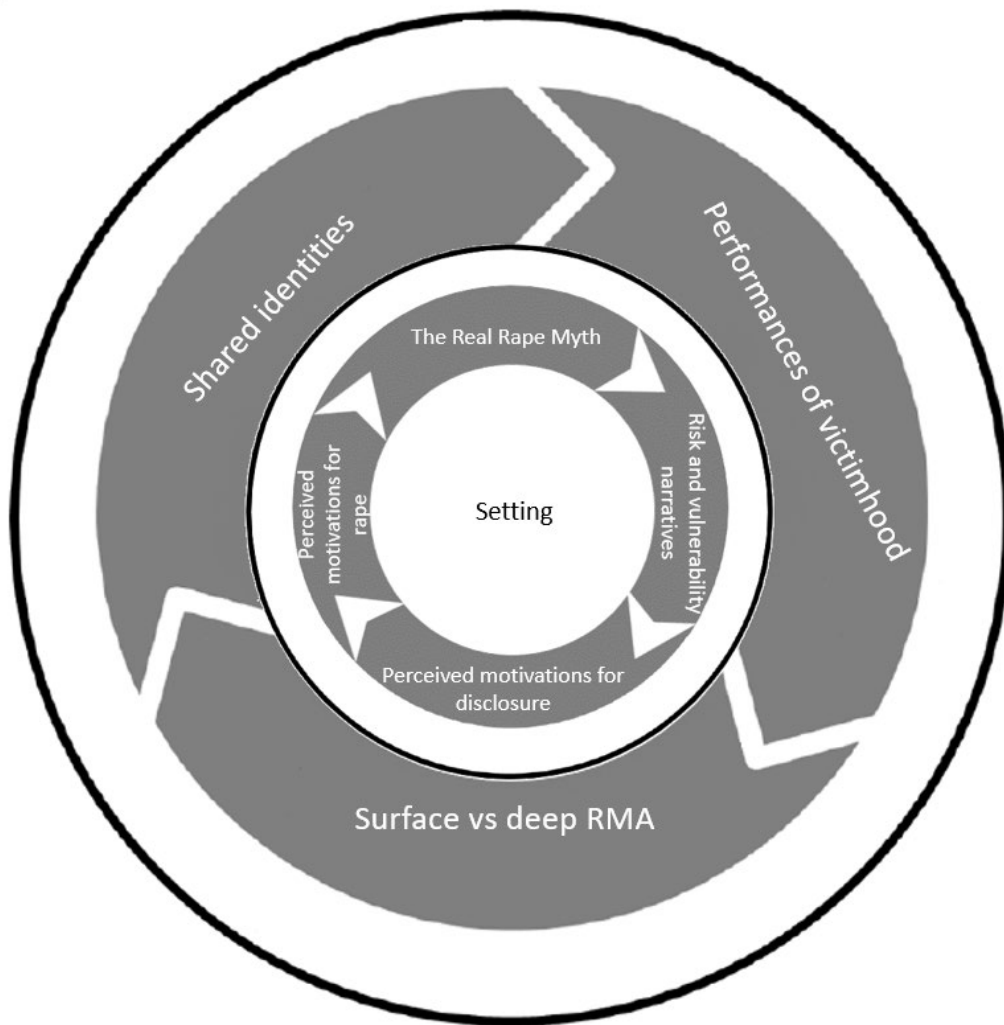


Figure 12. Illustration of how the gendered setting qualities and setting practices identified in this study interact to influence RMA for male and female victims, and for victims of male and female perpetrators. Gendered setting qualities influence practices embedded into different settings and vice-versa.

Settings. In socioecological terms (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010), a setting consists of person constructs (i.e. individual level variables, including attitudes/beliefs); events (i.e. the specific problem that prompts an individual to seek help and instigates a community help-system network to respond), and; environments (i.e. structural, function and

attitudinal characteristics of the community as a whole). Therefore, settings are not explicitly referring to a location, although locations can become associated with and influence settings.

Participants' talk reflected a variety of settings in which RMA was expressed differently, including formal settings (the police and courts, SARCs, prisons, NHS, social services, employment/work, education, and religions) and informal settings (families, friends, romantic partners, and acquaintances). This was the case when considering RMA from the perspective of the observer and also when considering the setting in which sexual violence was perceived as occurring. For example, one participant considered their own behaviour when playing a protective role in relation to family.

“And it’s interesting because there’s, there’s almost like a number of different attitudes here, that we might be thinking about. There’s my attitudes and beliefs, that have been informed over time. There’s the attitudes and beliefs of, well, I will use this in inverted commas, “survivors” “victims” who I might have worked with. And then I hear from them the attitudes and beliefs of people around them, family, friends, community. There’s attitudes and beliefs within organisational settings or in the community or the culture, where they’re victim-survivors. So, there’s lots of different attitudes and I didn’t know, or opinions and I wondered which ones you might particularly want?” (Participant 2)

Furthermore, a person’s knowledge of the gendered qualities and practices of settings may affect their interpretation of the talk and behaviour of

agents within those settings. For example, female victim-survivors may be highly aware of myths regarding provocative dress as a cause of rape. Therefore, actions or questions within a setting that relate to clothing (regardless of the motivations underpinning such actions) may reinforce the relevance of this rape myth, and may feed into self-blame.

“And, erm, I think the one around clothing is something that female survivors of rape can kind of question themselves over a lot, did they wear revealing or provocative clothing? and it shouldn't- obviously that shouldn't should be something that when you are questioned by the police, they will... You know like, they may- they may seize your clothing and... Yes, that can be something that is... That is quite difficult.” (Participant 3)

Implicit within this talk of settings was that although each person may accept rape myths to different degrees when compared to others, their RMA can also vary depending on the setting.

“I think most people would say, “You shouldn't be wandering out at night. You shouldn't be out drunk. You shouldn't get into cars with people that you don't know.” ... Whether that's people's fear and genuine care for people, or whether it's saying, “Well, if you were out on your own and you got raped, then that's your fault,” is a different thing... It depends on the context and the reason why you're saying it. Some people would say it because they genuinely care about the person, and they don't want anything terrible to happen. Some people

would say it because they believe that people who are out on their own will get raped, and that's their fault. The same with drinking.” (Participant 12)

Gendered setting qualities. The findings of this study suggest that gendered RMA is primarily influenced by the gendered qualities and practices evoked by a rape myth statement. According to Bond and colleagues' framework (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010), setting qualities reify and increase the salience of discrete gender categories, define a gendered universe of alternatives, privilege one group over the others by considering them normative and legitimising and obscuring inequality by ignoring the differential access to power and resources affected by gender. The gendered qualities identified as shaping RMA were: the real rape myth; vulnerability and risk; perceived motivations of rape and; perceived motivations of disclosure. Figure 13 provides a coding tree for this theme.

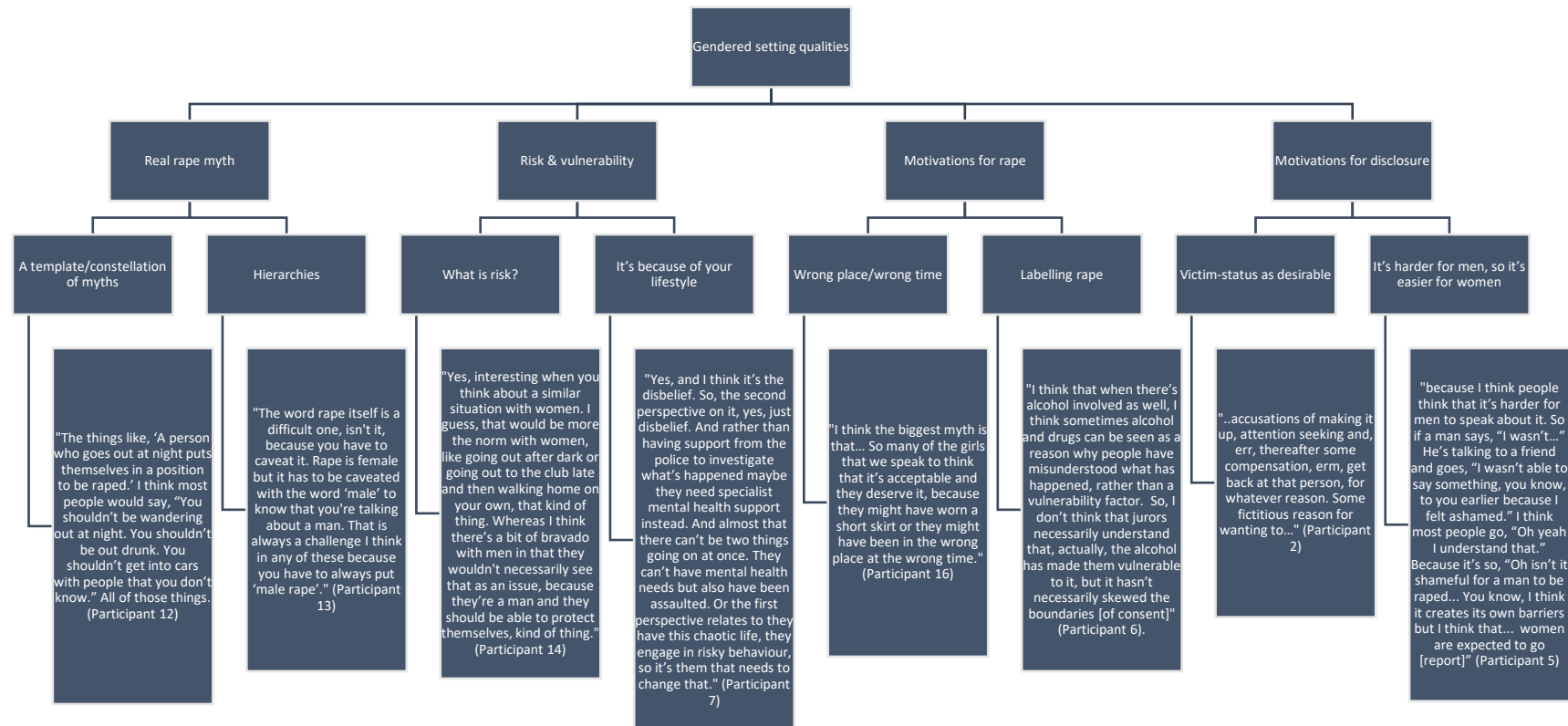


Figure 13. Coding tree for the theme of gendered setting qualities, with example codes and illustrative data extracts.

The real rape myth. Participants' talk reflected that people refer to a mental template when considering rape myths. This was often implied through the constellation of myths that were discussed when reading out single myths from the discussion materials. That is, participants' experience reflected that one myth tended to prime the salience of other myths, such as myths around "risky behaviour" priming myths around alcohol use and clothing for female victim-survivors. However, the template of a 'real rape' or a 'real rape victim' was also explicitly discussed by participants, as an accumulation of characteristics that encouraged, or discouraged, empathy, belief, and support for that individual. These characteristics could relate to the victim's behaviour, or the characteristics of their assault, but it could also relate to other forms of stigma that indicated victim character.

"So, yes, they can understand the little girl who's been abused, because she's a little girl. But if she happens to be a 40 year old woman who's completely overweight and smokes 60 cigarettes a day and kind of lives on the council estate, and you know, has got children who have been done for criminal offences and then most people are much less likely to be sympathetic to her as a victim..." (Participant 1).

Participants' talk reflected that the real rape myth was gendered. Specifically, rather than there being a template for female victims, and a template for male victims, there is a single template that positions 'real rape' as that involving a female victim and a male perpetrator. Furthermore, victim gender appeared to be the core gendering factor in the real rape myth, and perpetrator gender a moderating factor. That is, being a male victim, or being a victim of a

female perpetrator pushes one's status further away from the 'real victim' identity. Furthermore, the law in England and Wales was felt as directly contributing to this hierarchy of realness (and suffering), through the differentiation of rape with other labels of sexual assault based on perpetrator gender.

“The word rape itself is a difficult one, isn't it, because you have to caveat it, ‘Rape’ is female but it has to be caveated with the word ‘male’ to know that you're talking about a man. That is always a challenge I think... because you have to always put ‘male rape’.” (Participant 13)

Participants' professional experience suggested that laypersons, and some professionals, could recognise rape more easily when victim and perpetrator gender matched the real rape template.

“With men it seems to be that they are the perpetrator and... It almost seems more acceptable with men, which obviously neither is, but it's surprising how different it is when you're talking to a woman who has experienced that sort of thing with another woman... I think because it's the norm that a male and a female get together, and it tends to be portrayed... that the male is the one who attacks and violates a woman, because it seems much more... Whereas you don't tend to think of it being women. It's just much harder, unfortunately, to get a conviction.” (Participant 16).

In professionals' experience of the individuals they supported, this was also reflected in a hierarchy of perceived suffering; victims were seen as

encountering greater doubts over what could be frightening, demeaning or violating about sexual acts perpetrated by a female. Furthermore, there was a perception that female perpetration could only be damaging when it occurred in relation to CSA rather than adulthood.

“I guess outside the family, if it is a female perpetrator, it's going back to what I said earlier about this confusion about because a woman has shown interest in you sexually, that it gets into this fantasy that, instead of being frightened or being a terrifying experience, it should be a thrilling and sexual experience.”

(Participant 11)

Risk and vulnerability. Gender interacted with narratives of risk and vulnerability, which in turn influenced the rape myths that were identified by participants as particularly impacting survivors' experiences of disclosure and reporting. A key difference emerged in participants' talk of risk and vulnerability for male and female victims. Specifically, that risk for females referred to risk in the broadest sense - any kind of risk-taking behaviour (e.g. walking home alone in the dark, drinking alcohol whilst out at university, online dating apps for the over 50s). In contrast, many participants struggled to apply this narrative to male victims, with some asking - what is risky for males?

“Most rapes occur when the victim has engaged in risky behaviours.’ Going back to my previous point, that question for me anyway instantly conjures up that sort of victim blaming, you know, women in short skirts, getting drunk, and you've seen those sorts of things on university campuses... How does

a man engage in risky behaviour compared to a women? If male rape isn't about homosexuality, if it isn't about sexual arousal, if it's about power and control, and I'm no expert in this but I assume a man raping a woman is the same thing, then how do men engage in said risky behaviours because... I think that's part of the problem with the question in a way, I can't think of a way that it applies to all. If I was a straight man, what risky behaviour would I be engaging with to get raped by another man? If I was a gay man you could say you're off your head on crystal meth and you've met somebody on Grindr and blah-blah-blah, but where does the straight man who's been raped by another man fit into that profile in that question."

(Participant 13)

The gendered nature of risk suggested that people perceive risk for males as specific to *sexual risk-taking* behaviours. That is, many rape myths were accepted in a similar way for male and female victim-survivors when a setting denoted sexual-risk-taking. In part, this was indicated by the victim's involvement in the setting owing to their *intention* to have sex prior to the episode of sexual violence. However, this was specific to men who have sex with men, rather than men who were intended to have sex with women per se. This located male rape as labelled as such within certain settings. In contrast, female rape could occur across any setting.

"In my experience, it tends to be around sexual risk, rather than risk more generally. Like, people who, maybe, use saunas to go and have sex, or sex in risky places, like in public toilets,

that kind of thing. There are often people who choose to have sex in places that could be seen as a bit more risky, perhaps feel like, in a sense, they're, kind of, raped or sexually assaulted in those environments, that they deserve it more because they chose to go there... interesting when you think about a similar situation with women. I guess, that would be more the norm with women, like going out after dark or going out to the club late and then walking home on your own, that kind of thing. Whereas I think there's a bit of bravado with men in that they wouldn't necessarily see that as an issue, because they're a man and they should be able to protect themselves, kind of thing." (Participant 15)

As a result of this gendered risk narrative, RMA was also interwoven with talk of victim life-choices or lifestyle. Participants frequently encountered assumptions by laypersons, professionals from statutory services and in the media that position rape as part of the lives of individuals with risky or 'damaged' identities. In this respect, participants' talk revealed that the vulnerability narrative, which they felt had been championed by professionals to counter the misunderstandings of 'risk narratives' that were associated with characterological blame, had been hijacked. The term 'vulnerability' was being used in relation to RMA to locate rape as occurring for male and female victims in particular settings, as a product of their life-choices. Specifically, vulnerability was perceived as something that *was within the control of the victim*: victims were making themselves vulnerable and they were, therefore, at least partly culpable for their victimisation. For male victims, this related to vulnerability through lifestyle

choices associated with sex work, or through engaging in gay or bisexual communities such as 'chemsex' or the 'sex-pig' community.

The term "chemsex" refers to individuals, most commonly men who have sex with men, whom meet with the intention of having sex under the influence of psychoactive drugs (McCall, Adams, Mason, & Willis, 2015). The term "sex-pig" is also typically associated with men who have sex with men, and refers to "a persona characterized by an aggressive and insatiable enjoyment of all forms of sex" (Escoffier, 2007, p. 188). These communities were only spoken of by participants supporting male victim-survivors, whom felt that laypersons and professionals were typically less aware of chemsex and sex-pigs. Indeed, participants who supported male victim-survivors only were aware of rape myths which were typically accepted in relation to MFR that were also encountered by men within the chemsex and sex-pig communities. In particular, myths relating to 'provocative dress' were seen by many participants as specific to women and explicitly not relevant to male victims.

"I mean, I think it is. I could talk almost from two perspectives there... I mean, as a gay man myself, I think we get talked about in the same way that women get talked about in terms of what they wear. You know, gay and bisexual men can be subject to the same thing, like as in if you're wearing very tight clothing, there's an assumption that you must be up for sex. I think that amongst the GBT community... this is a sort of part of the gay, male community. Sometimes they describe themselves as like "sex-pigs" and that means that they're very... They like lots of casual sex. And there's a certain look that's

associated with that, as lots of normally like shaved head, lots of tattoos, quite muscular, tight T-shirt, that kind of look. I have a friend erm, who looks like that as a... you know, that what he likes to look like, but that doesn't translate into sexual practices. But he often reports being touched in a crowded bar and that people make assumptions about his willingness for sex based on how he looks.” (Participant¹⁰ supporting male victim-survivors only)

In these settings, a victim’s style of dress continues to be viewed as a ‘cue’ to consent.

Another similarity in RMA for male and female victims owing to gendered setting qualities (and the practices they then influence) related to alcohol and/or illicit substance consumption. In particular, male victims of sexual violence in the context of chemsex, and female victims in the context of drinking alcohol on a night out at university appeared to be framed in similar ways. For example, both were discussed in terms of young adults transitioning between settings (i.e. moving to a big city where a chemsex community operated, and moving to university from home) where they were still learning about the gendered qualities and practices of those settings. The implication was that these transitions may make young adults vulnerable, and perpetrators may use this vulnerability to their advantage. The gendered setting qualities associated with risk and vulnerability fed explicitly into a set ‘prevention efforts’ that were expected of male and females (in relation to male perpetrators) differently. These represent setting practices and are discussed under the next theme.

¹⁰ Participant number withheld to protect participant’s identity.

There was another gendered quality relating to risk and vulnerability relating to the intergenerational transmission of violence hypothesis. This hypothesis has primarily been used to explain the ways that experience of victimisation (primarily in childhood) may make an individual more vulnerable to victimisation in adulthood. Furthermore, CSA could lead to an individual developing unhealthy relationship practices in adulthood - leading to perpetration of sexual violence. For male victims (mainly of CSA, but also for some who had experienced sexual violence in adulthood), professionals encountered a societal belief (and an internalised fear) that they were a 'perpetrator in waiting'. Thus, many men were too ashamed to disclose sexual violence because they had internalised myths (or they feared others would perceive) that their experiences would lead them to perpetrator sexual violence against others - in the 'right' settings. Thus, the cycle of abuse myths for male victims were especially silencing.

“That’s quite and I guess we’ve also had more female offenders, but it’s quite damaging, especially with some of the dads, you know, male victims who are also dads that we work with. That is a very damaging myth as well, that they feel themselves, because they wonder if they’re perceived like that as well. But, again, it is a myth.” (Participant 6)

“It’s because of the erm... the generational transmission of personal and interpersonal violence, and whatever they especially want to use and all the rest of it’s a very powerful move. You know, if you – either because you are angry,

especially in male survivors...so there's kind of an expectation that's going to happen." (Participant 1).

In this respect, the gendered qualities relating to risk of future perpetration influenced perceptions of the practices associated with "victimhood", which are discussed in relation to the setting-practices theme.

A final quality of 'vulnerability' was specific to female victims and RMA, and reflected a lack of recognition of the impact of trauma on an individuals' coping behaviours (such as alcohol consumption, or suicide ideation). A label of vulnerability in relation to female victims was intertwined with mental health stigma, and conflated with anti-social behaviour, which meant victims were perceived as irreparably 'damaged'. Sometimes this narrative is not used to apportion blame, but instead reflects a defeatist mind-set, where rape is perceived as a part of some people's chaotic and dysfunctional lives, and there is little that can be done because the individuals involved *cannot or will not help themselves*.

"Yes, I think there are clients that I've worked with who maybe experience multiple different incidents of sexual violence and multiple perpetrators. For example, if they've experienced, say, CSA, and then as an adult experienced DV, and then they have been raped, that there is a lot of stigma on them. Almost that they have a chaotic lifestyle, so of course it happens to them, that sort of thing. Or, conversely, that it doesn't happen to them, but they're just a bit mad, and so lying or imagining that all of this stuff happens to them... So, the second perspective on it, yes, just disbelief. And rather than having support from the

police to investigate what's happened maybe they need specialist mental health support instead. And almost that there can't be two things going on at once. They can't have mental health needs but also have been assaulted. Or the first perspective relates to they have this chaotic life, they engage in risky behaviour, so it's them that needs to change that."

(Participant 7)

Thus, risk and vulnerability feeds into RMA (pertaining to male perpetrated sexual violence) for female and male victims differently. In turn, this appears to 'prime' a range of related types of rape myth relating to victim deservedness, the significance of rape and rape claims (i.e. credibility) that were perceived to impact on support victims received from mental health services, police investigations, and CPS decision-making.

Ultimately, perpetrator gender played a role in defining a setting as 'sexual' or not - through people's perceptions of the sexual preference effect and sexual scripting of settings and comparisons with the 'real rape' template. For example, setting indicators such as alcohol consumption and romantic cues would be interpreted differently in relation to victim gender as a function of perpetrator gender. However, female perpetrators were typically missing from discussions of risk and vulnerability and RMA, this appeared to imply that female perpetrators are simply not recognised as relating to risk. These factors were associated with another gendered quality of settings, specifically - people's perceptions for the motivation for the rape of male and female victims.

Motivations for rape. Perceptions of the motivations for perpetrators to rape, and victims to disclose, affected a range of myths differently for male and

female victims. In turn, these were moderated by perpetrator gender. There was some degree of consensus that the participants felt there was an increasing tendency to perceive the motivations of female rape to be power and control. Narratives drawing on this type of motivation were encountered by professionals in the media, and across a range of institutions (e.g. the police) that they worked with. Furthermore, there was some evidence that this perception of rape as motivated by power, control and degradation was beginning to be used in relation to male victims. However, this was only the case (for both male and female victims) in relation to the motivations of male perpetrators. There were no clear narratives that participants were aware of that pertained to female perpetrators motivations. Few participants appeared to have encountered talk relating to female perpetrator motivation, let alone counter arguments. As such, there seemed to be a gap in participants' understanding of how myths relating to female perpetrated rape were expressed and experienced by victim-survivors.

This may suggest that RMA is lower for these groups of survivors. However, the data from this study suggests that rape myths are accepted for victims of female perpetrators, but the frameworks that people use to inform their RMA are less well developed. In particular, there are fewer clear discourses for laypersons to draw on in order to make sense of why rape occurs in these victim-perpetrator gender dyads. It appeared that for these groups, the 'impossibility myth' (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992) was paramount and therefore others were less relevant.

"I think because it's the norm that a male and a female get together, and it tends to be portrayed... that the male is the one who attacks and violates a woman, because it seems much

more... But when it's a woman it tends to be a bit more of a grey area. And a lot of the women don't actually press charges, because it's often not dealt with as strongly in court... And then [they don't realise]... what had happened was rape..."

(Participant 16)

Although feminist frames for rape, as an act of power and control, were felt by many participants to be gaining traction, this was by no means universal. Participants' talk reflected that rape myths they encountered were being used by people to make sense of the motivations for rape in different settings. In turn, the gendered quality of those settings influenced the perception for the motivation of rape. For example, participants often encountered myths that position the motivations for rape as external to the perpetrator, arising from characteristics of a setting which interacted to influence perpetrators. Alcohol consumption was considered in place of perpetrator motivation, and positioned as an external factor which supported miscommunication of consent myths. Participants' talk reflected that they frequently encountered drinking alcohol as a quality of a setting that influenced the gendered expectations of consent and preventability efforts expected of male and female victims (discussed further under the setting practices theme). Participants encountered alcohol being used in conjunction with RMA as a "dis-inhibitor" which made rape myths relating to sexual desire as a motivation for rape tenable. For example, statements such as "she was too pretty for her own good" (Participant 1) provide insight into this way of thinking.

Myths pertaining to external motivators (i.e. outside the conscious control of a perpetrator or victim) appeared to perform a number of functions: they reinforced gender distinctions (i.e. men and women are biologically different),

they introduced science-like discourses to evidence arguments (i.e. men have a biological need for sex, driven by testosterone), and provided a means for laypersons to reconcile cognitive dissonance produced by recognising that 'ordinary' men could perpetrate acts of sexual violence. Furthermore, participants felt they were more likely to be expressed in informal settings amongst family, friends and partners than formal settings. This may suggest that the feminist counter-narratives (i.e. rape is motivated by power and control) may be more familiar to people within these settings.

In relation to MMR, participants' felt that although feminist counter arguments for the motivation of rape were becoming known in formal settings – these discourses were less established in the public domain. Instead, people draw on beliefs that MMR is motivated by sexual desire. This was implied through the conflation of MMR with sexual orientation – which influenced perceptions of settings as involving sexual risk-taking – and also triggered homophobic beliefs. Participants also described experiences of males they had supported (or of their own experiences of being a male victim-survivor), encountering these perceptions from professionals working/volunteering with sexual violence support services. The concepts of 'male rape', sex and sexual orientation identity (specifically, homosexuality of victim and/or perpetrator) were one of the most prevalent and impactful myths that participants described as encountering when supporting male survivors. Indeed, some participants highlighted the fact that one has to refer to 'male rape' indicates it is 'other', which people use to infer different motivations for its perpetration. Although these issues could be experienced in relation to FFR, it was not to the same degree. However, this may

indicate that to a degree, same-sex sexual violence is perceived as motivated by sex, whereas cross-sex sexual violence is viewed differently.

“One particular girl that I can think of [who was raped by a woman] was already confused about her sexuality and then hadn’t actually realised that what had happened was rape. Didn’t realise. She now knows, and now feels as strongly, but doesn’t feel strong enough to go for a conviction.” (Participant 16)

Owing to the lack of experience and familiarity of many of the participants with FFR in adulthood, they referred back to their experience of supporting female victims of female perpetrated CSA (particularly in adolescence). For a number of victims, the perpetrator of the abuse was a family member (most notably the victim’s mother). The victim-perpetrator relationship therefore took precedence when considering the impact of victim and perpetrator gender on perceptions of motivations for disclosure.

“...somebody that I’ve worked with where the perpetrator, the primary perpetrator was a mother, I think that was a barrier for her supporting.” (Participant 4).

In relation to FMR, few people had encountered any beliefs (evidence-based or rape myth) with regards to what motivates FMR. However, owing to many myths for male victims typically focusing on the victims’ masculinity, sex was viewed by some participants as a means of maintaining a masculine identity, and that men were perceived as sexual ‘opportunists’ as a result (i.e. referring to the sexual double standard). Therefore, within the setting of FMR, one participant

spoke of their perception that this would be classed as “bad sex” rather than rape. That is, rather than labelling an incident of unwanted sex as rape, male victims (and society) would “simply chalk it up to experience, and try to forget about it” (Participant 9).

Motivations for disclosure. Victim gender in combination with the setting for disclosure (i.e. to whom the victim was disclosing – family, support services or the police) were influential in interpretation and relevance of myths that made reference to the length of time between an incident and disclosure. Different settings influenced perceptions of the motivations underpinning a victim’s decision to disclose. In particular, if disclosing to the police and reporting a historical incident, participants spoke of how laypersons (and the courts) framed this differently for male and female victims. Professionals’ regularly encountered beliefs that a report of rape several days after the fact (or longer) was inferred by many to indicate that the ‘victim’ was either lying ‘to get back at’ the supposed perpetrator, was after some form of notoriety or celebrity status (i.e. that in some circumstances there is the perception that females may actively want and seek out the ‘victim’ label) or that they were simply fraudulently seeking compensation.

“So, ‘A report of rape several days after, is actually probably a false report’. I think we’ve had a huge problem out there with this kind of myth. Erm, ‘Why didn’t they say something sooner?’ Kind of thing. Erm, ‘If they didn’t say it then, then they must be making it up or attention seeking, for the money, whatever.’”

(Participant 2).

Indeed, the compensation myth was one which appeared quite prominently for both male and female victims, which has not typically gained

much focus in research. Thus, although perceptions of the motivations for disclosure could differ, owing to gendered setting qualities for male and female victims, this myth appeared to be equally applicable to victims of both genders who *reported to the police*.

Participants' talk suggested that laypeople typically considered female victims' motivation for disclosure in relation to intimate partner perpetrated sexual violence (rather than stranger perpetrated) whereas victim-perpetrator relationship was not typically implied for male victims in the same way. It appeared that the *delay* in disclosing was the gendered quality of a setting that influenced perceptions of victim-survivors' decisions to disclose. This was evidenced through many participants' meta-commentary regarding a societal awareness of the barriers to disclose for males and females.

"I mean people very commonly say in the meetings that I go to, that it's harder for a man to say that he's been raped than it is for a woman." (Participant 5).

There was a sense that laypersons and professionals outside of the sexual violence support voluntary sector were starting to recognise the difficulty for male victims to disclose rape or sexual assault. However, rather than this leading to increased empathy for all victim-survivors of sexual violence, it was having a negative, see-saw effect for perceptions of female victims. That is, disclosure for female victims was starting to be perceived as *easier*, and if it is easier then there are less barriers to disclosing. Therefore, a delay in disclosing must be for reasons other than disclosing being difficult for female victims. In turn, this primed RMA relating to characterological blame, credibility of rape claims, and significance of rape (i.e. it's not as bad for women as it is for men).

“Many people who report rape are lying because they’re angry and want revenge on the accused’. I don’t think a lot of people think men say they’ve been raped to get revenge. Because most people think that rape is quite a shameful thing for a man to say. So, I think that again applies to females. I think it applies, it can apply to boys, children and young people, you know, I think it can equally apply to boys and girls when they, er, disclose.” (Participant 5)

There were fewer instances of talk relating to FFR. However, professionals appeared to have encountered societal perceptions that female victims of female perpetrators would be less interested in seeking justice for their experiences. Therefore, female victims (particularly of female perpetrators) had to demonstrate a commitment to seeing justice done. One participant spoke of how seeking justice in and of itself countered myths about female perpetrated sexual violence.

“We get very few women that have been abused or violated by other women, but I think when that has happened it’s almost as if the women that we see want justice just as much. That’s almost when I think probably some of the myths change. And then it becomes almost an anger and a misjustice” (Participant 16)

Thus, perceptions of gendered motivations for disclosure appeared to prime acceptance of some different categories of rape myth for male and female victims.

Setting practices. Bond and colleagues' socioecological theory of gender (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010) suggests that over time different practices become expected of different settings. The setting practices identified as important to gendered RMA in this research were: shared identities; surface vs deep RMA and; performances of victimhood. Practices have structural elements, transactional patterns, and embedded values, which reinforce (are reinforced by) the gendered qualities of settings outlined previously. Figure 14 provides a coding tree for this theme.

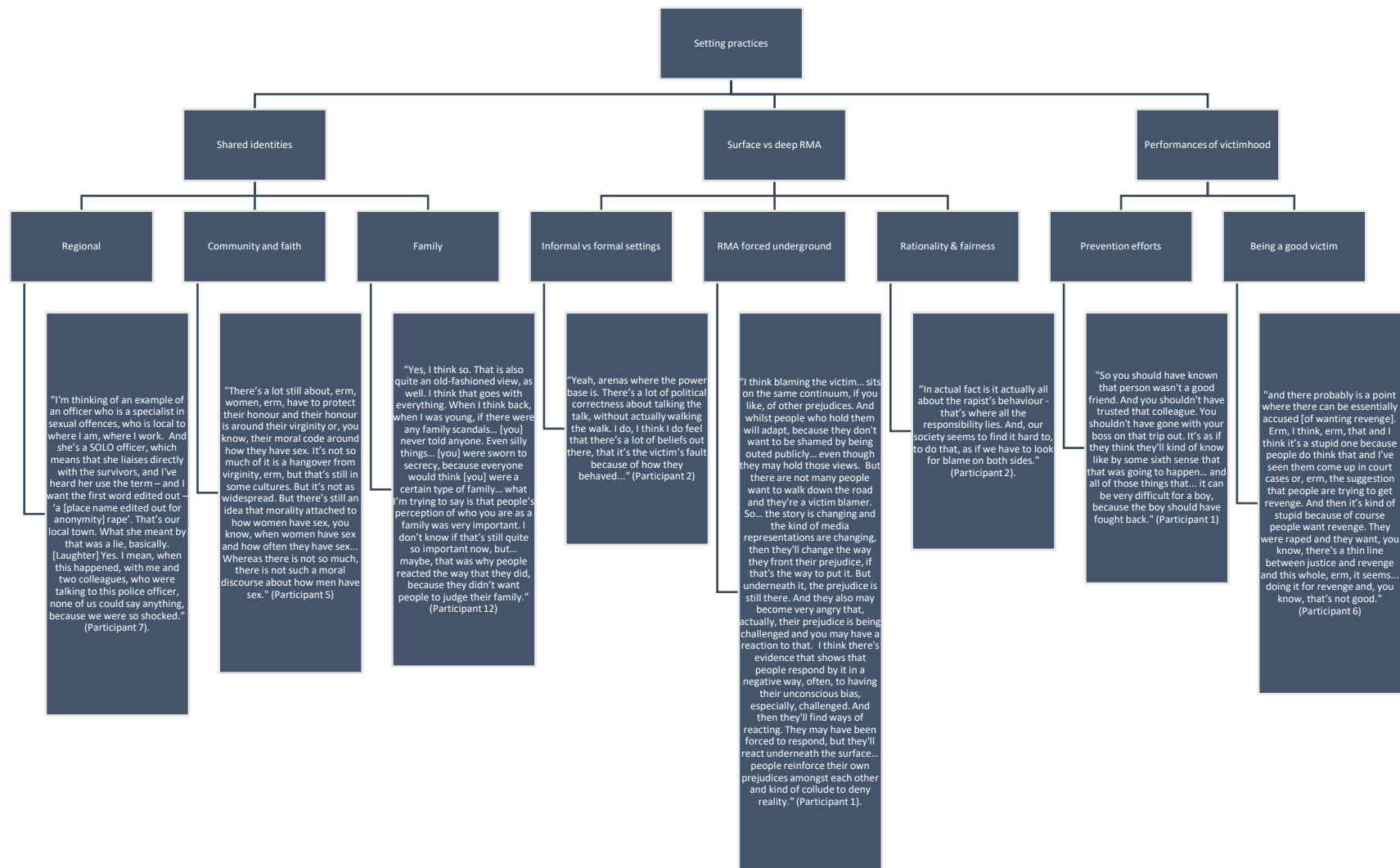


Figure 14. Coding tree for the theme of setting practices, with example codes and illustrative data extracts.

Shared identities. Participants' talk reflected that RMA was interwoven with settings through the qualities and practices. A product of this was that RMA could not be considered without reference to a number of identities a person has – which shapes the practices expected of them in different situations. Specifically, these identities were often *shared* in some way with others. These identities can be tied to an individual, their family or their community, or could become embedded in particular physical regions in a region. Furthermore, shared identities appeared to inform each other. For example, identities relating to family, community and faith were closely linked, with faith and community framing the meaning of family in these contexts. In turn, these shaped gendered qualities and practices associated with myths that influenced RMA. Therefore, RMA must either be considered in relation to the characteristics of victim-survivors that appear to trigger it, the person constructs of the observer that appear to shape their RMA, or the qualities and practices of settings in which RMA seems to be prevalent.

Participants' talk reflected that rape myths could be transferred across settings, based on the other setting members' perceptions of the person constructs that defined an individual. The person constructs that appeared particularly relevant to this were family, faith and class or socioeconomic status. For example, an individual victim-survivor could have a family-level identity, through becoming known to the police or other services. This meant that some people's claims of rape or assault would not be approached in the same way as someone that didn't have a similar family-level identity. Furthermore, participants' spoke of experiences of supporting victim-survivors whereby families had chastised them for disclosing – because they would look like “one of those

families". As such, some people appeared to accept myths differently in terms of an abstract "other", in comparison to a member of their own family.

"My personal experience... when I first disclosed... was, "Did you not fight back?"... You know, and it's all so blaming and she knew that. But her response – was - well, she had to two sons herself. So, her response was, you know, "That would never happen to my boys" and ... she was a trained mental health professional and for her first response to have been "did you not fight back". (Participant¹¹ supporting both male and female victim-survivors).

This suggests that there may be family-level rape myths, or that some people may perceive family-level rape myths to exist.

"Yes, I think so. That is also quite an old-fashioned view, as well. I think that goes with everything. When I think back, when I was young, if there were any family scandals... [you] never told anyone. Even silly things... [you] were sworn to secrecy, because everyone would think [you] were a certain type of family... what I'm trying to say is that people's perception of who you are as a family was very important. I don't know if that's still quite so important now, but... maybe, that was why people reacted the way that they did, because they didn't want people to judge their family." (Participant 12).

¹¹ Participant number withheld to protect participant identity

Participants' talk suggested that the stigma associated with rape through RMA, could transfer to a family identity. Family-level practices that either supported or inhibited disclosure and support could develop based on a family's fear of being stigmatised. These appeared to operate in both similar and different ways for male and female victims. There was a perception that many of the males that participants had supported, simply could not discuss sexual violence with their family, and may seek support from a counsellor or service provider instead. As such, they were isolated, and did not always know where to look for support.

In comparison, participants had more experience of supporting women who had disclosed to family. Although participants discussed positive responses to such disclosures for female victims, many also reflected on negative responses that females had received. A thread that was similar across negative responses for some males' and female victims' experiences related to faith. This could often be strongly interwoven with cultural and ethnic/racial identities. Some participants spoke of their experiences of supporting women from BAME Muslim communities, and males from Christian communities. For some victim-survivors (males and females), disclosure of sexual victimisation could result in their being ostracised from their families and communities for the shame that their disclosure was perceived as bringing to them (highlighting the inter-dependence of the shared identities of faith, family and community).

"I had one experience of, I think because of the client's religious and cultural background, there was a sense of, this kind of, to accept this disclosure risks bringing shame on the family. So rather than believe that difficult thing, they chose to actually just break their contact with that client, with the survivor. That he

was excommunicated because of the risk of bringing shame on the family. (Participant 12).

Some professionals' working with women survivors from Muslim communities, spoke of the fear of retaliation in the form of honour-based killings. Which presented an additional barrier to disclosure. However, participants highlighted that many family members wanted to help victim-survivors whom disclosed to them, but that their efforts varied in success. Sometimes, responses that were intended to be helpful were experienced as the opposite for the victim-survivors. Indeed, families could play a powerful role in normalising rape myths.

“One particular girl actually got the courage to speak to her mum... and her mum actually said, ‘It happens to all of us. To me. To your auntie...’ It’s almost like you just have to accept it and you just have to move on.” (Participant 16)

In other cases, particularly when the perpetrator of sexual violence was a member of the family or a romantic partner, participants spoke of women victim-survivors being viewed as perpetrating harm to the family through breaking the family up that was worse than the rape or sexual assault they had experienced. This was particularly the case when there had been a delay in disclosing. There was a sense that some women-victims were viewed as petty or vindictive for “raking up” the past.

“Erm, I think a number of female victims that I’ve worked with... for society to deal with the fact that a rapist is somebody’s son, is somebody’s brother, is somebody’s uncle...” (Participant 2)

As well as family-level myths, participants' talk identified that there could be regional-level myths: where identities became embedded in physical locations and associated with people who were problematic or anti-social, "chavvy" and associated with social deprivation. Individuals from these regions may be less likely to have claims of rape believed by people within social institutions. However, these myths seemed to be specific to female victim-survivors. In contrast male victim community-level myths tended to be those that were based on their sexual orientation.

"I'm thinking of an example of an officer who is a specialist in sexual offences, who is local to where I am, where I work. And she's a SOLO officer, which means that she liaises directly with the survivors, and I've heard her use the term – and I want the first word edited out – 'a [place name edited out for anonymity] rape'. That's our local town. What she meant by that was a lie, basically. [Laughter] Yes. I mean, when this happened, with me and two colleagues, who were talking to this police officer, none of us could say anything, because we were so shocked."

(Participant 7).

Indeed, this resonates with my own experience of supporting female victim-survivors – there were regions within the area our service supported that were associated in local popular culture with rape or incest and dismissed as 'laughable' by some.

Thus, regional identities could translate into local narratives which performed functions akin to bonding-ties – not only for an individual (i.e. "families stick together") but also in the eyes of other people (i.e. "all the people from that

region are trouble”). When local events, such as those relating to operation Stovewood, were exposed participants felt this could be healing for the communities affected which otherwise carried a local identity that was never discussed openly, but that people within the setting were aware of.

“Now finally it’s [CSE] having its time. It’s like a tipping point, isn’t it? You get one and then all of a sudden, it’ll be like the Savile effect. That poor woman, ridiculed for years and years, that one lone survivor that came forward, and then all of a sudden he died and then the floodgates opened.” (Participant 13).

Ultimately, participants’ talk revealed that there are perceived shared-identities in public awareness for victims which are shaped particularly by victim gender/sexual orientation/ethnicity/class/faith and region in which they live, which inform and are informed by the ‘real rape’ myth. Once an individual is perceived as holding a ‘victim’ identity, this may be perceived by laypersons as ‘tainting’ the identities they share with others (e.g. reflecting badly on their family or community). Professionals’ identified this as a powerful barrier to victim-survivor disclosure and help-seeking.

Surface vs deep RMA. Professionals differentiated between surface-level RMA, which people are conscious of and self-aware of how their spoken attitudes and behaviours reflect RMA, and deep RMA - which was more insidious, pervasive and implicit.

Many participants highlighted that owing to social events in the UK, including the recognition of high-profile CSA cases (such as Jimmy Savile, male CSA in sporting clubs, operations Yewtree and Stovewood) and CSE (such as

the conviction of the gang in Rotherham) sexual violence awareness was particularly high at the time during which the study was conducted. Participants spoke of this as affecting the way that rape myths were being accepted, on the surface. That is, the awareness of RMA as a negative phenomenon was merely resulting in 'surface level' change in people's views.

"I think blaming the victim... sits on the same continuum, if you like, of other prejudices. And whilst people who hold them will adapt, because they don't want to be shamed by being outed publicly... even though they may hold those views. But there are not many people want to walk down the road and they're a victim blamer. So... the story is changing and the kind of media representations are changing, then they'll change the way they front their prejudice, if that's the way to put it. But underneath it, the prejudice is still there. And they also may become very angry that, actually, their prejudice is being challenged and you may have a reaction to that. I think there's evidence that shows that people respond by it in a negative way, often, to having their unconscious bias, especially, challenged. And then they'll find ways of reacting. They may have been forced to respond, but they'll react underneath the surface... people reinforce their own prejudices amongst each other and kind of collude to deny reality." (Participant 1).

People are 'impression managing' their outward expressions of RMA within certain arenas, reflecting a politically correct way of talking about rape-

related attitudes. However, in settings in which people could ‘banter’, and be themselves without fear of censure - the old attitudes remained.

“Yeah, arenas where the power base is. There’s a lot of political correctness about talking the talk, without actually walking the walk. I do, I think I do feel that there’s a lot of beliefs out there, that it’s the victim’s fault because of how they behaved...”

(Participant 2)

This atmosphere had positive implications for victim survivors, in that sexual violence was being talked of more in public arenas, but negative in that in some respects it made challenging deep-seated RMA more difficult. Furthermore, the awareness of RMA had led people’s expression of RMA to become more subtle, leading to new ways in which it was expressed, or through the use of obfuscating language - particularly in relation to female victimisation. For example, participants spoke of the multiple ways that people refer to rape without using such language.

“...It’s an old attitude amongst men, “she needs a good seeing to”. Then they might talk a really good talk now.... But it’s that old shadow thing, you know... women who are frigid... and there’s not many people who would admit they believe that, but again... it’s out there.” (Participant 2).

Furthermore, this use of language was interwoven with the gendered qualities of settings which implied the hijacking of the risk and vulnerability narratives (discussed above). Thus, victim and perpetrator gender influenced the degree to which people decided that acceptance of a rape myth was socially

acceptable and could be expressed more freely, or was unacceptable and shared only with friends in disguised language. Such RMA may also function as a bonding-tie between agents in a setting - between friends.

Demonstrations of fairness and rationality. The present research identified that laypersons and professionals outside the sexual violence support service provider sector, were aware of the “victim blamer” label and would engage in a process of impression management to avoid this label being applied to them. There was a sense in participants’ talk, suggested that people wanted to be fair and rational, or at least to be perceived by others to be. However, fairness and rationality for many was interpreted as looking for responsibility across both parties of rape, in order to reach a compromise when drawing conclusions of whom was blame. This was often couched in frames of rationality and logic, making it challenging to counter such ‘common-sense’ narratives.

“In actual fact is it actually all about the rapist’s behaviour - that’s where all the responsibility lies. And, our society seems to find it hard to, to do that, as if we have to look for blame on both sides.” (Participant 2).

In some settings, such as the courts, this approach of fairness and rationality was utilised by the council for the defence to draw in extra-legal information (such as victim’s previous sexual behaviour or clothing) in order to raise reasonable doubt. In such complex cases as rape, where the decision often ultimately comes down to an issue of consent or non-consent, this was felt to play a key role in the low conviction rates. Also, it appeared to provide a segue into myths regarding the credibility of rape claims that hinged on a victim’s character and differed in relation to victim gender.

Performances of victimhood. Depending on victim and perpetrator gendered setting qualities, victim-survivors were expected to engage in behaviours that denoted victim-hood appropriately. These behaviours were spoken of almost in terms of performances that male and female victims were expected to engage in prior to, during, and after an incident (particularly if engaging with the CJS). Setting practices that were deemed appropriate for male and female victims differed in some respects, although there were many points of communality too. These practices were often described in relation to settings that involved a male perpetrator, suggesting that the setting practices associated with female perpetrators are less clear.

Prevention efforts. Different preventative steps were expected for male and female victims, primarily as a function of the gendered risk and vulnerability qualities associated with different settings. Female victims continue to experience myths regarding foreseeability: women were expected to have a 'sixth sense' which allowed them to perform a mental risk assessment of each setting they were in. Female victims were expected to identify the points of behaviour change that would allow them to mitigate or avoid risks pertaining to sexual violence. If they failed to do so then the vulnerability narrative defined in relation to gendered qualities of settings was invoked. That is, they had made themselves vulnerable and were less deserving of support. However, participants highlighted that these viewpoints might not be elicited when asking blunt questions in the abstract, but were demonstrated in a variety of subtle ways of rebuking a victim that they should have been more perceptive.

“So, the victim is the one who is responsible. And the perpetrator is never kind of in the frame for that. So, if you treat

any female like... 'you shouldn't have been drunk and you shouldn't have worn those clothes', they're the kind of classic stereotypes, aren't they? But it's more subtle than that. So, you should have known that person wasn't a good friend. And you shouldn't have trusted that colleague. You shouldn't have gone with your boss on that trip out. It's as if they think they'll kind of know like by some sixth sense that that was going to happen... and all of those things" (Participant 1)

Therefore, classic stereotypes in relation to the real rape template were relevant, but the myth of foreseeability suggests that there are more insidious expectations that a woman should anticipate sexual risk across any setting – regardless of victim-perpetrator relationship. However, once a female had 'allowed' themselves to be in danger, they were expected to protest physically, indeed, many participants spoke of victim-survivors struggling with feelings that they didn't do enough to prevent an incident or fight off an attacker.

In contrast, male victim-survivors were not expected to anticipate risk (see section defining gendered risk and vulnerability) per se, unless they had already had some degree of romantic relationship with the person, and alcohol was involved.

"Yeah, there is something there that people being drunk, people, erm, I think especially if... it's someone that you've already – I think if there is some kind of relationship... if you've met someone for whatever date and there is a kiss, and they're drunk. I think there is a sense then that there'll be willing to do it

but I don't think that it thought of in relation to - not for random drunks..." (Participant 9)

However, many participants who supported male victims had encountered views that males were expected to react to sexual violence threats physically.

For a man to be raped, erm it's often, it's obviously very traumatic, but there's also an element of him feeling he's losing some of his masculinity, because as a man, you're supposed to be strong. You're supposed to be able to fight off, you know, something like this. There are a lot of issues men go through about being raped. I think society still, although it has improved, still has difficulties taking on board the fact that men can be raped... Where, if you're a man, you should have been able to fight it off. Erm, fight an attacker off. Yes, I think there is still stigma for the victim of sexual abuse." (Participant 11)

Ultimately, gendered risk and vulnerability narratives reinforced prevention strategies expected of male and female victims, which in turn reinforced and was reinforced by, the real-rape template.

Gratitude and the 'good' victim. Some participants spoke of encountering perceptions, particularly in relation to the courts and mental health services, of 'good' victims and 'bad' victims. This differed from the real rape template, in that these labels were not used to imply credibility of a rape or rape victim. Instead these perceptions related to victim-survivors who challenged the system's handling of their cases or treatment – or those victims' whose behaviour were perceived as troublesome or problematic (e.g. not turning up to

meetings/counselling support or court dates). There was a perception that victims who did not challenge the system, but whom accepted with gratitude all special provisions made for them, were more deserving of support. There was almost a perception of criminal justice professionals and mental health professionals in particular, being “put out” by what they perceived to be ingratitude. However, some victim-survivors did not want particular special provisions that they could have requested, or felt that the special provisions (such as having the court room empty before they come in, presenting evidence via a video link) did not ultimately improve the adversarial nature of the court system. However, this behaviour was sometimes perceived in a similar way as having “bad manners”.

“So, it's, you know, kind of that, that... people need er - I call it either being a “bad victim” or you're a “good victim”. Erm and 'cause a good victim is one that just kind of plays “their victim”. Erm.. fits the stereotype of the nice person that would fit for you, but the bad victim's one that kind of challenges and ask questions and doesn't help you through process, not inappropriately, but because you're a victim, it's kind of - you're not thankful for the system doing what it does.” (Participant 1)

Although the “good victim/bad victim” appeared distinct from the real rape template – it may influence perceptions of victim credibility, through perceptions of gendered risk and vulnerability. For example, victims who didn't conduct themselves in a ‘victim-like’ manner were treated with suspicion. Equally, for victims the manner and timing of disclosure, and the setting in which disclosure was taking place (i.e. reporting) could also throw suspicion on the victim's

motivations. Thus, the 'good victim' performance, was interwoven with suspicion of the motivation for disclosure, which could influence perceptions of credibility and cyclically influence perceptions of the victim-survivor as "good" and deserving of support. Furthermore, this setting practice did not appear to be gendered in relation to victims or perpetrators, and was a more subtly articulated setting practice of victimhood.

Discussion

This study explored the ways in which victim and perpetrator gender influence RMA, using Bond and colleagues' socioecological theory of gender as a framework (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010). The framework was beneficial for elucidating potential mechanisms - gendered setting qualities and practices - that can explain *why* rape myths are accepted for male and female victims, and victims of male and female perpetrators (see figure 12 for an illustration). As such, the findings can help to move beyond merely identifying myths that are associated with different victim and perpetrator genders, which is a limitation of existing RMA theory. Therefore, these findings have implications for the measurement of RMA and designing effective interventions to challenge RMA and its consequences.

The gendered qualities identified as shaping RMA were: the real rape myth; vulnerability and risk; perceived motivations of rape and; perceived motivations of disclosure. These themes are considered as gendered qualities owing to the functions they perform, in line with Bond and colleagues' framework (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010). For example, defining vulnerability and risk in gendered ways services the function of reifying and increasing the salience of discrete gender categories. Ascribing different

motivations for rape and disclosure of sexual violence for male and female victims reflects the function of defining a gendered universe of alternatives. The real rape myth serves to “privilege” one group over the others by considering them normative (i.e. MFR being considered more credible and serious than other gender-combinations) and obscuring inequality by ignoring the differential access to power and resources affected by gender. For example, through implying that responding to and preventing MFR is women’s responsibility.

Three themes of setting practices were identified as shaping gendered RMA: shared identities; surface vs deep RMA and; performances of victimhood. The themes are considered to reflect setting practices owing to the extent to which they appear to become embedded in different settings; the ‘shared identities’ theme (including regional identity) reflects structural elements of setting practices. The surface vs deep RMA theme (including practices used to demonstrate you are a fair and reasonable person) reflects the transactional patterns of settings. Finally, the ‘performances of victimhood’ theme (including the ‘rituals’ that help to demonstrate the ‘good victim’ label), reflects the embedded values of setting practices. Setting practices reinforce (and are reinforced by) the gendered qualities of settings.

The findings of the present study suggested that gendered RMA is primarily influenced by the gendered setting qualities (e.g. vulnerability and risk) and practices (e.g. performances of victimhood) implied by a rape myth statement. However, the ‘target’ a respondent is asked to consider myths in relation to (e.g. considering it in the abstract vs in relation to someone you know) may also influence RMA (e.g. shared identities). Furthermore, the gendered qualities and practices associated with the setting in which a respondent inhabits

when they are asked to consider a myth statement, may influence the extent to which RMA is demonstrated (e.g. surface vs. deep RMA). These findings will now be discussed in light of existing theory and empirical findings.

Impact of gendered setting qualities and practices (i.e. content) in rape myth statements

The present study's findings support those of previous research which has identified that of female victims who conform more closely to the real rape template as being perceived as more credible and consequently more supported by informal support ecologies (Anders, 2007; Anders & Christopher, 2011) and how male victim-survivors seeking support in the UK are positioned in relation to female victim-survivors (Javaid, 2016c, 2017c, 2017b). For example, the real rape myth reinforces a hierarchy of 'realness' and 'suffering' which influences perceptions of 'worthiness' of support. Also, it highlights how victims of female perpetrators are marginalised by the gender of their perpetrator - as this sits outside the majority of people's (including professionals') experience. As a result, narratives (either aligned with or countering rape myths) explaining victimisation by female perpetrators is simply *missing*. Instead, focus is implicitly shifted onto other person constructs such as the relationship between victim and perpetrator (e.g. a wife/partner, or mother, a friend). The result is that when a perpetrator is female, perpetrator gender becomes invisible.

Perpetrator gender is used by observers to identify whether a setting should be considered sexually risky or not, based on hegemonic masculinity and heteronormative assumptions (Javaid, 2017a; Tomkins, 2016) and the sexual preference effect (Davies & Boden, 2012). In turn, this influences the prevention strategies (i.e. performances of victimhood) that are expected by male and female

victims in different settings. When a perpetrator is male, all settings should be considered sexually risky for females. When a perpetrator is male and he, or a male victim, is believed to be sexually attracted to other males, then a setting is deemed sexually risky for male victims (and therefore a true victim should have engaged in specific prevention strategies. However, the impact of hegemonic masculinity, heteronormative assumptions and the sexual preference effect is less clear when a scenario involves a female perpetrator. When this occurs, there is some evidence to suggest that same-sex rape myths are interpreted as sexually motivated (rather than motivated by power and control) and therefore could be identified as sexually risky scenarios for females. However, it appears more likely that an observer will simply label an incident as 'bad sex' rather than rape. This suggests that for victims of female perpetrators the "impossibility" myth over-rides other beliefs or concerns.

Professionals' verbalisations during the TAI task suggested that consideration of one myth may prime a constellation of other myths, through the implied setting qualities and/or practices they share. This may support notions of rape myths acting as schemas that guide interpretation of new information (Eyssel & Bohner, 2011; Krahe et al., 2007). However, in relation to victims of female perpetrators, the impossibility myth may take precedence over other myth types (i.e. if rape by female perpetrators is impossible, no other myths can logically be primed). Therefore, rather than "missing narratives" for female perpetrators indicating an absence of RMA, it may be that questionnaires are not focussing on the most relevant issues for victims of female perpetrators (i.e. not identifying the settings, qualities and practices that pertain to female perpetration effectively).

The finding of a gendered conceptualisation of risk which influence the practices expected of male and female victims differently, echoes the findings of rape and sex *scripting* research. Scripts represent prototypes of events (which are setting-bound) that inform perceptions of how events should proceed, and what appropriate behaviour of agents within these events should look like (Davies, Walker, Archer, & Pollard, 2013; Hockett et al., 2016; K. M. Ryan, 2011). Scripts comprise four features, 1) precondition(s), 2) elements that depend on other elements), 3) location(s) and 4) roles(s) (K. M. Ryan, 2011; Schank & Abelson, 1977). Previous research suggests that sex and rape scripts are informed by RMA in MFR (K. M. Ryan, 2011), although this has tended to focus on the social construction of sex and rape, rather than exploring these issues in relation to socioecological systems.

The present study suggests that like rape scripts, gendered RMA acts as a *setting bound* prototype that guides attitudes and behaviours relating to victim-survivors. Therefore, explicating the gendered qualities of settings and practices that influence RMA may provide a further bridge between rape myth and scripting research/theories. For example, the gendered setting qualities appear to interact with setting practices to inform people's expectations of *consent*. As such, the real rape template informs consent scripting across situations whose qualities are shaped by victim and perpetrator gender.

Similar to some previous gender-role conformity research (e.g. Grubb & Turner, 2012), this study's findings suggest that when gendered setting practices are performed appropriately (i.e. corresponding to the real rape template) RMA is lower, but when practices are transgressed (i.e. the relevant prevention efforts have not been performed) then RMA is higher. This may ultimately help to

explain why some categories of rape myth are accepted to a greater extent in relation to male victims or female victims, and why this may in turn be moderated by perpetrator gender. Similarly, the present findings concur with those of Anderson (1999) and Howard (1984), that the concepts of characterological and behavioural blame are important to understanding gendered victim-related attributions. Specifically, RMA for both male and female victims (and victims of male and female perpetrators) may be influenced by characterological and behavioural blame, which can be expressed in different ways (e.g. through vulnerability and risk narratives, and expected prevention efforts).

In combination, these findings suggest that interventions aimed at challenging gendered RMA should explore ways of challenging the acceptance of rigid gender-linked role attitudes and norms. This would need to focus on the gendered-qualities of different settings and the practices that become embedded in these settings that can become associated with characterological and behavioural blame. Within this, it would be helpful to focus on perpetrator gender - to further raise awareness of the impact of this on perceptions relating to male and female victims. Furthermore, these findings suggest that when developing and running interventions, it is important to collaborate with professionals working in that particular region or with a particular community. This can help to ensure that an intervention is tailored to that setting's identities and needs, and could facilitate a stronger response to region- or community-specific rape myths.

Developing more localised measures of RMA through research collaborations with third sector specialist organisations may provide a means of better establishing change in a particular setting following an intervention change. As previous authors have identified that the content and expression of rape myths

is time and culture bound (McMahon, Farmer, & Lawrence, 2011), this approach could also be beneficial for identifying how rape myths evolve in a particular setting over time, and why.

Impact of the ‘target’ of rape myths and settings in which rape myths are considered.

The ‘target’ a respondent is asked to consider in relation to a myth, influences RMA. For example, considering a statement in the abstract may provoke a different response (or strength of response) compared to considering a myth in relation to someone known to them - such as a family member. The present research identified contradictory findings in relation to whether RMA was more or less pronounced in relation to a family members. This appears to relate to the theme of shared identities: where family identity could act as a bonding tie in some circumstances (i.e. lower RMA and greater support), or a mechanism through which a victim could experience greater scrutiny and blame (i.e. higher RMA, silencing of disclosure, or exclusion of an individual from the family-level identity). Therefore, shared identities could act as either a protective or a facilitatory factor for RMA.

To understand how shared identities may influence RMA in diverse ways, it is important to consider how they influence expected practices across different ecological settings. For example, research has identified that people are more likely to offer help to a friend than a stranger in order to prevent rape, because they are members of the same in-group (Katz, Pazienza, Olin, & Rich, 2015). Therefore, in some circumstances a shared identity may increase the degree to which you perceive yourself as similar to that person. Research from the perspective of DAT suggests that perceiving yourself as similar to a victim of

sexual violence may lower victim blame (Levy & Ben-David, 2015; Shaver, 1970). This may explain the protective function of shared identities. However, the present research identified that some families fear the stigma that will be attached to their family if a victim discloses sexual violence - particularly if the perpetrator is also a member of their family, a partner or a member of their community. As a result, RMA and blame may function as a means of an in-group preserving out-group perceptions of the its identity. For example, research in relation to mental ill health stigma has identified that some families fear they may be “contaminated by the problematic family member” in the eyes of others (Park & Park, 2014, p. 165). This may result in distancing from that family member, or reticence to seek help (Park & Park, 2014). The stigma attached to victims of rape (which the present research suggests overlaps with perceptions of vulnerability, including mental health issues) may affect family-level identities in similar ways.

Research exploring empathy and aggression may also shed light on why RMA may be greater in relation to someone known to the observer in comparison to an abstract ‘other’. Richardson (2014) suggests that an individual may be more likely to perpetrate micro-aggressions against those they know well in comparison to strangers, as a result of familiarity. Furthermore, everyday aggression can take the form of direct or indirect tactics, or withholding of responses.

Together, these findings may explain professionals’ experience that some families believe and support their members in help-seeking and reporting, whereas others may blame, silence and ostracise a victim. Furthermore, the finding of low RMA in some quantitative research (Reece, 2014), which does not match the experience of support professionals working with victim-survivors, may

be a result of lower levels of investment in RMA when responding in the abstract (i.e. in relation to an unknown other). This finding has important implications for the measurement of RMA using questionnaires, which tend to be framed in terms of abstract others as victims or perpetrators. Furthermore, it highlights the usefulness of subscales such as the “perceived likelihood of experiencing rape” of the RAQ (Granger, 2008) in understanding RMA when positions in relation to self and others.

As well as the target of a rape myth, the setting in which a rape myth is accessed by a person (i.e. completing a questionnaire, responding to a family member’s disclosure, or seeing a news story), the bonding-ties that are activated whilst a person is considering a rape myth (i.e. the people comprising the setting - such as friends and family vs colleagues vs strangers) and the formality of a setting (e.g. a pub vs a place of work), interact to influence RMA.

This resonates with research into gender-role attitudes, which has identified that people endorse more egalitarian attitudes in formal compared with social (informal) settings (S. J. Anderson & Johnson, 2003). This may reflect that setting qualities and practices in formal settings are informed to a greater extent by legislation that polices gender-related discrimination. As such, this may also influence the observation in the present study that people mask their RMA and victim-blaming attitudes in certain contexts, but express them more freely in social contexts. Furthermore, the low RMA levels detected using questionnaires may reflect the gendered qualities and settings invoked by taking part in academic research. For example, much RMA research recruits students as participants (van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014), who may be more mindful of the policies in higher education that police discriminatory behaviours. Furthermore, if

participants are completing research in the context of a classroom (rather than using asynchronous, online data collection methods) (e.g. Howard, 1984), responses may be primed by the gendered qualities and practices associated with that setting. However, further research is required to explore this potential impact of setting on RMA research participation before conclusions can be drawn.

People (including victim-survivors' friends and family, and professionals working in fields that bring them into contact with victim-survivors) engage in deliberate efforts to avoid being labelled as 'victim blamers'. Either because they genuinely do not want to be a 'victim blamer' or owing to impression management concerns in some settings. This finding is similar to Anderson et al.'s (2001) mixed methods research, that observers perceive a need to demonstrate their persona as logical, rational and reasonable individuals. This leads to them engaging in meta-commentary – reframing potentially victim blaming statements in terms of the result of engaging in a rational consideration of all the issues and apportioning blame fairly.

The findings of this research and Anderson et al.'s (2001) may be explained by the impact of different approaches to the concept of 'fairness', as described by Ryan (1994) and Stoll and colleagues (Stoll, Lilley, & Block, 2018; Stoll, Lilley, Block, & Pinter, 2017). These authors distinguish between 'fair play' abstract liberalism (i.e. treating everyone the same), and 'fair shares' (recognising the impact of setting and history and impact on access to resources and opportunities and therefore differentiating treatment on this basis) notions of equality/equity. In combination, these may contribute to a system of 'gender-blind sexism' which implies that systems are no longer sexist - only individuals are sexist. Stoll and colleagues' (Stoll et al., 2018, 2017) work suggests that through

the frames of abstract liberalism, the status quo of gender inequality is preserved and individuals rely on 'common-sense' heuristics (i.e. rape myths) to understand apparent gender-related inequalities. The present findings suggest that professionals encountered attitudes and behaviours that were consistent with these frames – including that people want to be seen to be fair, but that for many this means examining sources of blame in *both* victim *and* perpetrator behaviour/character. This may explain the potentially contradictory findings from the quasi-experimental study, which has found socially desirable responding to be a poor predictor of RMA, and the findings of professionals' commonplace experience of observer impression-management in the present study.

A further reason for the mismatch between the findings of quantitative and qualitative research is that gendered RMA may be *expressed* in diverse ways. The present research suggests that RMA can be expressed verbally through statements that use obfuscating language or euphemisms, or through the withholding of positive responses to victim-survivor disclosure (i.e. withholding of support, rather than explicit victim blame). Indeed, these issues have previously been identified in research exploring RMA (particularly in MFR) and highlights that rape myths are culturally- and temporally-bound, and are ever changing as the language used to describe them evolves (Deming, 2017; McMahon et al., 2011). This leads to rape myths becoming increasingly subtle and covert, and presents a challenge to their measurement. For example, RMA may also be expressed through the withholding of positive responses to victim-survivor disclosure. It is unclear whether current measures of RMA can capture this, outside of offering a "neutral" score on the response option to items of strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Considered in combination, these findings highlight that RMA is setting-bound, and that in order to be effective, measures and interventions must recognise this. In particular, interventions need to take into account the settings in which more insidious and “hidden” RMA may be expressed - and perhaps simulate this in order to challenge it. This reinforces the need to ensure that professionals are aware of myths encountered by victims of different genders and communities, through cross-organisation training.

Limitations

There are a number of potential limitations to the study, relating to sample size, application of the TAI method and analysis of the data. These, and the strategies adopted to manage them and ensure quality of the research, will now be discussed.

There is little consensus in the literature with regards to appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Some guidelines for thematic analysis advocate the concept of theoretical/data saturation as a means of identifying the point at which to cease recruitment (Morse, 2015). This approach was not adopted in the present study for a number of reasons. For example, the concept of saturation has evolved over time and is often not applied appropriate to research outside the grounded-theory paradigm (in which it originally developed) (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Also, using saturation as a means of determining sample size is more closely aligned with a positivist idea of providing a “complete” picture of the phenomenon of interest ‘in the real world’, which is somewhat at odds of with the emphasis placed on the inter-subjective in the present programme of research (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Instead, guidelines proposed

by Clarke and Braun (2013), to provide an opportunity to identify meaningful and useful patterns across data, were used to inform sample size decisions.

The research initially aimed to recruit a moderate-large sized sample (i.e. 10-20+), which is recommended by Clarke and Braun (2013) for research aiming to identify influencing factors in decision-making, using interviews as the method of data collection. Therefore, sample targets of 5-10 individuals for each group were initially specified. Despite attempts to recruit equally amongst the groups, recruiting participants from female-only services was particularly challenging¹². Therefore, a smaller sized sample was ultimately recruited ($n = 16$).

Analysis with a smaller sample may have meant that some patterns in the data could not be explored more fully. In particular, future research should explore regional differences/similarities in participants' talk relating to gendered RMA. This would be beneficial for tailoring services to needs of their users, based on the attitudes they may encounter in daily life. However, previous research using the TA method suggests that even small samples can provide useful insights into the way people approach and make sense of tasks (Collins, 2018). Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2016) argue that "bigger isn't necessarily better" (p. 4) in thematic analysis, with the quality of the research findings influenced more by the analyst's recognition of complexity and nuance in the data than sample size per se. The analysis audit trail and analyst triangulation activities therefore helped to identify the degree to which inferences from the data were logical, coding was

¹² Of the male charities who were approached (via phone, email, website) one declined to respond to the participation invitation, and one replied that as policy they did not take part in research outside of students completing counselling placements with them; of the charities providing support to both men and women approached - all agreed to participate. Of the women-only charities approached, three declined to participate and two declined to respond.

thorough, themes were substantiated and potential 'analyst blind-spots' in interpretation were considered.

Concerns have been raised about the impact of verbalising thoughts on the nature of inner speech, or on participants' ability to verbalise inner speech (Charters, 2003; Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2012). However, in this context such impact should be minimal: questionnaires are regularly used in TA tasks and have been found to produce rich data (Drennan, 2003; Phillips, 2014). Furthermore, the argument can be made that all measures of RMA containing statements to be agreed/disagreed with are *reactive* in some way (Gurnham, 2016b). In fact, it is the way that different settings in which RMA is to be expressed and how this impacts RMA for same individual that may be of interest to future research.

As well as considering the impact of the nature of the stimuli on participants' verbalisations, it is important to consider the impact of the content of the statements selected. Efforts were made to choose stimuli which would generate talk of gender in diverse ways, through selecting items that research suggests are accepted more for some victim/perpetrator genders and other items that appeared to produce. The intention was to explore whether myths were accepted for similar or different reasons, or under different constraints in relation to victim and perpetrator gender. However, further research using the same approach with other myths, from other validate measures would be beneficial to identifying whether important gaps exist in the themes of the present research findings.

Adopting a TAI informed approach helped to explore the ways that gendered setting qualities and practices may influence rape myth acceptance. However, it presented a number of unique challenges to analysis. This included

identifying a suitable way to use the content of the stimuli to contextualise verbalisations, and in balancing the demands of inductive coding with the more deductive elements in which the socioecological theory was used to make sense of emerging patterns in the data. Indeed, delineating a gendered setting quality for a setting practice is not clear-cut - as many themes appeared to influence each other. Therefore, the audit trail and analyst triangulation activities were invaluable for helping the researcher to identify potential analysis “blind spots” and ensuring inferences were grounded in the data (see appendix I for the analyst triangulation report). As a result of this process subtle revisions were made to the “identities” theme - to emphasise their overlapping and shared nature. That is, to highlight how some shared identities (e.g. community or faith) could influence other the formulations of other identities (i.e. the family).

A limitation of the existing study is that it considers the impact of gendered setting qualities and practices on rape myth acceptance within a binary framework (i.e. impact on male/female victims/perpetrators). Further research is needed to explore the way that gendered setting qualities and practices influence the experience of individuals identifying as non-binary gender, transgender, gender fluid and gender-queer. This would have important implications for the way in which services are delivered for victim-survivors.

Conclusions and future directions

Professionals’ responses to the TAI task reflected that rape myths remain prevalent and impactful, which resonates with assertions by feminist authors that RMA remains a significant negative factor in victim-survivors’ experience of disclosing (K. M. Edwards et al., 2011; Jenkins, 2017; Krahe, 2013, 2016; Maxwell & Scott, 2014; Sleath, 2011; Sleath & Bull, 2015; Turchik & Edwards,

2012; Walfield, 2018). However, it contrasts with the findings presented in chapter 5 of this thesis, and previous research which suggests that when quantitatively measured, RMA is relatively low (Reece, 2013, 2014). This suggests a mismatch in the way that questionnaires typically measure RMA and the lived experience of professionals supporting victim-survivors. Although this finding is not new, the present findings provides further insight into *why* this mismatch may occur occurs.

This research identified that *setting* influences RMA in a number of ways: through the rape myth item itself (i.e. gendered setting qualities and practices implied by the content of the myth); the setting implied by the “target” of the rape myth (i.e. applied to a stranger, friend or family member) and; through the setting in which an observer encounters the myth and responds to it. This may explain the perception that observers can hold apparently contradictory beliefs about rape - providing empathic responses in some settings but negative reactions or neutral responses in others - even when the settings appear to share similar features.

This study has identified several gendered setting qualities (e.g. vulnerability and risk) and practices (e.g. prevention efforts) that influence gendered RMA, which may be beneficial for developing more gender-inclusive theories of RMA. However, their ‘real-world’ impacts on the support received by victim-survivors is unclear. Therefore, further research exploring the challenges gendered RMA poses for victim-survivor support organisations is required.

Chapter 8. The role of victim and perpetrator gendered RMA in challenges to providing services for adult survivors of sexual violence: an interview study.

Chapter introduction

This chapter presents a qualitative study exploring the challenges faced by victim-survivor support organisations in England. As outlined in chapters 1 and 2, many specialist survivor support services in the third sector are organised explicitly around victim gender, and implicitly around perpetrator gender. Therefore, these challenges are interpreted in light of the findings of chapter 7, with regards to the gendered setting qualities and practices that influence RMA. Also, as the challenges identified are numerous, diverse and complex, they are discussed in the context of the socioecological framework outlined in chapter 2. This model recommends that survivor support is considered as an ecological setting in its own right, and is bounded by temporal, macro, meso/exo, micro and individual-level factors (R. Campbell et al., 2009). The aim of using this framework is to produce more nuanced recommendations for enhancing victim support, to facilitate transformative praxis.

Background

Previous research with third-sector sexual violence specialist support organisations has revealed they face diverse and significant barriers to supporting victims (Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Rogers, 2017; Mihelicova et al., 2019; Robinson & Hudson, 2011; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). These challenges occur at different levels, including at the macro-level (e.g. rape culture, sexism, homophobia) and the individual level (e.g. burnout of support professionals and attrition from the third sector) (Lowe, 2017; Maier, 2011a, 2011b; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). However, much of what is known regarding these challenges is based on research conducted in the US (e.g. Ullman & Townsend, 2007), or with advocates working within feminist, women-only services (Donne et al., 2018). Less is known in relation to services providing support to victims of different gender identities within the UK. Although there are likely to be many similarities (e.g. funding constraints feature prominently in many research findings) (e.g. Maier, 2011a), key differences are also anticipated.

Owing to recent events, such as the Jimmy Savile documentaries and related inquiries, sexual violence has never been so prominent in public consciousness (NHS England, 2018). At the same time, we are in the midst of “austerity Britain”, with spending cuts to the third-sector frequently reported (Goldstraw, 2016). These factors have important implications for specialist sexual violence support services, particularly in relation to decisions of which strands of a service to prioritise and which to scale-back in light of changes to funding.

A challenge that services encounter when working with survivors is that of RMA, which is implicated in survivors’ experiences of secondary victimisation and

unhelpful responses to disclosure (Ullman & Townsend, 2007). Indeed, dispelling common rape myths that may contribute to survivors' self-blame is a key aspect of an ISVA's role (Patterson & Tringali, 2015). However, RMA as a barrier to victim support has typically been considered at the macro-level, as an indicator of the rape culture within which services operate (Ullman & Townsend, 2007). There is a lack of research exploring the influence of *gendered* RMA in relation to service challenges more broadly. As a result, there are gaps in gender-inclusive theory and the evidence-base with regards to the consequences of RMA for third-sector survivor support organisations. These gaps in the literature are important because many policies (e.g. 'ending VAWG') and services are explicitly organised around victim gender (i.e. women or men only services) and implicitly around perpetrator gender (i.e. in the context of male perpetration). Indeed, the question of how best to respond to gender in sexual violence prevention and support strategies is of growing concern in sexual violence research, advocacy and activism (Hearn & Mckie, 2008; Lewis, Sharp, Remnant, & Redpath, 2015; Lowe, 2017; McPhail, 2016; Brenda L Russell, 2013; Touquet & Gorris, 2016; Turchik et al., 2016).

The findings from chapter 7 illustrate the pervasive and important ways in which gender can shape RMA, and a small body of UK-based research exploring male victims' experiences of help-seeking suggests that gendered RMA may influence third-sector services responses to their disclosure (Javaid, 2016c, 2017b; Weare, 2018b). In some instances, this has led some male survivors to be excluded from the support they have requested (e.g. Javaid, 2016c). Furthermore, research in the US suggests that RMA may be fuelling a system of *gender-blind* sexism; whereby sexual violence against women is positioned as

an issue of the past, and its impacts minimised or rendered invisible at a societal level (Stoll et al., 2018, 2017). Subsequently differential access to, and experiences of support may arise from gendered RMA which is triggered by a victim's characteristics (and the characteristics of their assault, including the gender of the individual whom offended against them).

Further research exploring how gendered RMA affects survivor support charities is urgently required. Additionally, it would be helpful to consider these challenges within a socioecological framework, as a strength of this approach is that it can be used to identify how barriers manifest at multiple levels of a social structure. For example, Campbell (1998) utilised a socioecological model to explore the factors that influence female survivors' experience of help-seeking with formal support ecologies. This research was able to provide insight into the fit between victims' needs and the system-level responses; findings indicated that factors at the individual-level (e.g. victim-demeanour), assault-level (e.g. stranger vs non-stranger rape) and community-level (e.g. availability and organisation of resources between agencies) differentiated whether experiences with legal medical and mental health systems were rated as positive or not (R. Campbell, 1998). Also, information at each level of the socioecological model contributed to unique insight into survivors' help-seeking experiences.

A further strength of the socioecological approach lies in the emphasis it places on exploring the *interactions* between the levels of a socioecological system that leads to differential outcomes for survivors (Gravelin et al., 2018). Thus, reviewing service challenges that are identified as being shaped by gendered RMA from the socioecological perspective, could generate fresh insights into barriers to supporting victim-survivors of different gender-identities.

This is needed specifically in the current UK context, to help ensure survivors, organisations and funders/commissioners receive and deliver effective services.

The present study seeks to address the gaps identified in the literature, through exploring the following research questions with professionals from 10 services across England, providing support to male and female survivors: “what are the challenges facing adult sexual violence support services?” and “in what ways does gendered RMA impact on these challenges?”.

Methods

Design

An interview study was conducted immediately following completion of a TAI task (see chapter 7), and analysed using a hybrid deductive-inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; V. Clarke & Braun, 2013; Hoskin, 2019; Willig, 2013). All data were collected between February 2016 and June 2017.

Participants

See participants section in chapter 7 for recruitment methods, participant characteristics and characteristics of the organisations with which participants work/volunteer.

Materials

A topic guide with prompts was used to conduct the interviews (see appendix K). Topics explored with participants included: the extent to which they felt there was still stigma attached to victims of sexual violence and why it may exist; the factors they felt affective survivor’s decisions to seek support; the factors affecting victims’ decisions to report their experiences to the police; they key challenges they face in their role specifically, and which they feel their service

faces and the extent to which they felt survivors' needs were being met and why. An example of a prompt used to seek further information was "could you say more about why you feel X?"

Using topics with prompts rather than a rigid interview schedule, is recommended for allowing the exploration of related topics which emerge unexpectedly from participants (Kvale, 1996). Therefore, some variation in the nature of the questions asked, and timing of the questions within the interview was anticipated.

Procedure

Interviews were conducted over the telephone or Skype and lasted between 35 and 65 minutes (mean length = 45 minutes). All interviews were audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim (by an external organisation guaranteeing a confidential service, compliant with GDPR). Transcripts were anonymised by the researcher.

Qualitative data analysis was performed using NVivo 12 and Microsoft Excel.

Analytic strategy

Deductive-inductive thematic analysis was performed, following the steps outlined in chapter 7. As the researcher did not transcribe the interviews personally, the first step of familiarisation with the data was vital. Interview transcripts were checked for accuracy by reading through them whilst listening to the audio-files. This also allowed the researcher to become re-immersed in the data and to note down initial impressions of patterns that appeared relevant to the research questions. Step two involved generating initial codes across each transcript, using line-by-line coding of any meaning units which appeared relevant

to the research questions. A preconceived *codebook* was not used. Initial themes were identified across these codes in step three, and were reviewed and refined in light of the research questions and findings from chapter 7 in step four (Hoskin, 2019). That is, in light of the gendered setting qualities and practices (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010) identified as influencing gendered RMA in the TAI study. Steps five and six involved the naming, definition and reporting of the themes.

Quality assurance strategies

Details of the methods of trustworthiness have been described in chapters 4 (thick description and reflexivity), and 7 (auditing and analyst triangulation) and so will not be described again here. However, an additional method of checking credibility was employed in the present research: participant checking (also termed member-checking) (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Therefore, this section will describe this additional approach to participant checking used in this study.

Participant checking. Participant checking was performed with a selection of quotes, with a subset of participants (participants 1-5), as part of a separate report written for Survivors West Yorkshire (Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017). Participants were satisfied that their quotes had been interpreted appropriately, suggesting the researcher's interpretation had evidence of validity and trustworthiness (Birt et al., 2016).

Findings

Four core challenges emerged across participants' interviews: 'growing awareness', 'responding to complexity and diversity', 'competition and funding issues', and 'self-care and vicarious trauma'. Figure 15 provides a coding tree for

these themes. Although there were many similarities in how these challenges were experienced by services providing support to male and female victim-survivors, there were also key differences which were shaped by victim and perpetrator gendered RMA. Furthermore, areas of contention in participants' perception of how challenges would best be responded to, particularly in relation to victim gender were evident and also appeared to be influenced by gendered RMA. It is the aim of this research to generate constructive debates regarding these challenges, and how they may best be responded to, through drawing attention to the areas of consensus and contention in participants' talk.

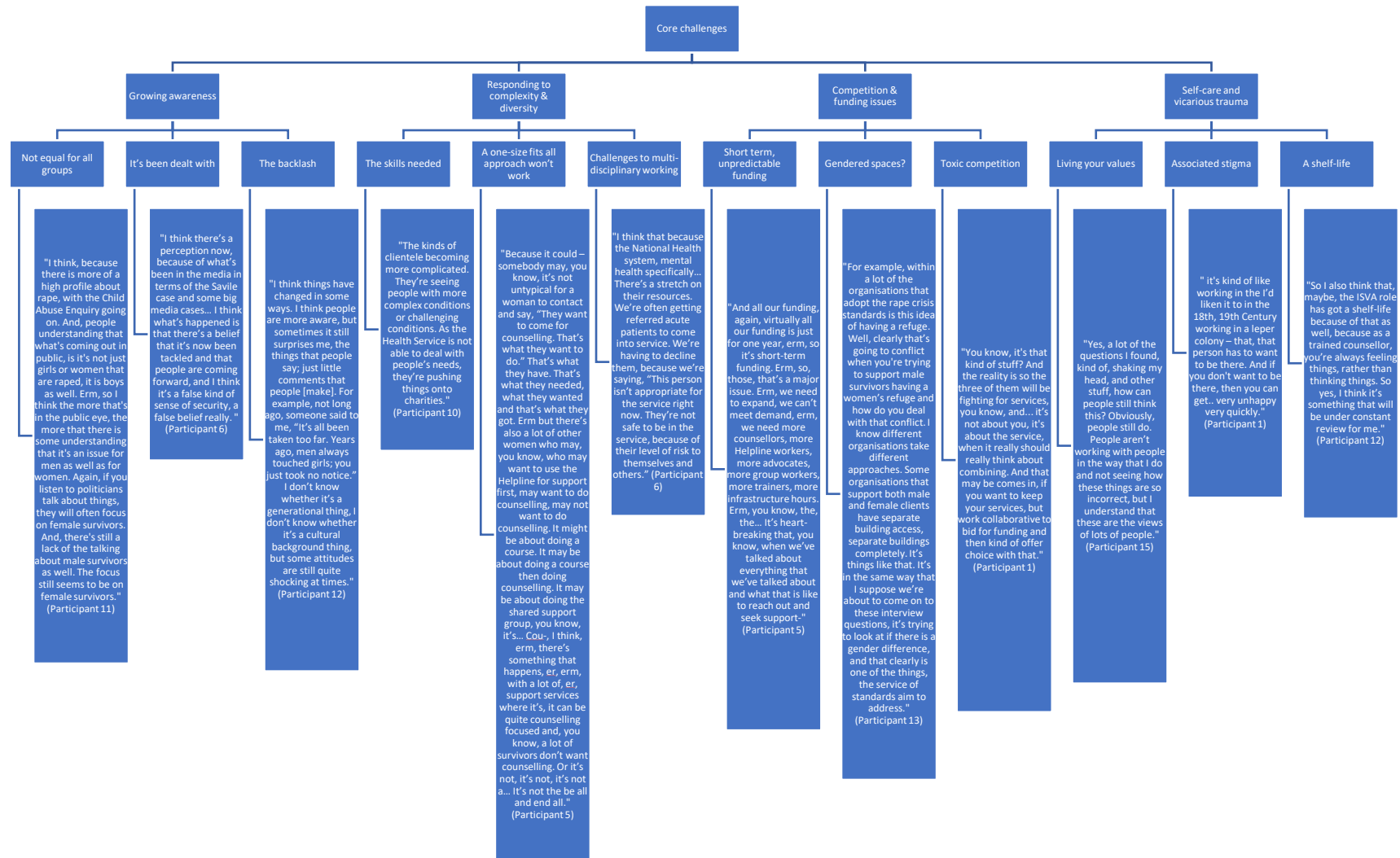


Figure 15. Coding tree of the four core challenges identified as facing sexual violence support organisations.

Growing awareness

All participants felt that recent social events within the UK¹³ had had positive effects on public awareness, increased confidence for survivors in seeking help from adult support services, and reporting to the police. All felt that this had resulted in more men and women accessing their services than ever before and meant there were greater opportunities to challenge RMA in public arenas.

“There is something that is going on in society that I have not witnessed before. So, there is much more out there in the soaps, in the media... talking about sexual violence. Which hasn't been the case in the past. In my experience... sexual violence hasn't been high on the agenda in the different strategic boards... and now it is much higher up the agenda.”

(Participant 5).

However, the reality for many victim-survivors is that they still encountered RMA when disclosing. Also, the growing awareness had resulted in a government rhetoric for people to come forward to disclose their experiences, which has not been matched with funding for services. This had resulted in all services developing long waiting lists (particularly for counselling support), and inhibiting professionals from making the early contact to support victim-survivors when they may be in crisis.

¹³ including the exposés of Jimmy Savile and the abuse perpetrated in the context of sports coaching, and the operations Yewtree and Stovewood

“...with the independent enquiry that's going on at the moment, there's a rhetoric from the government around, “Come and report these incidents to us and we will support you,” but actually it isn't being followed up with services. So, you can have people that come forward and say, “Yes, this happened,” but if then they find... that worker can't come out and meet you face-to-face for three weeks, then that isn't actually an effective way of dealing with it.” (Participant 3)

There were concerns that this in turn, would feed into rape myths for both male and female victims, that their experiences were not really ‘that bad’ and that they were alone in their experiences. Also, the growing awareness of sexual violence as an important issue, and the rhetoric around seeking support in the media, appeared to have created a perception that the issue had been ‘tackled’. This resulted in a distorted public perception of how many services for male and female victim-survivors actually exist, and how financially stable they were. In turn, this had contributed to a strange contradiction for individuals in service development or managerial roles, when attending regional strategic forums, conferences or events; sexual violence was perceived as being higher on the agenda in these meetings than ever before, but specialist sexual violence third sector organisations continued to have to justify themselves as important and necessary and struggled to secure funding.

“I think there are gaps everywhere....[for] males – it's horrendous, there are only three services that I can think of that you would regard as kind of standalone male services... it's got better for females now, but there's only 36 state-provided

services in the United Kingdom... And they're constantly under threat..." (Participant 1)

It is vital that third-sector organisations continue to feed into strategic debates, to ensure survivors' needs are represented and responded to. For example, although the treatment of survivors engaging with the CJS has markedly improved in recent years, one participant spoke of the importance of encouraging further training for police officers.

"... I think that all [STIOs] could do with training on combating their internalised view of what a sexual violence victim is... that's something that hasn't been given enough focus within the police force... and I think would really improve outcomes... because the mind-set of the people undertaking the investigation would be different, and also the support available for the client would be improved." (Participant 3)

Furthermore, participants spoke of survivors' experience of the courts as "very disappointing" (Participant 1), "horrendous" (Participant 4) and "brutal" (Participant 2), as they are still a forum for myths, which are frequently used to discredit survivors and cloud issues of consent. Mental health services were also described as falling short of meeting the needs of survivors, through failing to fully recognise the impact of the experience of sexual violence (particularly in childhood).

"I frequently hear, 'They don't understand. They don't understand.'... you know, they get slapped with a diagnosis and that's it. (Participant 4)

As the CJS and mental health services are two systems with which many survivors may come into contact, greater positive change needs to occur. Indeed, participants felt that awareness of rape myths was growing within these institutions, but was out-paced by the ways in which rape myths were changing in their content and expression. For example, this was particularly the case in relation to issues of consent and alcohol consumption. The highly politicised nature of RMA and victim-blaming meant that important conversations about the nature of consent were challenging because they could either be hijacked or misinterpreted as victim blaming.

“... this is about a new trend [chemsex] for gay and bisexual men to sort of meet on apps like Grindr or scruff... it's that it's specifically that they take drugs in order to have sex... And of course, there are all kinds of issues there around consent and we do get stories of people are literally unconscious and therefore unable to consent... I guess [I just want] to give people the information and to actually make people sit down and think about some things, that often people do just think of consent as a straightforward concept but of course, when you start to look at it, it isn't that straightforward... I realise, you know, that this could sound like victim-blaming. You know, things can go full circle and it's not at all to suggest they are responsible for being assaulted or whatever, but it's just an observation on the cultural thing that is happening” (Participant

8).

Across the institutions with which sexual violence support services interact to support victim-survivors, participants working with male and female victims did perceive that there were improvements but the speed at which change happened created challenges for changing institutional cultures. For example, although the rape scrutiny panels were felt to play an important role in challenging rape myths in court, their impact on the wider system was felt to be too gradual. The courts were perceived as a leviathan, and the impact of the rape scrutiny panels was likened to a trickle of water. Change spread gradually out from the rape scrutiny panel, one layer of professionals within the CJS at a time. This, coupled with the perception of rape myths as a layered phenomenon meant that surface change was affected first, and deep RMA was more challenging to address. In particular, the covert and insidious expressions of RMA - which aren't elicited by "blatant" (Participant 5), or "generic" (Participant 13) rape myth statements are not being challenged.

"Those are the ones that are more blatant in those, in those myths and stereotypes those are the ones that are more blatant about, well it can't be rape if or you brought it on yourself if. I think some of the other ones are more, erm, hiding the reality of rape and sexual violence." (Participant 5)

Thus, the frustratingly slow rate of change by which awareness of gendered RMA impacts on victim-survivor experiences through the CJS, means that by the time some of the more obvious rape myths are challenged, new ones have taken their place.

Notably, across these issues victims of female perpetrators were simply not discussed - suggesting that victim-survivors of female perpetrators are

invisible. Indeed, some participants felt a core reason for this was the legal definition of rape in England and Wales. Specifically, that the culture of awareness of sexual violence was leading some victims of female perpetrated sexual assault, to come forward anticipating that they will be supported but being informed by formal support organisations, or the police, that what they have experienced is not rape. There was a perception that this disparity between layperson and legal definitions of female perpetrated sexual assault reinforced a gender hierarchy of suffering and seriousness, and had to be “reconciled” to some degree with the use of other legal labels for offences.

“Females cannot be guilty of rape, not in terms of legislation, because it has to be committed by a penis. So, that’s true in that sense. People maybe don’t think of it around legislation, but I guess it’s important to know that serious sexual assault can carry the same sentence as rape. So, that’s how they reconcile that really.” (Participant 6)

Thus, participants’ talk revealed a raised awareness for some groups of victim-survivors, but not all. Furthermore, many participants (particularly those who had worked in the sector for a number of years) perceived that this raised awareness may be transitory - as there had been other periods in the history of women-services of raised awareness which had been followed by a lack of attention and withdrawal of funding from the government. This had resulted in mass closures of services, and a resurfacing of RMA. Beyond this, many participants felt that there was a backlash against the raised awareness. Their talk indicated that this backlash was fuelled by RMA, and was different for male and female victim-oriented services, owing to the particularly victim-gendered

nature of RMA. For example, RMA in relation to female victim-survivors was still prevalent with regards to women as liars and disclosing as a means of obtaining revenge on someone, as being petty and vindictive in light of a genuine mistake by a (male) perpetrator or to obtain compensation. In turn, this led to an interpretation of news stories that highlighted the widespread nature of sexual violence as a media frenzy and an invention of “fake news” - such as a means of getting back at celebrities and the price of fame.

“like the woman’s got something against them or they want to bring them down or something. So, there is some stuff, like Cliff Richard, he’s made this big public thing about how terrible it’s been for him and all of that... it’s the price of fame and celebrity...” (Participant 2)

Therefore, for female victim-survivors, the reporting of sexual violence against females was perceived almost as reinforcing rather than challenging some people’s RMA, and resulted simply in disbelief. However, people were less likely to say this overtly and instead it was demonstrated through the withholding of positive responses (such as support, good investigatory practices by the police) making female victim gendered RMA more difficult to challenge.

In relation to male victim gendered RMA, the reporting of some aspects of sexual violence juxtaposed male victimisation with arenas typically associated with masculinity - such as the scandal of abuse by coaches in sports clubs. However, this unintentionally appears to have reinforced several male victim gendered RMA - that male rape only happens in specific settings (particularly in relation to all male settings), that true male victimisation only occurs in childhood,

and that there is a time-limit by which reporting is valid - otherwise it is better left forgotten.

“That’s why the Eric Bristow thing, I was so angry when I heard what he said on television about, “If you don’t say anything there and then you’ve missed the boat,” there’s no point.”

(Participant 15)

In turn, all of these factors are silencing for male and female victims and may affect the shaping and delivery of sexual violence support services (discussed in further depth in relation to the theme of responding to complexity and diversity).

Participants identified the media as a mechanism that traversed multiple settings and the potential to both transmit rape mythic beliefs and attitudes, and also provide a platform for challenging such view-points. This was in the format of both traditional media and social media (particularly twitter and Facebook, and the online commenting facilities). The ways in which RMA was demonstrated - particularly in relation to celebrity - and how this could be challenged were particular concerns for many participants. Twitter was felt to be a key mechanism for challenging - also, in a sense, holding people accountable for the statements made and highlighting them in relation to the evidence or reality of rape was important.

Responding to complexity and diversity

Participants spoke of challenges that they and their services face in being able to respond effectively to complex survivor needs, and in ensuring services were responsive to the diverse backgrounds and experiences survivors have.

“So, I’m talking about multi-dimensional, choice-driven services where the survivor really kind of pathways themselves with assistance.... So, you offer the choice to the survivor and at each stage you give them the information. They kind of self-manage their own process...” (Participant 1)

Services also needed to recognise the support needs of *indirect* victims of sexual violence, including partners, family and friends. For example, as well as vicarious traumatisation of relatives, stigma (including RMA) could be applied to the individual victim-survivor, or their entire family. This could lead individuals from some social groups, such as those associated with faith or culture, to be ostracised by their family or community when disclosing. This aspect of stigma meant that making a service accessible for women from some BAME communities was particularly challenging, owing to the fear of losing control of a disclosure and a family or community member finding out.

“One particular girl actually got the courage to speak to her mum... and her mum actually said, “It happens to all of us. To me. To your auntie...But of course then she’s very concerned, because it happened to her auntie and then when she got married there was no blood and so they killed her. It was an honour-based killing. Thankfully this young girl doesn’t live in [country name omitted for anonymity], but she’s absolutely terrified that when she gets married...” (Participant 16)

This was particularly pronounced for women and girls who had experienced sexual violence and were currently seeking asylum in England and

Wales, and therefore encountered additional barriers relating to the asylum service.

For some women, who didn't speak English as a first language, talking to a professional from a support organisation would necessitate the use of an interpreter, meaning the victim-survivor would need to talk about their experiences in front of multiple people, creating additional barriers to services. Also, victims spoke of their fear that the interpreter may also be a member of the same community as them, and their disclosure may not be fully confidential.

“Erm, so those are barriers themselves for women coming forward and particularly in some cultures, where we have to work with interpreters and the fear about confidentiality and about the interpreter... It's likely to be someone they might know in their community and erm, you know, about word getting out, but a women, a survivor of sexual violence she's been accessing our service and the interpreters been there and privy to the session, etc, so, you know, all those are further barriers for these groups of women perhaps who need support erm, and they can't get the support without the interpreter and they're just worried about the interpreter.” (Participant 4)

It is anticipated that males from BAME communities may also be extremely reluctant to use interpreter services, for similar reasons. However, BAME males were not typically discussed by professionals, as so few individuals had experience of supporting them.

Another particular challenge to services was their perceived capacity to support victim-survivors with severe trauma, mental and physical health

problems. Many participants felt they had supported victim-survivors whose needs had not been addressed holistically; this arose both through a lack of expertise specific to sexual violence within general mental health services, and a lack of capacity and expertise of complex trauma within the sexual violence support third sector.

“I’m just thinking about, you know, mental health, nearly all the women I work with have had some engagement with mental health services... And you know, they get slapped with a diagnosis, and that’s it.” (Participant 4)

Participants spoke of a desire for better multi-disciplinary and cross-institution working, with mutual training. However, the infrastructure - such as that required to support information-sharing, and lack of recognition of the expertise in the third sector were identified as key barriers to this multi-disciplinary working. Participants had often experienced victim-survivors telling them of secondary victimisation within the mental health system as a result of RMA, which could have lasting, negative impacts on their recovery. In particular, the myths identified in chapter seven - regarding rape as simply an unavoidable product of some people’s unconventional or chaotic and dysfunctional lives, were prevalent. Many participants spoke of how these myths led to disbelief of victims’ disclosures, or the defeatist mind-set that these individuals could not be supported. Victim-survivors with complex mental health needs were almost perceived as being beyond help; the ‘damaged’ identity could become the largest aspect of a person’s identity, as perceived by others. In turn, this could impact greatly on the support they receive.

“I think that especially if you've got somebody who has got an awful lot of stuff going on in their lives, that they've got a lot of vulnerabilities themselves and, erm, maybe they have been in contact with the police multiple times, erm, then I do think that there is a certain.. amount of judgement that goes along with that, whether it's intentional or not but just kind of being like, “Okay, this person's come reporting another incident,” and yes, kind of, not giving it the amount of.. er.. weight that they should”

(Participant 3)

There are pervasive perceptions of survivors (within victim gender groups) as being homogenous, and requiring of a set approach to therapy. This appeared to be interwoven with empathic but erroneous perceptions about how trauma impacted on male and female survivors. Participants encountered these viewed in relation to the public, professionals working in other institutions (such as the NHS) as well as funding and commissioning bodies (the impact of this is explored further in relation to the competition and funding issues theme). However, it resulted in initially empathic beliefs about the negative impacts of sexual violence becoming rigid and fixed when thinking about what is “best” for survivors, and what “good support” looks like.

“[Mental health support]... perhaps I don't think is always creative enough. Like, there are lots of different things that you can do... Not everybody may actually require counselling... For some people things like, mindfulness and meditation and art therapy and yoga [may help more]...” (Participant 3)

Therefore, for male and female victims there are myths about the nature of support that should be provided by third sector organisations. However, participants highlighted that the reality is that the type and extent of support each survivor needs may change across their recovery journeys. For example, survivors may use a helpline to make initial contact and then move to support from an ISVA, or access counselling. Although all participants felt counselling was invaluable, many were concerned that there was a perception it was the only model that services could or should provide. Professionals highlighted that offering choice in services is key. Also, organisations should push the boundaries, safely, with the services they offer and shouldn't be afraid to think outside the box. The importance of innovation must be recognised and supported by funders/commissioners.

“So, I'm talking about multi-dimensional, choice-driven services where the survivor really kind of pathways themselves with assistance.... So, you offer the choice to the survivor and at each stage you give them the information. They kind of self-manage their own process...” (Participant 1)

Participants in service development or managerial roles therefore had to tread a fine line between challenging this rigid thinking, without detracting from people's underlying motivation to help victim-survivors. Essentially, participants had to be careful not to “bite the hand that feeds you”, which could make challenging RMA in its different forms more difficult.

Technology is changing the ways in which services can be offered and approached; survivors are using the internet to gather information, share experiences and look at services and judge whether they feel safe, confidential

and relevant to them. Therefore, having an effective online presence which resonates with a service's client group is key. If providing support to both female and male survivors, getting this balancing act right can be difficult, as what feels safe and relevant may be very different for men and women.

“... now they'll go to [the internet]... and see if there's anything there... I think they shop around. They do their own kind of checking out things. So, you know, the internet allows them to do that and they'll look at the colours of websites and things, and they'll try to get a feel for it...” (Participant 1)

Many professionals worked with services that spanned diverse geographical areas, which posed additional barriers to accessing support for some groups of survivors (such as male victims, victims with disabilities, victims within the asylum services). In response, many professionals felt that using technology smartly can help to make services more accessible and bridge gaps). Indeed, there are many invisible barriers to help-seeking, such as prohibitive travel costs, and without systematic, sustainable investment it is difficult to see how these can be addressed. However, providing information and support online may be a cost-effective means of expanding service provision for some of these victim-survivor groups.

Participants highlighted the challenge of EBP in the field - particularly in relation to how best to respond to challenges presented by victim and perpetrator gender. For example, there were concerns regarding the models underpinning some services, which were felt to be under-defined and under-evaluated. However, developing an evidence-base that could be used by services to evidence need and the benefits of particular approaches to service delivery was

outside the scope of many services. This relates to the theme of funding and competition - discussed in the next subsection.

Gendered RMA was felt to be embedded into the ways in which some sexual violence support organisations advertised their services, because it unconsciously reinforced gender binaries. That is, those services which offered support to both men and women, were felt by some professionals to still be organised around the premise of a female victim and male perpetrator. For example, the use of gender-neutral language alone was not enough to demonstrate that a service was applicable or appropriate for both females and males. Some online spaces were decorated in such a way as denoting femininity (i.e. use of certain colours), the links to other information provided. This could translate into physical premises and could be implicit in the location of the premises.

“When I think about my referral to [organisation name omitted for anonymity], support service, I didn't think they were for me. The reason I didn't think they were for me is because when I went on their website, my mind was it's all pink and purple so obviously it's for women, and rape as far as I was concerned at the time was, well, women get raped... so I just assumed that there wasn't anything out there at all because I still didn't have the capacity to... know what to search [Google] for. I do think that's changed now... [but] I wanted a male-specific service. I wanted to speak to a man about what had happened. It sounds a bit naff but I wanted the branding to be male oriented. I wanted to see inspirational stories and quotes from other male

survivors. I didn't want it to be all pink and fluffy..."

(Participant¹⁴ supporting male victim-survivors only)

Ultimately, an environment needs to feel safe in order for victim-survivors to be able to disclose and talk about their experiences. However, how to make such an environment safe may differ based on gender, and gendered-RMA.

The tension arises, in that it may be very difficult to make a space feel both inclusive of male and female genders, whilst also demonstrating it is bespoke and tailored to victim-survivors needs. As funding constraints mean that many services are not able to have split premises by gender (and this is not necessarily the way that professionals feel the issue would be resolved anyway), the question of how to demonstrate gender inclusivity is an important one.

"I think it's really important that females feel safe and comfortable to be vulnerable in the space, as men feel like they're not in a space that looks and it feels like it's a female-decorated space or energy". (Participant 6)

There is also a growing recognition that gendered assumptions may have become codified into practice, as many services standards for male support organisations have been developed from existing service standards from female support organisations. This may arise partly from assumptions about the nature of rape, but also owing to necessity for having a framework to start from for policy development. However, the impact of the lack of service standards designed specifically for male victim support are unclear.

¹⁴ Participant number withheld, to ensure anonymity.

“I’m sure as you know at the moment the majority of the service standards come from the Rape Crisis organisation movement and they’re used, or tailored, to male survivors’ charities, support organisations. I think there was just a feeling between the heads of the charities that it might be time now to look at whether or not something specific needs to be created for male survivors’ charities recognising that for male survivors it’s no more difficult but it is different, and I think that’s the viewpoint.”

(Participant 13)

Competition and funding issues

Many participants spoke of the diverse, negative impacts of funding insecurity on sexual violence support organisations in the third sector. A substantive amount of service managers and co-ordinators’ time and efforts are focused on petitioning for funds, bidding for tenders and identifying new or alternative sources of funding. The support professionals felt that it was this pursuit of funding and competition with other services, which revealed a range of myths relating to supporting victim-survivors. For example, participants in female services typically encountered mythic beliefs relating to the lack of seriousness of the impacts of sexual violence on women victim-survivors. This was expressed as dismissiveness of the skills and expertise required to support victim-survivors.

“We get a lot of people don’t know what we do.... They think we are ‘cup of tea and sympathy’... They don’t understand the professionalism, the training, the depth of the work we’re doing.... the NHS Psychologists or Psychiatrists or Police

Officers - they've all got the real work. We're just, sort of, like holding somebody's hand and giving them some sympathy."

(Participant 5)

In relation to services that were feminist informed and women-only, the lack of recognition was coupled with stigma attached to the women's movement. For example, many women professionals still experienced misogyny and were branded as "man haters", or just a bunch of women doing women's stuff.

"so, there's some hostility to us being a women-only service and talking about women and girls. Erm, and a perception and a stereotype that we, you know... we're man haters. We don't care about male survivors. We're not an ally for male survivors... We hate men, erm, and we're probably all a bunch of lesbians. Er, like that is really out there sometimes for me when I'm out in, in, in the world and it plays out in some different ways. Some much more subtly." (Participant 5)

In contrast, professionals working with male survivors experienced perceptions that services for men were not as important, owing to the asymmetry of sexual violence.

"I have heard incidences of men, even in a service that's available for men and women, it still feels like it's more geared towards women. And in a way it's just statistically that makes sense for those services, because the majority of their clients will be women. But men are sort of marginalised by those services. I even spoke to someone recently who said, "Well,

we don't cater to men because we don't get any." And my answer was, "But do you look for them? Do you advertise to them? Do you go and talk to them?" And he was like- it's a chicken and egg situation. They're not going to present if they don't feel like the organisation is for them. I mean, on some level you could even argue how they've decorated, or how their website looks is gendered." (Participant 8)

Participants felt there was a lack of recognition of the expertise within sexual violence support organisations, presenting a challenge to services which must annually justify the need for their existence to funders. Furthermore, it feeds into what one participant termed the 'professional optimism' of non-specialist organisations.

"...you see people rushing through the issue, and often... with... over-optimism that they can transfer skills that they've learned in a particular context into the context of sexual violence. "...it would seem obvious wouldn't it?... It can't be that much of a shift?" until they try it and find out that you're going into a world where you really have to know what you're doing: you can't learn it on the job." (Participant 1)

Many participants felt that specialist services are competing with larger 'generic' services, which was concerning for three reasons: smaller services would lose out on funding and would collapse; the philosophies underpinning these generic services are less well known and their outcomes felt to be less

clear, and; concern that generic services could not provide wrap-around, holistic support.

“.. [there are] generic organisations offering the same service, who are winning police contracts and getting all the case referrals. That's a huge challenge.” (Participant 4)

When listening to survivors' needs, some participants felt that there were key differences for men and women. Specifically, a key component of the women and girls' services is having women-only spaces: where females can come out of the world and enter a safe, physical space free from discrimination. Although male survivors also need safe physical spaces, having a *men-only* space was not seen as necessary.

This presented a challenge in relation to funding: there are gaps in men's services and funders are increasingly looking for 'value for money'. In combination this mean that women-only services are experiencing pressure to provide support to male survivors too (often with no extra funding). This may appear an economic way to use existing infrastructure. However, there are two serious concerns with this approach: it runs counter to the philosophy of many women-only services, who are concerned that fewer women will ultimately access their service. Also, male services run the risk of feeling like they have been 'tagged on' and do not resonate with men.

“I'm aware that there's a lack of provision for male survivors... but my personal view is that it shouldn't be incumbent on [women only services] to be offering services to men where, you know, where we were set up as a women only

organisation, by women for women and erm, if, er, others feel so strongly about it then my view is that they should be setting up their own service for men only, and you know, I do think that some services which have been forced to offer a service to men as well because of funders again. Erm, that itself can be a barrier for women accessing a service, because a lot of women want a women-only service and they want to be in a women only space.” (Participant 4)

Gendered RMA appeared to contribute to a toxic climate of competition between services and funding, and forced organisations to participate in discussions of women’s *OR* men’s services. That is, RMA contributed to perceptions of one group of survivors as being more “worthy” or in need of support than the other; - and funding was therefore re-directed from one group of survivors to the other.

For some professionals, they felt that an overarching service should have men’s and women’s strands. However, there were contentions as to how this should be delivered: some services operated similar services for both victim genders, whereas others offered women’s only spaces and male outreach. Professionals who supported male victim-survivors (and in some cases, were themselves male survivors) felt that the latter could have a particularly negative impact when help-seeking for men. Some males had sought help from services that offered male outreach support, but were not allowed to come onto the premises of a service because of the women-only policy. This had the effect of reinforcing rape myths positioning men as perpetrators, or predators in waiting.

“from what I’ve heard from others and what I’ve heard, for example, the heads of these organisations talk about in meetings is they are naturally female oriented. For example, within a lot of the organisations that adopt the rape crisis standards is this idea of having a refuge. Well, clearly that’s going to conflict when you’re trying to support male survivors having a women’s refuge and how do you deal with that conflict. I know different organisations take different approaches. Some organisations that support both male and female clients have separate building access, separate buildings completely.” (Participant 13)

It could also reinforce the perception of a hierarchy of suffering - with male victimisation being viewed as less important. However, negatives were also perceived of so called “gender-neutral” services - which emphasise the victim-survivor support element above and beyond that of gender. For some victim-survivors, this was felt as something that was not truly responsive to their needs as either female or male victim-survivors.

“I think... because legally a woman can’t be found guilty of rape. But I think when many people say the word ‘rape’ what they actually mean is ‘unwanted sex’. So ... it does feel to me like the law, unintentionally perhaps, is creating a hierarchy of serious sexual offences, and suggesting that women can’t be guilty of the most, the worst type of offence, and that men can’t be victims” (Participant 8)

Therefore, some participants emphasised that the focus should be on mapping service provision within a specific region, rather than mandating a specific model. That is, looking at a region holistically to ensure victims of all genders, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation groups, and (dis)abilities. Facilitating inter-organisation working and signposting, to ensure that no-one falls through the support gaps. However, participants felt that there was not currently a regional-level infrastructure (such as the government) in place that could, or would do this.

Therefore, there is a need for organisations to come together to bid for funding, to help preserve diversity of services and offer greater choice to survivors but this is challenging to implement in practice. Ultimately, important service decisions are currently being shaped by the nature of funding, rather than vice-versa.

“What we think would overcome these challenges is evidence-based commissioning [and funding] that reflects the number of survivors who need and want specialist sexual violence services... not, ‘Oh, right, well we’ve possibly got about this much money to commission a service so, what can we get for that? Oh, well we could get a bit of counselling, that’d help a client, and a bit of this and a bit of that.’ That’s not evidence-based...” (Participant 5)

Participants talk revealed important local knowledge, such as that developed through working with communities of different faiths, of working with women in the asylum system, of working with men involved in chemsex. This setting-based knowledge was pivotal in understanding local attitudes, resources

and barriers to accessing service for the groups of survivors the professionals worked with.

“I was on a scrutiny panel yesterday, the Violence Against Women and Girls Scrutiny Panel, and we have seen, in the last three months, a drop in people reporting. So, the panel meeting was to look at that and discuss that. So, something has changed in [area omitted for anonymity] in the last three months, that has decreased people coming forward and reporting.” (Participant 6)

This highlights the value of taking a setting-based approach to research, policy and practice and the need to maintain setting-based knowledge and relationships in order to support victim-survivors effectively. However, these factors could also lead to negative consequences for professionals, in relation to vicarious-trauma and burnout.

Self-care and vicarious trauma

All participants' talk reflected a commitment to challenging the causes of sexual violence, and advocating for support for victims. Indeed, in a number of cases - regional improvements and the development of services were the result of “lone champions”. These individuals campaigned for the rights of victims, advocated for funding of services and contributed to regional and national debates. However, this could be very isolating, and could come at significant personal cost.

“I have sent over the years, tonnes of letters to politicians and the response I'll get back, from MPs who have been like “good

luck"... From others you get left with kind of "good luck", followed by a kind of, "you've got one mountain to climb to demonstrate the challenges of dealing with sexual violence – good luck". And it's always struck me.. very powerfully, the people in the system who knew.. the challenges that existed to kind of get the system to change its viewpoint." (Participant 1)

For all participants, burnout was a concern. For example, some participants spoke of the importance of engaging in research as a means of self-checking attitudes. There was a concern that exposure to others' trauma and secondary victimisation (e.g. in the courts) could lead to cynicism or a kind of RMA creep - whereby you might not be aware of your own negative attitudes toward victim-survivors.

"I actually went through and answered the questions [in the interview discussion materials]... I just wanted to get an idea of how I would respond to them without trying to think about them too much, because I really find it's important to check how I think about these things too." (Participant 15)

These internal motivations were needed, as the external motivators (such as financial security) were somewhat limited. For example, funding for services is typically secured annually, from multiple and changing streams. Professionals spend substantial amounts of time collecting different evidence to meet multiple evaluation criteria and must live with constant uncertainty for their services. This is not sustainable or conducive to the development of services. It has serious implications for staff stress and loss of valuable expertise through staff turnover:

which is ultimately a great loss for survivors. Many participants spoke of being stretched to capacity, juggling multiple roles within an organisation and of having concerns over long-term employment. Furthermore, participants who were concerned that their role might not be funded again in the future were concerned about legacy planning for the victims they supported. This was particularly the case in relation to victim-survivors' whose cases were progressing through the court system, which could take a period of years to conclude. When longer-term funding was sourced, it could allow services to develop.

“So, we have a contingency plan for those clients that come through who are in long-term therapy. But, for example, we’ve just moved into a centre now. We’ve been able to - It’s much securer and we’ve got a children’s area as well, which we didn’t have in the previous centre. So, it just means that we can erm improve provision as well and the facilities for survivors and people accessing support quickly.” (Participant 6)

A theme running through participants' talk, particularly for those working as ISVAs in relation to the CJS, was that of seeing victim-survivor support as a journey made together. Maintaining professional boundaries was vital, and supporting victim survivors to make their own decisions regarding reporting and prosecution was the purpose of the role. However, it was only through empathy that many ISVAs felt they could be effective. Therefore, witnessing secondary victimisation of victim-survivors in the arena of the courts (for example) was traumatic for the professionals supporting them too.

“Well when you've worked with somebody for some time and supported them, seeing them be re-traumatised in a courtroom full of strangers, erm, being pulled apart from defence, being, you know, told that it was consensual or perhaps they got the wrong per-, you know, it was somebody else who did this to them and not whoever they're defending... and all manner of excuses that are used to try and undermine that credibility is - and watching them get incredibly distressed and erm..., it's very, very difficult.... yeah no it is. It is, it's awful. Horrendous, but obviously it's far worse for them than it is for me”.

(Participant 4)

There was a sense of the CJS as being unfair, and an arena for RMA that presented a risk to victim-survivors' recovery journeys, and also to support professionals' wellbeing. Managing personal concerns, and potentially frustrations relating to the choices that victim-survivors made, could also be challenging but needed to be respected.

“With counselling clients, the biggest challenge, really, is just staying with the client and not deviating from where they are. I think, sometimes, you can see something, but your client is not there yet. You try to almost lead them to where they want to be, and that's not what your role is. Your client needs to move at their own pace and work things out for themselves at their own pace. It can be quite challenging to kind of just stay with your client at their own pace and let them work things out for

themselves.” (Participant 12)

One of the strongest protective factors identified was the support network that formed part of working in the third sector. Indeed, working with other like-minded people, who share similar goals, and knowing that you make a difference to victim-survivors' experiences was a strong motivator for working or volunteering with support services.

"I also think it's very hard to gauge those sorts of things, and what's going on in broader society, if you are first of all working in this world, and second of all, if you are a feminist and engaging in those sort of circles online, then it becomes a bit of an echo chamber. And I think sometimes I get a bit of a shock when real-world stuff comes in, because I forget that opinions outside of that are quite different, or can be quite different. And, that kind of echo chamber of particularly online feminism lulls you into a bit of a false sense of security." (Participant 7)

Indeed, participants' talk reflected that working for sexual violence support organisations could be stigmatising, in and of itself. People did not want to talk about professionals' who work with them, questioned their motivations for wanting to work in such a 'horrible' profession (i.e. perceived as a profession that encounters victimisation and suffering on a daily basis), and perceived workers to be 'men hating feminists'. It also opened people to scrutiny regarding curiosity over whether they were survivors themselves. If professionals were 'out' as survivors, they encountered the same RMA that they did when supporting victim-survivors in their role, with some likening it to being under scrutiny in a petri-dish.

“So, I think many survivors, erm.. and I've experienced it myself, is if you disclose in a room full of professionals or non-professionals in some ways it's better disclosing in-front of non-professionals who don't have that kind of education that's kind of waiting for you to do something in a petri jar. You know, almost infinite waiting.” (Participant¹⁵ supporting male victim-survivors only).

A by-product of RMA (regardless of victim or perpetrator gender) was the perception that it was still considered by many as an ugly topic to talk about. As a result, fund-raising efforts that worked for other such as Cancer Research - where people donated money to organisations through fundraising activities or as a legacy in their last will and testament, did not work. This meant that some avenues for raising money were not available.

Despite RMA, and the potential for vicarious trauma and burnout, participants' talk often reflected the value they attributed to their work - which acted as buffer to the stigma they encountered.

The findings suggest that services providing support to different gender groups experience many of the same challenges. However, these challenges can manifest differently based on gendered RMA. Furthermore, the impact of gendered RMA on these challenges is complex and dynamic. Figure 16 presents a thematic map of the core challenge themes and how gendered RMA (in the form of gendered setting qualities and practices) influence these challenges. The thematic map is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of all the influences of

¹⁵ Participant number withheld to protect participant identity

gendered RMA, but to illustrate how different features of gendered RMA can influence different types of settings.

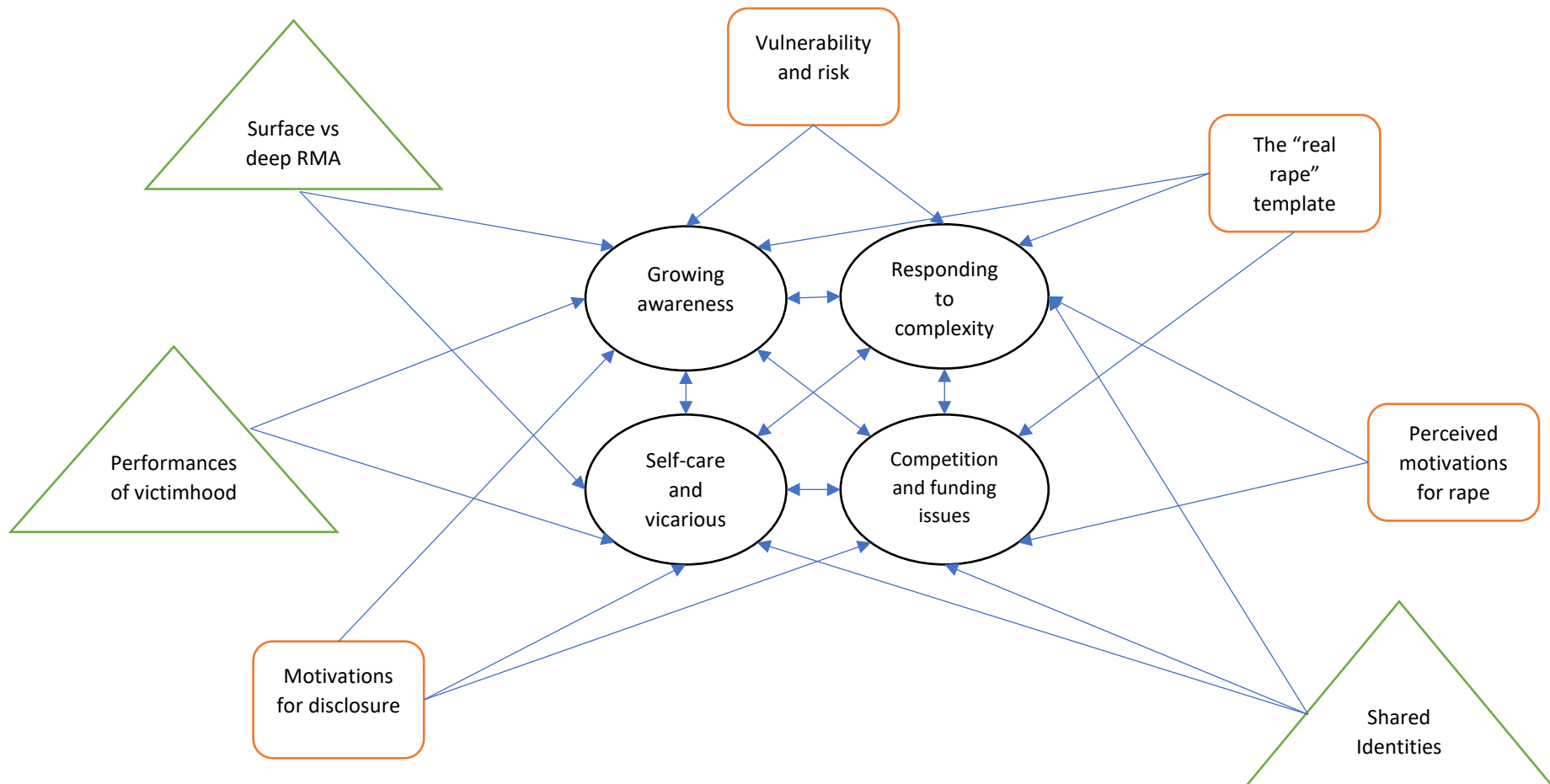


Figure 16. Thematic map illustrating how gendered RMA influences the four core challenges faced by survivor support organisations. Oval boxes represent core challenges; triangular boxes represent setting practices; rectangular boxes represent gendered setting qualities. Bidirectional arrows demonstrate reciprocal relationships; unidirectional arrows represent influence from gendered RMA on core challenges.

Discussion

This study sought to explore the challenges faced by third sector adult survivor support services in England and Wales, and how gendered RMA influences these challenges. Four core challenges were identified: growing awareness; responding to complexity and diversity; competition and funding issues, and; self-care and vicarious trauma, which were mutually reinforcing (see figure 16). All services experienced these challenges, but how they manifested and were responded to were shaped by gendered RMA. In particular, the characteristics and consequences of the challenges differed for services providing support for male, female or both male and female victim-survivors.

These findings will now be considered in light of existing literature and theories that can help explain the mechanisms through which gendered RMA influences services challenges. The core challenges will then be considered in light of the socioecological framework outlined in chapter 2, which argues that victim support can be conceptualised as a socioecological setting. Therefore, the ways in which the findings suggest the core challenges can manifest at the chrono-system, macro-system, meso-/exo-system, micro-system and individual level will be identified. This will be utilised to consider how the four core challenges *interact* to produce needs for services that must be addressed for transformative praxis in victim support to occur.

Challenges faced by third sector adult support services in England and Wales

Previous research with rape victim advocates reported that they have to combat a widespread culture of denial over the scale of sexual violence (Ullman & Townsend, 2007). However, the present research suggests that this situation

has improved in many ways. There is greater public recognition and acceptance of counter narratives to RMA pertaining to MFR, particularly in relation to rape as an act of power and control by a perpetrator (Perilloux et al., 2014). Thus, professionals working with MFR victims do not need to demonstrate the prevalence of sexual violence in the *same* way to justify the need for their services. However, professionals supporting male victims and victims of female perpetrators, still have to argue that these forms of victimisation are a greater public health, and social and criminal justice concern than popularly believed (McKeever, 2018; Stemple et al., 2017; Stemple & Meyer, 2014; Weare & Hully, 2019). As identified in previous literature then, awareness of some forms of victimisation continue to lag behind that of MFR (Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Balfour, 2015; Lowe & Rogers, 2017).

Heightened awareness is a precarious phenomenon; rather than something which passively evolves, awareness in the political, public and media arenas is something that requires active management in order to maintain and grow. Without this awareness can subside, with deleterious effects on services' funding. Therefore, many individuals and services are deeply concerned with how to maintain momentum with anti-sexual violence agendas. In addition, this study echoes findings of recent research that has identified a *backlash* against raised awareness resulting from the *#MeToo* movement (Mendes et al., 2018).

Anderson (2018) explores the backlash against the women's movement (mainly within a US context) in relation to what she terms 'modern misogyny'. She argues that anti-feminist discourse attempts to position gains from the women's movement as marking the 'completion' of the feminist agenda. Therefore, MFR has been resolved at a societal level, rendering the women's movement obsolete

(K. L. Anderson, 2018). Thus, a continued commitment to the women's movement reflects a "war against boys' and 'the end of men'" (p. 5). Indeed, professionals' talk in this study suggests that developing expertise specifically in female-victim support, rather than all genders, is perceived as *professionally selfish*. These views are encountered from the public, the media, and other services working with victims - hampering efforts to support survivors. However, as this research highlights: victim and perpetrator gender influence the experience of victimisation, disclosure and support in myriad ways. Therefore, developing expertise in supporting survivors from all gender-identity groups does not necessarily represent a realistic goal for professionals or services.

The backlash also manifests in the politically charged debates surrounding attempts to raise the profiles of male victims, victims of female perpetrators and same-sex sexual violence groups at a policy level (Girshick, 2002; Pretorius, 2009). For example, in the resistance to gender-inclusive agendas seeking to make the definition of rape to be fully gender-neutral (Girshick, 2002; Rumney, 2007) and the need for a complementary initiative to that of 'ending VAWG' (Fogg, 2019) for men and boys. This resistance is often couched in terms of their being fewer victims from these survivor groups, and therefore prevention strategies should not target them specifically (Powell & Webster, 2018). As a result, many services are caught between having to either *perpetuate* or *problematise* conversations that reify a hierarchy of support worthiness based on prevalence. For example, services either have to argue that there are larger numbers of male victims/victims of female perpetrators than previously thought (McKeever, 2018; Stemple et al., 2017; Stemple & Meyer, 2014; Weare & Hully, 2019), and therefore services are needed. Or, they have to argue that the premise

of rationalising funding decisions based on gender-asymmetry is flawed; services are needed because sexual violence has deleterious effects on (direct) victims of all gender-identities and of female perpetrators (Girshick, 2002; Javaid, 2016b; McKeever, 2018), as well as indirect victims (e.g. direct victims' families and communities) (R. Campbell & Wasco, 2005).

Perceptions of sexual violence as having been tackled, and no longer arising from systemic factors such as widespread sexism (K. L. Anderson, 2018), inhibits community responses to sexual violence prevention and survivor support. Therefore, third sector organisations are keen to identify ways of fostering community engagement. Indeed, third sector organisations appear uniquely positioned to do so, owing to their independence from statutory services (e.g. the police) and wealth of experience of supporting survivors from different backgrounds (e.g. BAME services). However, owing to financial constraints and as a result of the 'professionalisation' agenda, traditional activism, advocacy and educational initiatives are often the aspects of services that are typically the first to be scaled-back (Maier, 2011a, 2011b). The perception that strands of the third sector services are more dispensable than others needs to be challenged, particularly in relation to funders/commissioners of services. Political advocacy and community outreach at a regional, national and international level, should be viewed as core to victim-support and funded accordingly.

Developing knowledge of local context and relationships with different communities is vital to tailoring support to the needs of the survivors third-sector serve. The present research findings reinforce that barriers are shaped both at a broad societal-level (e.g. representation of victimisation/victims in the news and media) and at a local and/or community-level (e.g. regional history,

multiculturalism, social deprivation). For example, stigma and barriers to support may be shaped by the historical and socioeconomic context of an area. Social events can shape political agendas: government inquiries may lead to recognition of the prevalence of CSE within a region, which shapes the funding priorities for preventative strategies in that region. In turn, the targeting of CSE in awareness raising campaigns may unintentionally reinforce that sexual violence in that region only really happens to vulnerable young adults (i.e. reinforcing gendered RMA in that region). However, the present research reinforces that access to services remains a 'postcode lottery'; particularly for those individuals at the nexus of 'minority' identities, such as male individuals from BAME communities.

Professionals were unanimous in implicating wider funding cultures and constraints as contributing to the lack of comprehensive services across England: echoing findings of previous research. Indeed, the lack of- and short-term nature of funding have repeatedly been identified as hampering prevention and support efforts in the third sector, for several decades (Gillespie, 1994; Hawkins & Taylor, 2015; Jones & Cook, 2008; Lowe, 2017; McMillan, 2007). In 2019, the government pledged funding that would be allocated for a three-year period, rather than 12 months, which may help to counter this. However, the present research argues that funding cultures (attitudes towards and expectations of how third-sector services should operate) must change. There is an expectation that third-sector services can, and should, *do much with very little* (Maier, 2011b, 2011a). This perpetuates the myth that services can respond to sexual violence in a piecemeal fashion. However, *long-term* interventions are required that can tackle sexual violence at multiple levels (e.g. education, outreach, specialist services, political advocacy/activism) if they are to be successful in tackling the

systemic barriers to support (such as gendered RMA and secondary victimisation).

Within the third sector, the oversubscribed nature of services has resulted in long-waiting lists, preventing services from intervening therapeutically as quickly as they want to. As access to good quality timely intervention in sexual violence victimisation has been identified as important in reducing PTSD symptoms and severity associated with sexual violence victimisation (Dworkin & Schumacher, 2018), this is concerning. Indeed, existing research indicates that merely encouraging survivors to seek-help is not enough to lower the risk of traumatic symptoms following assault - it is the response that is received (good-quality, positive intervention) that is vital (Dworkin & Schumacher, 2018). Withholding of support can have a negative impact as well as receiving negative responses to disclosure (R. Campbell & Raja, 1999). Therefore, professionals are concerned that structural aspects of socioecological settings, such as economic factors (Bond & Wasco, 2017) that inhibit their timely responses to victim-survivors, may reinforce and victim's perceptions that their experiences aren't that serious or important.

Barriers to support are not only encountered as a lack of services or long waiting lists, they also manifest as support attempts that fail to address the unique aspects of trauma produced by sexual violence. It is apparent that some survivors' mental health needs are not being addressed effectively, particularly within statutory mental health services. For example, trauma arising from sexual violence requires different therapeutic responses to other forms of trauma (including violent trauma) (Litz, Gray, Bryant, & Adler, 2002; McNally, Bryant, & Ehlers, 2003). However, sexual violence support specialists feel that this is not

consistently recognised across all statutory mental health services that survivors may come into contact with. That is, the role of sexual violence in the development of trauma is not responded to holistically; symptoms are responded to without addressing the sexual violence element itself.

A growing challenge identified in the present research is the perceived growth in the access of services by people with complex needs (i.e. severe trauma, co-morbid disorders), arising from sexual violence experiences. Professionals reported increasingly supporting survivors whose trauma had been compounded by multiple experiences of victimisation, as well as secondary victimisation from negative responses to disclosure and previous unsuccessful help-seeking attempts. This supports a growing body of research which highlights the substantive detrimental impacts of victimisation on psychological and physical wellbeing (R. Campbell & Wasco, 2005; Lowe & Rogers, 2017; O'Dwyer, Tarzia, Fernbacher, & Hegarty, 2019; Rees et al., 2011; Vu et al., 2014). In particular, there is growing awareness of the overlap between populations needing mental health services and sexual violence support - resulting from complex trauma arising from sexual victimisation (Easton & Kong, 2017). However, in relation to gender, this tends to be in recognition of the impact of CSA in adulthood. Although there are growing calls for both gender sensitive and trauma informed sexual violence support within mental health services (O'Dwyer et al., 2019), the findings of the present study suggest that this has not yet resulted in effective policy and practices. Alternatively, it may be that evidence-based policies are in place already, but are not being implemented effectively. Furthermore, it is important to counter others' perceptions (particularly funders/commissioners) of survivors as constituting an *homogenous* group. That is, survivors' needs and preferences for

support differ based on their characteristics prior to an incident of sexual violence, the nature of the sexual violence, and post-assault experiences (R. Campbell et al., 2009), and 'where' they are in their recovery journey (Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992). Therefore, commissioners/funders should support the development of flexibility and choice of therapeutic intervention, rather than perceiving one form of intervention (e.g. one-to-one counselling) as the only or 'best' way of meeting survivors needs.

The present research suggests that many survivors experience a perfect storm of stigma, such as: stigma of self-identifying as a gender and/or sexual-orientation minority group, of having a mental health disorder diagnosis, of being labelled as vulnerable, of coming from an area associated with deprivation - each of which add barriers to effective support and influence the way others (laypersons and professionals working in victim-support) may perceive and respond to them. Furthermore, witnessing secondary victimisation relating to all gendered RMA as well as these other forms of stigma can affect indirect victims (R. Campbell & Wasco, 2005) (e.g. direct victims' partners, family, friends), potentially leading to vicarious trauma (Lerias & Byrne, 2003). For example, stigma that influence attitudes towards direct victims (e.g. RMA, and sexual-orientation-, mental-health-, and class- related stigmas) can 'transfer' onto their families and wider communities. In turn, this can be a powerful barrier to disclosure and help-seeking. Research is required to understand how indirect victims' fear of being stigmatised influences their responses to victim-survivor disclosure and their own wellbeing. This research suggests that all of these forms of stigma require active management to maintain and grow awareness and counter blaming attitudes towards the individual experiencing them.

All the challenges identified above can act as stressors for staff and volunteers in the third sector. Their impacts can be varied and substantial, and include secondary traumatic stress, vicarious traumatization, and emotional exhaustion, compassion fatigue and cynicism (i.e. burnout) (Clemans, 2004; Mihelicova et al., 2019; Wood, 2017; Yanay & Yanay, 2008). A growing body of research has developed exploring the ways in which stressors may be experienced depending on whether a support worker is an employee of a centre, or a volunteer, and whether the support worker self-identifies as a victim-survivor (e.g. Mihelicova et al., 2019). This literature calls attention to the potential negative impact of work in the survivor-support field, and the consequences this has for individuals and organisations, such as attrition, turnover, lower standards of care and less helpful responses to victim-survivors.

The role of “victim work” is extremely varied (Globokar, Erez, & Gregory, 2016). This variety can mean that staff are pushed to the limits of their resources, experience and confidence; can lead to negative self-evaluations, which in turn may contribute to attrition from the services (Mihelicova et al., 2019). As these roles are already challenging and potentially traumatic (Globokar et al., 2016; Houston-Kolnik, Soibatian, & Shattell, 2017; Ullman & Townsend, 2007) this places additional, unnecessary burdens on staff and volunteers – which the state ultimately relies heavily on for supporting victim-survivors. This is compounded by many professionals juggling multiple roles and being over-stretched as a result of staff/volunteer shortages produced by funding constraints (Goldstraw, 2016; Maier, 2011a, 2011b).

There is a lack of recognition, from those working within the CJS and mental health systems and laypersons, of the level of skill and dedication of

specialist sexual violence support professionals. Indeed, support professionals frequently encounter stigma from their informal support ecologies regarding the field they work in, holding feminist values, or working with stigmatised communities (e.g. chemsex communities). This, alongside the lack of external rewards (e.g. financial security) means that some professionals view their roles as having a 'shelf-life'.

Similar to Slattery and Goodman's (2009) work, this research suggests that co-worker support, good quality clinical supervision, and environments which emphasised shared power were reflective of better staff/volunteer emotional wellbeing. Furthermore, peer relational quality is predictive of compassion satisfaction (i.e. deriving a feeling of gratification and pleasure from helping others) and vicarious posttraumatic growth (i.e. personal growth experienced as a result of vicarious exposure to trauma - related to vicarious resilience). Research also suggests that holding feminist values may act as a buffer against RMA (Holland, Gustafson, Cortina, & Cipriano, 2019). In turn, this is associated with more helpful responses to victim-survivor disclosures (Holland et al., 2019). However, less is known regarding how organisations other than rape crisis experience these stressors and respond to them. The present research suggests that shared values relating to a transformative paradigm or social justice are important protective factors against burnout.

Despite the challenges, the present study highlights the commitment of professionals (paid and voluntary) to providing good quality, effective support and advocacy for survivors. Their efforts deserve greater recognition.

Impact of gendered RMA on service challenges

This study's findings suggests that gendered RMA influences service challenges in myriad negative ways, including: awareness raising (e.g. specifying who can be a victim or perpetrator, and what the impacts of sexual violence are for individuals from different identities); EBP (e.g. influencing the research gaze - what should be studied and how, and the politicisation of academic debates); allocation of funds (e.g. hierarchies of suffering and worthiness of support); policy and practice (e.g. gendering of strategies and spaces in specific and exclusive terms) and; practitioner wellbeing (e.g. through secondary stigmatisation, and witnessing victims' secondary victimisation).

The mechanisms through which gendered RMA influences service challenges can be explained through drawing on the theories of modern misogyny and gender-blind sexism (S. J. Anderson & Johnson, 2003; Stoll et al., 2018, 2017), sex and rape scripting (Brown, 2001; Davies & Boden, 2012; Davies et al., 2013; Girshick, 2002; Maxwell & Scott, 2014) and conceptualising support within a socioecological systems framework (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; R. Campbell, 1998; R. Campbell et al., 2009; Wasco & Bond, 2010).

Gender-blind sexism and modern-misogyny. Stoll and colleagues (2018, 2017) argue that gender-blind sexism operates within four frames: abstract liberalism (i.e. notions of fairness and reliance on 'common sense' heuristics in decision-making/attributions); naturalisation (i.e. social differences and inequalities are explained away as 'naturally occurring' phenomena), cultural sexism (i.e. deviation from traditional gender roles explains gender-related inequalities) and minimisation of sexism (i.e. things have improved and systems are no longer sexist, only *individuals* are sexist now). This theory shares similarities with the concept of modern misogyny, which also argues there is an

agenda to shift focus away from systemic factors that lead sexual violence to be tolerated (K. L. Anderson, 2018). Furthermore, both theories posit there is a backlash against the objectives of the women's movement (i.e. ending sexual violence) and that this is characterised by the stigmatisation of feminist beliefs.

Gendered RMA contributes to the frames of gender-blind sexism and modern misogyny by reifying the need to establish hierarchies of 'realness', 'suffering' and worthiness, to make decisions regarding funding priorities. For example, the present research suggests that notions of fair play, which aim to take into account historical barriers to accessing resources when determining how current resources should be distributed, may be marginalising male victims, victims of female perpetrators and same-sex sexual violence. For example, gendered RMA posits that only MFR is 'real rape' and worthy of support efforts; therefore, funding for MFR services should be prioritised. Indeed, this attempts to recognise the gender asymmetry in sexual violence (i.e. most victims are female and most perpetrators are male) (Powell & Webster, 2018). However, this becomes problematic when this hierarchy is repeatedly adopted, leading to little or no service provision across whole regions for survivors whom fall outside the MFR paradigm. Thus, gendered RMA, via gender-blind sexism and modern misogyny have detrimental impacts on service provision for male victims, victims of female perpetrators and same-sex sexual violence. However, it also has many serious negative consequences for female victims of male perpetrators.

Gender-blind sexism, through the frame of minimisation, positions MFR is an issue of the past, and no longer requiring of the same level of response by society (K. L. Anderson, 2018; Stoll et al., 2018, 2017). This places charities providing support to female victims in an awkward position, that apparent success

in raising awareness and challenging rape-supportive attitudes, can lead to further challenges for arguing the need for continued funding and expansion of services. That is, the women's movement is no longer needed because MFR is no longer a 'true' problem for society. Thus, there are genuine concerns that the already over-stretched funding for female victim services will be redirected to other agendas, exacerbating waiting lists and reduced service coverage too.

Gendered RMA and the frames of gender-blind sexism interact to affect how services have to justify need and engage in awareness raising campaigns for the survivor groups they support. For example, Pretorius (2009, p. 576) argues that there is a "'politically correct' way of thinking" which defines sexual violence in gender-specific terms. This results in male victimisation being marginalised politically in some feminist perspectives of rape, because it represents an opportunity for the feminist agenda for improving the lives of women to be derailed (Burgess-Jackson, 1996; Pretorius, 2009). I argue that this can be extended to the marginalisation of victims of female perpetrators, and that the process of derailment is a result of the cultural sexism frame of gender-blind sexism. The findings of this study suggest that gendered RMA and gender-blind sexism contribute to a toxic culture of competition between services for funding, and politically charged nature of public/academic debates about how best to meet survivor needs. For example, the culture of competition for funding means that services are 'pitted' against each other. Therefore, the gain of a new service in a region (e.g. for men) will typically come at the cost of that funding being diverted from already existing services (e.g. women only services). This means that services may need to engage in a dialogue which positions them in a hierarchy of worthiness for funding based on the characteristics of the victim-survivors and

communities they support. There is a need to destabilise these accepted narratives and practices, although how to achieve this is less clear. One approach suggested by participants in the research is to create the infrastructure which allows services a greater voice in regional strategic priorities and to work together to acquire funding. This could help to reduce gaps in services for survivors at the intersection of identities, whilst retaining services' diverse identities and service delivery models. This would also enhance signposting and multi-agency working, and enable choice for victim-survivors when help-seeking.

The frames of cultural sexism and minimisation raise additional barriers to victim-survivors of all gender-identities. In combination, they argue that the experience of sexual violence is a result of people's deviations from normative/dominant roles and identities, rather than systemic factors (Stoll et al., 2017). This is reflected in professionals' perception of the growing emphasis placed on individualistic-level interventions at the cost of system-level interventions. For example, the attitude that professionals encountered that rape was simply a part of some individuals' lives, owing to their dysfunctional lifestyle or mental health problems. This can lead to a focus on interventions to reduce some victims' level of vulnerability, rather than a focus on the systemic barriers underpinning vulnerability and unequal access to support. Essentially, rape is the fault of some individuals' decision-making and lifestyle and therefore is their responsibility to 'fix'. This also applies to interventions which are targeted at narrow groups of professionals in contact with victim-survivors. For example, Smith and Skinner's (2017) research exploring the impact of (MFR) myths on the court process concludes that training legal professionals to recognise and

challenge myths is vital, but on its own will not be sufficient to tackle the use of rape myths in court.

As well as influencing service level challenges and survivors' experiences of support, gendered RMA, gender-blind sexism and modern misogyny impact on professionals working in the third-sector. These factors can result in the stigmatisation of individuals working in the third-sector: for choosing to work in an 'ugly' field, for holding feminist values, for advocating renewed focus on systemic barriers to victim support, and so on. The present research suggests that this may contribute to professionals' burnout and ultimately attrition of expertise from services, as paid/voluntary staff seek alternative fields to work in. Furthermore, some professionals appeared concerned that these multiple stressors could lead to compassion fatigue which might manifest in the form of unconscious RMA towards the survivors they support - which this thesis terms "RMA creep". However, having the opportunity to reflect on their attitudes and beliefs using RMA statements could help them to identify this. This may be a useful tool to incorporate into clinical supervision activities.

Thus, gendered RMA contributes to gender-blind sexism and modern misogyny, which in turn: contribute to a toxic culture of competition between services; stifle debates about the role of gender in policy and practice and; lead to the loss of valued professionals from the field through burnout.

Sex and rape scripting. As argued above, gendered RMA shapes the challenges experienced by services through arguing that some people are more deserving of support than others. This is compounded by sex and rape scripting which guides people's interpretations of what should be labelled as sexual violence (Brown, 2001; Davies & Boden, 2012; Davies et al., 2013; Girshick,

2002; Maxwell & Scott, 2014). This contributes to the observation in the literature of the lack of discussion in public, political, health and justice arenas relating to FFR in particular (Girshick, 2002), but also MFR (McKeever, 2018; Weare & Hully, 2019). Thus, gendered RMA may contribute to the invisibility of victims of female perpetrators from adult services design, advertisement and use of online and physical services.

The present research suggests that sex and rape scripting may have implications for survivors' labelling of an incident as sexual violence, which in turn may affect their decision to seek support. For example, some participants spoke over their concerns regarding service names and materials that may include the term rape, and the need to specify this as "male rape" to make it clear that this term applies to male victims. Furthermore, some participants spoke of encountering situations with survivors whom were concerned whether their experiences constituted a 'crisis', as this was in the name of the service they were contacting, and they didn't want to waste professionals' time. Therefore, gendered RMA contributes to sex and rape scripting by guiding notions of what constitutes serious sexual violence, by delimiting how 'true' victims look and behave. In turn, this guides survivors' perceptions of what issues warrant making a request for support. This means that it is vital that organisations can promote their services in way that feels safe, relevant and tailored to a survivor, if a survivor is going to make contact with them.

Support as a socioecological system. An area which brings to the fore gendered RMA's impact on support, is the question of how gender should be acknowledged and responded to in policy and the delivery of services. This issue affects how resources within an environment are organised and deployed. Bond

and colleagues' theory of gender as a contextual variable demonstrates how the qualities and practices of a setting can lead to inequalities in access to resources, and rigid expectations of behaviours within a setting that are differentiated by a person's gender (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010). Therefore, there is a need to challenge the gendered setting qualities and practices that perpetuate sexual violence and the tolerance of sexual violence in society (Bond & Wasco, 2017).

The concept of a women-only spaces as a refuge for female victims of male perpetrators of sexual violence, provides an opportunity to challenge gendered setting qualities and practices. For example, spaces that are 'gendered' in this way allow support professionals to destabilise sexist systems within them, allowing women whom have experienced male-perpetrated violence an opportunity to feel *safe from* such violence, and *safe to* be emotionally, cognitively and intellectually expressive (Lewis et al., 2015). As such, women-only spaces are a cornerstone of many feminist-informed organisations (Lewis et al., 2015). However, the present research highlights the complexities of balancing "gendered spaces" where this, and other models are adopted to respond to the needs of survivors of different gender-identities.

Professionals are concerned that the loss of women-only spaces from services will lead to fewer women seeking help. As many services do not have capacity to provide completely separate services for male and female victims (e.g. separate physical premises to offer face-to-face support), organisations with women-only spaces frequently support male victims through providing outreach-only services. Indeed, some participants in the present research felt that there was not a need for men-only spaces per se, but that services needed to feel that

they were relevant to male survivors. However, this study's findings suggest the male outreach-only service model has limitations; male services can risk being perceived as 'tagged on', or that they don't really welcome male victims (e.g. if the majority of information on websites are tailored to MFR victims). The approach can also convey that males are dangerous (i.e. 'male' is synonymous with 'perpetrator'), which may reinforce male survivors' fears of being perceived as a 'perpetrator in waiting'. As such, this service model runs the risk of reinforcing some aspects of gendered RMA (Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996; Javaid, 2015b, 2016b, 2017b; McKeever, 2018; Weare, 2018b). Furthermore, it is not clear how the organisation of services impacts on victims of female perpetrators, as services tend to be implicitly organised (online and offline) in relation to supporting victims of male perpetrators. For example, it is unclear whether a women-only space is beneficial in relation to FFR. However, some research suggests that they may implicitly shape MMR, MFR and FFR survivors' perceptions of services as 'not for them' - inhibiting them from making contact (Donne et al., 2018; Girshick, 2002). The implicit heterosexist assumptions of such organisation also presents barriers to survivors from sexual orientation minority groups (Donne et al., 2018; Rumney, 2008, 2014).

Considering support as an ecological setting in this manner suggests that some of the setting characteristics and practices in the third sector are reinforced and in turn perpetuate some forms of gendered RMA. For example, online and offline spaces tend to be explicitly and implicitly gendered - which reinforces a gendered universe of alternatives and that gender is an immutable, biological, binary variable. However, this research and gender theory/research/activism argues that gender is more complex and nuanced than this (Richards et al.,

2017). Thus, services risk alienating and marginalising individuals if they don't fit into the MFR template. However, responding to the needs of survivors in relation to their gender identity (and that of their perpetrator) requires the third-sector to be supported by local/national government in terms of funding and infrastructure. It also requires the commitment of psychology, and other disciplines, to be to open science and partnerships with third-sector. Collaboration is needed to ensure research is practitioner co-produced, and conducted to explore questions of concern to services and explore "what works", for whom and why.

Needs arising and recommendations for transformative praxis

The present study has identified myriad challenges, at different levels, affecting adult survivor support. A framework is required to organise and cohere these findings in order to make achievable recommendations for facilitating transformative praxis.

As argued in chapter 2, survivor support can be conceptualised as an ecological setting. This means that support is bounded by: chrono/- (i.e. historical context for the service and the survivor); macro- (i.e. cultural values); meso- and exo- (i.e. formal social ecologies, including codified practices such as policies); micro- (i.e. informal social ecologies) and; individual/event- (including characteristics of the victim, assault and perpetrator) factors. Exploring how the four challenges manifest at each of these levels helps to identify the *service needs* that must be addressed if transformative praxis is to occur. Table 17 illustrates this process, and highlights that challenges are multiple, diverse and interactive.

Using this framework elucidated the following service needs in the third-sector: prevention/support strategies that are responsive to change in the barriers

(including gendered RMA) to help-seeking (chronosystem); Grow awareness of sexual violence and its impacts in public arenas and across institutions (e.g. CJS and mental health services) (macrosystem); Reduce gaps, implement EBP policy effectively, better meet the needs of all survivors (meso-/exo-system); Foster community responses to the systemic factors underpinning barriers to help-seeking, and criminal and social justice agendas (micro-system), and; Offer choice and flexibility at the organisation and intervention level in the third sector (individual/event system).

Recommendations for transformative praxis are now made that aim to address system-level factors that influence third-sector organisations' capacity to support victim-survivors in gender-inclusive ways.

Responding to chronosystem challenges: contextualisation. There is a need for prevention/support strategies that are responsive to change in the barriers (including gendered RMA) to help-seeking. This need can be addressed through promoting awareness with the public and professionals outside the support sector, that the challenges faced by services are not free-floating, but are structurally contingent (Stoll et al., 2017). This will help to ensure systemic inequalities remain on prevention and support agendas. The socioecological model is recommended as a framework to help contextualise knowledge, psychological measures (e.g. of gendered RMA), research and evaluation findings, services and policies. Variations of this framework have been used effectively in relation to MFR research findings (e.g. Gravelin et al., 2018) and policy (e.g. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004). The present research suggests that a fusion of approaches utilising Bronfenbrenner's (1979,

1986, 1995) and Kelly's (1966, 1968, 1971) approaches are useful for rendering visible gendered RMA's influence on support organisations' functioning.

Table 17

Examples of how core service challenges manifest at multiple levels of the socioecology

Socioecological level	Challenges identified	Needs arising & Recommendations
Chrono-system (i.e. historical context for the service, survivor or support worker)		
Growing awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining momentum Backlash against raised awareness 	<p>Need arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevention/support strategies that are responsive to change in the barriers (including gendered RMA) to help-seeking
Responding to complexity & diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myths evolve Survivors' previous victimisation experiences Survivors' previous experiences of disclosure and support, and secondary victimisation. 	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better contextualise research and support interventions in light of temporal factors that influence systemic barriers to help-seeking within a region, or in light of victim-survivor identities; Map and monitor the evolution of regional, gendered RMA and stigma over time; Use technology to capture changing attitudes towards rape myths and gender in relation to specific social event reported online and; to raise awareness of the temporal factors influencing support to victim-survivors and promote social justice and support agendas.
Competition & funding issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional identities Funding priorities change based on local and national social events and political agendas 	
Self-care & vicarious trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being an 'out' survivor and experiencing others' constant scrutiny Re-traumatisation of professionals whom are survivors 	
And Macro-system (i.e. cultural values/broad societal values)		
Growing awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of gender inclusive theories of sexual violence Gendered RMA Gender-blind sexism & modern misogyny 	<p>Need arising:</p>

Responding to complexity & diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchies of worthiness; • Community level myths (regions, mental health, etc). • Gender as a binary variable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow awareness of sexual violence and its impacts in public arenas and across institutions (e.g. CJS and mental health services).
Competition & funding issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstract liberalism and perceptions of fairness • Culture of funding the third-sector • Barriers to evidence-based practice 	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with professional bodies (e.g. BPS) to speak out on important political issues, and run CPD events to raise awareness through cross-discipline training; • Use technology to promote the role of feminism in gender-inclusive theory and practices; • Foster 'social justice ally' programmes; • Fund advocacy, education and community development work, to facilitate community involvement and facilitate outreach support; • Review the features of awareness-raising campaigns in related fields (e.g. Domestic Abuse), and adopt (effective) features; • Problematise the focus on individualistic level policies/strategies and promote system-level policies/strategies; • Contribute to open science agendas, to benefit third-sector organisations' access to, and co-production of EBP.
Self-care & vicarious trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on key individuals (lone champions) as agents of change within a region 	
Meso-/exo- system (i.e. formal social ecologies, including codified practices such as policies)		
Growing awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of professional recognition within statutory services • Lack of infrastructure to support good quality multi-agency/disciplinary working • Role of traditional and social media in spreading misinformation 	<p>Need arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce gaps, implement EBP policy effectively, better meet the needs of all survivors. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based commissioning and funding of services;
Responding to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex needs and skills to address them • Codification of gender into policy and practice 	

complexity & diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited opportunities for practitioner-researcher collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable, long-term funding from stable funding streams; Streamline funding evaluation criteria; Map out and review service models, policy (particularly in relation to organisation of services around gender), and job descriptions for roles with the same titles, in England and Wales; Advocate and contribute to open science efforts; Use of gendered RMA measures as reflection tools, potentially incorporated into clinical supervision activities; Use social media and digital technologies to support access to victim-survivors who cannot or prefer not to access physical services. Foster relationship with universities to develop professional-informed research and a greater evidence-base for third-sector organisations; Cross-discipline CPD opportunities for third sector and statutory professionals.
Competition & funding issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toxic culture of competition between organisations using different service delivery models Lack of evidence-based funding/commissioning 	
Self-care & vicarious trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juggling multiple roles and roles lacking clear boundaries Lack of access to CPD, progression opportunities and financial security Burnout & RMA creep 	

Micro-system (i.e. informal social ecologies)		
Growing awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resistance to community engagement, social justice, bystander intervention programmes 	<p>Need arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster community responses to the systemic factors underpinning barriers to help-seeking, and criminal and social justice agendas. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satellite sites within community structures - raise awareness and involvement in services
Responding to complexity & diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family, regional, community level stigma and fear of stigma Reliance on members of a community which could make confidentiality challenging. 	
Competition & funding issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of funding to support indirect victims, community response and outreach activities, public engagement. 	

Self-care & vicarious trauma

- Stigmatised field to work/volunteer in
- Constant ambassador for victim-survivor support (i.e. you can never “switch off” from your role)
- Encountering stigma owing to your values/identities (e.g. Feminism, gay male, non-binary gender identity).
- Identify systemic barriers to help-seeking, and criminal and social justice;
- Develop and expand on (gender-inclusive) bystander intervention training;
- Develop relationships with community leaders to foster involvement in social justice and support agendas;
- Research into the impact of vicarious trauma and impact of witnessing secondary victimisation of a family member/friend/partner and identify effective support interventions;
- Raise awareness of the role of professionals in third-sector in outcomes related to direct/indirect victims’ wellbeing, and criminal and social justice outcomes to counter negative stereotypes.

Individual/event (i.e. characteristics of the victim, assault and/or perpetrator)

Growing awareness

- Lack of layperson awareness of counter narratives for gendered RMA for FMR, MMR and FFR.
- Male victims, victims of female perpetrators not feeling they “fit” with the scope of services
- Impact of “crisis” in names of services and survivors not identifying their experiences as meeting this definition

Need arising:

- Offer choice and flexibility at the organisation and intervention level in the third sector.

Recommendations:

- Develop a coherent, collaborative regional service provision strategy, implemented on the ground;
- Research exploring different models of service delivery and their outcomes - to demonstrate ‘what works’ with different survivor groups, and why;

Responding to complexity & diversity

- Impact of trauma on engagement
- Professionals’ identity, e.g. gender-identity, as putting them on the ‘outside’ of victim-survivors’ experiences if they differ.
- Impact of male outreach only models on fear of being perceived as a ‘perpetrator in waiting’ rather than victim-survivor

Competition & funding issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postcode lottery for individuals at the intersections • Perception that all survivors want one thing in terms of therapeutic approaches (i.e. counselling). • Invisible barriers to support, lack of money for travel/childcare, disabled access of buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research collaborations with professionals and survivors to explore the perceptions of 'gendered support spaces' (online and offline) and their impacts; • Explore what a gender-inclusive regional strategy for service delivery could look like and how it could be delivered.
Self-care & vicarious trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification with victim-survivors and re-traumatisation • Witnessing negative impacts of secondary victimisation on victim-survivors • Every journey is different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to create opportunities for survivors to have a voice in service planning and (where appropriate) delivery, and research.

Note. This is an illustrative, rather than exhaustive list of the ways in which challenges can be experienced at multiple levels of the social ecology. It is designed to highlight the multifaceted nature of challenges encountered by services, and that interventions to address them must also, therefore, be multifaceted.

Responding to macro-system challenges: growing awareness. There is a need to grow awareness of sexual violence and its impacts in public arenas and across institutions (e.g. CJS and mental health services). To combat the emphasis on individual-level interventions, there is a need to highlight the systemic factors influencing the prevalence of and responses to sexual violence. This should include funding to facilitate community outreach (Allen, Ridgeway, & Swan, 2015; R. Campbell, Patterson, & Bybee, 2011), education (Maier, 2011b) and bystander interventions (Katz & Nguyen, 2016; Rosenstein & Carroll, 2015). For example, recent research suggests that informal education with non-student populations can reduce RMA (pertaining to MFR) (Reddy, Campbell, & Morczek, 2020), at least in the short term. However, further work is required to identify how the effects of such interventions can be maintained.

For example, weaving these interventions into activities more routinely, through education or employment arenas, or through the use of social media. This thesis argues that systems which emphasise networks between people and the visibility of sexual violence issues are key. This could help to alleviate the burden from individual professionals campaigning for change.

A further recommendation arising from this research is the development and expansion of a system of 'social justice' or 'anti-violence allies'. Allies are individuals who are a member of a dominant social group, who work to end oppression/inequality of an oppressed population, through support and advocacy (Casey, 2010; Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003). Thus, a social justice/anti-violence ally would support victim-survivors and advocate on issues affecting them, both in their personal and professional lives (Fabiano et al., 2003). This could include challenging gendered RMA pertaining to the survivor-group, gender-blind and modern sexism, hegemonic masculinity and homophobia and other forms of stigma. Some ally programmes in the US have generated positive findings and recommendations for practice (Casey, 2010; Fabiano et al., 2003). However, very little information is available for similar programmes in the UK.

Responding to meso-/exo-system challenges: enhancing EBP and reducing gaps in provision. A commitment to open science and education (Koutras, 2017; S. R. Lambert, 2018) and careful consideration and how research findings and good practice are disseminated is required to ensure that they reach the audiences they can benefit.

Adapting and applying models of 'Knowledge Brokers' from health/allied health sphere (Scurlock-Evans, Upton, & Upton, 2014), to policy-making in the

third-sector may be beneficial. Knowledge Brokers are individuals whom work collaboratively with stakeholders to facilitate the transfer and exchange of evidence (Bornbaum, Kornas, Peirson, & Rosella, 2015). This can involve working at a policy or practice level, or both. Developing knowledge broker roles in the third sector encourage evidence-based commissioning/funding practices and commissioner accountability (Loveday, 2013). Collaborations between support professionals and academics may also identify my efficient methods of collecting relevant data for service evaluation or to demonstrate need when bidding for funding. Furthermore, it could help to foster networks of benefit to support services and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that can facilitate research and intervention collaborations. Indeed, a finding of this research is that such collaborations are vital to generate insightful, current and practically useful/impactful research.

Additional strategies to enhance EBP include: cross-disciplinary training and working with relevant professional bodies (e.g. the BPS) to facilitate CPD opportunities within and outside the third-sector. This could help, for example, to foster awareness of sexual violence, expertise in the third-sector and expertise for working with trauma in mental health. It may also provide professionals from different institutions/sectors to foster professional networks that can benefit them and the survivors they support.

Gaps in services may arise for multiple reasons. For example, gaps may occur because of a lack of any services in an area, or because a service is inaccessible to some survivors. For example, a key issue identified in the present research is the lack of suitable accommodation for services: participants spoke of their frustrations over the lack of buildings that were fully wheelchair

accessible, or had hearing loops installed which they could afford to use. Therefore, buildings and their locations can present additional barriers to services for individuals with different mobility, sight and hearing abilities.

To address variability in access to support a combination of using technology (i.e. email, webchat, phone and text support, alongside information sharing webpages), community outreach (e.g. to work with hard-to-reach groups) and satellite sites in rural locations may help to reduce gaps in coverage. Indeed, technology such as the internet and social media allows for cost effective interventions to be run (Le et al., 2019; Lowe & Balfour, 2015). This suggests that the assertions of feminist scholars and advocates that fourth wave feminism should utilise social media to raise awareness of the causes and impacts of sexual violence are well placed (Baumgardner, 2011; Jane, 2016). Indeed, Aroustamian (2019) highlights the role that media may play in changing public opinion of sexual violence, informing changes to policy and practice.

This research suggests that survivors may use the internet and social media to gather information when help-seeking, and may use digital communication (e.g. email or text-messaging) to make contact with services. However, it is important to recognise that digital exclusion (i.e. digital poverty, and issues with digital literacy) is a growing challenge facing the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2019). Digital exclusion may affect some social groups whom are already disadvantaged more (Office for National Statistics, 2019), and so this could raise an additional barrier, rather than improving access, for these individuals when seeking-help. Therefore, wider inequalities such as socioeconomic deprivation must also be addressed in order to tackle sexual violence prevention/support challenges effectively.

Responding to micro-system challenges: encouraging community responses to sexual violence. Previous research has found that perceptions of others' tolerance of rape-supportive attitudes is associated with greater acceptance of rape myths (Eyssel et al., 2006). The present research supports the premise that survivors are aware of gendered RMA 'out there' and this acts as a barrier to help-seeking. Therefore, encouraging responses to sexual violence at a community level that challenge victim-blame and exoneration of perpetrators, may help reduce barriers to disclosure. Social justice ally programmes, bystander interventions and the use of social media as a platform to promote awareness of services and their role in the community, may all help to challenge these attitudes. Furthermore, through raising the profile of services, they may also encourage community involvement in victim support.

Encouraging community involvement in services may help to diversify the professional group whom work/volunteer to support victim-survivors, which may help with community outreach efforts (such as with BAME communities). Satellite sites set up within different community contexts, could to raise the profile of services and provide services to regions that don't have local, static sites. Furthermore, working with community leaders could foster communities involvement in social justice and support agendas and could provide further opportunities to support the indirect victims of sexual violence through signposting and raised awareness of services available. Therefore, it is vital that services be supported to develop local knowledge and community relationships. However, this is jeopardised by the potential loss of professionals (paid and voluntary) from the sector, through burnout and/or financial insecurity. Reducing the stressors associated with working in specialist survivor support services is

therefore vital, not only for the wellbeing of these individuals, but also for fostering meaningful and reciprocal relationships between third-sector organisations the communities they serve.

More stable and long-term funding could enable roles, such as ISVA posts, to be funded for a longer period of time. This would help to provide greater financial security for professionals working in the third-sector which a key cause of stress and attrition. Linked to funding of roles, it would be helpful to review the job descriptions associated with the same titles, as these can vary greatly across services and cause confusion. The boundaries of some roles need clarification, to avoid professionals becoming overstretched and overwhelmed. Local and national awareness campaigns are needed to raise awareness of the role of the third-sector in supporting victims of sexual violence, to reduce the stigma associated with working in the area. Raising the profile of the third-sector may also help to raise awareness of the expertise and professionalism within the field and combat some of the barriers to multi-agency working identified. This research also suggests that it is important services retain their identities and include a political advocacy strand, to campaign for social justice.

Responding to individual/event system challenges: offering choice and flexibility. Theory, research, policy and practice needs to attend to the growing gender-inclusive agenda. Within sexual violence support, this involves identifying gender-inclusive ways that can balance the impact of gender-blind sexism on responses to MFR and tackle the continued marginalisation of victims whom fall outside the MFR paradigm. Commitment to social justice and support for victim survivors of different gender (and other) identities requires that difficult academic and practice debates regarding the nature and delivery of services can

be held, that are not inhibited by political or ideological positions. Further research, with professionals (in the third-sector and statutory services) and survivors is required to explore different ways of organising services in relation to gender and the impact this has on survivor support. The current thesis argues that there should be a commitment to promoting diversity in service models that can offer choice (rather than mandating a single model of service delivery or “gender neutral” services) and is responsive to the needs of the region/community they serve.

Funding conventions/culture needs to be changed so that funding is more stable, allowing services to develop and expand the services and sites they offer. Furthermore, projects need funding to be able to cover the invisible barriers to access, including survivors’ travel- and childcare costs, which prevent them from accessing face-to-face support. Ultimately, an infrastructure is needed that allows services within a region to come together to plan services and bid, collaboratively, for money. This would help to combat the toxic culture of competition many services currently face and preserve the diversity in services that this study highlights is required in order to meet survivors’ needs. It could also provide an opportunity for greater signposting between services; although many services do this already, explicit links between services could be beneficial to them and the survivors within a region.

This research suggests that all of these forms of stigma require active management to maintain and grow awareness and counter blaming attitudes towards the individual experiencing them. In this way, the stigma associated with sexual violence victimisation will only be effectively tackled if the other stereotypic and intolerant forms of thinking are also addressed (Aosved & Long, 2006;

Hockett et al., 2009). This also reinforces the importance of adopting the socioecological framework to elucidate barriers to (high quality) victim-survivor support.

A summary of service challenges, needs and recommendations for transformative praxis is provided in table 17.

Limitations

For a discussion of the potential impact of sample size, see the limitations section of chapter 7: the same areas of concern and strategies for managing them also apply to this semi-structured interview study.

Balancing the demands of inductive coding with interpretation of the findings from chapter 7 (i.e. relating to the theory of gender as a contextual variable) to make sense of emerging patterns in the data. The audit trail and analyst triangulation activities were vital for identify potential analysis “blind spots” and ensuring inferences were grounded in the data (see appendix J for the analyst triangulation report). No substantial changes to the themes identified (including names, definitions or structure) were made following analyst triangulation, as the themes were felt to be underpinned by logical inferences and grounded in the data. However, additional coding trees and a visual representation of the impact of themes from chapter 7 were included to clarify the relationships between them.

Some participants spoke of additional barriers/challenges to services experienced for individuals identifying as non-binary and/or transgender. However, as this was not the focus of the present study these experiences could not be explored in great depth. However, they highlight the need for victim-support organisations and research seeking to understand RMA and its

consequences on working with gender-scholars to explore the evolving nature of definitions and understanding of gender. This is vitally important given the challenges identified in the present study regarding the use of “gendered spaces” in the design and delivery of victim-survivor support services.

Conclusions and future directions

Gendered RMA influences service challenges in multiple ways, including; how services have to justify their existence to commissioners/funders, the public and CJS and health agencies; how they respond to the needs of victim-survivors and; the way in which the support they offer is experienced by victim-survivors.

Considering services challenges within a socioecological framework has identified a number of core, cross-cutting service *needs* in sexual violence support, which must be addressed if transformative praxis is to occur. The findings reinforce the need to formulate interventions that target multiple challenges simultaneously, through identifying the systemic structures underpinning them, rather than adopting a piecemeal or individualistic-level approach. Furthermore, this research reinforces the need to address gendered RMA, which affect services in multiple ways. However, research suggests that improvements have been made and, crucially, that RMA is modifiable (e.g. Reddy et al., 2020). This may need to be carried out through the lens of social justice, which aims to address other ‘isms’ which are associated with RMA (such as racism, ableism, classism). Therefore, gendered RMA also presents opportunities for transformative praxis in third-sector support services, as well as social institutions that encounter victim-survivor as well as public and political arenas.

A crucial conclusion of this study is that many of the challenges that this research identified as facing services are not new. For example, multiple previous research studies and governmental report have highlighted the deleterious effects of funding instability and shortages on the third-sector (Gillespie, 1994; Hawkins & Taylor, 2015; Jones & Cook, 2008; Lowe, 2017; McMillan, 2007). Yet these challenges persist. Although some changes to funding by the government were pledged in March 2019, the present research highlights that gains can be transitory. Without active management the current climate of awareness may wane, with consequences for social justice agendas and survivor support.

Chapter 9. Discussion, evaluation and conclusion

Chapter introduction

The aim of this chapter is to draw the findings from each study together, into a coherent response to the two questions which drove this mixed methods doctoral research. To do this, and to generate robust recommendations for research, theory, policy and practice, Teddlie and Tashakkori's (2003; 2008) approach to inference-making is employed. That is, the findings and conclusions from each study are considered in order to produce an overall explanation, or meta-inference, of the ways in which victim and perpetrator gender shape RMA, and the impact that gendered RMA has on the challenges faced by support services for adult survivors. Consequently, chapter 9 is organised into three sections: a synopsis of the empirical chapters' findings; an evaluation of the research, including its limitations, original contributions, implications and recommendations arising and; the conclusion of the thesis.

Synopsis

Four empirical studies were conducted as part of this mixed-methods thesis, including: a systematic review, a quasi-experimental study (quantitative phase), a TAI study and semi-structured interview study (qualitative phase) (see figure 1 in chapter 4 for an overview of these studies, and where and how 'mixing' of the research occurred). The findings of these studies will be synthesised in this section, in response to the two research questions driving the thesis. Figure 17 provides a visual representation of the meta-inferences generated from the 'mixing' of the findings from the multiple phases of the research. It is not intended as an exhaustive list of meta-inferences, but rather an illustration of key findings of the thesis and how meta-inferences were produced.

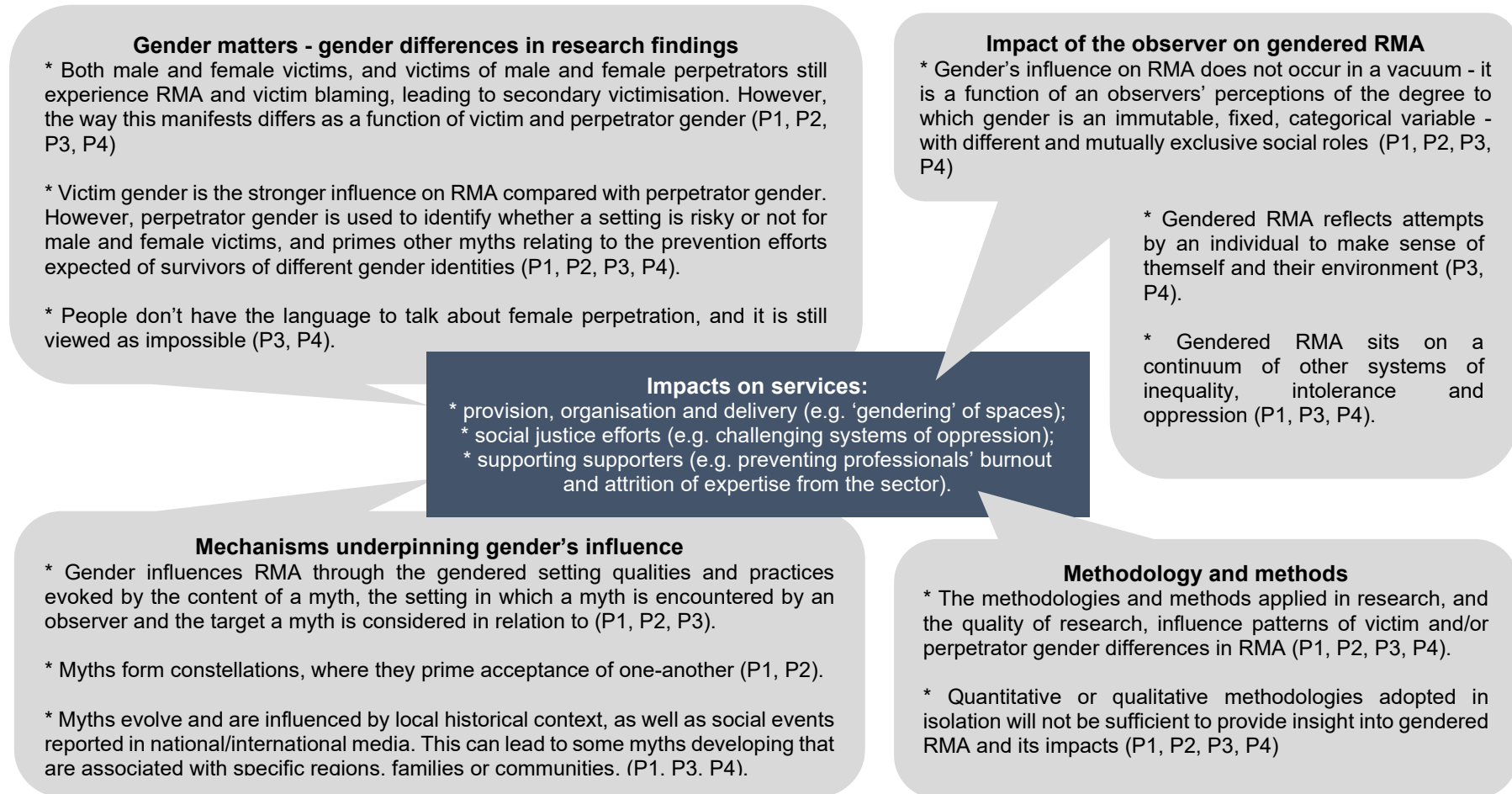


Figure 17. Diagrammatic representation of meta-inferences generated from the mixing of findings in this research, in response to the two questions driving this thesis. Meta-inferences in the outside text boxes (in grey) relate to the ways in which gender shapes RMA. The centre text box (in blue) illustrates the meta-inferences generated in relation to how gendered RMA impacts on adult support services. Information in brackets represents the phases of the research (P1 = systematic review, P2 = quasi-experimental study, P3 = TAI study, P4 = semi-structured interview study) from which inferences were mixed to generate the meta-inference.

In what ways do victim and perpetrator gender shape rape myths and RMA?

Integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings of this thesis in combination provides persuasive evidence that victim and perpetrator gender do influence RMA. Differences in the expression and acceptance of rape myths are evident between male and female victims, and victims of male and female perpetrators. These differences arise from complex individual-environment interactions and the characteristics of observers, including how they perceive notions of gender and fairness. However, they are also shaped by the methodologies and methods used to investigate them.

Gender differences in research findings. Male and female victims, and victims of male and female perpetrators continue to experience RMA (Chapleau et al., 2008; K. M. Edwards et al., 2011; Girshick, 2002; Javaid, 2017c; Turchik & Edwards, 2012). In particular, there are key differences in the ways that different *types* of rape myth are accepted for male and female victims (Granger, 2008). Perpetrator gender's influence appears to be contingent on other factors, including victim gender and the gender-related attitudes of an observer (Muehlenhard, 1988). However, perpetrator gender is used by people to make sense of whether situations should be considered 'risky' or not for an individual (i.e. the sexual double standard and sexual preference effects) (Davies & Boden, 2012; Muehlenhard, 1988; Nadelhoffer, 2008; Walfield, 2018).

For male victims, myths pertaining to victim resistance and character and rape claims are most salient as they appear to fit with notions of hegemonic masculinity and heterosexist assumptions (Javaid, 2017c). That is, they are particularly associated with notions of 'fighting off' (male) attackers during

attempted incidents, and whether a survivor is a heterosexual male (i.e. not engaging in 'sexually risky' behaviours with males) (Davies & Boden, 2012). In contrast, myths pertaining to victim resistance and character, rape claims and victim deservedness appear to be salient to female victims because they help an observer to identify whether they were actively guarding against (male perpetrated) rape by avoiding/managing risk (Finch & Munro, 2007; Jamshed & Kamal, 2019). For example, they had not placed themselves 'at risk' by their lifestyle or behaviours immediately prior to an incident (Anders, 2007). However, this thesis demonstrates that laypersons and professionals still struggle to find ways of making sense of female perpetrated victimisation (Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996; Girshick, 2002; Weare, 2018b). For male victims, female perpetrated sexual violence is classed as 'not rape' (i.e. just 'bad sex') and therefore irrelevant (Weare, 2018b; Weare et al., 2017). However, FFR is deemed inconceivable and rendered invisible (i.e. it isn't possible) (Girshick, 2002). Thus, these findings highlight that the same myth may be accepted to similar degrees for male and female victims - but for different reasons. This has implications for victim support and violence prevention initiatives, and highlights that identifying gender differences is only one aspect of understanding the ways in which gender influences RMA.

The role of observer characteristics. RMA does not occur in a vacuum, but is shaped by the person constructs, particularly attitudinal variables, of an observer (K. M. Edwards et al., 2011; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Maxwell & Scott, 2014; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010; Turchik & Edwards, 2012). Gendered RMA appears to sit along a continuum with other forms of stigmatised and intolerant thinking (Aosved & Long, 2006; Hockett et al., 2009). In particular, cleaving to

more traditional and rigid notions of gender is associated with greater acceptance of gendered RMA (I. Anderson & Bissell, 2011; Haggard, 1995; Koepke, Eyssele, & Bohner, 2014; Sleath & Bull, 2010; Walfield, 2018; White, 2001; White & Robinson Kurpius, 2002). Endorsing notions of gender as a binary, immutable variable with each category assigned mutually exclusive social roles, may make an observer more aware of the victim and perpetrator gendered elements of RMA. For example, the present research suggests that observers high in gender-linked social roles are more accepting of rape claims myths in relation to FFR than any other gender combination. That is, they are more likely to view FFR as simply 'unbelievable'.

Gendered RMA may reflect observers' attempts to be 'fair' in their judgements towards victim-survivors and perpetrators (I. Anderson, 1999; I. Anderson et al., 2001; Doherty & Anderson, 2004). There is evidence to suggest that liberalist notions of fairness (Stoll et al., 2018, 2017) are particularly influential in relation to RMA, and also in deployment of resources which is perceived to be ethical in the third sector (Hall, 2018). For example, abstract liberalist notions of 'fair play' suggest that observers should look to both parties for blame (i.e. treating victims and perpetrators 'the same') (Christianson, 2015), without recognising that blame for sexual violence should always lie with a perpetrator.

Mechanisms underpinning gendered RMA. A primary concern of this thesis was to move beyond merely identifying patterns of differences based on victim and perpetrator gender, to providing a theoretical account of *why* and *how* these differences occur.

Findings from the qualitative phase of the research suggests that gender's influence on RMA occurs through the setting qualities and practices evoked by a

rape myth. The content of a myth provides information about a victim's, perpetrator's and incident's characteristics leading up to, during and after an assault. People use victim and perpetrator gender to help make sense of this information. For example, people use victim and perpetrator gender to try to work our hierarchies of realness, suffering and worthiness for support through comparing them to a gendered 'real rape' template. Victim (and perpetrator) behaviour is considered in light of gendered perceptions of risk and vulnerability, motivations for rape and motivations for disclosure to identify the degree to which victims should be believed and/or blamed for their experiences. These act as gendered setting qualities which are reinforced by (and in turn perpetuate) practices that are expected in different situations by persons of different genders. RMA influences perceptions of when these practices have not been performed adequately by the victim, leading to greater blame attributed to them (and less blame attributed to a perpetrator).

Victim/perpetrator gender and myth content primes acceptance of other myths that are unconsciously perceived as similar by an individual, which can influence the degree to which a survivor is deemed credible and worthy of empathy and support. The target of a rape myth (an abstract stranger, a family member or famous person) influences the degree to which a myth is accepted. Furthermore, the setting in which a myth is encountered (i.e. formal setting, or informal setting) may influence the degree to which acceptance is expressed. Thus, rape myths appear to act as cognitive schemas or scripts that observers draw on to make sense of gender and sexual violence (Ballman et al., 2016; Barnett, Hale, & Sligar, n.d.; Davies et al., 2013; Eyssel & Bohner, 2011; McKimmie, Masser, & Bongiorno, 2014; Ong & Ward, 1999; K. M. Ryan, 2011; Süssenbach, Eyssel, &

Bohner, 2013). Thus, gender role attitudes, notions of fairness and rape myths combine to guide an observer in their attributions of victims, perpetrators and assaults.

The impact of methodology and methods. Patterns of RMA in relation to victim and perpetrator gender (and combinations thereof) may be influenced by numerous factors - including the methodologies and methods used to research them (Deming, 2017; Grubb & Turner, 2012; Gurnham, 2016b; McMahon et al., 2011; O'Connor, Cusano, McMahon, & Draper, 2018; Reece, 2013, 2014; J. Shaw et al., 2017). For example, findings from the quantitative phase of this mixed methods research suggested that when looking at a global level, degree of RMA is similar for male and female victims, and victims of male, female and gender-unspecified perpetrators. However, when considering victim and perpetrator gender in relation to different *types* of rape myth differences in acceptance are evident. Furthermore, spurious gender differences may arise from poor research design, which fails to control for, or measure the impact of gendered setting qualities and practices implied by tools (such as vignettes) used to collect data (e.g. McCaul et al., 1990). Therefore, as well as research quality, other variables which this thesis implicates in influencing patterns of gendered RMA include; the time-period in which research was conducted; whether victim and perpetrator gender were manipulated in combination or investigated separately; the person constructs and attitudinal variables of the observer also measured, and; whether quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods research designs are employed (see chapter 5 for discussion of these factors). Thus, any victim/perpetrator gender differences observed in research must be interpreted in light of the context (or ecological setting) in which they were identified.

How does gendered RMA impact on the challenges faced by support services for adult survivors?

Findings from the quantitative and qualitative phases of this research demonstrate that gendered RMA remains prevalent in many social institutions, including the CJS, mental health services and traditional and social media (K. M. Edwards et al., 2011; Gravelin et al., 2018; Jamel, 2008; O. Smith & Skinner, 2017; Turchik & Edwards, 2012; Turchik et al., 2016). Although perceptions of MFR and MMR have improved to some degree, further improvements are required. Gendered RMA, through gender-blind sexism and modern misogyny (K. L. Anderson, 2018; Stoll et al., 2018, 2017), reinforces a perception that MFR is no-longer a serious problem, and does not require the level or response that the third-sector organisations says it does. In contrast, advocating for services for male victims and victims of female perpetrators is positioned as competing against the women's movement and detracting from attempts to address the gender asymmetry in sexual violence (Rumney, 2008). Furthermore, heterosexist assumptions about the nature of rape continue to marginalise same-sex sexual violence from political, research and support agendas (Davies et al., 2013; Donne et al., 2018; Hester et al., 2012; Rumney, 2008). These systems of cultural values, fuelled by gendered RMA, contribute to public and political support (or lack thereof) of social justice agendas, shape commissioning and funding decisions, and inform the organisations of resources by services. Consequently, the impacts of gendered RMA can be seen in services' practice, praxis and the staff/volunteer wellbeing.

Impacts on provision, organisation and delivery of services.

Gendered RMA contributes to a culture of toxic competition, through reifying a

'hierarchy of worthiness' for support (Lowe & Balfour, 2015). Services are pitted against each other, with gains for one victim gender position as coming at the cost of the other victim gender (K. L. Anderson, 2018; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017). Victims of female perpetrators are simply positioned as 'not rape' and therefore not relevant to support (Girshick, 2002; Kramer, 2017; McKeever, 2018; Weare, 2018b). Therefore, funding issues represent an omnipresent challenge that influence all aspects of service functioning, and professionals' wellbeing (Laforest & Orsini, 2005; Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Balfour, 2015; Maier, 2011a, 2011b; Ullman & Townsend, 2007).

The emphasis of funding on competition rather than collaboration (Hall, 2018; Lowe & Balfour, 2015), means that specialist adult support services are forced into competition with larger, more generic victim support organisations, leading to some facing closure as they lose-out on contracts and funding (Hawkins & Taylor, 2015). There are fears this could lead to a 'one-size fits all' approach to victim support (Hawkins & Taylor, 2015), which doesn't recognise the nuances of trauma produced by sexual violence relative to other forms of violence and trauma (Litz et al., 2002; Lowe & Balfour, 2015; McNally et al., 2003; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017). Furthermore, there are concerns that the mental health needs of survivors with complex trauma are not being met (Lowe & Balfour, 2015). This is due to a lack of understanding of the impact of sexual violence within statutory mental health services, and barriers to third-sectors' multi-agency working with statutory mental health needs (Lowe & Balfour, 2015; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017).

Victim gender is the primary person construct driving the development/delivery of services which affects the organisation and deployment

of resources (Donne et al., 2018; Girshick, 2002; Rumney, 2014). However, this research suggests there are many others which differentiate victim-survivors' experiences of sexual violence risk and support, including: sexual orientation identity, faith, ethnicity, (dis)ability, class, socioeconomic deprivation, and where you are from (Donne et al., 2018; Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996; Girshick, 2002; Hester et al., 2012; Hickson et al., 1997; Javaid, 2016c, 2017b; Kimerling et al., 2002; Mont et al., 2013; Peterson et al., 2011; Rumney, 2014; Stermac et al., 2004, 1996; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). Gendered RMA is bound up with these other stigmatised beliefs (Buddie & Miller, 2001), particularly regarding mental health (women are damaged, men are dangerous as a result of sexual violence) which positions some survivors as 'beyond help'. This is similar to research exploring honour-based abuse, which has identified that survivors are positioned as 'mad, bad or consenting' (Aplin, 2019, p. 55), in order to discredit concerns over abuse, and justify perpetrators' behaviour.

Professionals encounter the view from service commissioners/funders that survivors within genders all need and want the same types of therapeutic interventions. There are frustrations that service commissioners/funders do not take more evidence-based approaches to financial decision-making, and that they should listen more to services' expertise and local knowledge when deploying money (Hawkins & Taylor, 2015). There is a perception that decisions are driven by financial considerations, rather than survivor needs (Hawkins & Taylor, 2015; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017). This echoes findings of Hall (2018) and Simmonds (2019) review of local commissioning - in particular, that decisions are being made based on poorly understood and implemented assessments of 'local need'. This suggests that strategies or policy may not be

inadequate, but how they are being implemented is problematic (Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017). There are concerns that the current commissioning frameworks expect PCCs to have an oversight of local needs that is not realistic with the given infrastructure; thus, developments to infrastructure are required in order to foster the cohesive, regional and collaborative strategies that the present thesis suggest is needed, if victim needs are to be met (Hall, 2018; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017; Simmonds, 2013, 2019).

Impacts on services' social justice efforts. There have been improvements in recognition of the prevalence and impacts of sexual violence in recent years (NHS England, 2018). Professionals perceived that there was a growing acceptance of counter RMA and victim-blaming narratives in the media and news. Furthermore, there was a growing acceptance of combating sexual violence as an important component of social and criminal justice (Mendes et al., 2018). However, awareness continues to lag behind for some groups of survivors, including male victims and particularly victims of female perpetrated sexual violence (Girshick, 2002; Kramer, 2017; McKeever, 2018; Brenda L Russell, 2013; Weare, 2018b; Weare & Hully, 2019). It appears that these groups, and same sex-sexual violence, are still marginalised owing to the lack of gender-inclusive theories of the aetiology of sexual violence, which contributes to prevention policies that are labelled as 'ending VAWG' (Donne et al., 2018; Fogg, 2019; Lowe & Balfour, 2015; Touquet & Gorris, 2016; Turchik et al., 2016).

Identifying ways to respond to gender in sexual violence prevention and support strategies is a key issue, as the aetiology of sexual violence appears to be rooted in gender-role attitudes and sexism (Aosved & Long, 2006; McPhail, 2016; Turchik et al., 2016). Furthermore, the practices of support services - in

destabilising the gendered qualities and practices of settings (i.e. through providing women-only spaces) may be beneficial for some (Lewis et al., 2015), but alienating for others (Donne et al., 2018; Girshick, 2002; Rumney, 2014). Indeed, how best to 'gender' spaces (online and offline) is an issue in which tackling gendered RMA is brought to the fore (e.g. Lowe & Balfour, 2015).

Services providing support to female victims continue to encounter stigmatisation for holding feminist values, modern misogyny and attempts to redirect funding away to other 'more important' social issues (K. L. Anderson, 2018). In contrast, services supporting male survivors encounter arguments that they are not as necessary as female services, because there are 'fewer' male survivors (e.g. Powell & Webster, 2018). Furthermore, services are organised around supporting survivors of male perpetrators - suggesting female perpetration continues to be an opaque issue in policy and practice (Girshick, 2002; McKeever, 2018).

The findings from the quantitative and qualitative phases of the research suggest that a core issue that service encounter is how to challenge the more covert, insidious but nevertheless harmful gendered RMA (Deming, 2017; McMahon et al., 2011; O'Connor et al., 2018; Savoia, 2016; J. Shaw et al., 2017). For example, findings of the quantitative phase of the research suggested that socially desirable responding is not a strong or consistent predictor of gendered RMA attributions (D. L. Burt & DeMello, 2002; Sheridan, 2005; Walfield, 2016). However, findings from the qualitative phase of the study suggests that professionals frequently encounter 'suppressed' RMA which still shapes people's responses to sexual violence victims' disclosures. It is apparent that raised awareness of sexual violence in political, social and media arenas has led to the

understanding that people should avoid being labelled as a 'victim-blamer'. Therefore, they impression-manage their responses, disguise myth acceptance through obfuscating language, or only express their 'true' attitudes and beliefs in informal arenas where they feel unlikely to be challenged. In this way, gendered RMA may function as a bonding tie in a setting (Bond & Wasco, 2017), making it difficult to challenge.

The above issues make tackling gender-related (and other) inequalities, and advocating for victims' rights and needs challenging for the third sector (K. L. Anderson, 2018; Lowe, 2017; Lowe & Balfour, 2015; Stoll et al., 2018, 2017).

Impacts on 'supporting the supporters'. The impact of gendered RMA on professionals' wellbeing is evident (Coles, Astbury, Dartnall, & Limjerwala, 2014; Globokar et al., 2016; Lerias & Byrne, 2003; Maier, 2011a, 2011b; Mihelicova et al., 2019; Ullman & Townsend, 2007), but appears to be overlooked in relation to funding decisions and government rhetoric. However, the impact on wellbeing of working in survivor support in the third sector survivor represents an important ethical concern, and is part of the agenda for social justice (Barnes, 2013; Mihelicova et al., 2019).

Professionals spoke of the difficulty of witnessing the survivors they support being subjected to secondary victimisation (Barnes, 2013; Maier, 2008): particularly by the courts, and of seeing survivors being ostracised by their family or communities for fear of being 'contaminated' by the stigma of association. These could be particularly re-traumatising for professionals whom were also survivors themselves (Mihelicova et al., 2019). Seeing gendered RMA enacted in this way could be demoralising and frustrating, leading to a sense of being helpless to combat the systems which disadvantage victims of sexual violence

(Mihelicova et al., 2019). However, many professionals spoke of post-traumatic growth and of finding their own resilience in the face of this (Slattery & Goodman, 2009). In particular, feeling part of a community of professionals (paid and voluntary) whom share the same beliefs and values and are working towards achieving social justice (Holland et al., 2019; Slattery & Goodman, 2009) were protective factors against burnout and potential 'RMA creep'. However, the ultimate impact of large workloads (Goldstraw, 2016; Maier, 2011a, 2011b), vicarious trauma (Barnes, 2013; Mihelicova et al., 2019) and financial insecurity (Maier, 2011a) is that some professionals view their roles as having a 'shelf-life' and will ultimately leave the field. This leads to attrition of valuable expertise, as well as placing barriers to developing long-term, meaningful relationships with communities that could be beneficial for preventing and responding effectively to sexual violence (Maier, 2011a, 2011b; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). Part of this challenge, which is influenced by gendered RMA, is raising awareness of the invaluable knowledge, skill and dedication of professionals in the third-sector, with other statutory victim services and the public (Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017).

The third-sector plays a crucial role in supporting survivors, including information, advocacy (at the individual and political levels), emotional support and challenging gendered RMA (Anderton, 2017; Eleftheriou-Smith, 2015; Hawkins & Taylor, 2015; Henderson, 2012; Mcgee et al., 2002; Simmonds, 2013). This thesis suggests that the loss of professionals or organisations would therefore have serious consequences for survivors, communities and ultimately social and criminal justice agendas (Eleftheriou-Smith, 2015; Maier, 2011a).

Evaluation

Each empirical chapter provided a discussion of that study's limitations, considered separately, and how these were managed. Therefore, this section considers the limitations of the programme of research and how they influence the meta-inferences of this chapter. Furthermore, the delimitations of the research and future research planned are discussed.

Research limitations

This thesis has sought to cohere disparate bodies of research, methodologies and methods in RMA to provide insight into the ways in which gender influences RMA and its consequences for victim-survivor support. Nevertheless, a number of limitations are identified.

Reinforcing the gender-binary? This research aimed to address the gaps in knowledge arising from a lack of gender-inclusive theories of the existence, transmission and impact of rape myths. Applying the socioecological framework to explore the mechanisms underpinning gender's influence on RMA, and the multiple socioecological levels at which gendered RMA influences challenges to victim-survivor support has provided insight into these issues. However, the findings are still couched within a gender-binary perspective. It was outside the present thesis' scope to explore RMA in relation to victims and perpetrators of non-binary gender, transgender, gender-queer and gender fluid identities. Nevertheless, this thesis highlights how gendered setting qualities and practices within society and the third-sector may pose additional barriers to supporting survivors from minority gender-identities. Just as additional barriers have been identified for survivors at the nexus of other 'minority' identities, including: race/ethnicity, (dis)ability, sexual orientation identity, and faith. Further research utilising the socioecological theory of gender is required to explore how

gendered setting qualities and practices influence RMA and victim-survivor support challenges for these groups. In so doing, this will also provide insight into problematic practices of gendering spaces, and the potential impact they have on survivors' support experiences. Furthermore, such research may shed light on how to destabilise gendered setting qualities and practices for transformative praxis in sexual violence prevention and support.

Contributing to gender-blind sexism? In problematising the labelling of preventative policies as 'ending VAWG' for male victims and victims of female perpetrators, it is not the intention of the researcher to obscure the role of gender in shaping risk, experience, preventative strategies or therapeutic support interventions. Instead it is to call for a commitment to gender-inclusive approaches to the development of policy. Although a separate policy for ending violence against men and boys, as proposed by some activists/advocates (Fogg, 2019), may contribute to surfacing these victim-survivors, this does not resolve the issues facing survivors from other gender-identity groups (Donne et al., 2018). Therefore, this thesis argues that policies must take greater account of the nuancing and diversity of gender-identities.

The present research has raised concerns regarding approaches to the gendering of spaces in the third-sector (and applicable to many statutory services also). However, it is not the intention of the researcher to argue that women-only spaces, or that outreach-only male victim support should be abandoned. The aim is to identify the way that gendered setting qualities and practices marginalise survivors from policy, theory, research and practice spotlights and identify multiple strategies for managing these. Fundamentally, no single solution is likely to be suitable or feel relevant to all victim-survivors. Instead, this thesis highlights

the urgent need for diversity in services and of the value of taking multiple approaches to tackling systemic barriers to survivor support. Therefore, this thesis argues that a regional, collaborative, cohesive prevention and response strategy approach is required in order to transform victim support experiences, rather than mandating a single model of working.

Representativeness. Although efforts were taken across the research to recruit participants from a broad range of backgrounds and characteristics, this research suffers from an issue which plagues much of RMAS: the over-reliance on mainly white, female and student populations (van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014). The intersectional feminist perspectives advocates recognition of the danger of (mis)presenting the experiences of one group as representative of all. As such, the attitudes/beliefs and experiences of individuals (survivors, observers, professionals) from BAME communities is somewhat limited in this thesis. Further efforts are needed to address gaps in theory and the evidence-base which arise as a result of this lack of representation.

Applying quality assurance. As outlined in chapter 4, the term 'mixed-methods research' refers to myriad approaches in which methodologies, methods and findings can be integrated to provide insight into a research question. Furthermore, there are numerous ways in which the 'mixing' of these can occur, affected by decisions regarding the weighting given to quantitative and qualitative strands of research. Therefore, the application of quality assurance strategies, to ensure the generation of robust meta-inferences, in themselves was extremely challenging. That is, quality assurance strategies must be tailored to the unique characteristics of the research question and nature of mixing. For example, the phasing of quantitative and qualitative strands of the research, and the different

research questions they aimed to address made it difficult to identify whether the criteria of 'sample integration' was applicable to generating meta-inferences.

The socioecological model has played a vital role in addressing these challenges and cohering findings (which is a concern of sample integration legitimisation checks). However, the application of this framework of itself is not without challenges. A key issue is that there are multiple approaches to specifying socioecological models, such as those arising from the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986, 1995) and those arising from Kelly's (1966, 1968, 1971) work. As a result, this thesis sought to integrate the two strands; emphasising the socioecological theory of gender in order to identify the mechanisms by which gender shapes RMA (chapter 7), and the setting-bound nature of survivor support in relation to gendered RMAs impact on adult services' functioning (chapter 8). This allowed the framework to be tailored to the research question the study was aiming to address, whilst keeping key concepts within the framework consistent. Future research should explore approaches to integrating these strands of socioecological theory in a more formal way, as this will help to provide approaches to organising the evidence-base, exploring interactions between systems within the socioecology and their impact on survivor support, and opportunities to generate new hypotheses guided by the framework.

Original contributions, implications and recommendations

This thesis sought to achieve four key aims: synthesise existing literature and consider the implications of research quality, theoretical foundations, methods used, analysis techniques applied, on extant knowledge and perspectives on gender and RMA; consider what "gendered" rape myths mean, and why this is important for research and support practice; apply a

socioecological framework to consider the effects of gendered rape myths across different systems within which survivors and support organisations are embedded, and; apply novel methods of data collection and analysis, and inference-making, to draw novel conclusions and make recommendations for future research and support practice.

Addressing these aims has resulted in a number original contributions to RMA and the study of victim-support. The contributions will now be discussed in light of their implications and recommendations for theory, philosophical standpoint and methodology, methods, the empirical evidence-base, and policy and practice.

Theoretical underpinnings and gender inclusivity. This thesis has identified ongoing challenges to *gender-inclusive* RMA theory. Although interdisciplinary, much sexual victimisation has been dominated by feminist perspectives which seek to position sexual violence as a gendered crime (Chapleau et al., 2008; Rumney, 2007; Turchik & Edwards, 2012; Turchik et al., 2016). This has led to a lack of emphasis on developing gender-inclusive theories of the existence, transmission and impact of RMA (Maxwell & Scott, 2014), which is problematic for numerous reasons. For example, the dominance of the radical-liberal feminist perspective has led to gender-specific theories of the aetiology of rape and RMA, which position them as arising from a limited set of factors relating to patriarchy, power and control (Maxwell & Scott, 2014; McPhail, 2016; Turchik et al., 2016). This is unlikely to be representative of all MFR victims' experiences. Furthermore, such gender-specific theories position perpetrator gender to only be important to understanding to the aetiology of RMA and rape if the perpetrator is male. In contrast, if a perpetrator is female the focus in explanations for the

incident shifts from gender onto other person constructs or setting features, such as victim age, or victim-perpetrator relationship (Girshick, 2002). Ultimately, there is a lack of explanation for female perpetrated sexual violence (Girshick, 2002; Kramer, 2017; Maxwell & Scott, 2014; McPhail, 2016; Turchik et al., 2016), particularly in relation to forced-to-penetrate FMR and female same-sex sexual violence (Girshick, 2002; Kramer, 2017; Weare, 2018b). People don't talk about female perpetration, in fact, people don't seem to know *how* to talk about it. (Girshick, 2002). Another challenge is that of current theories' handling of same-sex sexual violence. The present research suggests that to some extent, same-sex sexual violence is still perceived as motivated by sex and desire. This reinforces gendered RMA that suggests that same-sex rape only happens in specific settings that are shaped in some way by homosexuality/bisexuality. Furthermore, same-sex sexual violence, particularly for men, is only credible and worth of support if it occurs in childhood (Donnelly & Kenyon, 1996; Girshick, 2002; Weare, 2018b; Weare et al., 2017)

Relying on gender-specific accounts of RMA (or any single motivation as underpinning rape), will lead to a lack of understanding of survivors' experiences and therefore the support they receive. Instead, a range of more gender-inclusive theories regarding the motivations for rape need to be promoted: so that laypersons and professionals whom may come into contact with survivors have discourses that they can draw on, to make sense of disclosure in a supportive manner.

This thesis presents the socioecological theory of gender (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010) as a means to overcome these limitations. This approach to definition suggest that gender can be viewed

as a contextual variable, rather than only as a grouping or socially constructed variable (Bond & Allen, 2016; Bond & Wasco, 2017; Wasco & Bond, 2010). As such, it has enabled this thesis to explore the role of gender in shaping RMA and its consequences for support from a different theoretical perspective. This has facilitated the generation of new insights, and support for previous theories. For example, the empirical chapters provided support for previous theories which suggest that RMA is interwoven with gender-role attitudes, and norms (Eyssel et al., 2006), and acts as a vehicle for victim blame by identifying when gender-roles have been transgressed (Angelone et al., 2012). Thus, gendered RMA reinforces power imbalances relating to gender (Messerschmidt, 2000; Muehlenhard, 1988), but particularly when gender intersects with other 'minority' identities (such as sexual-orientation identity minority group status). Furthermore, the present thesis argues that power imbalances must be recognised as setting-bound. Therefore, gender can lead to power imbalance when male victims, and victims of female perpetrators seek support, as there is less provision for these groups. Placing emphasis on gender as a contextual variable means that the focus can shift onto *how* gender influences perceptions of survivors in different situations. This recognises that victim and perpetrator gender will influence RMA in different ways depending on context. For example, the myth pertaining to victims' clothing as provoking of rape has typically been identified in relation to the blaming of female victim (e.g. Whatley, 2005). However, findings reported as part of the present thesis suggest that looking at this myth from the perspective of gendered setting qualities and practices, mean these myths can be salient to male victims too. For example, this myth was encountered by some professionals supporting victim-survivors from "chem sex" and "sex-pig" gay male communities, as a result

of gendered perceptions of risk and vulnerability, and prevention efforts expected of male victims. This highlights the complex nature of the impact of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA, the value of considering gender as a contextual variable, and the importance of skills and knowledge of professionals working with specific communities.

Gendered RMA appears to be associated with a range of other stigmatised beliefs, including being labelled as 'vulnerable' in some way. As other factors have been found to interact with risk of experiencing sexual violence, including: sexuality, age, (dis)ability and ethnicity (Hickson et al., 1997; Kimerling et al., 2002; Mahoney et al., 2014; Mont et al., 2013; Peterson et al., 2011; Stermac et al., 2004, 1996), this is concerning. Indeed, findings reported in this thesis support theories that argue RMA forms part of a wider system of intolerant beliefs and attitudes, (Aosved & Long, 2006; Bohner et al., 1998; Hockett et al., 2009; Lanis & Covell, 1995; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010), and may be reinforcing of other systems of inequality, such as gender-blind sexism (Stoll et al., 2018, 2017). Furthermore, support is identified for suggestions that rape myths reflect rigidly applied schemas and scripts pertaining to gender, gender-roles and sexual violence (M. R. Burt, 1980; Chapleau et al., 2008; Eyssel & Bohner, 2011; R. M. Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013; Schwartz, 1991; Süßenbach et al., 2013; Yamawaki & Tschanz, 2005). Findings from the empirical chapters indicated that gendered RMA is particularly associated with perceiving 'gender' as binary variable, associated with mutually exclusive social roles. Furthermore, acceptance of one myth appears to prime others, which is another feature of a schema (Littleton, Axsom, & Yoder, 2006; Stuart, McKimmie, & Masser, 2019).

Previous theory has positioned rape myths as neutralising cognitions that allow people to accept the (self or others') violation of social norms relating to sexual violence (Bohner et al., 1998; M. R. Burt, 1980; Sykes & Matza, 1957). This research provides support for this. However, it also suggests that gendered RMA may represent a flawed but benevolent attempt to attribute blame and prioritise support for survivors. This appears to be driven by perceptions of what is ethical and fair in decision-making, particularly with regards to abstract liberalist notions of fair shares and fair play (Stoll et al., 2018, 2017). This demonstrates how responses to sexual violence survivors that are intended to be empathic may be experienced as blaming and unhelpful by survivors.

Recommendations for gender-inclusive RMA theory. Ultimately, gendered RMA continues to delimit what constitutes rape, through delimiting who can be a victim and perpetrator, and why rape happens (Girshick, 2002; Javaid, 2016c; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; K. M. Ryan, 2011; Turchik & Edwards, 2012; Turchik et al., 2016). Definitions of rape myths need to reflect this in gender-inclusive, rather than gender-specific terms. Definitions also need to adopt terminology which avoids conflating gender dyad with sexual orientation assumptions (e.g. 'homosexual rape vs heterosexual rape' instead being discussed as 'same-sex vs mixed-sex' rape), to overcome some of the heteronormative assumptions which have been identified in the literature and evidence-base (Kramer, 2017).

Using a socioecological framework in future efforts to develop RMA theory would be beneficial, as it can be used to integrate observations, develop research questions and hypotheses and has the potential to ground theories in gender-inclusive terms. Developing gender-inclusive theories and definitions of RMA is

vital, as it will improve understanding of why and how secondary victimisation is experienced by survivors from all gender-identities. For example, adopting a socioecological theory of gender can help to elucidate the gender-role-related expectations and attitudes that become embedded into everyday settings and practices which perpetuate RMA. These everyday practices represent opportunities for challenging rigid notions of gender, gender-roles and RMA, and therefore present opportunities for transformative praxis.

Theoretical links between gendered RMA, gender-blind sexism, notions of fairness and socially desirable responding warrant further attention. For example, it would be beneficial to explore these factors in relation to attitudes towards social justice agendas more broadly and whether they are perceived as helpful or harmful to equality. Such research may help to explain the backlash to raised awareness of the prevalence and significance of sexual violence identified in the present research. It may also help to identify barriers to intervening to prevent victimisation, and supporting survivors, which could be addressed in bystander intervention (Rosenstein & Carroll, 2015) and social-justice/anti-violence ally programmes (Casey, 2010; Fabiano et al., 2003).

Philosophical stand-point and methodology. Few studies have adopted feminist-informed pragmatism as the philosophical stand-point underpinning their research. However, the present thesis demonstrates the benefit of this integrated worldview. It reinforces that feminism is vital for ongoing transformative and social justice agendas for survivors of all gender-identities, victimised by perpetrators of all gender-identities (C. Cohen, 2014; McPhail, 2016), as this perspective is largely responsible for the recognition that sexual violence is a serious social, criminal and public health issue (McPhail, 2016).

However, this thesis highlights a resistance to, or even a backlash against feminist-informed perspectives which are hampering social justice and support efforts in the third sector. In part, this thesis suggests this may arise from a perceived fear of some feminist perspectives to recognise gender-inclusivity (Burgess-Jackson, 1996; Girshick, 2002) and recognise nuance to the concept of gender (Turchik et al., 2016). Indeed, the present thesis suggests that there are fears this will contribute to gender-blind sexism (i.e. frames of minimisation), which seeks to position MFR as tackled (K. L. Anderson, 2018; Stoll et al., 2018, 2017). There is a sense that embracing gender-inclusive agendas will be similar to opening 'Pandora's box' (Girshick, 2002). However, this is necessary in order to provide a coherent, holistic account of the role of gender in the risk of, experience of, and responses to sexual victimisation. This thesis underscores the devastating consequences that sexual violence has on survivors from all gender-identities, and whom have experienced sexual violence at the hands of perpetrators from different gender-identities. Without feminism's championing of gender-inclusive agendas, some survivors will continue to go unsupported (Girshick, 2002; Javaid, 2017b). Therefore, a contribution of this thesis is to bring attention to the transitory nature of raised awareness and consequent political agendas: to challenge the notions of gender-blind sexism, that gains for survivors are linear and ever-improving. This can be used to counter arguments that MFR is no longer a systemic societal issue.

Pragmatism's contribution is to refocus the researcher's attention to answering questions of 'what works', for whom and why - rather than emphasising the primacy of ontological and epistemological concerns. Previous research has tended to adopt either an overtly constructionist philosophy or an implicit positivist

or post-positivist philosophy. Both of which have been identified as having limitations in the study of RMA. For example, quantitative approaches have been argued to emphasise the objectivity, stability and consistency of concepts which may be, at least in part, socially constructed and thereby obscure complexity, fluidity and intra-individual variation (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011). However, qualitative methods have been argued as failing to resolve the dilemma produced by placing equal validity on all voices in research (e.g. where pragmatism would argue regarding making the ability to make authoritative claims) (Parr, 2015) and producing research findings which are obfuscating in the language used, or over-emphasise complexity and confusion, and do not lead to research findings which can be easily applied (Crossley, 2003). In contrast, pragmatism emphasises the *inter-subjective* (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011). Thus, pragmatism provides an opportunity for insight into how rape myths can exist as part of the interactions between an individual and their environment (i.e. contingent upon an individual - either observer, or target of a rape myth) and independent of an individual (i.e. embedded into everyday behaviours, through the gendered qualities and practices of a setting). Thus, although there may be some consistency in a person's level of RMA, there will also be differences according to the target of a myth and context in which a myth is considered. This feminist-informed pragmatic perspective therefore represents a novel framing of the existence and transmission of RMA.

A further benefit of adopting a feminist-informed pragmatic stance, is that it lays the foundations for mixing methodologies and methods. The present programme of research argues that mixing methodologies or methods is required in order to provide insight into a sensitive, complex and inter-disciplinary topic

such as sexual violence. Juxtaposing approaches typically associated with 'quantitative' methodologies and 'qualitative' methodologies provides an opportunity to develop the radical middle and also a means of 'balancing out' the strengths and limitations of different approaches (Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011).

Conducting mixed-methods research first involved explicitly reviewing the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research, which was beneficial for operationalising key variables/concepts. An additional benefit of the mixed-methods design adopted in this thesis is that it was *emergent* (Creswell, 2007). This allowed the research to explore the issues identified as relevant by research using one method during one phase, with another approach in a later phase.

The chief benefit of the mixed-methods design adopted is the novel insights generated from mixing methodologies and methods that otherwise would not have been identified if conducting mono-method research (i.e. the ability to generate meta-inferences). Examples of original contributions in this area include: issues around socially desirable responding, deep/surface acceptance, notions of fairness, and gendered RMA. The meta-inference arising from the empirical findings from each phase of the research suggests that, at least to a degree, observers' are aware of how their acceptance of rape myths shapes others' impressions of them. Additionally, that observers reflect on how acceptance resonates with their sense of being a fair, rationale and ethical being. This process of reflection shapes how they accept myths in different ways in relation to victim and perpetrator gender, in different ecological settings. This is similar to previous research's findings that identify RMA as being shaped by BJW

and DAT, which observers use to help make sense of themselves and their environment (Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015).

Recommendations for philosophical stand-point and methodology.

RMAS would benefit from exploring research questions from diverse perspectives, using diverse methodologies and methods. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to conduct research from diverse worldviews, to challenge the current over-reliance on post-positivist and constructionist paradigms. This thesis demonstrates the benefit of adopting a feminist-informed pragmatic philosophical standpoint, including its quality of facilitating methodological pluralism (Mahalik, 2014). However, other researchers have adopted feminist-informed critical realist philosophies which provide different perspectives on gender, rape myths and sexual violence (e.g. C. Cohen, 2014). Similar to pragmatism, critical realism is aligned with a transformative paradigm and posits that an internal and external world exist, which is also conducive to mixed-methods research (Bergin, Wells, & Owen, 2008; McEvoy & Richards, 2006).

Complex and sensitive social phenomena, such as sexual violence, requires an approach to research which is nuanced and multi-faceted. This has led numerous authors to call for methodological pluralism and mixed-methods research in this field (Mahalik, 2014; McPhail, 2016; Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2013). The present thesis advocates the use of mixing methods/methodologies in future research, in order to develop the 'radical middle' and new insights into old and/or ongoing issues (Onwuegbuzie, 2012).

The literature describing quality assurance specific to mixed-methods/methodologies research needs to be expanded. Publishing researchers' reflections on the application of criteria, challenges encountered and

how they were addressed could act as case studies, to guide future research. Consolidating conventions for assuring quality will help to further reduce the barriers encountered by mixed-methods researchers when disseminating research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Methods. The present programme of research is significant with regards to the contributions it has made in developing understanding of gendered rape myths, through reviewing the methods and tools used to measure RMA, and applying innovative data collection and analysis techniques to examine gendered RMA in different ways. This provided insight into the sensitivity, framing, relevance and responsiveness of typical statements that are intended to capture RMA, in relation to victim and perpetrator gender.

Questions have previously been raised over the capacity of questionnaires to capture RMA (and only acceptance of rape myths, rather than other types of attitude) in a way that is truly representative of the beliefs/attitudes held (Reece, 2013, 2014; J. Shaw et al., 2017). For example, research by O'Connor et al. (2018) identified that when spontaneously generated, students tended to articulate myths in more subtle forms than typically presented in RMA questionnaires. Indeed, support professionals in the present thesis raised concerns over the framing of some myths as “blatant” and very “obvious” and that people are wary of endorsing such statements (even if they agreed with them) in many ecological settings, because they knew this would present them as a ‘victim-blamer’. Therefore, concerns regarding the utility of questionnaires may be justified. However, this thesis also demonstrates their benefits. For example, presenting the myths in the original context of a measure of RMA and analysing this quantitatively and presenting them in the context of a TAI study revealed

striking differences. Patterns of findings from the quantitative and qualitative phases of research suggested a disparity in the levels of RMA recorded using questionnaires (i.e. low) and the experiences of professionals' supporting survivors (i.e. myths are ubiquitous). This contradiction may be influenced by the challenge of measuring *covert* RMA vs more blatant and obviously victim-blaming statements. Factors that influence gendered RMA include: the content of the myth; the target featured in a myth (e.g. a stranger, a celebrity, a family member), and; the context in which a myth is considered (e.g. formal vs informal setting). None of the questionnaires reviewed in the systematic review were able to account for all these factors. Furthermore, findings of this programme of research indicated that acceptance of myths may be demonstrated through *withholding* positive responses to survivors and/or using disguised language (i.e. couched in terms of being a rational observer).

A key finding from this research is that recording global scores of RMA are not particularly helpful. They are unlikely to differentiate between male and female victims, or victims of male and female perpetrators - as these differences exist at a more nuanced level. Instead, questionnaires need to explore types or categories of rape myths. The present thesis suggests that the RAQ (Granger, 2008) has potential to do this and in its adapted form was able to detect differentiated levels of acceptance relating to victim and perpetrator gender. However, further research is required to validate and develop this questionnaires in the UK context.

The TAI has been identified as a method that has not been applied within RMAs, but can help to elicit nuanced talk and rich data for exploring the ways in which gender is discussed in relation to settings, setting qualities and practices.

It therefore has implications for evaluating and developing rape myth questionnaires, but also potentially vignette methods and qualitative comparative research (which is missing from the literature reviewed).

This thesis adopted a hybrid, deductive-inductive method of TA, which is novel to this area of research and is still in its infancy as an approach. It demonstrates the potential for bridging the gap between inductive and deductive methodologies/methods - increasing the flexibility with which research questions can be responded to. For example, although not used in the present thesis, it may also provide a means of including opportunities for conversion of qualitative data into quantitative data (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2011) if using a code-book (J. L. Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013).

Recommendations for methods. A number of concerns regarding quantitative measurement of RMA have been raised by this thesis. However, unlike some other authors whom advocate eschewing such methods (e.g. Savoia, 2016; J. Shaw et al., 2017), this thesis argues that, when applied in isolation, any method will have limitations in the extent to which it captures gendered RMA. For example, in eschewing quantitative methods, authors may argue for *replacing* them with qualitative methods using naturally occurring talk (e.g. Savoia, 2016; J. Shaw et al., 2017). However, even this research is likely to be influenced by findings from research employing questionnaire methods. For example, even Shaw et al.'s (2017) novel research analysing police reports for evidence of RMA utilised a coding framework developed from the myth types derived from the IRMAS (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). Therefore, it is important to ensure that these limitations are identified and ameliorated where possible. To a degree, this will be achieved through ensuring that questionnaires are subjected

to psychometric validation and regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current, as this thesis highlights that their expression changes over time and across different regions (Deming, 2017; McMahon et al., 2011; O'Connor et al., 2018). However, guarding against the limitations of measuring RMA using questionnaires, whilst retaining their benefits (i.e. in prediction of outcomes and correlations with other attitudinal variables), will involve supplementing data gathered using these tools with other methods of data collection and analysis. In particular, collecting quantitative and qualitative data and mixing these to generate meta-inferences may help to shed new light on the topic.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that RMA measures that aim to capture attitudes towards male victims and victims of female perpetrators need further psychometric evaluation and development. There is an over-reliance on poor quality, unidimensional RMA measures for male victims (Chapleau et al., 2008), and few measures of FFR related RMA at all (let alone validated) (I. Anderson & Quinn, 2009; Carlson, 2013; Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017). The impact of using unidimensional and/or poorly validated measures of RMA is to lower the overall quality of research. In turn, poorer quality research has been implicated in spurious findings relating to victim/perpetrator gender and RMA (see chapter 5 for a discussion of this). Furthermore, if the aim of incorporating a measure of RMA is to provide an index of 'rape culture' (Klaw et al., 2005), the present thesis argues that the measure should contain items pertaining to male victims, victims of female perpetrators, combinations thereof, as well as outside the gender-binary alongside MFR. Otherwise this provides only a partial picture of a society's 'rape culture' is provided, and some groups of survivors continue to be marginalised in the evidence-base. Therefore, the development and validation of

good quality gendered RMA measures should be a priority in future efforts, to facilitate transformative praxis in research.

The TAI method would be useful for exploring 'covert' and subtle types of RMA with different populations and in different ecological settings. For example, it could be used in a similar approach to the present study (i.e. presented in the format of a questionnaire) or it could be used in a more scenario-based research, to understand the nuances of RMA as influenced by victim and perpetrator gender. Further research needs to explore the impact of measures that record RMA in relation to an 'abstract other', rather than someone known personally by (e.g. family member), or known to the observer (e.g. celebrity). Although there are important ethical considerations to conducting research into these issues, the present thesis suggests that different patterns of responses are likely to occur based on the target of the rape myth. This has important implications for training and education initiatives, as well as victim support practice.

Empirical evidence-base. This thesis has helped to synthesise and critique the existing evidence relating to gendered RMA. A key issue encountered is that the lack of gender-inclusive theory and approaches to research has resulted in very little comparative research being conducted - particularly that takes into account perpetrator gender (see chapter 5 discussion). Much gender comparative research that has been conducted has focused on the impact of RMA (or conceptually similar variables) on victim and/or perpetrator blame attributions. That is, viewing RMA as an observer-related intermediary variable, rather than the impact of gender on rape myth manifestation and salience as an outcome in its own right. However, this thesis has demonstrated that distinguishing between these concepts is important because, although

related, RMA and blame are distinct concepts. Examining the role of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA, through gendered setting qualities and practices, has provided insight into why different types of myth appear to be accepted to different degrees for these groups. This has important implications for research design and data collection tools (such as scales), many of which may conflate victim and perpetrator status with gender.

Through exploring the impact of victim and perpetrator gender on RMA simultaneously, this thesis highlights that researchers can't afford to overlook perpetrator gender in research. Neither should perpetrator gender be left unspecified in the tools used by researchers to measure RMA. Perpetrator gender is used alongside other cues (such as indicators of the sexual preference effect) to interpret the characteristics of ecological settings as risky or not. Or it acts as a barrier to interpreting all other setting characteristics and renders sexual violence invisible and unspoken. This echoes Girshick's (2002) reflection on the state of understanding of FFR (and I argue extends to FMR), which does not appear to have improved substantively: "To say, "my rapist was a woman" brings no image to mind for most people. Instead, the questions of "how could that be?" and "what did she actually do?" reflect people's disbelief. For most people, these questions do not have answers; it is inconceivable to them that females are sexually violent" (p. 1502).

Importantly, the present research supports assertions by Girshick (2002) that it is not only the public who may lack the language to talk about abusive sexual behaviour within the context of FFR (and I argue FMR), but also the advocates whom are trying to support them. This thesis argues that this is a consequence, at least in part, of the over-reliance on gender-specific theories of

the aetiology of sexual violence and RMA and a limited evidence-base with which to inform gender-inclusive practice.

Recommendations for the empirical evidence-base. The socioecological framework adopted in the present thesis would be beneficial as an analytical framework, for systematic reviews and empirical research, to address the gaps in research identified in previous chapters. For example, a systematic review of the factors influencing victims' of female perpetrators experiences of secondary victimisation at each level of the socioecological is required.

Future research is needed to explore confounds and correlates of gendered RMA: particularly in relation to observer notions of ethics, fairness and rationality. Also, exploring whether reducing other forms of stigmatised beliefs (e.g. mental health stigma) has positive impacts on the mechanisms which appear to underpin differences in RMA arising from victim and perpetrator gender (i.e. gendered perceptions of risk and vulnerability) is needed.

Theorists and researchers should build opportunities for collaboration with services, professionals and survivors when designing and conducting research and interventions. Furthermore, the open science agenda, with its emphasis on enhancing transparency in and access to evidence should be supported, as this will help to ensure that evidence is available to the third-sector to inform practice.

Policy and practice. This thesis argues that gender is a core component of survivors' experience of risk, sexually violent acts, recovery, identity, responses to them. Therefore, it should feature prominently in policy and practice. However, the ways in which victim and perpetrator gender are articulated in policy, and used to organise and deploy resources in the third

sector, need urgent attention (Fogg, 2019; Girshick, 2002; Lewis et al., 2015). This issue is particularly pronounced in relation to the gendering of spaces (online and offline) in support services (Girshick, 2002; Javaid, 2016c, 2017b), and the heterosexual assumptions that are implicit in this (Girshick, 2002; Rumney, 2014).

Chapter 8 explored survivor support as an ecological setting, which is bounded by chrono-, macro-, exo-/meso-, micro- an individual level factors. It considered how services attempt to destabilise the gendered setting qualities and practices that promote gendered RMA. For example, in providing women-only spaces in which female victims of male perpetrators are 'free from' violence and intimidation and 'free to' be cognitively, emotionally and creatively expressive (Lewis et al., 2015). This thesis suggests that explicitly changing the qualities and practices of a setting is beneficial for survivors and those supporting them. However, the challenge is finding ways in which to challenge setting qualities and practices in a gender-inclusive manner. That is, creating women-only spaces may reduce the features of a setting which reinforce and are compounded by gendered RMA for female victims of male perpetrators. However, it may have the opposite effective for male survivors, and female survivors of female perpetrators - by reinforcing these groups as anomalies which don't reflect the 'real rape' myth. Ironically, these efforts appear to reinforce gender as a binary variable with mutually exclusive categories.

Policy review and research collaborations between support professionals, survivors and academics are required to identify ways of balancing the needs of survivors of different gender-identities, challenging the setting qualities and practices which reinforce gendered RMA and evaluating which approaches work

best, for whom and why. This thesis argues against mandating a single approach to victim-survivor support (Simmonds, 2019). Instead, the third sector needs to be adequately funded and supported by government and statutory services in offering choice in approaches to support. However, research findings informing this thesis suggest that services want to be able to offer choice and flexibility, but are hampered by funding/commissioning cultures which are not evidence-based and a toxic culture of competition between services for limited funding (Simmonds, 2019).

Addressing inequalities in access to support arising from gender must also involve addressing other sources of inequality, including: socioeconomic deprivation, digital exclusion and rural-urban divides (Donne et al., 2018; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). Furthermore, to be successful in combating gendered RMA, this thesis argues that other stereotypic and prejudiced ways of thinking, the 'isms' and 'phobias' (e.g. sexism, racism, homophobia/biphobia, transphobia, faith, ableism) must also be addressed (Aosved & Long, 2006; Hockett et al., 2009). Many of these factors appear indicative of wider systems of oppression and intolerance, which bolster gendered RMA (Aosved & Long, 2006). Therefore, addressing inequalities must involve addressing the social structures underpinning inequalities, rather than adopting individualistic-level policies (Stoll et al., 2018, 2017). Ultimately, gender is only one of many person constructs that influence perceptions of survivors and responses to their disclosure (Aosved & Long, 2006; Donne et al., 2018; Sanders-McMurtry, 2004). This highlights the need for policy and practice to be informed by intersectionist feminist perspectives, and also integrative feminist theory that aims to produce gender-inclusive and more nuanced theories of sexual violence

(Girshick, 2002; McPhail, 2016; Turchik et al., 2016). There is a need for sustained efforts to bring individuals from the nexus of minority identities in relation to sexual violence, onto the research, political and policy agendas (Donne et al., 2018; Mahoney et al., 2014; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2016). Emphasising the bridging social ties (Bond & Wasco, 2017) between survivors from different gender-identities (e.g. the right to social justice), and between services, professionals and researchers from different fields (e.g. commitment to the transformative paradigm), may encourage a community response and mobilisation of resources to prevent sexual violence and support survivors.

Specialised knowledge of (local) context, and developing relationships with stakeholders in social and criminal justice, and health, are vital to effective survivor support (Hall, 2018; Hawkins & Taylor, 2015; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). This thesis has highlighted how gendered myths can evolve and are shaped by local history and social events. Therefore, strategies to respond to them need to be aware of this, otherwise the 'fit' between an intervention and the setting in which it is conducted will be poor. Such knowledge is important to informing regional strategy to prevent and respond to sexual violence and should be used in evidence-based funding/commissioning decisions (Hawkins & Taylor, 2015; Ullman & Townsend, 2007). Indeed, the purpose of introducing in England and Wales a local commissioning framework in 2012, and Police and Crime Commissioners in 2014 was intended to foster greater response to local need (Hall, 2018; Simmonds, 2019). However, this approach appears to have fallen short of achieving this (Hall, 2018; Simmonds, 2019). This thesis argues that it is the implementation of these frameworks that needs attention, rather than their goals.

Recommendations for policy and practice. Legal and support reforms have led to some improvements for survivors seeking help from the third-sector, and successful outcomes from the CJS (see chapter 2 for an overview). However, reforms must continue and be expanded. In particular, this thesis supports calls to make the legal definition of rape gender-inclusive (Rumney, 2007, 2008). Arguments against this have typically been framed as gender-neutral laws failing to reflect the gender-asymmetry of the prevalence of sexual violence (i.e. women are typically victims and men are typically perpetrators) (Rumney, 2007, 2008). However, the present research argues that this has negative consequences for male victims, but also female victims of female perpetrators and individuals from other gender-identities. Furthermore, the explicit and implicit organisation of services around victim and perpetrator gender may lead some survivors to feel that services are not relevant to them, and would not be welcoming (Girshick, 2002; Javaid, 2016b, 2016c). Efforts to identify effective ways of balancing ‘gendered spaces’ is therefore required.

There is a need to focus policy and interventions at the system-level, rather than the individualistic-level (Stoll et al., 2018, 2017). One approach which this thesis suggests may be beneficial, is to encourage programmes of bystander intervention and social justice/anti-violence ally programmes (see chapter 8 for a discussion).

When designing and conducting interventions to challenge gendered RMA and its consequences, professionals working in particular regions and with particular communities should be invited to collaborate (Ullman & Townsend, 2007). Local knowledge of the historical barriers to support and potential local myths will help to ensure interventions are tailored effectively. Another approach

to enhancing interventions is to work with relevant professional or regulatory bodies, such as the BPS. Collaborations could involve facilitating CPD or cross-training opportunities, thereby disseminating gender-inclusive survivor support practice and vice-versa. That is, these collaborations may provide opportunities for knowledge transfer which can enrich third-sector provision, and foster helpful responses to victim disclosure and preventing sexual violence in other arenas (e.g. mental health services).

Technology may provide a means for gendering spaces, as well as addressing service accessibility issues (Le et al., 2019; Lowe & Balfour, 2015; Scurlock-Evans & Mahoney, 2017). For example, Ben's Place is a virtual support hub which is run by Survivors West Yorkshire: <https://survivorswestyorkshire.org.uk/bens-place/> This service represents an explicit gendering of an online space, to challenge gendered setting qualities and practices that may discourage male survivors from seeking help. Furthermore, as services are available online, this helps to support access for male survivors whom otherwise may have to travel long distances across Yorkshire, to attend male survivor services physically (although offline support services are also offered). However, for such an approach to be truly inclusive there must be a wider commitment by the government to reduce digital poverty and exclusion (Office for National Statistics, 2019). Otherwise the use of technology will not increase access to survivors from the most disadvantaged or vulnerable sections of society. However, with increasing access to technology in private homes, including smart phones, this may provide a vehicle for supporting hard-to-reach groups.

Retrospective reflexivity

Chapter 4 outlined the importance of reflexivity to the practice of mixed-methods research and provided a prospective reflexive statement. However, a retrospective reflexive statement is also important (Attia & Edge, 2017); that is, reflecting on how the research has impacted on the researcher.

I feel that this thesis has affected me as a researcher in numerous ways. Firstly, it has reinforced the importance of adopting gender-inclusive approaches to understanding, prevent and responding to sexual violence; I am therefore committed to demonstrating this approach in my future research, teaching, and social justice and support activities.

My understanding of research methodology (including ontological, epistemological and axiological stances) has improved markedly through learning 'what works'. This has given me confidence to apply novel frameworks and techniques to complex research issues, such as that of sexual violence. Therefore, this has both influenced my approach to own research, but also how I review and teach research methods.

I believe that *all* theses will involve periods of challenge, as you encounter hurdles in research, work and personal life whilst you complete them. This has underscored to me the importance of building resilience as a researcher, and to identify new ways of working if old ones aren't bringing you closer to your goals. I think that part of this process is reflecting on gratitude and hopefulness: I am grateful for the efforts of everyone whom has been involved in this thesis - particularly my supervisory team, participants and family and friends; I am grateful for the opportunity to complete this thesis and grow as a feminist-pragmatist researcher, and; I am hopeful that this thesis has contributed to constructive

debates about effective ways of responding to the needs of survivors of sexual violence.

Research delimitations and future directions

I would like to acknowledge the fact that the present research explores RMA of victim-survivors from various perspectives, but not those of victim-survivors themselves. That is, findings are used to *infer* how gendered RMA may impact on victim-survivors' decisions and experiences of support. Furthermore, across the thesis there have been allusions to the impact of the FRMH on victim-survivor decision-making and support through their consistency/congruency with rape myths pertaining to them, their character, behaviour, characteristics of their assault, relationship with the perpetrator, and characteristics of the perpetrator. This thesis has explored found evidence to support this assertion. However, the FRMH was not tested explicitly. Future research, informed by the findings presented in this thesis, is planned to explore, using a similar methodology to Anders (2007) to model this in relation to reporting decisions of male and female victim survivors, using indicators derived from the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

In order to address the gaps in theory and research identified in the present thesis, I also intend to conduct further research using the socioecological theory of gender and the TAI method (employed in chapter 7), to explore how gendered setting qualities and practices influence RMA for survivors from transgender, non-binary gender, gender-queer and gender-fluid identities.

Conclusions

Victim and perpetrator gender do influence the acceptance of rape myths (stereotypical views of victims, perpetrators and offences), but they are

situationally bound: both in the gendered qualities and practices implied in the rape myth itself, but also in the context in which it is considered by an observer. As a result, gendered RMA influences the ways in which support services for adults have to justify their existence, how they respond to the needs of victim-survivors, and ultimately the ways in which victim-survivors experience support.

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Appendix A – Example search strategy

Database: PsycINFO

Key word search

(gender or sex or (mal* and femal*) or (m#n and wom#n))

(Victim or survivor or complainant) OR (offender or perpetrator or assailant or defendant)

(rape or "sexual assault" or "sexual coerc*") AND ("myt* accept*" or "myt* endors*" or "myt* adher*" or blam* or responsib* or fault* or cause or "myt* aggre*" or myt*)

Limiters: English language, date range (May 2018, inclusive) - applied to abstracts.

Identified: hits. 679

8	(Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004)	✓					✓		✓			✓			✓			
9	(James, 2018)	✓					✓		✓			✓			✓			
10	(Kahn et al., 2011)	✓					✓		✓			✓			✓			
11	(Rylands & Nesca, 2012)	✓					✓		✓			✓			✓			
12	(Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			
13	(Granger, 2008)	✓			✓			✓					✓				✓	
14	Schneider, Ee, J., & Aronson (1994)	✓			✓				✓			✓			✓			
15	(Coble, 2017)	✓			✓					✓		✓					✓	
16	Davies, Gilston & Rogers (2012)	✓			✓					✓	✓				✓			
17	(Berry, 1991)	✓			✓					✓		✓					✓	
18	Chapleau, Oswald & Russell (2008)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			

19	King & Hanranan (2015)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			
20	Reitz-Kruger, Mummet & Troupe (2017)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			
21	Rosenstein (2015)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			
22	(Rosenstein & Carroll, 2015)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			
23	Beyers, Leonard, Mays & Rosen (2000)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			
24	Burczyk & Standing (1989)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			
25	Burt & DeMello (2003)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			
26	Cruz & DeLamarter (1988)	✓			✓			✓				✓						✓
27	Davies, Pollard, & Archer (2001)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			
28	Davies, Smith & Rogers (2009)	✓			✓			✓				✓			✓			

29	Felson & Palmore (2018)	✓			✓				✓			✓			✓			
30	Ford, Liwag-McLamb & Foley (1998)	✓			✓				✓			✓			✓			
31	Howard (1984)* - study 1	✓			✓				✓			✓			✓			
32	Judson, Johnson & Perez (2013)	✓			✓				✓			✓			✓			
33	Lawler (2002)	✓			✓				✓			✓					✓	
34	Piatak (2015)	✓			✓				✓			✓					✓	
35	Seaman, Werlinger & Wolter (2001)	✓			✓				✓			✓			✓			
36	Sheridan (2005)	✓			✓				✓			✓					✓	
37	Tomkins (2016)			✓	✓				✓			✓					✓	
38	Anderson & Lyons (2005)	✓			✓				✓		✓				✓			
39	Anderson & Quinn (2009)	✓			✓				✓		✓				✓			

40	Mitchell, Angelone, Kohlberger, & Hirschman (2009)	✓			✓			✓		✓			✓				
41	(Shu, 2015)	✓			✓			✓				✓				✓	
42	(Vincent, 2009)	✓			✓			✓		✓						✓	
43	Wakelin & Long (2003)	✓			✓			✓		✓				✓			
44	White & Kurpius (2002)/ White (2001)	✓			✓			✓		✓							✓
45	(McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, & Crawford, 1990) - study 1	✓			✓			✓		✓				✓			
46	(McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, & Crawford, 1990) - study 2	✓			✓			✓		✓				✓			
47	(Anderson, 2004)	✓			✓			✓		✓				✓			
48	(Spencer, 1996; Spencer)	✓				✓			✓			✓					✓

	& Tan, 1999)																	
49	(Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992)	✓				✓		✓			✓				✓			
50	(Parkinson, 2014) - study 1	✓				✓			✓		✓						✓	
51	(Parkinson, 2014) - study 2	✓				✓			✓		✓						✓	
52	(Davies & Boden, 2012)	✓				✓			✓		✓				✓			
53	(Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006)	✓				✓			✓		✓				✓			
54	Sleath (2010)	✓			✓			✓			✓						✓	
55	Javaid (2017a, 2017b)		✓				✓	✓			✓							✓
56	Anderson, Beattie & Spencer (2001)			✓	✓				✓		✓				✓			
57	Anderson (1999)			✓	✓				✓		✓				✓			

Note: * Only findings for Howard's (1984) study 1 are included in this review, as study 2 combined observations across robbery and rape scenarios (i.e. could not be separated)

Table B2

Description of quantitative methods used

Record number	References (N = 53)	Quantitative study design		Quasi-experimental design (N = 47)		Methods		Sampling method				College sample?	% Rating
		Analytical cross-sectional study (n = 9)	Quasi-experimental (n = 47)	Between groups (n = 38)	Mixed between/Within (n = 9)	Vignettes (n = 45)	Solely questionnaires (n = 11)	Opportunity/convenience (n = 46)	Snowball (n = 2)	Random (n = 3)	Unspecified (n = 9)	(n = 45)	
1	(Smith, Pine, & Hawley, 1988)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	29
2	(Trangsrud, 2010)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	57
3	Carlson (2013)		✓	✓		✓		✓					14
4	(Walfield, 2016)	✓		N/A	N/A		✓	✓					100
5	(Anderson & Bissell, 2011)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	43
6	(Ayala, Kotary, & Hetz, 2018)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	57
7	(Doude, 2008)		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓	33
8	(Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	43
9	(James, 2018)		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				14
10	(Kahn et al., 2011)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	43
11	(Rylands & Nesca, 2012)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	71

12	(Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017)	✓		N/A	N/A		✓	✓	✓				63
13	(Granger, 2008)		✓		✓		✓	✓					71
14	Schneider, Ee, J., & Aronson (1994)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	43
15	(Coble, 2017)		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓	57
16	Davies, Gilston & Rogers (2012)	✓		N/A	N/A	✓		✓				✓	57
17	(Berry, 1991)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	29
18	Chapleau, Oswald & Russell (2008)	✓		N/A	N/A		✓	✓				✓	86
19	King & Hanranan (2015)	✓		N/A	N/A		✓	✓		✓		✓	57
20	Reitz-Kruger, Mummert & Troupe (2017)	✓		N/A	N/A		✓	✓				✓	29
21	Rosenstein (2015)		✓	✓			✓	✓				✓**	75
22	(Rosenstein & Carroll, 2015)	✓		N/A	N/A		✓	✓				✓**	86
23	Beyers, Leonard, Mays & Rosen (2000)		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	29
24	Burczyk & Standing (1989)		✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	29
25	Burt & DeMello (2003)		✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	43
26	Cruz & DeLamarter (1988)		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	14

27	Davies, Pollard, & Archer (2001)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	43
28	Davies, Smith & Rogers (2009)		✓	✓		✓		✓					43
29	Felson & Palmore (2018)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	29
30	Ford, Liwag-McLamb & Foley (1998)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	43
31	Howard (1984) * - study 1		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓	43
32	Judson, Johnson & Perez (2013)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	57
33	Lawler (2002)		✓	✓		✓		✓					57
34	Piatak (2015)		✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	29
35	Seaman, Werlinger & Wolter (2001)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	29
36	Sheridan (2005)		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	71
37	Tomkins (2016)	✓		N/A	N/A	✓		✓				✓	71
38	Anderson & Lyons (2005)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	57
39	Anderson & Quinn (2009)		✓	✓			✓				✓	✓	
40	Mitchell, Angelone, Kohlberger, & Hirschman (2009)		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	57
41	(Shu, 2015)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	

42	(Vincent, 2009)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓** *	33
43	Wakelin & Long (2003)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	43
44	White & Kurpius (2002)/ White (2001)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	71
45	(McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, & Crawford, 1990) - study 1		✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	14
46	(McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, & Crawford, 1990) - study 2		✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	14
47	(Anderson, 2004)		✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	14
48	(Spencer, 1996; Spencer & Tan, 1999)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	43
49	(Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992)		✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	43
50	(Parkinson, 2014) - study 1		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	29
51	(Parkinson, 2014) - study 2		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	43
52	(Davies & Boden, 2012)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	29
53	(Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006)		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓	29
54	Sleath (2010)	✓		N/A	N/A		✓	✓				✓	83

56	Anderson, Beattie, & Spender (2001) (quant element)		****	✓		✓		✓				✓	56
57	Anderson (1999) (quant element)		****		✓	✓		✓				✓	43

Note: * Only findings for Howard's (1984) study 1 are included in this review, as study 2 combined observations across robbery and rape scenarios (i.e. could not be separated), ** Naval academy students, *** Mental health students with client-contact roles, **** quantitative data collected as part of mixed-methods research, created via quantitising qualitative interview data.

Table B3

Description of qualitative methods used

Record number	References (N = 3)	Qualitative study design			Method			Theoretical framework	Sampling method			College sample? (n = 3)	Quality % Rating
		Inductive	Deductive	Both inductive and deductive elements	Vignette/ stimulus	Interview	Open ended questionnaire		Purposive (n = 1)	Opportunity/ convenience (n = 3)	Snowball (n = 1)		
37	Tomkins (2016)			✓	✓		✓	Rape myths, blame and heteronormativity		✓		✓	60
55	Javaid (2017a, 2017b)	✓				✓		Hegemonic masculinity, rape myths and the social ideal of gender	✓		✓		100
56	Anderson, Beattie, & Spender (2001) (qual element)			✓	✓	✓		Blame attribution processes, including the role of covariation information.		✓		✓	80
57	Anderson (1999) (qual element)			✓	✓	✓		Blame attribution processes, including characterological and behavioural		✓		✓	57

Appendix C – Systematic review data extraction templates

Extraction template: Quantitative

Reference	
Published or grey literature?	
Study design	
Methods	
Sampling	
Participants	
Details: IVs	
Details: DVs	
Effects investigated	
Observer characteristics investigated	
Measures used	
Victim gender findings	
Perpetrator gender findings	
Victim/perpetrator gender findings	
Observer characteristics findings	
Tool used	
Rating	
Action to be taken	

JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Quasi-Experimental Studies (non-randomized experimental studies)

Reviewer L Scurlock-Evans

Date

Record Number

	Yes	No	Unclear	Not applicable
1. Is it clear in the study what is the 'cause' and what is the 'effect' (i.e. there is no confusion about which variable comes first)?				
2. Were the participants included in any comparisons similar?				
3. Were the participants included in any comparisons receiving similar treatment/care, other than the exposure or intervention of interest?				
4. Was there a control group?				
5. Were there multiple measurements of the outcome both pre and post the intervention/exposure?				
6. Was follow up complete and if not, were differences between groups in terms of their follow up adequately described and analyzed?				
7. Were the outcomes of participants included in any comparisons measured in the same way?				
8. Were outcomes measured in a reliable way?				
9. Was appropriate statistical analysis used?				

Overall appraisal:

Include

Exclude

Seek further info

Comments (Including reason for exclusion):

Extraction template: qualitative

Reference	
Published or grey literature?	
Study design	
Methods	
Details	
Sampling	
Participants	

Main aim and focus of the study	
Themes identified relating to victim gender	
Themes identified relating to perpetrator gender	
Themes identified relating to victim/perpetrator gender	
Themes identified relating to observer characteristics	
Tool used	
Rating	
Action to be taken	

JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research

Reviewer _____ Date _____

Author _____ Year _____ Record Number

	Yes	No	Unclear	Not applicable
10. Is there congruity between the stated philosophical perspective and the research methodology?				
11. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the research question or objectives?				
12. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the methods used to collect data?				
13. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the representation and analysis of data?				
14. Is there congruity between the research methodology and the interpretation of results?				
15. Is there a statement locating the researcher culturally or theoretically?				
16. Is the influence of the researcher on the research, and vice-versa, addressed?				

17. Are participants, and their voices, adequately represented?				
18. Is the research ethical according to current criteria or, for recent studies, and is there evidence of ethical approval by an appropriate body?				
19. Do the conclusions drawn in the research report flow from the analysis, or interpretation, of the data?				

Overall appraisal: Include Exclude Seek further info

Comments (Including reason for exclusion):

Appendix D – Description of vignettes and scales used in reviewed literature

Table D1

Description of vignettes used in quantitative research.

No.	References	Vignette/scenario details	
		Vignette	Type of assault
1	(Smith, Pine, & Hawley, 1988)	Bespoke to present study	Case description format. Stranger rape (forced oral sex forced to perform oral sex).
2	(Trangsrud, 2010)	Bespoke to present study	Date rape scenario
3	Carlson (2013)	Vignettes adapted from (Ryan, 2011).	Three vignettes used depicting rape in context of: stranger, acquaintance and dating (i.e. deliberately manipulated)
5	(Anderson & Bissell, 2011)	Adapted from Richardson and Campbell (1982)	Acquaintance rape (varying alcohol/no alcohol consumption).
6	(Ayala, Kotary, & Hetz, 2018)	Bespoke to present study	Stranger and acquaintance (i.e. deliberately manipulated variable).
7	(Doude, 2008)	Bespoke to present study	Ambiguous acquaintance rape (presenting verbal coercion and verbal non-consent).
8	(Gerber, Cronin, & Steigman, 2004)	Vignette based on that by (Bell, Kuriloff, & Lottes, 1994)	Date rape (perpetrator bit the victim hard enough to break the skin).
9	(James, 2018)	Bespoke to present study	Unclear but involved alcohol
10	(Kahn et al., 2011)	Bespoke to present study	Acquaintance rape (forced oral sex and forced to perform oral sex)
11	(Rylands & Nesca, 2012)	Bespoke to present study	Unclear.
14	Schneider, Ee, J., & Aronson (1994)	Bespoke to present study	Stranger rape by multiple male assailants (involving both oral and anal rape) of a victim whose car broke down and was offered a lift by the assailant (i.e. took victim to difference scene in order to rape them). Fictional report format.
15	(Coble, 2017)	Unclear whether bespoke or adapted	Dating and acquaintance rape (i.e. variable deliberately manipulated).
16	Davies, Gilston & Rogers (2012)	Vignette – stranger rape involving a gay male and male victim – taken from Davies et al. (2001)	Stranger rape.
17	(Berry, 1991)	Vignette from Smith, Pine and Hawley (1988).	Case description format. Stranger rape (forced oral sex forced to perform oral sex).
23	Beyers, Leonard, Mays & Rosen (2000)	Bespoke to present study	Courtship abuse
24	Burczyk & Standing (1989)	Bespoke to present study	Character description in which victim was stated as having been sexually assaulted by a male acquaintance.

25	Burt & DeMello (2003)	Bespoke to present study	Acquaintance rape in the victim's place of residence.
26	Cruz & DeLamarter (1988)	Vignette from Howard (1984)	Case description format. Stranger rape (forced oral sex forced to perform oral sex, with or without physical violence).
27	Davies, Pollard, & Archer (2001)	Bespoke to present study	Stranger rape - victim walking home from work.
28	Davies, Smith & Rogers (2009)	Adapted from Davies et al. (2001)	Stranger rape - carried out in a car park as victim walked home from work.
29	Felson & Palmore (2018)	Bespoke to present study	Acquaintance rape in context of either being given a lift, party (unconscious) or taking back perpetrator to apartment (limited sexual activity).
30	Ford, Liwag-McLamb & Foley (1998)	Bespoke to present study	Acquaintance sexual assault (details not specified) - met someone in a bar went back to their house for a nightcap.
31	Howard (1984) - study 1	Bespoke to present study	Transcript of interview between victim and police officer. Stranger rape.
32	Judson, Johnson & Perez (2013)	Adapted from Davies et al. (2006)	Stranger rape at a party.
33	Lawler (2002)	Adapted from Ford et al. (1998).	Acquaintance sexual assault (details not specified) - met someone in a bar went back to their house for a nightcap.
34	Piatak (2015)	Adapted from Transgurd (2010)	Acquaintance rape involving alcohol by both victim and perpetrator in campus setting.
35	Seaman, Werlinger & Wolter (2001)	Adapted from Smith, Pine and Hawley (1988)	Case description format. Stranger rape (forced oral sex and forced vaginal/anal sex).
36	Sheridan (2005)	Bespoke to present study	Stranger and acquaintance (i.e. deliberately manipulated variable) - in a university setting.
37	Tomkins (2016)	Vignettes adapted from Cameron & Stritzke, 2003; Davies et al., 2006; Romero Sanchez et al., 2012; Sleath & Bull, 2010.	Sexual assault (unwanted touching without penetration) between two acquaintances.
38	Anderson & Lyons (2005)	Bespoke to present study	Newspaper article format: acquaintance rape by neighbour giving victim a lift in their car.
40	Mitchell, Angelone, Kohlberger, & Hirschman (2009)	Bespoke to present study	Stranger rape - graduate student walking home from the library at night.
41	(Shu, 2015)	Vignette - adapted from Davies et al. (2006) and McKimmie, Masser, and Bongiorno (2014).	Acquaintance rape at house party
42	(Vincent, 2009)	Bespoke to present study	Case description format: Stranger rape - victim on daily jog
43	Wakelin & Long (2003)	Adapted from Freetly and Kane (1995).	Stranger rape - carried out in public space (a lift) as victim walked to boyfriend/girlfriend's apartment.
44	White & Kurpius (2002)/ White (2001)	Adapted from Schult and Schneider (1991).	Stranger rape - victim's car broke down and man offering a lift forced oral and anal sex.
45	(McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, & Crawford, 1990) - study 1	Bespoke to present study	Stranger rape - victim hiking and assaulted by a male perpetrator who attacks them from behind.

46	(McCaul, Veltum, Boyechko, & Crawford, 1990) - study 2	Bespoke to present study	Stranger rape - victim hiking and assaulted by a male perpetrator who attacks them from behind.
47	(Anderson, 2004)	Bespoke to present study	Acquaintance rape - perpetrator walks home with victim, then forces his way into victim's home, knocks the victim down and rapes them whilst they are semi-conscious.
48	(Spencer, 1996; Spencer & Tan, 1999)	Adapted from Broussard, Wagner and Kazelskis (1991) and Smith, Pine and Hawley (1988).	Acquaintance rape - perpetrator is neighbour who knocks on the door when the victim is alone. Tells him to lie down on the sofa (victim doesn't know what to do so complies) and then fellates him for 15 minutes.
50	(Parkinson, 2014) - study 1	Bespoke to present study	Sexual assault (unwanted touching without penetration) by a stranger whom gave the victim a lift in their car.
51	(Parkinson, 2014) - study 2	Bespoke to present study	Sexual assault (unwanted touching without penetration) by a stranger on public transport.
52	(Davies & Boden, 2012)	Bespoke to present study	Stranger assault (unwanted touching without penetration) in a club whilst victim walking alone to the toilets.
53	(Davies, Pollard, & Archer, 2006)	Bespoke to present study	Stranger rape (forced oral sex - not clear if whether forced to perform oral sex or not) at a party.

Table D2

Description of measures used in the literature reviewed

Scales/questions used to measure RMA	Number of studies using
Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale and Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, including short forms (Payne et al., 1999)	7
Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (McMahon et al., 2011)	4
Attitudes Towards Rape Victims Scale (Ward, 1988)	1
Male Rape Myth Scale (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 1992), including a 7 item short form (King & Hanrahan, 2015)	6
Male Rape Myth Scale (Melanson, 1999), or adapted to include only male perpetrator questions,	6
Attitudes Towards Male Rape Victims Scale (I. Anderson & Quinn, 2009)	1
Bespoke measure of MRMA, including only female perpetrator items (Reitz-Krueger et al., 2017)	1
Adapted versions of the Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, varying victim and perpetrator gender (Carlson, 2013)	1
Adapted versions of the Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson Male Rape Myth Scale varying victim gender (Schulze & Koon-Magnin, 2017)	1
Male Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (MRMAS; Sleath, 2011)	1

The Rape Attitudinal Questionnaire (Granger, 2008)	1
Prison rape myth acceptance scale (King & Hanrahan, 2015)	1

<i>Scales/questions used to measure blame attributions</i>	Number of studies using
---	--------------------------------

Items created bespoke for the study	18
Items created bespoke for the study, but which specify the measures from which items were taken/adapted.	7
Davies, Pollard and Archer (2001) victim blame and perpetrator reactions questionnaire, and items adapted from Davies, Pollard and Archer (2001) (including Davies, Pollard and Archer, 2006).	7
Gerber et al.'s (2004) items, and items adapted from Gerber et al. (2004)	3
Case Reaction Questionnaire (Schult & Schneider, 1991)	3
Smith et al.'s (1988) cognitions underlying rape myths questionnaire, and items adapted from Smith et al. (1988)	3
Items adapted from Berger et al. (2008)	2
Kopper's Blame Attribution Scale (Kopper, 1996)	1

Appendix E – Comparisons of data collected across 2013 and 2016 waves

Data were compared across the two waves of data collection on key variables (i.e. the dependent variables and covariates) and no significant differences between the two were identified (see table E1). The two waves of data were therefore combined into one sample for further analyses.

Table E1

Man-Whitney U test results for key variables, by year of data collection (2013 vs 2016)

Variable	<i>p</i>
Dynamics of rape	.984
Likelihood of rape	.064
Significance of Rape	.553
Rape Claims	.180
Victim Deservedness	.939
Victim Resistance and Character	.093
Gender linked social roles	.056
Gender transcendent social roles	.989
Socially desirable responding	.754

Note. 2013 n = 370, 2016 n = 182.

Finally, participants from a range of countries participated. To improve interpretability only countries which research suggests should have substantial cultural similarities were included (21 individuals were excluded). These countries included: UK ($n = 507$), Ireland ($n = 4$), US ($n = 29$), Canada ($n = 4$) and Australia ($n = 8$), typically referred to as Anglosphere countries for this reason. To ensure responses were similar for participants from across these countries of residence, non-parametric tests (owing to very unbalanced cell sizes; Dancey and Reidy, 2001) were performed on key variables (see table x). No significant differences were identified between the countries on the variables except on socially desirable responding scores. Man-Whitney U pairwise comparisons indicated

that the only significant difference was between the UK ($M = 5.4$, $SD = 2.6$) and Australian ($M = 8.6$, $SD = 2.5$) participants scores ($p < .001$). However, these individuals comprise 1.4% of the sample and therefore this significant difference is unlikely to have substantive impact on analyses conducted and data was pooled.

Table E2

Kruskal Wallis test results for key continuous variables, by country of residence.

Variable	<i>p</i>
Dynamics of rape	.185
Likelihood of rape	.637
Significance of Rape	.428
Rape Claims	.507
Victim Deservedness	.907
Victim Resistance and Character	.969
Gender linked social roles	.204
Gender transcendent social roles	.969
Socially desirable responding	< .001

Appendix F – Identification of suitable covariates

Value inflation figures and correlation coefficients produced as part of the regression analyses suggest that no predictors were affected by multicollinearity (max. VIF value = 1.80, minimum Tolerance value = 0.580, maximum $r = .63$). Furthermore, although multivariate outliers may be present as indicated by mahal's distance (max. Mahal. Distance = 60.91), none of these exerted undue influences on the models (max. cook's distance = 0.15). This suggests that each of the seven potential covariates could be entered in combination without incurring problems with multicollinearity.

As ANCOVA is most effective when the smallest number of possible covariates are used, only the strongest predictors of the rape dynamics myth type were tested for appropriateness as covariates: gender-linked and gender transcendent social roles endorsement and participant gender. As gender linked and gender transcendent social roles were moderately positively correlated ($r = .34$), it was felt that entering both as covariates would be problematic (i.e. correlation of covariates, redundancy, reduced power and interpretability of results). Therefore, gender linked social roles, as the strongest overall predictor was retained alongside participant gender. However, when investigated the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes for ANCOVA was violated: the slopes of the regression lines for the covariate differed across participant gender, and combinations of participant and victim gender – indicating that it would not be appropriate to treat this variable as a continuous covariate. Following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2016) guidance, the variable was categorised (individuals high vs low in gender linked social roles endorsement) and a mixed

methods ANOVA, where the gender-linked social roles variable was entered alongside participant gender as another fixed factor, was performed.

Table F1

Levene's test of equality of error variances

Significance of Rape	$F(23,528) = 4.311, p < .001$
Rape Claims	$F(23,528) = 1.357, p = .125$
Victim Deservedness	$F(23,528) = 4.139, p < .001$
Victim Resistance and Character	$F(23,528) = 2.673, p < .001$

Appendix G – Identification of suitable items for the TAI task

Table G1

Item-level descriptive and inferential statistics by victim gender (for 'significance of rape', 'rape claims', 'victim character and resistance', and 'victim deservedness' myth subscales (N =552))

Item no.	Male victim (n = 268)		Female victim (n = 284)		Mann-Whitney U test		
	Mean rank	Mdn	Mean rank	Mdn	Z	p	r
1	258.18	5.00	293.79	6.00	-2.89	.004	.12
2	269.16	5.00	283.42	6.00	-1.16	.247	.05
4	298.95	5.00	255.31	5.00	-3.35	.001*	.14
5	259.30	6.00	292.73	6.00	-2.74	.006	.12
7	276.38	6.00	276.61	6.00	-0.02	.983	< .01
8	234.74	4.00	315.91	5.00	-6.14	<.001	-0.26
10	307.67	5.00	247.08	5.00	-4.64	<.001*	.20
11	275.01	6.00	277.90	6.00	-0.26	.795	.01
13	286.10	6.00	267.44	6.00	-1.77	.077	.08
14	279.74	6.00	273.44	6.00	-0.57	.570	.02
15	271.07	6.00	281.63	6.00	-1.02	.306	.04
16	302.93	6.00	251.56	5.00	-4.13	<.001*	.18
17	301.19	5.00	253.20	5.00	-3.67	<.001*	.16
18	275.29	6.00	277.64	6.00	-0.19	.849	.01
19	266.94	6.00	285.52	6.00	-2.59	.010	.11
20	262.85	6.00	289.38	6.00	-2.17	.030	.09
21	285.06	6.00	268.42	6.00	-1.37	.172	.06
22	286.63	6.00	266.95	6.00	-1.77	.078	.08
23	305.20	6.00	249.42	5.00	-4.59	<.001*	.20
26	274.09	5.00	278.77	5.00	-0.37	.713	.02

27	258.35	6.00	293.63	6.00	-3.69	< .001*	.16
28	265.20	6.00	287.16	6.00	-1.97	.049	.08
29	269.61	5.00	283.00	5.00	-1.05	.294	.04
30	275.22	5.00	277.71	5.00	-0.19	.849	.01
31	269.44	6.00	283.16	6.00	-1.28	.202	.05
32	269.96	5.00	282.67	5.00	-0.99	.320	.04
33	269.34	6.00	283.25	6.00	-1.38	.168	.06
34	268.72	6.00	283.85	6.00	-1.65	.099	.07
35	265.23	6.00	287.14	6.00	-1.81	.070	.08
36	273.85	6.00	279.00	6.00	-0.58	.563	.02
37	271.76	6.00	280.97	6.00	-0.92	.357	.04
39	266.48	6.00	285.96	6.00	-1.81	.070	.08
40	280.99	6.00	272.27	6.00	-0.78	.433	.03

Note. Items in bold are those selected as stimuli for the TAI task; “” represents statistically significant result following application of the Holm-Bonferroni correction. Owing to range restriction in individual items, significant differences are not always observable in the median scores. Therefore, the mean rank scores for each item are also included.*

Table G2

Item-level descriptive and inferential statistics by perpetrator gender (for 'significance of rape', 'rape claims', 'victim character and resistance', and 'victim deservedness' myth subscales (N =552)

Item no.	Neutral perpetrator (n = 184)		Male perpetrator (n = 183)		Female perpetrator (n = 185)		Kruskal-Wallis test		
	Mean rank	Mdn	Mean rank	Mdn	Mean rank	Mdn	H	p	r
1	276.69	6.00	261.20	5.00	291.44	6.00	4.014	.134	< .01
2	267.18	5.00	281.07	6.00	281.25	6.00	1.146	.564	.10
4	271.21	5.00	275.64	5.00	282.61	5.00	0.520	.771	.10
5	279.48	6.00	274.39	6.00	275.63	6.00	0.126	.939	.10
7	272.55	6.00	280.80	6.00	276.18	6.00	0.407	.816	.10
8	257.99	4.00	275.03	5.00	296.36	5.00	5.663	.059	.05
10	275.06	5.00	282.78	5.00	271.73	5.00	0.502	.778	.10
11	273.36	6.00	275.99	6.00	280.13	6.00	0.251	.882	.10
13	266.30	6.00	280.35	6.00	282.84	6.00	1.910	.385	.03
14	266.79	6.00	276.49	6.00	286.16	6.00	2.041	.360	.03
15	267.21	6.00	284.76	6.00	277.58	6.00	1.951	.377	.03
16	277.36	6.00	271.17	6.00	280.92	6.00	0.420	.811	.10
17	268.24	5.00	286.08	5.00	275.23	5.00	1.258	.533	.10
18	275.66	6.00	277.22	6.00	276.62	6.00	0.011	.995	.10
19	270.47	6.00	283.84	6.00	275.24	6.00	2.383	.304	.03
20	272.83	6.00	271.31	6.00	285.29	6.00	1.056	.590	.10
21	268.80	6.00	285.73	6.00	275.04	6.00	1.314	.518	.03
22	279.74	6.00	271.18	6.00	278.53	6.00	0.460	.795	.10
23	273.63	6.00	278.96	6.00	276.93	6.00	0.131	.937	.10
26	273.90	5.00	274.49	5.00	281.08	5.00	0.263	.877	.10
27	271.86	6.00	268.43	6.00	289.10	6.00	3.600	.165	.03

28	270.46	6.00	276.63	6.00	282.38	6.00	0.764	.682	.10
29	279.61	5.00	263.01	5.00	286.75	5.00	2.433	.296	.03
30	275.70	5.00	272.59	5.00	281.16	5.00	0.294	.863	.10
31	278.56	6.00	277.26	6.00	273.70	6.00	0.146	.929	.10
32	275.70	5.00	271.95	5.00	281.80	5.00	0.404	.817	.10
33	269.14	6.00	272.54	6.00	287.74	6.00	2.585	.275	.03
34	270.56	6.00	274.10	6.00	284.79	6.00	1.753	.416	.03
35	269.79	6.00	274.08	6.00	285.57	6.00	1.219	.544	.10
36	270.25	6.00	271.16	6.00	288.01	6.00	3.380	.185	.03
37	271.12	6.00	286.60	6.00	271.86	6.00	2.032	.362	.03
39	271.79	6.00	284.72	6.00	273.05	6.00	1.171	.557	.10
40	264.27	6.00	277.07	6.00	288.10	6.00	3.084	.214	.03

Note. Items in bold are those selected as stimuli for the TAI task; Holm-Bonferroni correction not applied as no p-values were identified below .05 - only item 8 narrowly failed to reach statistical significance. Owing to range restriction in individual items, significant differences are not always observable in the median scores. Therefore, the mean rank scores for each item are also included.

Table G3

Item-level descriptive and inferential statistics by victim-perpetrator gender combination (for 'significance of rape', 'rape claims', 'victim character and resistance', and 'victim deservedness' myth subscales (N =552)

Item no.	Male victim, Neutral perpetrator (n = 89)		Male victim, Male perpetrator (n = 90)		Male victim, Female perpetrator (n = 89)		Female victim, Neutral perpetrator (n = 95)		Female victim, Male perpetrator (n = 93)		Female victim, Female perpetrator (n = 96)		Kruskal-Wallis test		
	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	H	p	r
1	260.46	5.00	239.12	5.00	275.18	6.00	291.89	6.00	282.58	6.00	306.52	6.00	12.46	.029	.10
2	255.26	5.00	275.30	6.00	276.86	6.00	278.34	6.00	286.65	6.00	285.32	6.00	2.76	.738	.09
4	302.99	5.00	295.30	5.00	298.61	5.00	241.44	5.00	256.61	5.00	267.78	5.00	12.75	.026	.011
5	262.72	6.00	259.06	6.00	256.12	5.00	295.17	6.00	289.22	6.00	293.72	6.00	7.67	.175	.03
7	276.72	6.00	274.87	6.00	277.57	6.00	268.64	6.00	286.53	6.00	274.90	6.00	1.03	.960	.011
8	221.09	3.00	234.14	4.00	249.00	4.00	292.57	5.00	314.60	5.00	340.27	5.00	43.68	< .001*	0.16
10	314.15	5.00	307.27	5.00	301.61	5.00	238.44	5.00	259.07	5.00	244.03	5.00	22.75	< .001*	.17
11	276.27	6.00	269.69	6.00	279.13	6.00	270.63	6.00	282.08	6.00	281.06	6.00	0.76	.980	.011
13	276.19	6.00	290.99	6.00	291.07	6.00	257.04	6.00	270.05	6.00	275.20	6.00	5.08	.406	.06
14	273.23	6.00	278.11	6.00	287.90	6.00	260.76	6.00	274.93	6.00	284.55	6.00	2.52	.774	.09
15	264.58	6.00	281.52	6.00	266.99	6.00	269.67	6.00	287.89	6.00	287.39	6.00	3.47	.628	.08
16	307.93	6.00	303.70	6.00	297.16	6.00	248.72	5.00	239.68	5.00	265.86	6.00	18.89	.002*	.15
17	300.55	5.00	307.02	5.00	295.93	5.00	237.98	5.00	265.82	5.00	256.04	5.00	15.30	.009	.13
18	276.80	6.00	271.78	6.00	277.33	6.00	274.58	6.00	282.49	6.00	275.97	6.00	0.28	.998	.11
19	258.40	6.00	268.04	6.00	274.38	6.00	281.77	6.00	299.14	6.00	276.03	6.00	12.20	.032	.10
20	250.26	5.00	262.98	6.00	275.31	6.00	293.96	6.00	279.37	6.00	294.54	6.00	6.75	.240	.02
21	274.11	6.00	293.29	6.00	287.69	6.00	263.82	5.00	278.40	6.00	263.31	5.50	3.39	.640	.08
22	284.54	6.00	281.04	6.00	294.35	6.00	275.25	6.00	261.64	6.00	263.86	6.00	4.20	.521	.07
23	300.70	6.00	305.44	6.00	309.45	6.00	248.26	5.00	253.32	6.00	246.78	5.00	21.36	.001*	.16
26	261.71	5.00	273.26	5.00	287.33	5.00	285.32	5.00	275.68	5.00	275.29	5.00	1.72	.886	.01

27	256.78	6.00	242.54	6.00	275.92	6.00	285.98	6.00	293.48	6.00	301.33	6.00	18.53	.002*	.15
28	266.96	6.00	265.23	6.00	263.42	6.00	273.75	6.00	287.66	6.00	299.95	6.00	5.83	.323	.04
29	267.06	5.00	252.89	5.00	289.07	5.00	291.37	5.00	272.81	5.00	284.59	5.00	4.50	.480	.07
30	271.22	5.00	271.81	5.00	282.66	5.00	279.91	5.00	273.35	5.00	279.77	5.00	0.46	.993	.11
31	258.25	6.00	272.92	6.00	277.12	6.00	297.58	6.00	281.47	6.00	270.53	6.00	4.94	.423	.06
32	287.83	5.00	243.16	5.00	279.19	5.00	264.33	5.00	299.82	6.00	284.22	5.00	8.10	.151	.04
33	267.46	6.00	259.60	6.00	281.08	6.00	270.71	6.00	285.07	6.00	293.91	6.00	5.28	.383	.05
34	259.57	6.00	271.22	6.00	275.33	6.00	280.85	6.00	276.88	6.00	293.56	6.00	5.01	.415	.06
35	250.97	5.00	271.53	6.00	273.11	6.00	287.41	6.00	276.55	6.00	297.13	6.00	5.62	.345	.05
36	255.26	6.00	270.10	6.00	296.24	6.00	284.28	6.00	272.18	6.00	280.37	6.00	8.01	.156	.04
37	261.07	6.00	278.56	6.00	275.58	6.00	280.53	6.00	294.39	6.00	268.41	6.00	4.30	.507	.07
39	254.70	6.00	283.01	6.00	261.53	6.00	287.81	6.00	286.38	6.00	283.72	6.00	5.79	.327	.04
40	262.22	6.00	287.02	6.00	293.65	6.00	266.18	6.00	267.45	6.00	282.95	6.00	4.47	.485	.07

Note. Items in bold are those selected as stimuli for the TAI task; ‘’ represents statistically significant result following application of the Holm-Bonferroni correction. Owing to range restriction in individual items, significant differences are not always observable in the median scores. Therefore, the mean rank scores for each item are also included.*

Table G4

Item-level analysis of RAQ subscales 1 ('dynamics of rape' myths) and 2 ('perceived likelihood of rape'), by gender-linked social role attitude endorsement group (N = 552).

RAQ item	Low SRQ linked (n = 281)		High SRQ linked (n = 271)		<i>Man-Whitney U test</i>		
	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	Z	p	r
2. Females cannot rape other women	305.64	6.00	246.29	6.00	-5.412	< .001*	.23
3. I am unlikely to be raped in my life time	298.25	4.00	253.95	3.00	-3.318	.001*	.14
5. Most rapes would occur when the victim has engaged in risky behaviours	314.90	5.00	236.68	5.00	-5.993	< .001*	.26
7. In a committed relationship, if a partner requests sex, you have an obligation to agree	317.41	6.00	234.08	5.00	-7.229	< .001*	.31
9. If a person appeared controlled and calm the day after their alleged rape, it probably isn't true	319.84	6.00	231.56	5.00	-7.592	< .001*	.32
10. Outside all-male settings, the rape of men is too rare to be worth worrying about	305.70	6.00	246.22	5.00	-5.004	< .001*	.21
11. People are usually raped by someone they don't know	309.83	5.00	241.94	5.00	-5.207	< .001*	.22
14. Rape is unlikely to happen to any female I know	302.12	5.00	249.93	5.00	-4.040	< .001*	.17
15. Only a homosexual man would rape another man	310.54	6.00	241.20	5.00	-5.454	< .001*	.23

16. I am less likely to be raped in comparison to others of my age and gender	304.36	5.00	247.62	4.00	-4.282	< .001*	.18
18. If a person is in a current sexual relationship with the accused, you wouldn't really call it rape	311.00	6.00	240.73	6.00	-6.577	< .001*	.27
19. A report of rape several days after the act is probably a false report	303.80	6.00	248.19	6.00	-5.479	< .001*	.23
20. Rape is unlikely to happen to any male I know	310.80	5.00	240.94	4.00	-5.278	< .001*	.22
21. Females cannot be guilty of rape	302.37	6.00	249.68	6.00	-4.688	< .001*	.20
22. Males rape other males only in all-male institutionalised settings	303.91	6.00	248.07	5.00	-4.587	< .001*	.20
24. Marital rape is not possible because a man has rights to sex in marriage	297.56	6.00	254.67	6.00	-5.196	< .001*	.22
25. A rapist must perpetrate or threaten physical violence towards the victim in order for the act to be considered rape	309.27	6.00	242.52	6.00	-5.878	< .001*	.25

Note. Items in bold are those selected as stimuli for the TAI task; “” represents statistically significant result following application of the Holm-Bonferroni correction. Owing to range restriction in individual items, significant differences are not always observable in the median scores. Therefore, the mean rank scores for each item are also included.*

Table G5

Item-level descriptive and inferential statistics for additional items, by victim gender (N = 552).

Item no.	Male victim (n = 268)		Female victim (n = 284)		Mann-Whitney U test		
	Mean rank	Mdn	Mean rank	Mdn	Z	p	r
6	263.32	6.00	288.94	6.00	-3.04	.002*	.13
9	261.74	6.00	290.43	6.00	-4.29	< .001*	.18
38	274.48	5.00	278.41	5.00	-0.3	.766	.01

Note. “” represents statistically significant result following application of the Holm-Bonferroni correction. Owing to range restriction in individual items, significant differences are not always observable in the median scores. Therefore, the mean rank scores for each item are also included.*

Table G6

Item-level descriptive and inferential statistics for additional items, by perpetrator gender (N = 552).

Item no.	Neutral perpetrator (n = 184)		Male perpetrator (n = 183)		Female perpetrator (n = 185)		Kruskal-Wallis test		
	Mean rank	Mdn	Mean rank	Mdn	Mean rank	Mdn	H	p	r
6	264.44	6.00	284.48	6.00	280.61	4.00	4.24	.120	.02
9	271.08	6.00	279.51	6.00	278.91	5.00	1.32	.518	.07
38	237.62	6.00	282.97	6.00	308.78	5.00	19.93	< .001*	.17

Note. “” represents statistically significant result following application of the Holm-Bonferroni correction. Owing to range restriction in individual items, significant differences are not always observable in the median scores. Therefore, the mean rank scores for each item are also included.*

Table G7

Item-level descriptive and inferential statistics for additional items, by victim-perpetrator gender combination (N = 522).

Item no.	Male victim, Neutral perpetrator (n = 89)		Male victim, Male perpetrator (n = 90)		Male victim, Female perpetrator (n = 89)		Female victim, Neutral perpetrator (n = 95)		Female victim, Male perpetrator (n = 93)		Female victim, Female perpetrator (n = 96)		Kruskal-Wallis test		
	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	Mean Rank	Mdn	H	p	r
6	256.63	6.00	268.53	6.00	264.72	6.00	271.75	6.00	299.90	6.00	295.33	6.00	14.32	.014*	.11
9	260.42	6.00	263.61	6.00	261.16	6.00	281.07	6.00	294.90	6.00	295.36	6.00	20.47	.001*	.14
38	250.25	4.00	273.01	5.00	300.19	5.00	225.78	4.00	292.61	5.00	316.73	5.00	22.34	< .001*	.17

Note. “” represents statistically significant result following application of the Holm-Bonferroni correction. Owing to range restriction in individual items, significant differences are not always observable in the median scores. Therefore, the mean rank scores for each item are also included.*

Many people who report rape are lying because they are angry or want revenge on the accused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A person who goes to the home of a partner on their first date implies that they are willing to have sex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It would do some people good to be raped.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The extent of a victim's resistance should determine if a rape has occurred	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a person doesn't physically resist sex, even when protesting verbally, it really can't be considered rape	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People who wear revealing or provocative clothing are inviting rape	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for reading through these materials.

Appendix I – Analyst triangulation worksheet - chapter 7 (TAi study data)

Please complete this worksheet in combination with information in the analyst triangulation workbook. The guiding questions are developed from Flick's (2017) discussion of quality assurance in qualitative research. Thank you.

Guiding question - To what extent:	Analyst response and brief explanation
1) are findings grounded in the data?	Yes. The emergent themes are mapped to the data clearly. This was not doubt enhanced by using a theoretically informed topic guide and the RMQ items.
2) are inferences logical?	Yes, although some caution might be needed when selecting illustrative quotes. Some data are more explicitly mapped to the inferences so some additional explanation might be needed when citing less 'obvious' illustrative quotes.
3) is the thematic structure appropriate?	Broadly, yes. However, see 6). The themes very much map onto the theoretical principles and concepts used. However, given the TA essentially inductive a quick review or even reflection on whether the TA is actually more deductive than inductive might be useful. This will be a question of phrasing. Mapping theme names to theoretical concepts is part of the process but it is worth reviewing whether the theme labels used could, in some instances, be reviewed to reflect the data first and foremost, with an explanation of how these connect with concepts. It might be that there is no conflict here, but a brief review would be useful.
4) are there unexplored or insufficiently explored data?	I do not think so. The level of granularity is about right and the interviews are detailed and data rich. The thematic structure captures the salient and relevant content given the research question explored in the PhD. Data can always be re - analysed but the analysis done is congruent with the overall goal of the research.
5) to what degree is the process leading to the results transparent?	There is good transparency in the process and sufficient for the reading to understand the inference making and, if so wished, to trace the steps taken by the researcher.
6) are themes refined in light of theory (i.e. socioecological theory of gender) credibly?	Yes. The coding tree themes appear congruent with the major principles of socioecological theory and the socioecological theory of gender used. The distinction between community and family is perhaps less obvious than the coding tree suggests (e.g. Muslim is used to refer to community but the example given could be interpreted as families within the Muslim community rather than community per se. However, if this is used to refer to a community context that frames the meaning of family, then the distinction works.

Appendix J – Analyst triangulation worksheet - chapter 8 (semi-structured interview study data)

Please complete this worksheet in combination with information in the analyst triangulation workbook. The guiding questions are developed from Flick's (2017) discussion of quality assurance in qualitative research. Thank you.

Guiding question - To what extent:	Analyst response and brief explanation
1) are findings grounded in the data?	Yes. The linkage here is more explicit than with the Tai study. This does not mean the TA for Tai is 'weak' but simply that the inductive nature of the themes is easier to recognise, unsurprising given the Tai study used the RMQ items and the semi-structured interviews are more obviously 'traditional' in their purpose and process (conduct and TA).
2) are inferences logical?	Yes. The sample quotes and the sample transcripts reviewed (25%) are congruent. My observations from the 25% map nicely to the coding tree. The inferences are balanced – neither merely semantic nor overly latent.
3) is the thematic structure appropriate?	Yes. Right level of granularity and grouping of codes.
4) are there unexplored or insufficiently explored data?	Any qualitative corpus can be analysed and r – analysed in multiple ways. However, the TA exploration is appropriate for the purpose of this study, and the overall research question of the research.
5) to what degree is the process leading to the results transparent?	Very transparent. The classification and coding trees make the process very clear and, again, my observations of the 25% sample reassure me that the process has been done with integrity.
6) are themes refined (in light of findings from chapter 7) credibly?	Yes. The themes were unsurprising given my observations of the 25% sample. The themes form a logical 'response' to those that emerged from the TAI study. The themes have a clear connectivity with the TAI themes. I'm uncertain about 'how' this connectivity could be made more explicit using the classification trees. For example, semi-structured interview theme identities is connected with TAI themes real rape myths and risk and vulnerability (and perhaps others as well). This connectivity could be flagged within the text (which I am certain it will be). However, some sort of diagrammatic mapping (a synthesis of the classification trees) might be possible? This could be unnecessary given this could be done textually. However, it might strengthen the analytical conclusions being drawn (thus strengthening the argumentation across chapters 7 and 8).

Appendix K – Interview topic guide with prompts

	Topic areas	Example Questions
1	Exploring context	<p><u>Example question</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you briefly describe your role to me? For example, what your role typically involves, the people you provide support to/work with or have worked with? How long have you been in your role?
2	Stigma	<p><u>Example questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel there is still stigma attached to sexual violence and victims of sexual violence? • Could you say why do you feel this stigma exists?
3	Rape myths, language & attitudes	<p>A short while before the interview I sent you a list of stereotypes, or rape myths, which people may hold about victims, perpetrators and sexual violence more broadly. I wondered if you had had chance to read them?</p> <p><u>Example questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel these rape myths represent the attitudes you have encountered in your work and when supporting/working with survivors? • When reading through the statements, were there any which you felt would be interpreted differently in relation to a female or male victims or perpetrators of sexual violence?
5	Help-seeking & reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What things do you feel affect a survivor's decisions to seek support with their experiences? • What do you think affects a survivor's decisions to report their experience to the police? • Are there any factors which you think affect how people respond when survivors' disclose to them? • Do you feel gender has any impact on survivors' decisions or experiences?
6	Key challenges you face in your work	<p><u>Example questions:</u></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you describe to me what you feel the key challenges you face in your role are? This could be across all aspects of your work (e.g. in supporting survivors directly, in raising awareness of sexual violence, etc.)? • Do you feel that gender presents any particular challenges to you in your work? • What do you feel might help you to manage or overcome these challenges? • Is there any support which you would like in your work which you feel would help you?
7	Key challenges your service faces	<p><u>Example questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about the organization you work with/volunteer for – what do you feel are the greatest challenges it faces? • Why do you feel these challenges exist? • In what ways do you feel these challenges affect victims? • What do you feel may help overcome these challenges?
8	Needs/gaps	<p><u>Example questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel the needs of survivors are being met? Could you say why you feel this way? • Do you feel there are any gaps in services, or areas which aren't being addressed? • How do you feel these gaps should be addressed or the needs of survivors can best be met? • What role do you feel gender plays in the shape services for survivors should take? • If you had a service "wish-list" what might this look like?
9	Is there anything else you would like to discuss or mention?	<p><u>Development questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything else you would like to say about anything we have discussed (or we haven't discussed which you feel is important)? Is there anything you would like to say about the interview you have taken part in today?