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Boglárka Nyúl

"No means no"

Rape myths acceptance and the perception of rape

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Rape myths acceptance and the perception of rape

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To Móni Szabó

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Abstract

Although victim blaming and rape myths (widely held beliefs about rape) are widespread when it comes to public reactions to (media reports and public opinion of) rape cases in Hungary, little is known about the connection between rape myths acceptance and the evaluation of different rape cases. The goal of this PhD dissertation was to understand which situational and attitudinal factors affect whether people blame the victim and label a case as rape. In addition, our study examines rape and rape myths acceptance in Hungary, in a social context, where gender equality is low and on the other hand, social psychological research on this topic is largely missing.

To be able to examine rape myths acceptance we validated the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (UIRMAS). For this we conducted a confirmative factor analyses to assess the structural validity of the scale and identified the original factors of UIRMAS on a large convenience ($N = 758$) sample in Study 1 and on a demographically similar to the Hungarian population in terms of gender, age, education, and settlement type ($N = 1007$) in Study 2. We established the scale's convergent, construct, and discriminant validity. After the validation, we compared the level of rape myths acceptance between victims, unimpacted people, and those who are affected by rape through a close relation. These individuals can be the strongest potential allies of victims in bringing about social change, which is particularly important in a gender unequal social context. We found that those with prior experience with rape (being a victim or impacted through a close relation) were less acceptant of rape myths (Study 1).

Throughout Study 2-5 we examined different factors that affects the evaluation of rape cases. First, we examined whether rape myth acceptance predicted uncertain rape cases more strongly than indisputable ones, considering that rape in its stereotypical form is condemned by all members of society, but cases do not always get labelled as rape when they are less

stereotypical. We found that rape myth acceptance predicted the evaluation of both rape scenarios, but the prediction was stronger when the rape was uncertain (Study 2). Furthermore, we examined, whether group membership of the victim or the perpetrator affects the evaluation of a rape case. In Study 2, using a within subject design ($N = 1007$) we found that when the victim is a medium-status outgroup member, people tend to blame her more and label the case less as rape. In Study 3, using a between subject design on a nationally representative sample ($N = 1068$) we examined the role of low status outgroup membership. We expected harsher evaluations of low status perpetrators and stronger victim blaming of low status victims, however, we found no main effect of the conditions in the evaluation. In fact, we found that the low status outgroup victim was blamed less for the rape, than victims in the other conditions. In Study 4 we examined whether people are affected by the fact that the perpetrator is a famous person in case of an uncertain (N = 870) and undisputable (N = 105) rape scenario. In line with our predictions, we found that in the uncertain context, rape myth acceptance and the perception of the perpetrator as a successful person predicted whether respondents labelled the incident as rape, and how the perpetrator's reactions were judged morally. In the undisputable condition, rape myth acceptance still predicted moral judgements, but it no longer predicted whether the incident was labelled as rape. In Study 5 we examined the perpetrator's outgroup membership and celebrity status in interaction. Using an online between subject 2 (perpetrator's group membership) x 2 (perpetrator's celebrity status) experimental design ($N = 516$) with an uncertain rape scenario, we found a main effect of celebrity status on rape labelling, but not on perpetrator or victim blaming. We did not find an interaction effect of the condition on victim blaming and rape labelling (i.e. neither being a low-status outgroup member or a celebrity affected the evaluation of the rape case in any of the possible combinations).

In Study 6, we focused on how group entitlement explains rape myths acceptance amongst men and women, because both phenomena serve to justify men's higher status in society, but the previous one is more generally, while the latter more specifically fulfills this function. Relying on an online convenience sample of undergraduate students ($N = 482$), path analysis revealed an association between on the one hand group-based male entitlement and personal entitlement and on the other hand, rape labelling and victim blame. As predicted, only the relation between group entitlement and rape labelling and victim blame was fully mediated by rape myth acceptance in case of both men and women. A similar mediation was not found for personal entitlement. These results suggest that ideologies of rape and the evaluation of rape cases may be connected not to individual but group-level processes and therefore more directly connected to gender relations in society than personal relations.

Based on the findings of Study 1-6, we suggest that prior attitudes about rape and other beliefs embedded into the social system are extremely important in the evaluation of rape cases. Although, we found, inconsistent data regarding outgroup membership, we also found, that situational factors, such as outgroup membership and celebrity status are important, especially if they are in line with prior attitudes toward rape and if the rape case is uncertain. Therefore, we suggest that both rape myth acceptance and the effect of the overall perception of the perpetrator and the victim should be tackled in rape prevention programs because they cause biased perceptions, and because rape cases rarely happen in real life or get presented in the media as certain and unambiguous.

Introduction to research on the social psychology of rape

"*It's your fault, you can do something about it*" was the slogan of a rape prevention campaign by the police of Pécs, Hungary. The underlying message was that women's alcohol consumption, flirty behavior, and "inappropriate" clothing are invitations for rape. At the end of each campaign video the stereotypical perpetrator appeared: a scary looking stranger who follows women in dark alleys. The campaign met some public outrage (Nolen, 2014) because it supported rape myths, i.e., the idea that rape is the victim's fault and is connected to men's stronger sexual drive. In my doctoral research my aim was twofold: once, to understand how people think about rape cases, when do they blame the victim once, why would they punish perpetrators harshly other times, and when do they label certain cases as rape and others not, twice, to investigate the underlying mechanisms that motivate people to endorse rape myths.

Although rape affects millions of people worldwide, the exact number is unknown. One out of five U.S. women experienced rape in her lifetime, and 1.3 million women reported some type of rape in the preceding 12 months according to a survey from 2010 (Ministry of Justice, Home Office, & Office for National Statistics, 2013). A much lower, but still very high prevalence was found in Europe: one out of 20 women experienced rape according to the estimations of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). The difference in the numbers does not necessarily imply that rape is indeed less prevalent in Europe, simply that the exact numbers are unknown because of high latency. It is estimated that only 11 out of 100 000 people report rape to the police, and this number greatly varies among countries (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014).

Whether or not a victim of rape reports the case to the police is influenced by both personal and societal factors. The victim of rape may be reluctant to report it because of experiencing guilt, shame, embarrassment, fear of retaliation, and a lack of trust in the police

(Sable, Danis, Mauzy, & Gallagher 2006). These emotions arise from the stereotypes about seductive and vindictive women that are also often used by defense attorneys to prejudice juries against the victim (Sable et al., 2006). Rape is often depicted as less violent or serious than it actually is (Newcombe, Van Den Eynde, Hafner, & Jolly, 2008; Yamawaki, 2007), testimonials of rape victims are often doubted and the psychological harm is underrated (e.g., Yamawaki, 2007).

Because of these attitudes, when a victim decides to report the rape case, they often experience "second rape" (Campbell et al., 2001). Second rape or secondary victimization means victim-blaming attitudes, behaviors, and practices by people or professional dealing with rape (e.g. police force, doctors, psychologists, jurors) causing an additional trauma for victims (Campbell & Raja, 1999) and causing poor health outcomes. Second rape can have three different sources: (a) insensitive treatment based on victim-blaming attitudes (Best, Dansky, & Kilpatrick, 1992; Campbell & Johnson, 1997); (b) secondary victimization can be caused by personnel not providing assistance either legally (Campbell, 1998) or medically (Campbell & Bybee, 1997); and (c) procedures of legal prosecutions can cause a high amount of distress and frustration (Cluss et al., 1983, Frazier & Haney, 1996) . Although there is no empirical research in Hungary regarding second rape, 52 domestic violence and/or intimate partner violence issues were analyzed in a Court Watch Program suggesting the high prevalence of second rape (Sándor, 2016). The analysis found that judges often overlook violence against women, blame victims, or do not care about the violation of the victims' rights or human dignity. All of these are directly connected to rape myths and the belief that victims are to be blamed at least to some degree.

According to the Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2016), 50% of Hungarians agree that there are situations when consent is not necessary for sexual intercourse. More than one third of the participants (44%) think that the perpetrator of rape is more likely to be a

stranger than an acquaintance (EU average: 31%). When Hungarians think that rape happened, they would punish the perpetrator harshly (Virág & Kó, 1998)victim Nine percent of 15-74 years old Hungarian women experienced rape in their life and only 0.24% of these cases were reported to the police, which is not surprising when 49% of Hungarians are not aware of any hotlines where they could ask for help after an attack (European Commission, 2016).

Even if the victim goes to the police, they often face prejudice and are accused of lying (Parti, 2002), or they are asked by the police not to report the case (Amnesty International, 2012). If the victim reports the case, the investigation can remain superficial (Dénes, 2000), and judges often look for excuses or reasons why rape did not happen (Amnesty International, 2012). Furthermore, in case of intimate partner violence (IPV) judges do always not care about the violence against the woman during the hearing and blame the victim (PATENT Association, 2016). In a court watch study results show that judges can be empathetic and ask more questions from the victim, this only happened, when the perpetrator was foreigner, or a drug user with more than one victim. Moreover, there are cases, when even experts and other institutions support the charge of the abuse, the court label them as unverifiable (PATENT Association, 2016). Institutions – similarly to people – often thinks that rape and IPV victims falsely accuse the perpetrator, despite the statistics, that false accusation is around 1-2% as in case of other crimes (Kuszing, 2010). Despite the high prevalence, and that latency is one of the highest in case of rape and sexual abuse, there are no institutions in Hungary offering help to victims (Betlen & Pap, 2012). Furthermore, there are no Hungarian studies dealing with rape myths acceptance of health care professionals in Hungary, in case of IPV they are not usually attentive to the crimes, despite that they should report it to the police (Spronz, 2016). Furthermore, in this normative context the government does not support research on prevalence and incidence of rape, nor educational programs for

lay people or for professionals to decrease the acceptance of false beliefs or myths regarding rape and to increase the accessibility of support programs and support professionals (Amnesty International, 2012).

Rape myths and their function

Rape myths are descriptive and prescriptive beliefs about rape that serve to deny and justify men's aggression against women (Bohner et al., 1998) and trivialize its effects on the victim (Brownmiller, 1975). They constitute a specific domain of sexism that contributes to sexual aggression and coercion (Brownmiller, 1975), furthermore, their functional component separate them from general rape attitudes (which are not aware of the function of such beliefs, e.g. Larsen & Long, 1988), that their main function is to deny its pervasiveness and structural causes (Forbes, Adam-Curtis, & White, 2004; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Rape myths either put the blame on the victim (e.g., "if a girl acts like a slut, eventually she is going to get into trouble") or excuse the perpetrator (e.g., "rape happens when a guy's sex drive goes out of control") by rationalizing rape (Burt, 1980; Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Rape myths encourage victim blaming and provide a feeling that the world is predictable and fundamentally just, and only those people get raped who somehow deserve it.

People accept rape myths to a different degree based on their gender, personal attitudes toward gender issues, and social norms. Men are more likely to accept rape myths (e.g. Suarez & Gadalla, 2010) on one hand, because they are more motivated to preserve gender inequality and the status quo than women, on the other, rape myths suggest that only deviant men could be rapists (e.g. Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), therefore, "regular people" would not become rapists. Women's RMA level determines whether they see rape as something that could happen to them, and whether exposure to rape cases lowers their self-esteem (Bohner et al., 2009). RMA can therefore function as a form self-protection which reduces anxiety about becoming a victim (Bohner & Lampridis, 2004). It can therefore

comfort both women and men because it helps maintain the belief that they will neither become victims, nor perpetrators of rape. Although research consistently found that men support rape myths more, Süssenbach and Bohner (2011) argue that not gender, but gender identification influences rape myth acceptance. They found that more highly identifying men (who reported that it is important for them that they are men) endorsed rape myths more than lower identifying men, suggesting that not gender per se, but traditional masculine roles are associated with rape myth acceptance. In contrast, highly identifying women (who reported that it is important for them that they are women) endorsed rape myths less than low identifiers, which suggest that for women, higher gender identification can also reflect a stronger feminist identification, explaining the negative association with rape myth acceptance. However, this research did not examine the content of group identification, therefore, it is questionable whether identification or the content of the gender identity (Becker & Wagner, 2009) affects the support of rape myths. Thus, highly identifying women can either identify with traditional gender roles or with a feminist identity. Based on previous findings examining sexism and gender identification, it is possible that those women who identify more strongly with traditional female gender roles would accept rape myths more, while those women who identify more strongly with a feminist identity would accept rape myths less.

Although culture has an important role in how different populations and societies perceive sexual violence, cross-cultural aspect of sexual violence is highly under-investigated (Kalra & Bhugra, 2013). Women are a disadvantaged group relative to men across cultures (The Global Gender Gap Report, 2020). In societies where sexism is higher, power distance tends to be higher as well (Glick, 2006). Power distance is the perceived relation between dominants and subordinates, which means that „less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally"

(Hofstede, 2001, p. 98). Power distance legitimizes and emphasizes the respect of social hierarchy and power differences between individuals, but it is strongly related to sexism, which legitimizes hierarchy and power differences between men and women (Glick, 2006). According to this approach, the negative sociocultural reaction to rape victims can be explained by the concept of rape myths. Comparative research on rape myths reveals that Asian college students tend to accept rape myths more than Caucasian college students (Mori et al, 1995; Yick, 2000; Lee et al., 2005). Furthermore, victim blaming is even more emphasized in Chinese culture because the loss of women's virginity counts as "loss of face" (Hu, 1944), therefore committing suicide after being rape was common to restore the reputation of the victim and her family (Chan, 2009). Moreover, while American people usually would seek professional help (Yamawaki, 2007), Asian people would keep it as a family secret, even if the rape was committed by a family member (Okazaki, 2002). Furthermore, a study examining college students found that Japanese students were more likely to minimize, blame, and excuse domestic violence than American students (Yamawaki, Ostenson, & Brown, 2009). Studies conducted in India found that social and cultural norms regarding power of women and men are closely related to violence against women (e.g. Kamimura, Nourian, Assasnik, Rathi, & Franchek-Roa, 2016; Kimua, Djamba, Ciciurkaite, & Cherukuri, 2013), where martial rape is still not a crime according to the low (Raj & McDougall, 2014). Moreover, previous studies found that gender difference in rape myths acceptance is larger in less gender equal countries (Hantzi et al., 2015). Results of this study also shows that stronger acceptance of traditional gender roles correlates with rape myths acceptance, and that is part of the wider patriarchal social system (Hantzi et al., 2015). As with other belief systems, rape myths have several psychological functions. Rape myth acceptance functions as a cognitive schema that influences how people interpret social information (Greger et al., 2007). Those who endorse rape myths more, are more likely to

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identify women's friendly behavior as sexually teasing (Willan & Pollard, 2003), less likely to help rape victims (Foster & Kidd, 2014), less likely to suggest rape victims to report the rape (Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004), and less likely to label forced sex as rape (Burt & Albin, 1981; Norris & Cubbins, 1992; Peterson & Mehlenhard, 2004).

Eyssel and Bohner (2011) found that the more information participants received, the stronger the effect of rape myth acceptance was on blaming judgements, irrespective of whether the additional information pertained to the victim or the perpetrator. In the same study they found that participants with high rape myth acceptance who believed that they received additional subliminal information about a rape case, although they did not, felt more entitled to judge. Other studies found that rape myth acceptance even affects visual attention. Participants with higher rape myth acceptance identified and processed rape myth consistent clues more easily in rape related pictures and showed a preference for information about the victim over the perpetrator (Süssenbach & Bohner, 2011; Süssenbach et al., 2017).

Rape myths and rape myth acceptance function as social norms as well. In previous research men's rape proclivity was affected by perceived rape myth acceptance of others, and the effect was moderated by the participant's own RMA (Bohner et al., 2010; Eyssel, Bohner, & Siebler, 2006; Siebler, Bohner, & Schmelcher, 2006). Similarly, participants who read an article about rape with information based on rape myths were less likely to believe that the perpetrator was guilty than those who read an article with rape myth challenging information (Franiuk et al., 2008). Rape myths presented in the media can increase their acceptance, especially among those who already endorse them. Media reporting that relies on rape myths also communicate their acceptability toward people who are otherwise not aware of them (Franiuk et al., 2008). Although the general acceptance of overt rape myths has diminished over the years because of higher awareness and changing social norms, they continue to exist in more subtle forms (McMahon, 2007). In sum, rape myth acceptance should be considered

both as an attitudinal dimension with individual differences and as the normative context of rape, because they both influence the threshold of labeling a case as rape, blaming a victim for the act, and considering the perpetrator guilty. Another psychological function of rape myth, similarly to just world beliefs, is that they reaffirm people's sense of security and sense of control over their life (Gilmartin-Zena, 1987). Lerner (1980) argues that those who believe in a just world assume that the world is a fair place and bad things only happen to bad people, as everyone gets what they deserve. Rape myths suggest something similar in the realm of sexual assault. These beliefs serve to deny that rape can happen to anyone and decrease threat perception and anxiety. Despite these similarities, the connection between rape myth acceptance and just-world beliefs is ambiguous. Most previous studies found a positive association between the two (Hafer, 2000; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015), suggesting that an "innocent" rape victim is a threat to the belief that people always get what they deserve. Previous research also found that when just world beliefs are threatened, people tend to blame the victim more (Strömwall, Alfredsson & Landström, 2013).

However, other studies found that the positive association exists only among women but not among men (Sinclair & Bourne, 1998), and only when the victim was a woman (Lambert & Raichle, 2000). Others found that rape myths acceptance only correlates positively with just world beliefs regarding others, but negatively with just world beliefs regarding oneself (Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013). This bias is in line with the assumption that people, especially women, try to exclude themselves from the category of potential victims and distance themselves from victims (Bohner et al., 1993).

Rape myth acceptance is strongly associated with oppressive beliefs (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010), such as social dominance orientation. Social dominance orientation is an individual level variable, which indicates whether the person accepts hierarchical and unequal

intergroup relations (Pratto et al., 1994), but tends to be higher among higher status social groups, such as men for example (Hantzi et al., 2015). SDO correlates positively with rape myth acceptance, which means that people who want to maintain the existing social hierarchies and accept the oppression of lower status people also endorse rape myths more (Pratto et al., 1994).

Similarly to SDO, sexist beliefs also serve to maintain the status quo. This is underlined by the fact that people in more hierarchical male-dominated societies would blame the victim, excuse the perpetrator, and justify the rape more than in less hierarchical and more gender equal societies (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). A meta-analytical review found that adversarial attitudes toward women, sexism, male-dominance attitudes, pro status quo attitudes, and acceptance of rape (e.g. likelihood of raping and acceptability of rape) are also positively correlated with rape myth acceptance, whereas male hostility (e.g. the belief that men's hostility toward women causes rape, and not male mental illness) and pro-feminist attitudes are negatively correlated with rape myth acceptance (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010).

Both hostile sexism (i.e. an overt hostility toward women's equality) and benevolent sexism (i.e. traditional positive views of women that maintain hierarchical gender relations) in society serve to justify and sustain male social dominance over women in society, similarly to rape myth acceptance. Hostile sexism is one of the strongest predictors of rape myth acceptance, and it correlates with rape myth acceptance more strongly than benevolent sexism (Glick et al., 2000; Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2004). This is because similarly to hostile sexism, rape myths contain hostile attitudes toward women (Greger et al., 2007). Benevolent sexism correlates with rape myth acceptance positively, but the association is weaker, because it does not entail directly hostile attitudes towards women as opposed to rape myths (Greger et al., 2007). Previous research found, that people with higher benevolent sexism blame the female victim more if she behaved inconsistently with the traditional female

gender role (did not behave ladylike, e.g., she wore revealing clothes, spoke to strangers, and drank alcohol) because this way she does not deserve the protection that men provide to women (Abrams et al., 2003; Chapleau, Oswald, & Russel, 2007).

Rape myths also provide an explanation and serve as a justification to victims and their environment about why rape happened and why specifically to them. Although, accepting rape myth could help regain a sense of control, and reassure victims that rape cannot happen to them again (Faccenda & Pantaleon, 2011; Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013), there is no evidence that rape victims would accept rape myth more than unimpacted people. In fact, studies have found either that such difference does not exist (Carmody & Washington, 2001) or that rape victims accept rape myths less than unimpacted people. This can be explained by the fact that victims may have a better understanding that rape does not always happen in a stereotypical way, whereas unimpacted people can have broadly accepted preconceptions about rape (Baugher et al., 2010; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015). victim

However, previous studies compared only victims and unimpacted people, whereas people may be personally affected by rape not only as victims, but also through the experience of a close relative or friend. In this case too, regaining a sense of control can be important, but believing the victim and learning that rape does not happen stereotypically and according to the myths can decrease rape myths acceptance and broaden the cases that they would label as rape. As far as we know, no studies have previously investigated rape myth acceptance specifically among people impacted by rape through a close friend or relative. There is some evidence from two studies that college students knowing victims had a lower level of RMA (Ellis, O'Sallivan, & Sowards, 1992; Gilmartin-Zena, 1987) whereas other studies did not find any difference between people who knew rape victims and the general population (Borden, Karr, & Caldwell-Colbert, 1988). The relevance of understanding the reaction of close friends or relatives of rape victims is that they can offer the most direct

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social support for victims and engage in collective action, and therefore play an important role in both interventions and social change movements. Based on previous studies they can confront people's rape myths more effectively than victims, because they do not seem to directly benefit from change, just like men are sometimes more effective in confronting sexism than women (Drury & Kaiser, 2014).

Measuring Rape Myths Acceptance

The concept of rape myths was first used in the 1970s (Brownmiller, 1975; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1974), and defined as cultural beliefs about sexual assault that support and trivialize male sexual aggression against women. By looking at commonly held responses to sexual assaults, Burt (1980) emphasized that the cultural function of rape myth is to normalize sexual violence and victim blaming and relied in these responses in developing a measure of rape myth acceptance (Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, RMAS). Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) pointed out the limitations of Burt's (1980) scale, and developed a newer scale (Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale IRMAS, Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999) that could explain the psychological mechanisms of victim blaming and its social consequences at the same time (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). As rape myths and its public expression became more subtle, researchers had to use more subtle scale items to measure its acceptance. Following these societal changes in the acceptance of blatant rape myths, McMahon and Farmer (2011) eliminated three subscales of IRMAS, updated its language, and reworded the items to capture the currently more prevalent subtle rape myths. Therefore, in the dissertation we are using this scale.

Aims of the Studies

In the dissertation, I examined three main topics related to the social psychology of rape (see Figure 1). First, I wanted to get an understanding of how rape myths acceptance

relates to evaluation of rape cases, how this relation is affected by the stereotypicality of the cases, and how does rape myths bias the perception of rape cases in itself or through different components. Second, I examined different factors that could serve as excuses or blames for perpetrators or for victims in the evaluation of rape cases. Third, I focused on the wider picture, and examined how rape myths acceptance is embedded into the wider social system which pertains status quo and gender inequality, and therefore focused on group-based male-entitlement in the context of rape evaluations.

Study 1	• Validation of the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale • Examining the connection between rape myths acceptance, other belief systems and prior experience with rape
Study 2	• Validation of the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale • Examining the role of rape myths acceptance and victim's outgroup membership and rape stereotypicality in the evaluation of rape cases
Study 3	• Examining the role of rape myths acceptance and victim's and perpetrator's outgroup membership in the evaluation of rape cases
Study 4	• Examining he role of the perpetartor famousness and rape stereotypicality in the evaluation of a rape case
Study 5	• Examining the relation between celebrity status, outgroup membership, and the evaluation of a rape case
Study 6	• Examining the role of group-based male entitlement in contrast with personal entitlement in the prediction of rape myths acceptance

Figure 1 Aims of the Studies

Overview of the Studies

In Study 1 we examined the reliability and validity of the Hungarian translation of the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (UIRMAS). We expected to identify a 5-factor scale based on the original model with confirmatory factor analysis, and the relation of rape myths acceptance with similar beliefs and attitudes. Furthermore, we tested how previous experience with rape is connected to rape myths acceptance, especially for those who were

not victims per se, but knew someone who was. These individuals can be the strongest potential allies of victims in bringing about social change, which is particularly important in a gender unequal social context. We tested our hypotheses on a large convenience sample.

In Study 2, on the one hand, we wanted to replicate the findings of Study 1 and confirm our factor structure. On the other hand, we examined whether rape myth acceptance predicted uncertain rape cases more strongly than indisputable ones, considering that rape in its stereotypical form is condemned by all members of society, but cases do not always get labelled as rape when they are less stereotypical. Furthermore, we wanted to test how outgroup membership of the victim influences the evaluation of the scenarios. We used a within subject experimental design with an uncertain rape case with a medium status outgroup victim, an undisputable rape case, and an uncertain rape case where both perpetrator and victim were ingroup members. To test our hypothesis, we used a large online sample, which was demographically similar to the Hungarian population in terms of gender, age, and settlement.

In Study 3 we continued the work on the effects of group membership in the evaluation of rape cases. We examined the effect of either the victim's or the perpetrator's low status outgroup membership on the evaluation of an uncertain rape case in which they are involved. We expected harsher evaluations of low status perpetrators and stronger victim blaming of low status victims. We used a between subject experimental design with three conditions: (1) ingroup victim and ingroup perpetrator, (2) ingroup victim and outgroup perpetrator, and (3) outgroup victim and ingroup perpetrator. We tested our hypothesis on a nationally representative sample.

In Study 4 we continued to work on how biased perceptions affects the evaluation of rape cases, however, now we focused on a factor, which is usually used to excuse the perpetrator. We examined the effect of "celebrity status" on the much-publicized real-life rape

case of Hungarian swimming coach, László Kiss that took place 55 years before it was publicly revealed. We tested whether people's opinion about the coach's rape case was affected by rape myth acceptance and the perception of the perpetrator as a successful person both when the case was uncertain and unambiguous. We conducted two online surveys to reveal this connection at two different time points, using a convenience sampling method to collect data amongst undergraduate students and via social media.

In Study 5 putting together Study 3 and Study 4, we examined how the perpetrator's outgroup membership and celebrity status affects the evaluation of rape cases both separately and in interaction. Again, we used a low status out group to be able to compare our findings to Study 3. We used an online between subject 2 (perpetrator's group membership) x 2 (perpetrator's celebrity status) experimental design with an uncertain rape scenario. We tested our hypothesis on a convenience sample of undergraduate students.

In Study 6 we changed our scope, and rather than examining how different factors affect the evaluation of rape cases, we focused on how rape myths acceptance is connected to the broader social system. We examined how group entitlement explains rape myths acceptance. We proposed that group-based male entitlement specifically, and not personal entitlement leads to rape myth acceptance and consequently to victim blaming and the tendency not to label cases as rape. We relied on a convenience sample of undergraduate students.

The order of the studies does not entirely reflect the order of the data collections. We collected the data of Study 1 first, then Study 4. After that we collected data for Study 2 and Study 6, followed by Study 3 and Study 5. We chose to present our studies in the current order to follow the logic of our argument.

Study[1]1: The connection between rape myths acceptance, other belief systems and prior experience with rape

Research Aims and Hypotheses

The aim of the study was twofold, on one hand we wanted to adapt a scale to be able to measure RMA and explore its correlates, on the other hand, we wanted to explore how experience with rape relates to rape myths acceptance in a society, where victim blaming is an everyday experience. Based on previous studies we expected to confirm the five-factor model of UIRMA-SF (H1). We also hypothesized that RMA would be higher among male participants than among women (H2); we expected a positive relationship between UIRMA-SF and hostile sexism (H3); positive correlations with similar and related attitudes to RMA (benevolent sexism and just world beliefs, H4). Additionally, we expected that rape victims would endorse rape myths less than unimpacted people (H5) but because of inconsistent and missing results from previous research we had an exploratory hypothesis about the connection between rape myth acceptance and the personal experience of rape or a close relative or friend (H6).

Materials and methods

Participants

Participants were recruited in two different ways. We collected data amongst undergraduate students and recruited participants online from a community sample using convenience sampling. The final sample size was $N = 758$ (see Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive information of participants in Study 1.

			Age	
	N	Men %	Mean	SD

Undergraduate student sample	77	54.5	21.31	1.58
Community sample	681	22.2	28.66	10.67
Total sample	758	25.4	27.91	10.37

We categorized participants into three groups based on the following question: "We would like to ask you whether you have been personally affected by any form of rape. Please indicate which of the following statements best apply to you. If you do not want to answer, you can skip this question.". Participants could select multiple options from the following: "I am personally a victim of rape." "I have a family member or loved one who is a victim of rape." "I have a good friend who is victim of rape." "I have an acquaintance who is a victim of rape." "I don't know anybody who is a victim of rape". "I have never come across the issue of rape." We labelled participants "rape victims" who experienced rape themselves; we called participants "rape impacted" people who knew a victim of rape (family member, loved one, friend, or acquaintance); and we called participants "unimpacted" people who neither experienced rape, nor knew of any victims (see Table 2).

Table 2 Experiences with rape among men and women

	Men		Women	
	N	%	N	%
Victims	2	1.3	53	11.4
Rape impacted	22	13.9	52	11.2
Unimpacted	134	84.8	360	77.4

Fifty-five participants reported that they were rape victims (2% of men and 9.4% of women participants), 74 of them were impacted by rape by knowing someone close to them

who experienced rape (11.4% of men and 9.3% of women), and 496 participants were categorized as unimpacted people (81.9% of men and 64.1% of women); 94 participants did not know anyone personally who was a victim of rape (13.5% of men and 11.9% of women), and 39 participants (4.7% of men and 5.3% of women) chose not to answer this question. Choosing not to answer the question either can mean that they did not know whether they know anyone who was a victim, could mean that this is a sensible question, and/or that participants simply did not want to answer the question.

Measures and procedure

We conducted our first study in 2014. We used a paper-and-pencil questionnaire within the student sample and an online questionnaire in the community sample. We conducted the research following the IRB approval of EPKEB. We report all data exclusions and measures that are relevant to the research question.

After giving their informed consent with agreeing the following item "I agree with the conditions described above, and agree to participate in the research." to participate in a study about men's and women's roles in society and attitudes toward sexual violence, participants completed the validated Hungarian version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (10 items hostile sexism scale, $\alpha = .89$; 11 items, benevolent sexism scale, $\alpha = .86$) (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Szabó, 2008), the validated Hungarian version of Belief in a Just World Scale (8 items, $\alpha = .84$) (Dalbert, 1999; Berkics, 2008), and the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (18 items, $\alpha = .91$; McMahon & Farmer, 2011) on a 7-point scale (from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree). We did not administer the item "Girls who are caught cheating on their boyfriends sometimes claim that it was a rape" because this question number was mistakenly not presented in the figure of the original paper (McMahon & Farmer, 2011). The item loaded on the 5th factor and it was the weakest item of the subscale. Following the guidelines (Beaton et al., 2000) for instrument translation, the items of UIRMA-SF were

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translated into Hungarian. After the backtranslation the scale was reviewed by Dr. McMahon, one of the authors of the original scale.

Results

First to test the hypothesis regarding the Scale (H1), we performed confirmatory factor analysis on the data based on the factor structure provided by McMahon and Farmer (2011). Due to non-normality of the distribution of several ratings, we used MLR estimator. CFA were performed with MPlus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015). Goodness of fit was measured in the confirmatory factor analysis based on Chen's (2007) indicators. The five-factor model provided a good fit ($\chi 2$ = 353.687, df = 124, CFI = .954, TLI = .943 RMSEA = .049 [.043; .056], SRMR = .051). Our analysis confirmed the following five original factors: (1) *She lied* (α = .88), (2) *She asked for it* (α = .88), (3) *It wasn't really rape* (α = .74), (4) *He didn't mean to* (α = .71), (5) *He didn't mean to (intoxication)* (α = .58). Before comparing UIRMA across gender and prior experience of rape, the factor structure was tested for measurement invariance (see Brown, 2006). Scalar invariance was established across both gender (see Table 3) and prior experience (see Table 4), as indices diminished less than the recommended values (.10 for CFI and TLI; .015 for RMSEA; Chen, 2007). The five factors of UIRMA can be separated both statistically and theoretically (see McMahon & Farmer, 2011), the multicollinearity between the factors and the correlation of the factors with the whole scale is high (.32-.67 see Fig 1), and the factors are related to the main concept strongly, and do not describe a different phenomenon. Based on confirmatory factor analysis the factor structure of the scale is adequate, therefore, we did not change the original factor structure, but internal consistency of the 5th factor is lower than acceptable. Therefore, in Study 1 to test the validity we present the associations between the measured variables and both rape myths acceptance and its subscales. Furthermore, similarly to other studies, we will use UIRMA as a concept

that describes rape myths acceptance (RMA), and we will not distinguish between the different subscales (e.g. Peterson et al., 2018).

Fig 1. Confirmatory factor analysis of the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (SF).
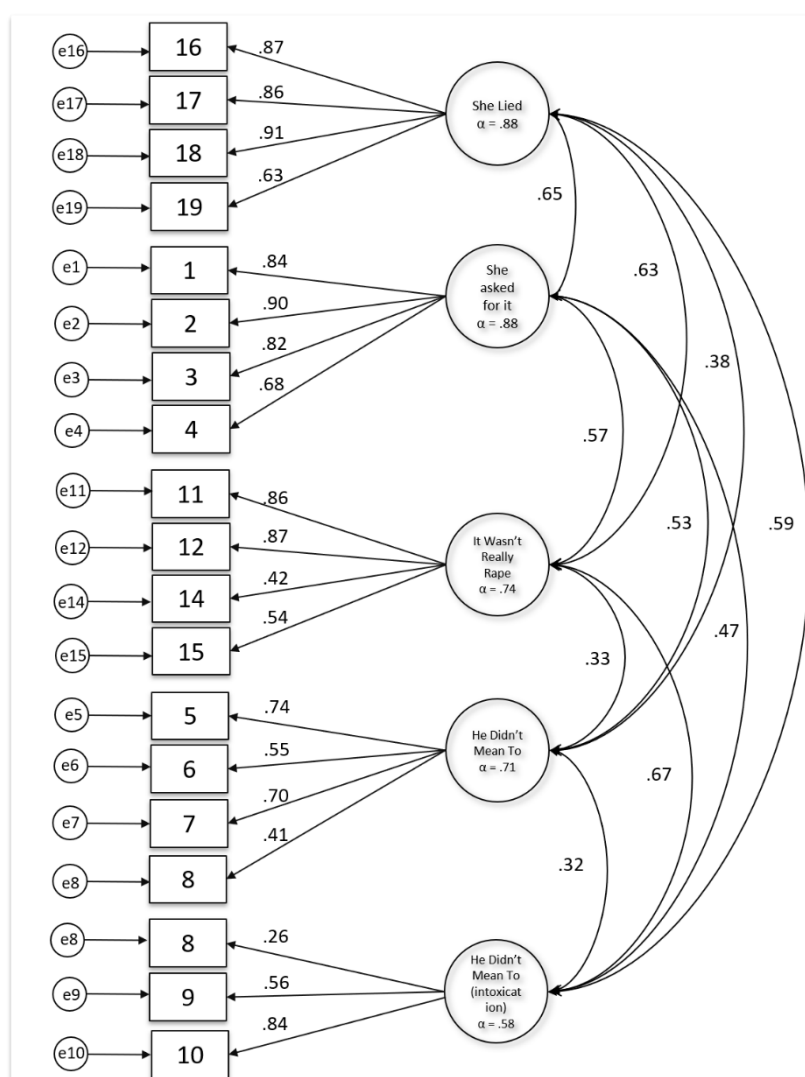
All the factor loadings are standardized and significant (p < .01)

Table 3 Invariance between genders on Study 1

Model	χ^2 (df)	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	90% CI	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	ΔCFI	ΔTLI	ΔRMSEA
Configural	514.500 (248)	.950	.938	.053	.047-.060				
Metric	527.431 (262)	.950	.942	.052	.045-.058	12.931 (14)	0.000	0.004	-0.001

| Scalar | 598.687 (275) | .939 | .933 | .056 | .050-.062 | 71.256 (13) | -0.011 | -0.009 | 0.004 |

Table 4 Invariance between prior experience on Study 1

Model	χ^2 (df)	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	90% CI	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	ΔCFI	ΔTLI	ΔRMSEA
Configural	723.383 (372)	.928	.911	.067	.060-.075				
Metric	801.019 (400)	.917	.905	.069	.062-.076	77.636 (28)	-0.011	-0.006	0.002
Scalar	836.793 (426)	.915	.909	.068	.061-.075	35.774 (26)	-0.002	0.004	-0.001

Convergent and Discriminant Validity. UIRMA data was non-normally distributed with skewness of .650 (SE = .089) and with kurtosis of .051 (SE = .177), therefore we used a Mann-Whitney analysis to test gender differences. Men scored significantly higher on all five factors and on rape myths acceptance than women, but these differences were weak or moderate (H2, for more information on the differences, see Table 5).

Table 5 Difference between men and women

| | men | | women | | | | |
| | (N = 193) | | (N = 562) | | | | |
	Mean rank	Mean (SD)	Mean rank	Mean (SD)	Mann-Whitney U	P	η^2
Rape myths acceptance	447.13	2.97 (1.00)	354.26	2.57 (1.04)	40890.50	p < .001	.035
She lied	458.36	3.12 (1.37)	350.40	2.49 (1.32)	38723.00	p < .001	.047
She asked for it	412.77	3.47 (1.64)	366.06	3.14 (1.65)	47521.50	p = .010	.009
Wasn't really rape	418.82	2.21 (1.17)	363.98	1.85 (1.11)	46355.00	p = .002	.012
He didn't mean to	414.83	3.45 (1.24)	365.35	3.18 (1.31)	47125.50	p = .006	.001

He didn't mean to (intoxication)	439.58	1.95 (1.04)	356.85	1.72 (1.00)	42348.50	$p < .001$	.027

Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism correlated moderately positively with RMA and just world beliefs correlated positively but weakly with rape myths acceptance and its subscales (H3, H4, see Table 6). Furthermore, hostile sexism correlated stronger with RMA than benevolent sexism (q = .24)

Table 6 Correlation between hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, just-world beliefs, UIRMA and its subscales

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Benevolent sexism	-							
2 Hostile sexism	.448	-						
3 Just world beliefs	.156	.106	-					
4 Rape myths acceptance	.443	.615	.168	-				
5 "She lied"	.310	.591	.079	.822	-			
6 "She asked for it"	.391	.540	.099	.842	.615	-		
7 "Wasn't really rape"	. 321	. 408	.205	. 757	. 580	. 498	-	
8 "He didn't mean to"	.375	.388	.147	.668	.363	.473	.550	-
9 "He didn't mean to (intoxication)"	. 236	. 343	. 117	. 666	. 470	. 417	.483	.550

Significance is below $p < .001$ in each cell.

To test our main hypothesis regarding prior experience with rape (H5, H6), we conducted a one-way ANCOVA to determine the difference between victims, rape impacted people, and unimpacted people in rape myths acceptance, controlling for gender, age, and

education. We found, that prior experience had a significant effect on the overall UIRMA, $F(2, 600) = 7,29$, $p = .001$ $R^2 = .079$. Post-hoc comparisons showed that the unimpacted people's RMA was higher than victims' and rape impacted people, but there was no difference between the latter two groups. We identified the same pattern for each subscale, except for the subscale *He didn't mean to and He didn't mean to (intoxication)* (see Table 7 and Figure 2).

Table 7 The relation between UIRMA and prior experiences regarding rape

	Mean (SD)			F	R^2	df	P	Post-hoc
	Victim	Rape impacted	Unimpacted					
Rape myths acceptance	2.22 (1.04)	2.44 (1.03)	2.81 (1.02)	7.29	.079	2, 600	.001	1 = 2 < 3
"She lied"	2.20 (1.21)	2.34 (1.24)	2.81 (1.39)	5.27	.075	2, 600	.005	1 = 2 < 3
"She asked for it"	2.58 (1.63)	2.83 (1.63)	3.41 (1.64)	5.89	.068	2, 600	.003	1 = 2 < 3
"Wasn't really rape"	1.65 (1.11)	1.77 (1.17)	2.05 (1.14)	3.16	.030	2, 600	.043	1 = 2 < 3
"He didn't mean to"	2.82 (1.47)	3.19 (1.26)	3.36 (1.26)	2.79	.027	2, 600	.062	-
"He didn't mean to (intoxication)"	1.53 (0.80)	1.69 (1.11)	1.83 (1.02)	2.55	.023	2, 600	.079	-

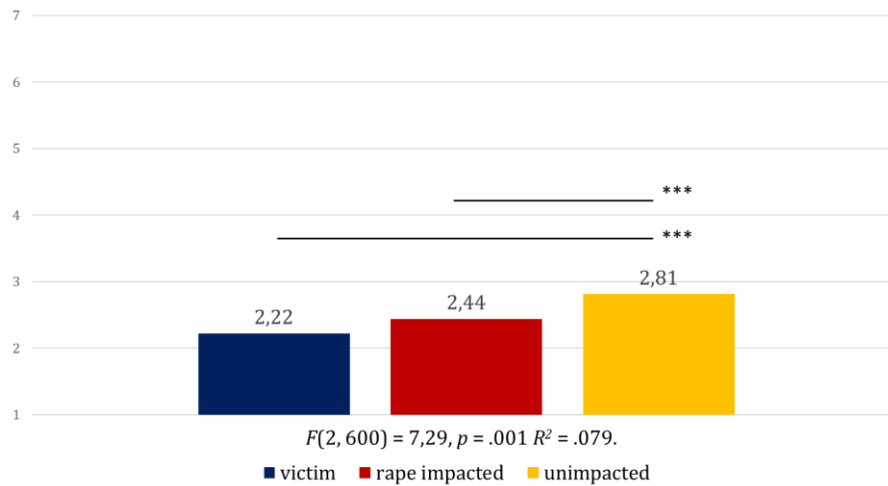Note. 1 – victim, 2 – rape impacted, 3 – unimpacted people

Figure 2 The relation between UIRMA and prior experiences regarding rape

Discussion of Study 1

Study 1 confirmed the adequacy of the five-factor solution of the rape myth acceptance scale as suggested by McMahon and Farmer (2011). Although the proposed 5-factor structure indicated a good fit to the data, the correlation between the scales were strong. Furthermore, there was no meaningful difference when we used the subscales to establish correlations with other constructs in comparison with using the full scale. Therefore, similarly to other studies (e.g. Debowska et al., 2015; Peterson et al., 2018; Reling et al., 2018) we also used it as a scale that describes the concept of rape myths acceptance more generally.

Although differences were small, our results supported the hypotheses that men accepted rape myths more (H2), people with higher rape myth acceptance endorsed hostile sexism (H3) and benevolent sexism more, and in line with previous research, people with higher rape myth acceptance believed more in a just world (H4) (e.g. European Commission, 2016; Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004; Parti, 2002). Furthermore, in line with previous results (Dénes, 2000; Hayes, Lorenz, & Bell, 2013) we found that the correlation between rape myth acceptance and hostile sexism was stronger than the correlation between benevolent sexism and rape myth acceptance. Although the two sexist attitudes are closely related and they are both positively associated with rape myth acceptance, this difference can be explained by the

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fact that benevolent sexism serves to justify men's dominance over women, hence it is related to rape myth acceptance, but it does not contain aggressive and punishing attitudes toward women that both rape myth acceptance and hostile sexism entails (Bohner et al., 1993).

In contrast to some earlier studies (Frese, Moya, & Megías, 2004; Lerner, 1980), but in line with others (Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015), we found that victims of rape endorsed rape myths less than unimpacted people (H5), and people impacted by rape through knowing a victim of rape also accepted rape myth less than unimpacted people (H6). This result suggests either that surviving or knowing someone who was raped decreases rape myths acceptance or that those who accept rape myths less, label their own or others' experience as rape, and rape victims may be more likely to share their trauma with people who endorse rape myths less.

Although our results gave us the first indication that the psychological mechanisms connected to rape myths acceptance apply in the context of Hungary, and the translated version of McMahon and Farmer's (2011) scale is adequate, the results are limited by the convenience sample that we used.

Although we found that people who are affected by rape endorse rape myths less, our cross-sectional method does not give us information about causality. On the one hand, it is possible that rape victims share their trauma with people who endorse rape myths less, knowing that they will be more understanding and offer better help, on the other hand, if people learn that a friend or close relative of theirs became victim of rape which is more likely to be an event that is counter-stereotypical, it may decrease their rape myth acceptance. Although it is important to mention that people who said that they know someone who was raped also accept the fact it was rape, while people high in rape myth acceptance may report that they don't know anyone who was raped because they label less incidents as rape.

In conclusion, we found that rape victims, rape impacted people, and women in general accept rape myths less than unimpacted people and men. We found not only that being a victim but also knowing a victim is connected to lower rape myth acceptance.

In Study 1 we established the factor structure of UIRMAS and mapped its correlates but because participants were recruited using convenience sampling and overwhelmingly among university students, we conducted another study to examine the phenomenon using a sample demographically similar to the Hungarian population. We also extended our research question to assess how rape myth acceptance is associated with the evaluations of rape scenarios with different degrees of certainty.

Study 2: The role of rape myths acceptance and victim's outgroup membership in the evaluation of rape cases

Rape myth acceptance reflects socially shared beliefs about rape that serve to justify men's sexual aggression against women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), therefore rape myths acceptance and conservative gender relations in society are closely connected (Viki & Abrams, 2002). According to the global gender gap index, Hungary holds the 105th position in equality of the positions of men and women in society (The Global Gender Gap Report, 2020, suggesting that gender equality is lower than in most of the western world. Estimations suggest that unreported rape cases are 415 times higher than reported ones in Hungary (Wirth & Winkler, 2015). While rape can disrupt the harmony between men and women and draw attention to gender inequalities (Searles, 1995), rape myths can hinder the recognition of the structural aspects of rape (Chapleau, Oswald, & Russel, 2007), that the perpetrators are mostly men, whereas victims are overwhelmingly women (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014).

Rape myths create a normative environment in which labeling a case not as rape, blaming a victim for it, and excusing the perpetrator is more acceptable than in social contexts in which rape myths are refuted (Bohner, Siebler, & Schmelcher, 2006). Based on previous results (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014) it is reasonable to think that low gender equality and the associated high level of rape myth acceptance creates an environment in which victims do not trust the police and other authorities, and do not think they will be treated fairly (Sable et al., 2006; Wirth & Winkler, 2015). They therefore do not report the rape to the police (McMahon & Farmer, 2011), which explains why latency is higher in less gender equal countries that are also likely to endorse rape myths more widely (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). Therefore, understanding the phenomenon of rape myth acceptance has great relevance in the normative context of Hungary, both to check whether the construct is identical in this societal context compared to the data collected mostly in Western countries too, and to examine its practical implications, e.g. how people react to rape cases and victims.

The importance of examining reactions to various rape scenarios is twofold: on the one hand, people's reactions reflect the normative context of rape in society, therefore it affects whether perpetrators do or do not think that rape is a serious crime, or what constitutes a rape, and on the other hand, it affects whether victims report the case to the police or seek help at all (Bohner, Siebler, & Schmelcher, 2006). Evaluation of rape cases is affected by the stereotypicality of the rape, which affects the perceived certainty of rape. Previous studies found that a rape scenario is perceived as stereotypical if the perpetrator is a stranger to the victim and a deviant person (Greenberg & Ruback, 1992), he is armed or uses physical force during the rape (McGregor et al., 2000), and the victim immediately reports the case to the police and cooperates with them (Bongiorno, McKimmie, & Masser, 2016). Moreover, the gender of the victim and the perpetrator and their prior relationship affect whether a case fits

into a stereotypical rape scenario, which in turn affects evaluations of the rape. Participants were more likely to blame the victim and believe that it was not rape when the case was perceived counter-stereotypical, that is, when the victim did not fight against the perpetrator physically and did not cooperate with the police (Sheldon & Parent, 2002).

Group membership of the perpetrator and the victim can also produce bias in how a rape case is perceived and evaluated (Bal & Van den Bos, 2010; George & Martinez, 2002; Harrison et al., 2008; Masser, Lee, & McKimmie, 2010; McKimmie, Masser, & Bongirono, 2014). This can be explained by social identity theory suggesting that people are motivated to see members of their ingroup more positively than members of the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Previous research has shown that people blame an out-group perpetrator more than an ingroup perpetrator (Bal & Van den Bos, 2010; George & Martinez, 2002; Harrison at al., 2008), and blame an ingroup victim less than a victim belonging to an out-group (Harrison et al., 2008). However, putting together the effects of stereotypicality and group belonging, Bongiorno and colleagues (2016) found that the perpetrator's out-group membership did not affect the evaluation of a stereotypical rape case, however, the ingroup perpetrator was more likely to be excused and the victim blamed for the rape when the rape was counter-stereotypic.

Research Aims and Hypotheses

The main purpose of Study 2 was twofold, on one hand to examine the connection between rape myth acceptance and the evaluation of uncertain and undisputable rape cases and how group membership affects the evaluation of uncertain rape scenarios in a highly gender unequal country. Again, we tested the validity of UIRMA, this time using an online sample that is demographically similar to the Hungarian population in terms of gender, age, and settlement in Hungary. Similarly, to Study 1, we aimed to check the five-factor solution

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of the UIRMA-SF scale and expected that men accept rape myths more than women (H1); a strong positive relationship between UIRMA-SF and hostile sexism (H2); and moderate positive correlations with benevolent sexism and with social dominance orientation (H3).

Based on previous research (e.g. Chapleau, Oswald, & Russel, 2007; Suarez & Gadalla, 2010) in case of the stereotypicality of the cases we expected, that rape myths acceptance will predict victim blaming and labelling the case as rape (H4) and people with higher rape myth acceptance would blame the victim more and label the case less as rape, especially when the case is uncertain (H5). While in case of group membership, we expected, that participants will blame the victim more (H6) and label the case as rape less (H7), when the victim is an outgroup member.

Materials and methods

Participants

We recruited participants with the help of an opinion poll company (SoliData) who relied on an online pool of respondents that are demographically similar to the Hungarian society in terms of gender, age, and type of settlement, but participants had a higher than average education ($N = 1007$, 49.2% male 50.8% female). We did not calculate sample size based on previous results which is nowadays often required to prevent Type 2 error due to a larger sample size that would be ideal to test the hypothesized relation, and targeted $N = 1000$ which is typically used in representative opinion poll surveys in Hungary (see Poll of Polls, 2018). Mean age was 41.52 years ($SD = 13.05$) ranging from 18 to 64 years, level of education and type of settlement are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 Level of education and type of settlement of participants

	N	%

Education		
Primary degree or less	8	0.8
Secondary degree	464	46.1%
Another type of degree	118	11.7%
College/university degree or higher	417	41.5%
Settlement		
Capital	191	19%
County capital	212	21.1%
Town	331	32.9%
Village	273	27%

Measures and procedure

Data was collected in 2016 following the regulations of IRB approval of Eötvös Loránd University. After giving their informed consent, participants were presented with three scenarios: (1) an uncertain scenario with a victim with different group membership, (2) an undisputable scenario, and (3) an uncertain rape scenario in this order (for the exact wording of the cases, see the A1 in the Appendix). For technical reasons, randomization was not possible in the data collection, therefore, we conducted a complementary analysis in order to check whether the responses given to the first rape vignette influenced the responses given to the following one. We run a moderation model (Model 1) using the Process macro (Hayes, 2017) and found that rape myth acceptance influenced the uncertain rape labelling and victim blaming beyond and above the labelling and victim blaming in the uncertain rape scenario

(see the results of the moderation analysis in in the Appendix, A2). which suggest that results are not consequences of the order effect only.

We established the level of certainty based on Bongiorno, McKimmie, and Masser's (2016) research, in the undisputable rape scenario the victim physically resisted to the perpetrator, and she fully cooperated with the police (e.g. "*Éva [the victim] said that she screamed and tried to escape but she couldn't. At the same night Éva went to the police and reported the case.*"), but in the uncertain scenarios she did not (e.g. *"She said many times that she does not want to have sex with him, but physically she did not resist" „Szilvia [the victim] went to the police and reported the case but it was really hard for her to work with them.*"). We measured victim blaming with one item ("*I think Éva/Szilvia [the victim] is responsible for what happened.*") and participants labelled the case whether they considered it a rape or not, and both were measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = it was certainly not rape to 7 = it was certainly rape.

We varied the victim's groups membership between Slovenian and Hungarian in the other scenarios. In the outgroup condition we added the nationality of the victim and used the Slovenian version of a well-known name in Hungary in the description (*"...accused to committing rape against the Slovenian Julija…"*). To test whether the scenarios were equivalent in stereotypicality, we run a pilot test (*N* = 25) on the scenarios, using only Hungarian names. Participants were presented with both scenarios in a randomized order. We found no difference in the evaluation of the scenarios in stereotypicality (see **Hiba! A hivatkozási forrás nem található.**)

Participants completed the short form of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (5 items hostile sexism scale, α = .84; 5 items benevolent sexism scale α = .79; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Szabó, 2008), Social Dominance Orientation (8 items, α = .78; Ho et al., 2015, Faragó & Kende, 2017) and the Hungarian version of the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance

Scale (18 items, α = .90; McMahon & Farmer, 2011). The data collection was a part of an omnibus survey. Besides the mentioned variables, we measured modern sexism (Swim & Cohen, 1997), but we do not discuss the findings related to this variable within the presentation of this study.

Results

To check whether the five-factor solution can be identified, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis again based on the factor structure suggested by McMahon and Farmer (2011) and tested in Study 1. Again, due to non-normality of the distribution of several ratings, we used MLR estimator. CFA were performed with MPlus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015).

The five-factor model showed good fit to the data ($\chi 2$ = 421.850, df = 124, CFI = .944, TLI = .931 RMSEA = .054 [.048; .060], SRMR = .049). Standardized factor loadings of the general factor ranged from 0.31 to 0.90 (see Fig 2.). Measurement invariance (see Chen, 2007), and scalar invariance of the UIRMA scale was established across gender groups (see A4).

Fig 2. Confirmatory factor analysis of the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (SF).
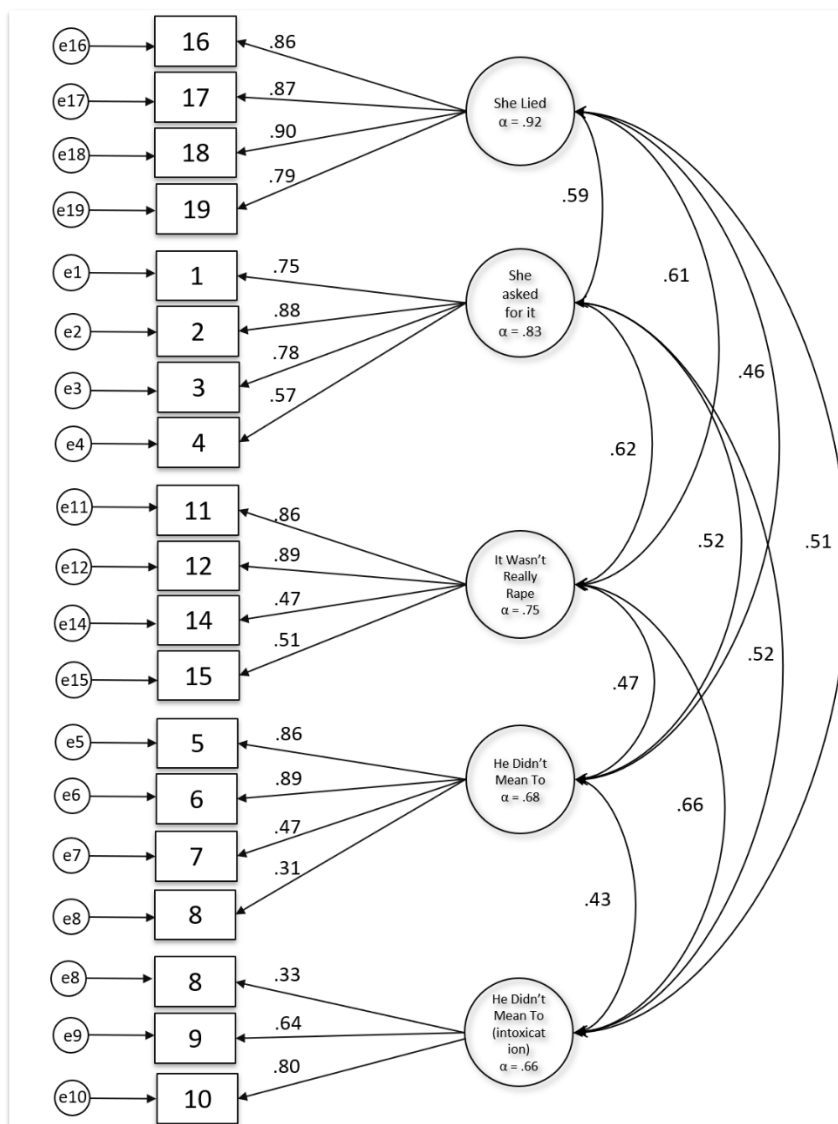
All the factor loadings are standardized and significant (p < .01)

Convergent and Discriminant Validity. Because of non-normal distribution (skewness of .307, SE = .077 and kurtosis of -.130 SE = .154) we used Mann-Whitney test to compare the UIRMA scores of men and women (see Table 9). Men scored significantly higher than women on rape myths acceptance and on every subscale of UIRMA, except on subscale He didn't mean to (intoxication), however these differences were weak.

Table 9 Difference between men and women on UIRMA and on its subscales

	Men (N = 495)		Women (N = 512)	

	Main rank	Mean (SD)	Main rank	Mean (SD)	Mann-Whitney U	P	η^2
Rape myths acceptance	529.25	3.50 (1.11)	479.59	3.30 (1.23)	114223.00	p = .007	.007
She lied	557.35	3.80 (1.57)	452.42	3.22 (1.61)	100310.50	p < .001	.033
She asked for it	530.13	3.84 (1.49)	478.74	4.11 (1.71)	114994.00	p = .011	.006
Wasn't really rape	532.01	2.90 (1.46)	476.92	2.64 (1.43)	113785.50	p = .005	.008
He didn't mean to	520.72	3.82 (1.29)	487.84	3.60 (1.50)	112856.00	p = .003	.009
He didn't mean to (intoxication)	529.25	2.38 (1.37)	479.59	2.27 (1.40)	118445.00	p = .069	

As predicted, UIRMA correlated moderately positively with hostile sexism (r = 49, p < .001) indicating convergent validity (see Table 10) and correlated weakly with benevolent sexism (r = .25, p <.001) and with social dominance orientation (r = .24, p <.001).

Table 10 Correlation between benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, social dominance orientation, UIRMA and its subscales

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Benevolent sexism								
2 Hostile sexism	.14							
3 Social Dominance Orientation	.02	.32						
4 Rape myths acceptance	.26	.50	.24					
5 "She lied"	.18	.55	.23	.80				
6 "She asked for it"	.22	.39	.18	.78	.52			

7 "Wasn't really rape"	.16	.36	.18	.81	.60	.50	
8 "He didn't mean to"	.26	.23	.11	.66	.36	.41	.38
9 "He didn't mean to (intoxication)"	.14	.26	.16	.68	.42	.42	.52	.55

Significance is below p < .001 in each cell.

We tested whether people evaluated the uncertain and undisputable scenarios differently with a paired sample t-test. We found that participants blamed the victim more and labelled the case as rape less in the uncertain rape scenario (victim blaming $M = 3.36$ $SD = 1.68$; rape labelling $M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.92$) than in the undisputable case (victim blaming $M = 1.42$ $SD = 1.02$; rape labelling $M = 6.70$, $SD = 0.97$). We run a hierarchical linear regression to test the role of RMA in the evaluation of both an uncertain and an undisputable rape case (see Table 11 and Figure **3**). We controlled for gender and age in the regression. We found that benevolent sexism and RMA were significant positive predictors of rape labelling both in case of an uncertain rape scenario and in case of an undisputable rape scenario. In the case of victim blaming, hostile sexism and RMA were significant predictors both for the uncertain and undisputable rape scenarios. However, RMA better predicted the evaluation of the rape case, that is that predicted with a stronger effect size and explained a greater part of variance when the case was uncertain, then when it was undisputable.

Table 11 Hierarchical linear regressions on rape labelling and on victim blaming in an uncertain and undisputable rape case

Outcome variable: Rape labelling												
	Uncertain case						Undisputable case					
	B	SE	β	p	ΔR^2	R^2	B	SE	β	p	ΔR^2	R^2

	B	SE	β	p	ΔR²	R²	B	SE	β	p	ΔR²	R²
Step 1					.008	.008					.006	.006
Constant	4.13	0.27					6.38	0.14		< .001		
Gender	0.26	0.12	0.07	< .001			0.12	0.06	0.06	.042		
Age	0.01	0.01	0.07	0.029			0.00	0.00	0.04	.174		
Step 2				0.026	.035	.043					.004	.010
Constant	5.48	0.39					6.15	0.120		< .001		
Gender	0.02	0.13	0.00	< .001			0.14	0.06	0.07	.034		
Age	0.01	0.01	0.06	0.891			0.00	0.00	0.04	.246		
Hostile sexism	-0.26	0.04	-0.20	0.060			0.01	0.02	0.01	.801		
Benevolent sexism	0.02	0.04	0.02	< .001			0.04	0.02	0.06	.049		
Step 3				0.628	.106	.149					.018	.028
Constant	5.81	0.37					6.22	0.20		< .001		
Gender	0.15	0.12	0.04	< .001			0.16	0.06	0.09	.011		
Age	0.01	0.00	0.09	0.210			0.00	0.00	0.05	.113		
Hostile sexism	-0.01	0.05	-0.00	0.002			0.06	0.03	0.09	.020		
Benevolent sexism	0.12	0.04	0.09	0.901			0.06	0.02	0.09	.005		
RMA	-0.63	0.06	-0.39	0.005			-0.13	0.03	-0.16	p < .001		

Outcome variable: Victim blaming

	B	SE	β	p	ΔR²	R²	B	SE	β	p	ΔR²	R²
Step 1					.001	.001					.003	.003

|	B	SE	β	R²	ΔR²	B	SE	β	R²	ΔR²
Constant	3.56	0.24				1.64	0.14			
Gender	-0.02	0.11	-0.006			-0.10	0.06	-0.05		
Age	-0.00	0.00	-0.032			-0.00	0.00	-0.02		
Step 2				.084	.085				.044	.047
Constant	1.58	0.33				0.75	0.21			
Gender	0.32	0.12	0.094			0.05	0.07	0.02		
Age	-0.00	0.00	-0.017			-0.00	0.00	-0.01		
Hostile sexism	0.36	0.04	0.306			0.16	0.02	0.22		
Benevolent sexism	0.01	0.04	0.008			0.01	0.02	0.01		
Step 3				.085	.170				.010	.057
Constant	1.32	0.32				0.70	0.21			
Gender	0.21	0.10	0.064			0.03	0.07	0.01		
Age	-0.01	0.00	-0.046			-0.00	0.00	-0.02		
Hostile sexism	0.15	0.04	0.131			0.11	0.03	0.16		
Benevolent sexism	-0.07	0.04	-0.055			-0.01	0.02	-0.01		
RMA	0.50	0.05	0.348			0.10	0.03	0.12		
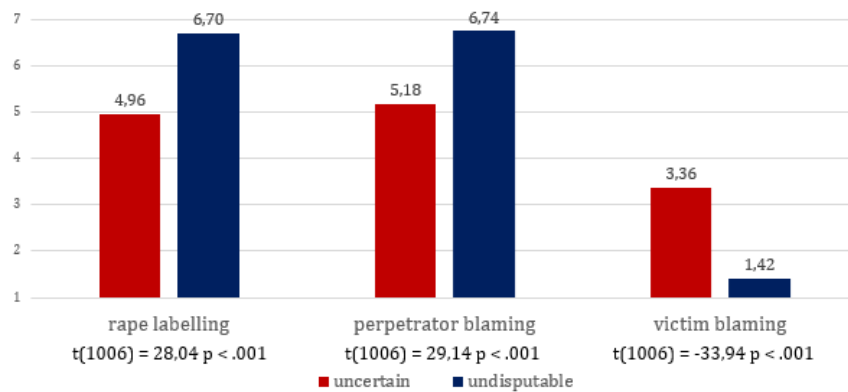
Figure 3 Difference in the evaluation of uncertain and undisputable rape cases

To examine the effect of victim's group membership on the evaluation of rape cases, we run paired sample t-tests. We found that participants labelled the case less as rape (ingroup victim $M = 4.96$ $SD = 1.92$, outgroup victim $M = 4.35$ $SD = 1.90$, t(1006)= -10.40, p<.001) blamed the perpetrator less (ingroup victim $M = 5.18$ $SD = 1.69$, outgroup victim $M = 4.63$ $SD = 1.70$, t(1006)= -10.72, p<.001) and blamed the victim more (ingroup victim $M = 3.36$ $SD = 1.68$, outgroup victim $M = 3.67$ $SD = 1.54$, t(1006)= 6.42, p<.001; see Figure **4**).
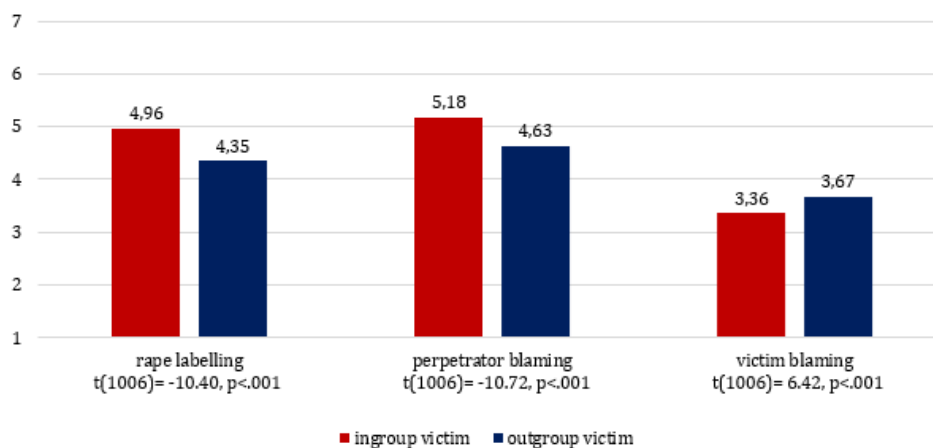

Figure 4 Difference in the evaluation of rape cases with an ingroup or with an outgroup victim

Discussion of Study 2

We replicated and confirmed the original five-factor model of the UIRMA scale on a representative sample. In line with our hypothesis found that men accepted rape myths more, however these differences were small (H1). We found a positive relationship between rape myth acceptance and other oppressive believes people with higher rape myth acceptance tended to endorse oppressive beliefs like hostile sexism (H2), benevolent sexism and social dominance (H3) orientation to a greater degree.

Using a representative sample enabled us to generalize our findings regarding the scale validation to the Hungarian context. Both in Study 1 and 2 we found evidence for convergent and discriminant validity of the scale, suggesting that rape myth acceptance is part of a generalized hostility toward women (Amnesty International, 2012) and it is deeply embedded in the society's belief system about gender roles and inequality. At the same time, measuring rape myth acceptance can offer a better understanding of rape related attitudes than more general ideologies about gender or about victim blaming in general (e.g. through just world beliefs).

Rape myths serve to justify men's sexual aggression over women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994) and mask the structural aspects of rape (Chapleau & Oswald, 2014). This explanation is supported by data suggesting that rape myths are more accepted in more conservative, and less gender equal societies (Aosved & Long, 2006; Foster & Kidd, 2014) and that rape myth acceptance is usually more accepted by men than by women (e.g. Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Although this can be a reason that gender differences in rape myth acceptance can be found in more gender unequal societies like Hungary (Hanzi et al., 2016) we did not examine rape myths acceptance cross-culturally in the current study.

Furthermore, in line with previous findings (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010) we found that rape myth acceptance predicted how rape cases were evaluated. Participants with higher rape myth acceptance blamed the victim more and labeled the case less as rape (H4). We also

found that rape myth acceptance was a stronger predictor of rape evaluations than sexism in both cases, which supports the assumption that rape myth acceptance is a different concept than sexism and more relevant to understanding rape related attitudes than sexism in general (e.g. Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

In this study we also wanted to test whether the level of rape myth acceptance predicts rape labelling. Rape does not usually happen in dark alleys and by deviant perpetrators, therefore we examined whether the evaluation of counter-stereotypical and stereotypical (uncertain vs. indisputable) rape cases depended on the participant's rape myth acceptance. In line with previous research (Chapleau, Oswald, & Russel, 2007), we found that people with higher rape myth acceptance label both cases less as rape and blame the victim more, furthermore people evaluate uncertain rape cases less harshly, that is, they blame the victim more and label the case less as rape.

However, rape myth acceptance explained greater variance and was a stronger predictor in the evaluation of the rape cases that was uncertain, but it was still a significant predictor when it was undisputable (H5). These findings align in line with previous research (Chapleau, Oswald, & Russel, 2007) that when rape cases are uncertain – i.e. they don't fit to the stereotypical rape scenario which is in fact the case most of the time – rape myths affect people's way of thinking about the case even more, resulting in stronger victim blaming and the excusing of the perpetrator.

Furthermore, we found that when the victim is an outgroup member, people tend to label the equally uncertain rape case less as rape, excuse the perpetrator, and blame the victim more for the rape, that is in case of uncertain rape cases, an irrelevant dimension as the victim's group membership effects the evaluation of rape (H6-7). In line with previous findings (e.g. Bongiorno et al., 2016) these results suggest that ingroup positivity and group membership has an effect on how people evaluate rape cases, when those are uncertain.

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In conclusion, we found that when a rape case is uncertain in comparison when it is undisputable, people use other information even more to fill the missing data like their general attitudes toward rape (rape myths acceptance) to be able to form a coherent opinion about the case. Furthermore, this assumption is supported by the result, that people used victim's outgroup membership as an excuse for the perpetrator, when they were uncertain about the rape. In summary we can say that when a rape case is uncertain, prior attitudes are even more important, and irrelevant factors such as the victim's group membership becomes a factor that affects the evaluation of the rape case.

However, because neither the scenarios nor the randomization of the order of their presentation was not available at SoliData, we had to use a not randomized within subject experimental design. Although we were able to identify differences between the scenarios in line with our predictions, in Study 3 we aim to test our findings in a randomized between subject designed experiment. We widen our scope and examine not only outgroup victims, but outgroup perpetrators affect the evaluation of a rape case, furthermore, we aim to examine the role of outgroup status with a perpetrator and a victim from a group with lower status.

Study 3: The role of rape myths acceptance and victim's outgroup membership in the evaluation of rape cases

In Study 2 we chose a neutral outgroup about which Hungarians do not have any negative stereotypes, and the group is neither clearly a high nor a low-status outgroup for Hungarians. Because we found that victim blaming is higher and rape labelling and perpetrator blaming is lower even when the outgroup victim is from a neutral out-group (i.e., without the presence of negative stereotypes and not clearly a higher or lower status group),

we supposed that the pattern would be stronger when the victim or the perpetrator is from a low status group that is generally treated with hostility because it can bias the perception of rape even more. The purpose of our question was twofold, on the one hand, if people blame the neutral outgroup victim (see Study 2) more than the ingroup victim, there is an even greater chance that they will blame the victim from a rejected outgroup. On the other hand, it was also expected that people would blame a perpetrator from the rejected low-status outgroup and blame him more for the same crime. George and Martinez (2002) examined whether people blame African American people more, who have relatively lower status, than White Americans for rape. Manipulating both perpetrator's and victim's racial identity, they found that both African American and White American victims were blamed more if they were assaulted interracially than intraracially, meaning that African Americans victims were blamed more if they were raped by a White American than by an African American, while White American victims were blamed more if they were raped by and African American that if by a White American, and the cases were labelled less as rape. These surprising results could be explained for White American victims by the expectation of not spending time with a man from a different race, while for African American victims that she must have been too provoking if a White American raped her. However, in general, other research also found that participants tended to see White perpetrators more credible and recommended shorter sentence for them than for Black people (Knight, Giuliano, & Sanchez-Ross, 2001).

Furthermore, because in Study 2 we used a within subject experimental design, in Study 3 we wanted to test our findings with a between subject randomized experimental design.

Research aim and Hypotheses

Extending the findings of Study 2 about a neutral outgroup victim, in Study 3 we aimed to examine how low-status group membership bias the evaluation of a rape case, however this time not only for the victim, but also the perpetrator. Perpetrator's low-status group membership can enhance perceptions more in line with a stereotypical rapist, who is deprived and lives on the edge of the society. Based on previous studies we hypothesized that when the victim is an outgroup member, people blame the victim more (H1) excuse the perpetrator more (H2) and label the case less as rape (H3). We also hypothesized that when the perpetrator is a low-status outgroup member, people will blame the victim less (H4) excuse the perpetrator less (H5) and label the case more as rape (H6).

Materials and methods

Participants

We recruited a representative sample of participants to the Hungarian society with the help of an opinion poll company (Medián) as an omnibus to another online study. However, 1553 people participated in the original study, only 1068 of them decided to continue with this study also (41.9% male 57.4% female, 0.7% other/did not wish to answer). Because of the high number of dropouts, our sample was no longer representative of the Hungarian population. Mean age was 48.40 years ($SD = 15.00$) ranging from 18 to 84 years, level of education and type of settlement are presented in Table 12. After completing a longer questionnaire, participants were randomly assigned to three different conditions. 1065 (99.7%) participants passed the attention check (control condition $n = 353$, outgroup perpetrator condition 1 $n = 355$, outgroup victim condition 2 $n = 357$).

Table 12 Level of education and type of settlement of participants

	N	%
Education		

Primary degree or less	24	2.2%
Secondary degree	563	52.7%
College/university degree or higher	453	42.4%
Other	28	2.6%
Settlement		
Capital	181	16.9%
Other city	572	53.6%
Village	306	28.7%
Abroad	9	0.8%

Measures and procedure

Data was collected in 2019 with an online between subject experimental setting following the IRB approval of Eötvös Loránd University.

To test our hypothesis, after giving their informed consent, participants were presented one of three scenarios. In the first condition both the perpetrator and the victim were non-Roma Hungarians, in condition 1 the perpetrator was Roma and the victim was not, and in condition 2 the victim was Roma and the perpetrator not. We altered the scenario of Study 2 to make it more believable and common for the context of a Roma perpetrator and victim, and not to make the story counter-stereotypical of perceptions of Roma people. To indicate that the character in the stories was Roma, we added the following sentence in the corresponding conditions: "József/Ibolya is Roma, Ibolya/József is not." (see Appendix A5).

We measured victim blaming with one item ("*I think Ibolya [the victim] is responsible for what happened.*"), perpetrator blaming with one item ("*I think József [the perpetrator] is responsible for what happened*") and participants labelled the case whether they considered it as rape or not, both were measured on a 7-point scale from 1 = it was certainly not rape to 7 =

it was certainly rape. After that participants completed an attention check about the scenarios, where they had to decide about two statements whether they are true for the scenarios depending on the scenario (József [the perpetrator] is Roma/not Roma and Ibolya [the victim] is not Roma/Roma.), to test whether they have noticed the different group membership of the perpetrator or the victim.

We also measured participants anti-Roma attitudes with a feeling thermometer, which is one of the most widely used measures of prejudice against Roma, with one item on a scale from 0 to 100 where 100 implicated that the group is completely likable, and 0 indicated that completely unlikable (e.g. Enyedi et al., 2004). Participants completed the shortened form of the Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (8 items, $\alpha = .83$, Bendixen & Kennair, 2017) because of the constraints of survey length, using a 7-point scale (from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree).

Results

Participants tended to disagree that what happened was rape ($M = 2.37\ SD = 1.50$), and they blamed the perpetrator ($M = 3.62\ SD = 1.59$), and the victim on a similar level ($M = 3.69\ SD = 1.54$). People tended to dislike Roma people ($M = 40.65\ SD = 27.69$) and moderately agree with rape myths ($M = 3.07\ SD = 1.16$).

To test our hypothesis, we run an ANCOVA controlling for gender and RMA, because this way RMA will not cause the difference between the evaluations (see Figure **5**). We found no difference in rape labelling ($F(2,849) = 0.27\ p = .763$) nor in perpetrator blaming ($F(2,849) = 0.46\ p = .634$) between the conditions but identified difference in victim blaming ($F(2,849) = 13.27\ p < .001$). The post-hoc analysis revealed that people blamed the victim less when she was an outgroup member ($M = 3.35\ SD = 1.48$) compared to when the perpetrator was an outgroup member ($M = 3.81\ SD = 1.58$) or none of them were outgroup members ($M = 3.98\ SD = 1.51$).
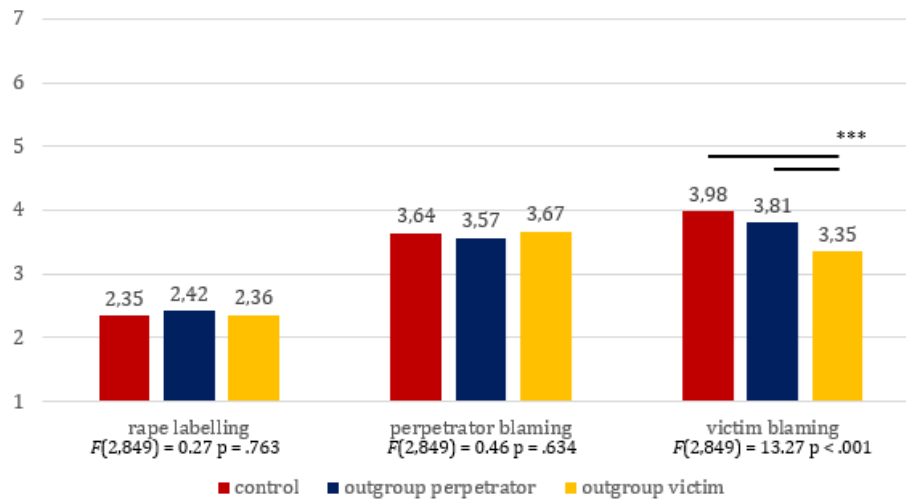
Figure 5 Difference in rape evaluation between the conditions

To get a deeper understanding of our results in line with anti-Roma attitudes we run a moderation analysis with Process macro (Hayes, 2017). For the ease of understanding we changed the direction of the feeling thermometer, now higher number means a higher level of anti-Roma attitudes. We found a main effect of anti-Roma attitudes ($t(5,840) = -2.48$ p = .015), and an interaction effect between anti-Roma attitudes and conditions ($F(5,840) = 3.57$ p = .034) in case of rape labelling (see Figure 6). These results mean that people generally tend to label rape cases less as rape if they have stronger anti-Roma attitudes (which suggest that they are generally more prejudiced and acceptant to prejudicial beliefs), but the interaction effect complement this understanding with the result, that when the perpetrator is Roma, people with higher anti-Roma attitudes are more likely to label the case as rape, in contrast with the condition in which the victim is Roma (and the perpetrator is not), and when neither of them are Roma. We found no main effect of anti-Roma attitudes, but we found the same interaction effect between condition and anti-Roma attitudes in perpetrator blaming ($F(5,840) = 3.61$ p = .003; see Figure **7**). It means that when the perpetrator was Roma, people with stronger anti-Roma attitudes blamed the perpetrator more (and as mentioned earlier in line with this they labelled the case more likely as rape), while in the other two conditions when

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people had stronger anti-Roma attitudes, they blamed the perpetrator less. In case of victim blaming we found a main effect of anti-Roma attitudes ($t(5,840) = 2.65$ p = .008) and an interaction effect between anti-Roma attitudes and condition ($F(5,840) = 7.63$ p < .001). Specifically, we found that when the victim was Roma, victim blaming was not affected by the level of anti-Roma attitudes, while in the other two conditions higher anti-Roma attitudes correlated with higher victim blaming (see Figure **8**).
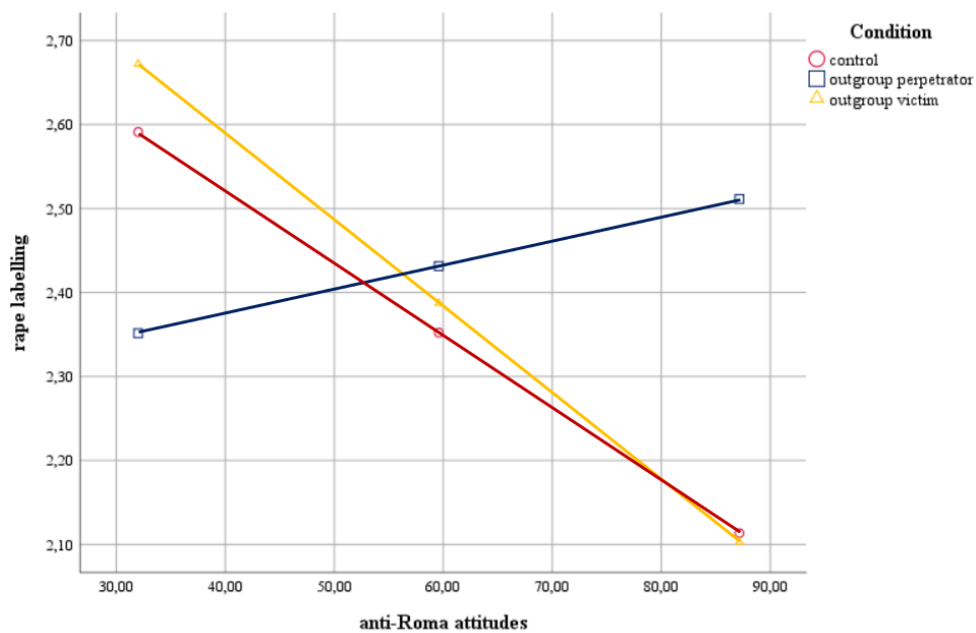

Figure 6 Interaction effect of condition and anti-Roma attitudes on rape labelling
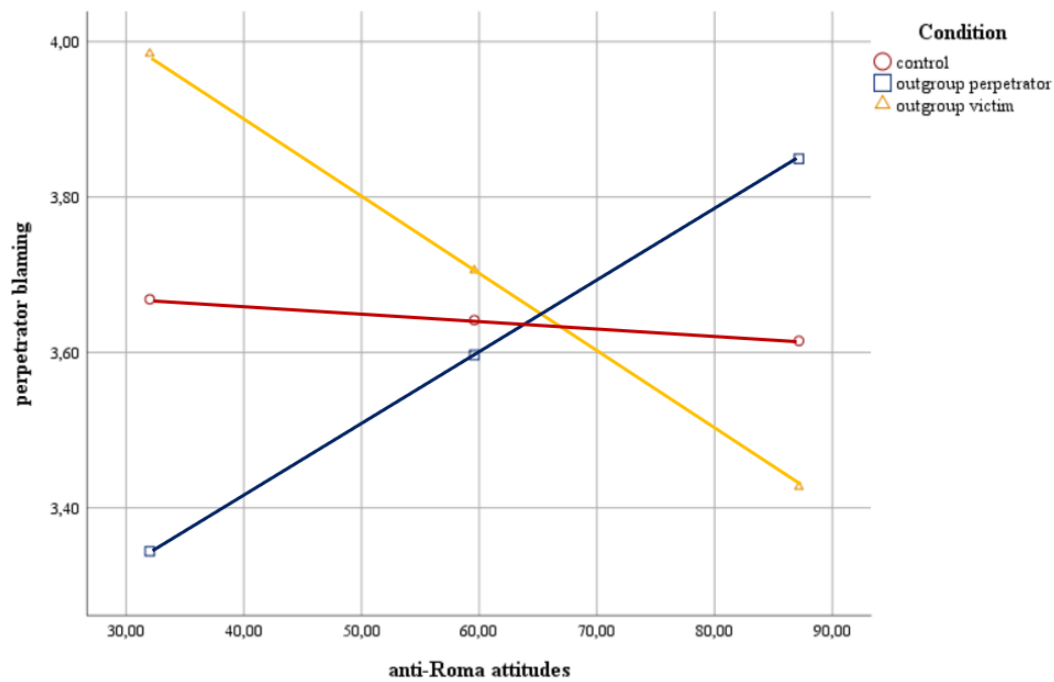
Figure 7 Interaction effect of condition and anti-Roma attitudes on perpetrator blaming
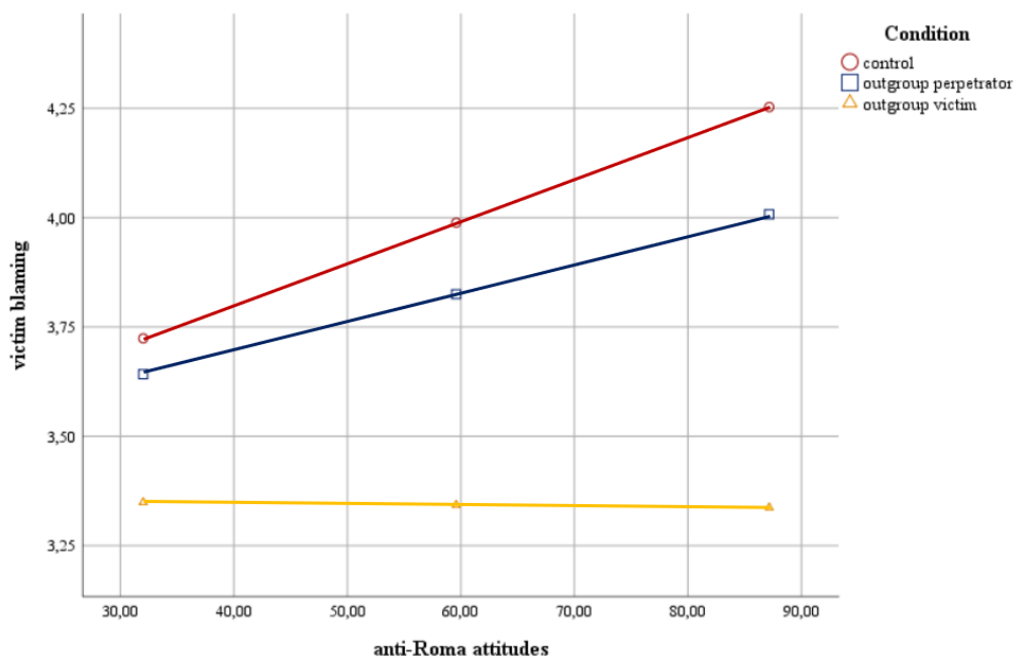

Figure 8 Interaction effect of condition and anti-Roma attitudes on victim blaming

Discussion of Study 3

The aim of Study 3 was twofold, on the one hand, to test whether the findings of Study 2 are replicable when the victim is a member of a low status group, and on the other hand, we

examined whether perpetrator's group membership affected the evaluation of a rape case. Furthermore, in contrast to the within subject experimental design of Study 2, we used a between subject design, to eliminate the possibility of scenarios affecting each other.

Unexpectedly we found that when the victim was an outgroup member, people blamed her less (H1) and in our explanatory analysis we found, that anti-Roma attitudes did not affected victim blaming, when the victim was a Roma person. These results seem to contradict the findings of Study 2, but they may be explained by perceptions of a victim's lower group status and the content of the stereotypes about Roma women. According to common stereotypes, Roma women may be seen not as a threatening outgroup, but those who deserve pity, who are miserable and less intelligent (Bernáth & Messing, 2001). If this stereotype prevailed, this can explain why participants blamed the Roma victim less. Unfortunately, the feeling thermometer offers no direct reflection on stereotypes, therefore we can only speculate about this interpretation. Another explanation is that Roma people are often dehumanized (Kteily et al., 2015), which may imply less adequate communication about not wanting to have sex. Again, as we did not measure these perceptions, these explanations remain speculative.

In contrast with our hypothesis we found that victim's outgroup membership did not affect rape labelling (H2). In contrast with our hypothesis (H3 and H4), regarding the perpetrator's outgroup membership we did not find any difference in rape labelling, but people blamed the victim more in this case too, in comparison to the condition with the outgroup victim. This result suggests that the perpetrator's outgroup Roma membership does not increase his culpability, and people do not blame the perpetrator more, when he is a lower status outgroup member.

These results contradict previous findings about the role of outgroup membership in the evaluation of rape cases, therefore we are only able to speculate about our findings. One

possible explanation is that on the one hand, when people accept rape myths more, they evaluate the case in line with these myths, that is, they would not blame the perpetrator, because blaming the perpetrator is contradictory with their myths. Another possible explanation is connected to the overall perception of the uncertain rape case which people with high RMA perceived as consensual sexual intercourse between two people. Our exploratory analysis suggests that rape labelling, victim blaming, and perpetrator blaming are correlated with general prejudiced beliefs, in this case to anti-Roma prejudices, as more prejudiced people are more likely to blame the victim, excuse the perpetrator, and label the case less as rape regardless of the conditions of the study, that is, regardless whether the perpetrator or the victim is an outgroup member. However, when the perpetrator is a Roma person more prejudiced individuals label the case more as rape and blame the perpetrator more. Although we have no direct evidence to support this interpretation, this would mean that not outgroup membership, but specifically prejudice against that outgroup affects whether people label the case as rape and blame the perpetrator, and consequently make evaluations less in line with rape myth acceptance.

In conclusion, our aim of with Study 3 was to examine, how people react to a victim and to a perpetrator from a lower status and negatively evaluated outgroup, and how group membership affects their evaluation of rape cases. Unexpectedly, we found that Roma victims were blamed less both compared to situations in which both the perpetrator and the victim were non-Roma, and in which the perpetrator was a Roma person, possibly because participants saw them as more vulnerable, when a majority group member was the perpetrator. However, we found, that people are not affected by group membership in rape labelling per se, which suggest, that they see every case as rape to a similar extent, but they differentiate where they put the blame.

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A limitation of the study was that our manipulation of group membership was very explicit in the vignettes, which could guarantee that participants were certainly aware of it which was indeed the case, supported by the low rate of those who failed the attention check, but it could also create a social desirability effect with respondents trying not to appear prejudiced. Our study took place after a questionnaire about attitudes toward Roma people as part of an omnibus survey, which could also increase participants awareness about the goal of our study. Therefore, in Study 5 we aimed to overcome these limitations and create a more subtle scenario to test factors that could alter the perception and blame of the perpetrator. We found that being a member of a low status rejected outgroup did not directly affect the evaluation of the perpetrator, therefore, in Study 4 (and in Study 5) we were interested, whether an excusing factor such as celebrity status affects the perception of a rape case.

Study 4[2]: The role of celebrity status as an excuse in the evaluation of a rape case

Following the revelations of the Harvey Weinstein case and the related public outrage, perpetrators of sexual abuse faced more serious consequences, such as termination of contracts and damage to their public image. However, this has not been and is not always the case when it comes to sexual offence committed by famous people. Bill Cosby (TV show presenter and actor), Roman Polanski (film director), and László Kiss (head coach of the Hungarian swimming team) are successful and admired people, despite the fact that they all committed sexual assault or rape. This is not to say that they were not affected by the consequences of their offence, but against popular belief, rape accusations do not always

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mean the end of the perpetrator's career and popularity. These people stayed popular and successful despite broad public awareness of their sexual misconduct. This is all the more surprising, as people consider rape an extremely serious crime, and have strong negative attitudes toward sex offenders (Ferguson & Ireland, 2006). In our study, we examined why a famous person can get away with rape (regardless of the fact that others may be judged extremely harshly for committing the same crime).

Knight, Giuliano, and Sanchez-Ross (2001) found that perception of rape is influenced by the perpetrator's celebrity status as well: famous perpetrators were evaluated more positively than non-famous ones. Furthermore, participants recommended shorter sentences, considered the perpetrators more reliable and thought that victims enjoyed the rape more if the perpetrators were celebrities. Success can be a direct outcome of social status, both occupational social status (e.g. bank manager) or because of the family's social status (e.g. being a relative of a powerful person), but it can also be gained by high achievement and competence. In case of the first, the individual may be perceived successful because of a halo effect, which suggest that people who are in a higher social status are often perceived as more successful than people with lower social status (Forgas & Laham, 2016). These two sources of success may have different implications for lenience. In the former case, it has to do with social power, and in the latter case, it is connected to positive personal qualities and deservingness (for a similar distinction see Pica, Sheahnan, & Pozzulo, 2017).

The perpetrator's social status also affects jurors' judgement according to a meta-analysis (Devine & Caughlin, 2014). Perpetrators with lower SES are more likely to be convicted than perpetrators with high SES. Perpetrators with higher SES are seen less blameworthy and they are assigned shorter sentences (Gleason & Harris, 1976; Osborne & Rapaport, 1985). However occupational social status does not affect jurors' verdict directly, but high SES perpetrators are perceived as having better potentials in the future (Loeffler &

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Lawson, 2002). A more recent study has found that a perpetrator's low social status affected whether he was seen guilty in a rape case after alcohol consumption, but not after taking cold medicine (i.e., whether they were considered responsible for their state). However, this difference was not found when the perpetrator was a star athlete (Pica, Sheahnan, & Pozzulo, 2017).

In Study 4, we were interested in understanding the mechanisms of bias using the example of a rape case of a famous and popular swimming coach in Hungary. Swimming is an important and highly successful national sport, and therefore, it receives a lot of public attention. Swimmers and coaches are generally well-known and highly popular people, and often considered as national heroes. Although the scandal was recent, the rape was committed 55 years earlier. The perpetrator was a successful young swimmer at the time, and he did not know his victim who was an 18-year-old woman visiting the swimming-pool that day for recreation. The case was known to some people in his immediate surroundings – he was even shortly imprisoned for committing this crime at the time – but it only became known to the wider public in 2016 (for a description of the scandal see Anderson, 2016). László Kiss was already a talented swimmer at the time of the rape, and later he became not just a successful swimmer, but also one of the most successful swimming coaches. His pupils became Olympic and world champions. In sum, he was a widely respected person who received his reputation through hard work and competence. The fact that he earned his success and deserved people's admiration was also often mentioned in the media in connection to his rape case. At the time of the rediscovery of his rape, the swimming coach denied it. This evoked mixed reactions among Hungarians. Both media and social media reactions used rape myths to defend him and make his story credible (e.g., news reports suggested that the victim liked sex, or she should not have had gone with the perpetrator to his apartment). Others expressed their disappointment in a popular and well-known person.

This case seemed suitable for examining the effects of a biased perception of the perpetrator on a rape case because the event happened a long time ago. As the victim was believed to be dead at the time the scandal broke out, many aspects of the rape were unclear. We found this case especially interesting because it had the potential to reveal whether a rape case was evaluated through the distorting lens that focuses on the perpetrator's success even though the rape happened before, he became a well-known and popular person. Thus, we could examine the effect of rape myth acceptance and the related biased perception of the perpetrator more clearly than studies that focused on the evaluation of rape cases committed by people who were celebrities at the time of the rape. These studies have found that not only famous perpetrators were found less guilty, rape itself was seen differently (e.g., Knight et al., 2001).

The importance of understanding the connection between rape myth acceptance and biased perception through famousness of the perpetrator is important, because scandals that people talk about for weeks can strongly influence the normative context in which all other rape cases are evaluated. Journalists are not immune to the cultural context and victim blaming either. Researchers found that journalists were more likely to question the victim's story than the perpetrator's in their reports on rape cases, and 65% of the newspaper articles referred to a rape myth (Franiuk et al. 2008). Victim blaming is also commonly found in newspapers (Korn & Efrat, 2004, Los & Chamard, 1997). Understanding these biases in reporting about rape is underlined by a study showing that people who read an article that endorsed rape myths were less likely to believe that Kobe Bryant (a basketball player who was accused of rape) was guilty than those who read an article with rape myths challenging thoughts (Franiuk et al., 2008). Our research can potentially explain why social reactions to this highly publicized rape scandal were mixed, and it can also provide guidelines for the media on how to communicate rape cases.

Research Aims and Hypotheses

Related to the case of the swimming coach, we examined whether the evaluation of the rape was affected by the perception of the perpetrator along traits that were otherwise irrelevant from the perspective of the case, such as being a successful swimmer or swimming coach (i.e., considering success an important factor in making judgements about the rape), as well as by individual differences in rape myth acceptance (RMA). Specifically, we hypothesized that RMA would predict a higher importance of the perpetrator's success in labelling the case as rape (H1, in line with Eyssel & Bohner, 2011; Süssenbach et al. 2012) and in the moral judgement of the reactions to the rape case, such as its denial by the perpetrator (H2). We also hypothesized that RMA would directly predict labelling the case as rape (H3, Eyssel & Bohner, 2011). Rape is considered morally wrong and as a serious crime. Consequently, people have negative attitudes toward sex offenders (Ferguson & Ireland, 2006) Therefore, we hypothesized that rape labelling and moral judgement would be positively associated, that is, those who label the case more as a rape would have stronger moral judgements about the perpetrator (H4). Finally, because RMA creates bias in information processing that affects the importance of different cues to participants regarding a rape case, we hypothesized that the importance of the perpetrator's success – as an opportunity to excuse the perpetrator – would not be an independent variable from RMA, but mediate the connection between RMA and labelling the case as rape (H5 see e.g., Eyssel & Bohner, 2011; Devine & Caughlin, 2014; Knight, Giuliano, & Sanchez-Ross, 2001; Loeffer & Lawson, 2002; Süssenbach et al. 2012). Although there is evidence that the level of reported RMA depends on perceived social norms (Bohner, Siebel, & Schmelcher, 2006), therefore, it could theoretically treated as an outcome variable in the context of perceived success of the perpetrator, previous research predominantly treated RMA as a stable construct. For this reason, we examined how RMA predicted irrelevant but absolving information about the

perpetrator rather than how perceiving the perpetrator's success in the context of the rape predicted the RMA level.

<div align="center">

Study 4A

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Materials and methods

Participants

Participants were recruited in two different ways. First, we collected data from a self-selected community sample (N = 504; 19.6% male 78% female 2% did not wish to answer age: M = 37.52 SD = 12.34) using convenience sampling by posting the link of the questionnaire on Facebook in various women's groups including groups with a clear focus on violence against women. This method of sampling reached respondents who were likely to be motivated to express their opinion about the case. Their opinion is not representative to the public opinion, nevertheless relevant to consider as they are motivated to influence the public perception and public debates about a topic. However, in order to create a more balanced sample, we also collected data amongst university students, to include people with less established attitudes about rape and rape myth to the sample. Students received credit points for participation (N = 366; 25.1% male 73.5% female 1.4% did not wish to answer, age: M = 21.33 SD = 1.84). The final sample size was N = 870 (22% male 76.1% female 1.7% did not wish to answer, age M = 30.66 SD = 12.35). Level of education see in Table 13.

Table 13 Level of education of participants in Study 4A

	Study 4A		Community sample		Student sample	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Primary degree or less	1	0.1%	1	0.2%	0	0%
Secondary degree	362	41.6%	67	13.3%	295	80.6%

College/university degree or higher	471	54.1%	404	80.2%	67	18.3%
Other	34	3.9%	30	6%	4	1.1%

Measures and procedure

We used an online questionnaire and conducted the study following the IRB approval of Eötvös Loránd University. We report all data exclusions and measures that are relevant to the research question in this study.

Participants were presented with a summary of the scandal without any evaluations. The description contained only the dates of the event and its recent discovery, as well as the reactions of the National Swimming Association (which was defensive of the coach). As the case was recently discovered, and few people knew about it from the time that it happened, we did not ask people to recall the events or whether they knew about it before the current scandal broke out, but only asked them to offer their opinion about the case assuming that they learned about it in the present and were reminded of its details in the short description that we provided. Nevertheless, respondents may have been influenced by different interpretations of the events by their exposure to different media sources. It was for this reason that we launched our questionnaire shortly after the scandal broke out, and before opinions could have been crystallized pro or contra the case. We started collecting data nine days after the scandal broke out when it was still a widely discussed topic in mainstream and in social media. Based on Google search more than 160 online newspaper articles included the key words "László Kiss" and "rape" between 5/4/2016 and 13/4/2016, that is, between the first article discussing the case and the start of our data collection.

Participants indicated how important the perpetrator's success was for them in their perceptions of the rape case by two items (How important is it that he was a successful

swimmer [in the evaluation of the rape case]? and How important is it that he was the swimming coach of the Hungarian national swimming team [in the evaluation of the rape case]? $r=.76$, $p < .001$) on a 7-point scale (1 = completely unimportant, 7 = very important). As we have mentioned in the introduction, perceived success can be achieved through a person's social status, because people often see people in high social status as more successful (Forgas & Laham, 2016), or it can be the result of hard work and discipline (Pica, Sheahan, & Pozzulo, 2017) . In this case, both interpretations could be applicable, because he did not only hold a high social status by being the national swimming coach (i.e. being in a position of power), but also earned his position through a lifetime of hard work. While both of these perceptions can have the same distorting influence on the evaluation of the rape case through perceptions of deservingness, we were not particularly interested in measuring the actual perception of the perpetrator's success, but only its importance to the participants in the context of the rape. To put it differently, we measured the extent to which participants evaluated the rape case in light of the perpetrator's perceived success.

We measured [3]the moral judgement of the perpetrator's response by four items that we created for the purpose of this questionnaire. We asked respondents to evaluate whether the following responses were morally right: *László Kiss declared that he served his sentence and suffered enough* (reversed); *László Kiss declared that the rape never happened* (reversed); *László Kiss resigned; α = .64*). We originally included two other items in the measure of moral judgement which were indirectly related to the moral responses to the scale (*The Hungarian Swimming Association stood up for László Kiss, The documents of the László Kiss*

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[3] Furthermore, we have measured how important is to participants that the perpetrator is a man, that he is old, or he is supported by the government. We also measured participants' own group membership (e.g. national identity, sportsmanship, being a sport fun) to identify how these affected their evaluation. Taking all the variables into account led to similar conclusions presented in the current chapter of the dissertation. Nyúl B., Ferenczy D., Kende A., Szabó M. (2017) A felelősség paradoxona. *A nemi erőszak mítoszok és a társas identitás összefüggései.* In: Kovács (Ed.) Társadalmi nemek. Elméleti megközelítések és kutatási eredmények. ELTE Eötvös Kiadó.

case was closed (reversed) $\alpha = .72$), however we omitted them, as they were not the perpetrator's response to the events. However, it should be noted that these items fit into the scale based on reliability analysis, and the overall patterns are unaffected by its inclusion or removal. Although by the removal the reliability of the scale was lower than conventional standards, this is not necessarily a problem, as an analytical approach suggests „when a measure has other desirable properties, such as meaningful content coverage of some domain…low reliability may not be a major impediment to its use" (Schmitt, 1996 pp. 351-352). We used reversed scoring on all items but one so that a higher mean indicated the more negative moral judgement, using a 7-point scale from 1 = It was completely wrong to 7 = it was completely right. Participants indicated whether they labelled the case as rape or not using one item on a 7-point scale (1 = it was certainly not rape - 7 = it was certainly rape), and completed the Hungarian version of the Updated Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (18 items, $\alpha = .93$; McMahon & Farmer, 2011).

Results

Because of the different sampling methods, the two subsamples differed in their perception of the rape case (see Table 14). As expected, the self-selected community sample accepted rape myths less (Levene's test indicated unequal variances, $F = 61.09$, $p < .001$, so degrees of freedom were adjusted from 868 to 639.53, $t(639.53) = 17.83$ $p < .001$), cared less about the perpetrator's success as a swimmer and swimming coach ($t(868) = 14.25$; $p < .001$), they evaluated the reaction of the perpetrator as morally less acceptable (Levene's test indicated unequal variances, $F = 32.92$, $p < .001$, degrees of freedom were adjusted from 868 to 708.5, $t(713.76) = -12.74$ $p < .001$), labelled the case more clearly as a rape (Levene's test indicated unequal variances, $F = 24.13$, $p < .001$, degrees of freedom were adjusted from 868 to 731.55, $t(731.55) = -8.75$ $p < .001$).

Table 14 Descriptive statistics of Study 4A

	Study 4A		Self-selected community sample		Student sample	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Perpetrator's success	3.34	2.07	2.57	0.08	4.39	0.09
Moral judgement	5.89	1.19	6.30	1.02	5.32	1.18
Rape labelling	5.89	1.51	6.27	1.38	5.38	1.54
RMA	2.05	1.04	1.59	0.76	2.68	1.03

Although there were differences between the two samples, we ran all analyses on the combined sample for two reasons. Firstly, we did not have different hypotheses for the two subsamples and expected the same psychological processes in the biased perception of the rape case. Secondly, combining these samples provided estimates based on more diverse attitudes towards the issue, and thus arguably more representative of the population as a whole than each subsample individually. In order to check that indeed the same psychological mechanisms were present in both subsamples, we ran the mediation analyses on both samples, and found the same results (see A6, A7, A8, A9 in Appendix). Correlations (shown on Table 15) suggested that RMA was negatively associated with moral judgement and rape labelling, and positively associated with perpetrator's success. Also as expected, rape labelling and moral judgement were positively associated. Perpetrator's success was negatively associated with moral judgement and rape labelling. These zero-order correlations were in line with our

hypotheses and confirmed that it was meaningful to test the mediating role of perpetrator's success in the connection between rape myth acceptance and the evaluation of the rape case.

Table 15 Correlations between the variables in Study 4A

	1	2	3
1 Perpetrator's success			
2 Moral judgement	-.36***		
3 Rape labelling	-.23***	.46***	
4 RMA	.30***	-.27***	-.19***

Note. *** *p* <.001

We tested the hypothesis to examine whether the connection between rape myth acceptance and labelling the case as rape as well as moral judgements of the perpetrator's response related to the rape was mediated by the perpetrator's success using path analyses with the bootstrapping technique, controlling for the effect of gender. As we tested the predictions regarding two outcome variables that were also correlated, we used Structural Equation Modelling in which we relied on maximum likelihood procedure (ML) with 1000 bootstrap samples. We ran the analysis using MPlus Version 7.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015). Based on previous theorizing, all variables were allowed to predict the two outcome variables, therefore, the model was fully saturated, allowing us to estimate all path coefficients (for details see Bollen, 1989). Because the model was just identified, the fit indices of the model are not informative (df = 0).

The result of the path analysis revealed that higher RMA predicted higher importance of perpetrator's success, lower moral judgement of the perpetrator's response and rape labelling directly, and higher perpetrator's success predicted lower moral judgement of the perpetrator's response and rape labelling. As expected, RMA did not only directly predict rape labelling and moral judgement of the perpetrator's response, but this effect was mediated by the importance of the perpetrator's success. As expected, rape labelling and moral judgement of the perpetrator's response were positively associated (see **Hiba! A hivatkozási forrás nem található.** for a visual presentation of the significant paths and see Table 16 for the direct effects – variance is explained by the RMA via the mediator – and indirect effects – variance is explained only by RMA).
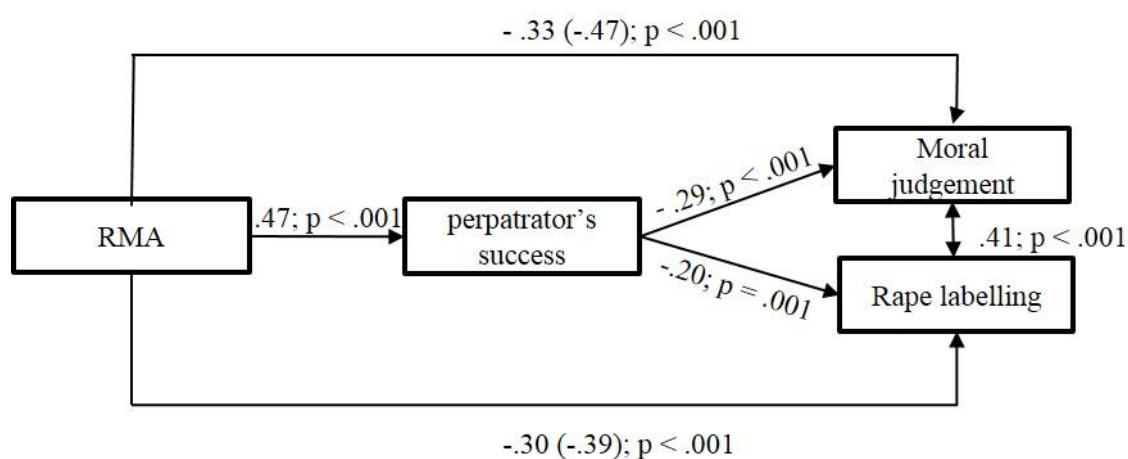

Figure 9 Standardized path model of the direct and indirect effects on Moral judgment and Rape labeling in Study 4A

Table 16 Standardized estimates of direct and indirect effects on moral judgement and rape labelling in Study 4A

	Standardized β	95% CI	SE	p

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RMA → Moral judgement (total effect)	-.47	[-.55 ; -39]	.04	< .001
RMA → Perpetrator's success → Moral judgement (indirect effect)	-.14	[-.17 ; -.10]	.02	< .001
RMA → Moral judgement (direct effect)	-.33	[-.42 ; -.24]	.04	< .001
RMA → Rape labelling (total effect)	-.39	[-.47 ; -.31]	.04	< .001
RMA → Perpetrator's success → Rape labelling (indirect effect)	-.09	[-.13 ; -.06]	.02	< .001
RMA → Rape labelling (direct effect)	-.30	[-.39 ; -.21]	.05	< .001

Note: 95% Confidence intervals were calculated with 1000 bootstrap samples.

Discussion of Study 4A

We hypothesized that higher RMA would predict less severe moral judgement of the perpetrator's response and lower likelihood of labelling the case as rape, and this connection would be mediated by giving importance to the positive perception of the perpetrator as a swimmer and swimming coach. Our results supported this hypothesis. We also hypothesized that consideration for the perpetrator's success would be predicted by RMA which was also supported by ours. These results are in line with Eyssel and Bohner's (2011) findings that participants with higher RMA would use any information to judge the actual rape scenario. Our results are also in line with Knight et al.'s (2001) findings that a perpetrator's success can function as an excuse in the evaluation of a rape case. We also found that participants with higher RMA judged the perpetrator's response morally less harshly and labeled the case less as a rape, both of which are in line with previous findings (see Burt & Albin, 1981; Cowan &

Curtis 1994; Norris & Cubbins, 1992). In sum, in the uncertain context of this specific rape scandal, rape myth acceptance and the biased perception of the perpetrator predicted whether participants labeled the incident – that happened 55 years earlier and even before the perpetrator was a well-known and celebrated person – as rape, and how they judged consequent reactions morally. Participants used perception of the perpetrator to justify their views in the moral evaluation of the consequences. This finding suggests that as long as there is room for relativizing a rape case, excusing the perpetrator, and blaming the victim, rape myth acceptance plays an important role in predicting the cognitive bias in the perception of the perpetrator that in turn can predict different evaluations of the case.

Study 4B

After data was collected for Study 4A, there was an unexpected turn of events, as the victim turned out to be alive, and came forward with the story of her rape. Following her appearance, the swimming coach publicly admitted the crime. The fact of rape became undisputable. We could therefore compare the effect of the biased perception of the perpetrator of the same rape case when it was uncertain and when it became undisputable.

Research aims and hypothesis

Building on the findings in Study 4A about the moral judgement of the perpetrator's reactions and labelling the case as rape, we expected that the biased perception would no longer have an effect on labelling the case as rape (H1), while we hypothesized that RMA would continue to predict the moral judgement of the case (H2), and this connection would be mediated by the perpetrator's perception as a successful swimmer/swimming coach (H3, Burt & Albin, 1981; Norris, & Cubbins, 1992; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004).

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Materials and methods

Participants

Participants were university students who completed the questionnaire for course credit ($N = 105$; 29.5% male 68.6% female 1% did not wish to answer, age: $M = 21.78$; $SD = 3.98$). Table 17 shows participant's level of education.

Table 17 Level of education of participants in Study 4B

	N	%
Primary degree or less	0	0%
Secondary degree	81	77.1%
College/university degree or higher	20	19%
Other	3	2.9%

Measures and procedure

We relied on the same procedure and the same measures as in the Study 4A with minor adjustments to the new context. We extended the summary with the information that the victim was alive, and László Kiss admitted his crime and apologized to her. Respondents rated how important it was that the perpetrator was a successful swimmer/swimming coach by two items ($r = .75$, $p < .001$), and labelled the case whether they considered it a rape or not, and completed the RMA Scale (18 items, $\alpha = .92$; McMahon & Farmer, 2011). We added one item to the moral judgement of the perpetrator's response scale (László Kiss apologized to Zsuzsanna Takáts) so it became a 4-item scale ($\alpha = .47$). Again, we used 7-point scales for all items. Although the Cronbach α of the scale was lower than what conventional standards suggest as acceptable, according to Schmitt (1996) this is not necessarily problematic, if the measure has other desirable properties such as meaningful content coverage of some domain.

In our case, the main desirable property was the coverage of the current reactions to the situation, and their moral evaluation. Therefore, in our view this property is justified as it accurately reflects the real-life events connected to the case.

Results

In contrast to the results of Study 4A, most participants agreed that it was rape what happened (Study 4A: $M = 5.89$ $SD = 1.51$ Study 4B: $M = 6.17$ $SD = 1.46$ Levene's test indicated unequal variances, $F = 5.62$, $p = .018$, degrees of freedom were adjusted from 973 to 132.51, $t(132.51) = 1.84$ $p = .068$) but people did not judged the moral response more negatively (Study 4A: $M = 5.89$ $SD = 1.19$ Study 4B: $M = 5.89$ $SD = 1.19$ $F = 2.41$, $p = .121$, $t(973) = -8.19$ $p = .029$). For descriptive statistics see Table 18.

Table 18 Descriptive statistics of Study 4B

	Mean	SD
Perpetrator's success	3.59	1.98
Moral judgement	5.91	1.03
Rape labelling	6.17	1.46
RMA	2.67	1.16

Zero-order correlations were highly similar to Study 4A (see Table 19), variables were associated in the expected direction, higher rape myths acceptance was associated with higher perceived success of the perpetrator, labelling the case as rape and moral judgement, and these variables were also positively associated.

Table 19 Correlations between the variables in Study 4B

	1	2	3

1 Perpetrator's success			
2 Moral judgement	-.10		
3 Rape labelling	-.03	.49***	
4 RMA	.36***	-.44***	-.08

*** - p < .001

Similarly, to Study 4A we used path analysis with the bootstrapping technique controlling the effect of gender in the analysis to test our hypothesis about the mediating role of the perpetrator's success in labeling the case as rape and judging the reactions morally. Again, we used Structural Equation Modelling with the maximum likelihood procedure (ML) with 1000 bootstrap samples. In contrast to the model of Study 4A, but in line with our hypothesis, this model was not fully saturated, but offered good fit to the data (*Chi-square = 61.99 (df = 9), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 1.00, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 1.00, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.000, 90% confidence interval* [0.00 ; 0.08]).

We found that neither RMA, nor the perpetrator's perceived success predicted labelling the case as rape. However, RMA was a significant predictor of moral judgement of the perpetrator's response, but the perpetrator's perceived success did not mediate this connection, so only the direct path was significant. (For a visual presentation of the path model see **Hiba! A hivatkozási forrás nem található.**).
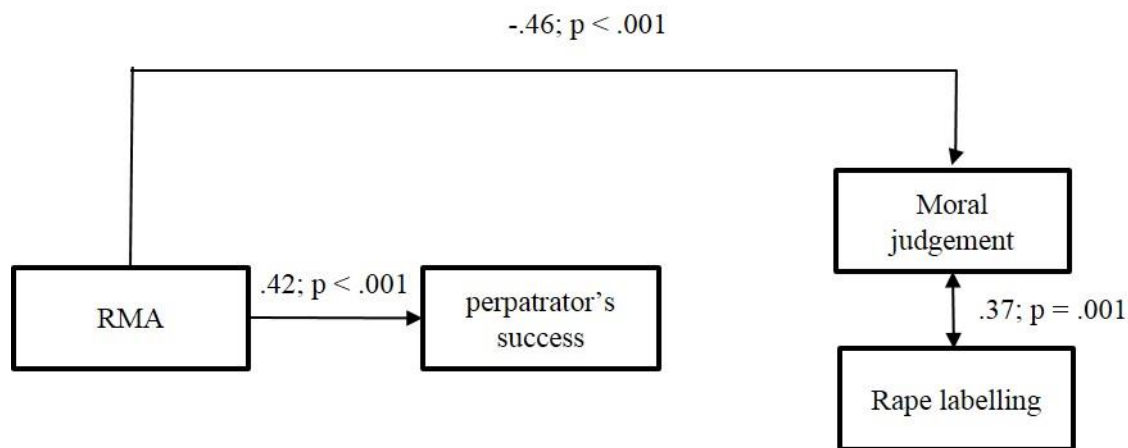
Figure 10 Standardized path model of the direct and indirect effects on Moral judgment and Rape labeling in Study 4B

Discussion of Study 4B

We hypothesized that the perception of the perpetrator's success would no longer have an effect on labelling the case as rape as the label became undisputable after it was admitted by the perpetrator. However, we expected that RMA would continue to predict the moral judgement of the perpetrator's response and this would continue to be mediated by perceiving the perpetrator as a successful swimmer/swimming coach. The hypothesis was only partly supported. In line with the hypothesis, we found that indeed rape myth acceptance and the perceived success of the perpetrator became irrelevant in labelling the case as rape (H1, H3). This finding is in line with Bongiorno et al.'s (2016) study that found that circumstances, such as the group membership of the perpetrator do not matter if the rape is perceived as stereotypical, that is, when people tend to accept it as real. However, the moral judgement of the responses to the scandal were still affected by rape myth acceptance, that is, higher acceptance of rape myths predicted less harsh moral judgements (H2). This finding suggests, on one hand, that a situational factor such as the perpetrator's perceived success is only relevant when the case is uncertain, because in that case people are motivated to use it to

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justify their RMA, but when the case becomes undisputable, they cannot use this factor anymore. On the other hand, participants with higher rape myth acceptance could not or did not deny the case more than those with lower RMA but continued to judge the situation less severely. This finding can be interpreted in a way that people with higher acceptance of rape myth judge rape as a less severe criminal act in general (see Frese et al., 2004; Norris & Cubbins, 1992).

General discussion of Study 4

The aim of our study was to examine whether people with higher RMA are more likely to use the positive public perception of a famous person as an excuse for committing rape or even for labelling the case as rape regardless of the fact that the rape happened even before the person became famous. We also wanted to show whether these psychological processes can be identified when it comes to an actual case that people learned about in the media as opposed to the evaluation of cases presented in lab studies using vignettes. Furthermore, this real-life story with high public awareness allowed us to compare judgements when the case was somewhat more uncertain and when the same case became indisputable.

Our findings about the role of rape myth acceptance in believing the perpetrator's denial and taking into account that he was a successful person in the uncertain case, supplemented previous research suggesting that irrelevant factors can affect the evaluation of a rape case (e.g., Bal & Van den Bos, 2010; Bongiorno et al., 2016; George & Martinez, 2002; Harrison at al., 2008). This does not mean that situational factors, such as the perpetrator's perceived success is not important, but it indicates that people with higher RMA tend to use this information to justify their beliefs. Furthermore, our results therefore also confirm that rape myth acceptance functions as biased information processing, as people seek consistent information to confirm their preexisting beliefs (Eyssel & Bohner, 2011;

Süssenbach et al., 2012). Indeed, we found that RMA affected the evaluation of a real-life rape case, and the current perception of the perpetrator as a successful person functioned as an excuse, especially when RMA was high.

On top of identifying the biased perception of the perpetrator and the biased evaluation of the rape case connected to rape myth acceptance, the turn of events provided a unique opportunity to also examine whether these connections changed when the fact of rape became indisputable. We found that RMA still had a direct effect on moral judgements of the perpetrator's response, but it no longer predicted rape labelling. Furthermore, the perpetrator's success did not affect moral judgement or rape labelling anymore. Although these results suggest that biased information processing had a more powerful effect on the evaluation of the case when the rape was uncertain, previous attitudes about rape continued to affect moral judgements of the perpetrator's response even when the case was indisputable.

These findings support Eyssel and Bohner's (2011) theory that rape myths function as cognitive schemas and therefore predispose the perception of a rape case. In line with previous findings, RMA directly predicted rape labelling and moral judgements of the perpetrator's response, but more importantly for people with high RMA the fact that the perpetrator is famous was also important in judging the case (Eyssel & Bohner, 2011; Süssenbach et al. 2012). This finding fits with previous research about the connection between the perpetrator's celebrity status and the evaluation of the rape case (Devine & Caughlin, 2014; Loeffer & Lawson, 2002; Knight, Giuliano, & Sanchez-Ross, 2001). Similarly to Bongiorno and colleagues' (2016) study, in which they found that group membership of the perpetrator was taken into account only in non-stereotypical cases of rape, we found that when rape was uncertain, people relied on irrelevant information more to justify their evaluations, especially when it was in line with their previous attitudes about rape.

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Although our research about an actual rape case provided a unique opportunity to test the effect of rape myth acceptance, our data collection had some limitations. For example, we used a cross-sectional research design, and therefore, we could not identify how individual respondents' beliefs changed between the two times of the data collection.

Before the items of our study variables, we presented some facts related to the scandal to the participants. Although the case was widely known after the scandal broke out, we did not examine participants' prior knowledge of the case. The different or the lack of knowledge could have affected the way the participants thought about the victim and the perpetrator, and through this the evaluation of the case.

Furthermore, we measured the importance of the person's success in the evaluation of the rape case by directly asking it from participants. This straightforward method could cause a bias based on social desirability, because there could be people who would not indicate that their evaluation is affected by this factor, or because people are often not aware of their own attitudes, which is a general critique of self-report measures. Moreover, regarding our scale, it is important to mention that we did not measure how people morally judge the perpetrator because of the rape, but how people morally judge him for his responses. At the time of Study 4A (when the scandal broke out) it was widely debated that the swimming coach never apologized and tried to minimize the crime by his reactions. Therefore, with our items we only measured whether people think that his responses were morally right and justifiable. Furthermore, we did not measure how people perceived the swimming coach, how they saw him before the scandal, and how they perceived his success (famous because of competence and hard work or famous because of his high status as a swimming coach).

The strength of our research is its the ecological validity and the fact that we collected data at the time the scandal broke out, therefore, we did not have to rely on people's memory of the event but measure their immediate responses. However, this created a caveat for the

study. The central variable of our research was the perception of the perpetrator's success in the evaluation of the rape case. As this has not been measured in previous studies, we could not rely on a validated or previously used measure for this construct. Therefore, we chose the most straightforward option of directly asking respondents about how important it was for them in the evaluation of the rape case that the perpetrator was a successful athlete and coach. However, we acknowledge that this response may have been affected by respondents' perception of his success. As we did not collect data about the evaluation of his success in general, we have no way to know whether individual differences in the acknowledgement of his personal success may have affected how important they considered this information in evaluating the rape case. Although in this research we examined the impact of the perpetrator's success on the evaluation of a rape case, other factors could have been included in our research contributing to the overall evaluation of the case, such as the historical context of the crime, the different social norms regarding rape at the time and the time which has passed since it occurred. Future research should focus on extending the study to the effects of other factors.

In the Study 4A we used two different convenience samples: a self-selected community sample and a university student sample to test our hypotheses. We used the community sample that we recruited in social media groups relevant to the topic of rape to understand the decision-making processes of people who have a stronger motivation to express their opinion and consequently to influence public opinion on these issues. We supplemented this self-selected community sample by students to also see how more naïve participants formulate their opinion on the case. Although collecting two subsamples we had a more diverse sample, the use of these samples has limitations in terms generalizability of our findings to the broader population.

For the purpose of this research, we used the example of a swimming coach because this was the example presented to us by real-life events. However, based on this case, we cannot be sure that patterns would be exactly the same if the perpetrator was a different kind of celebrity. Future studies should consider testing the effect of different types of celebrities, especially considering that celebrities represent different types of role models. Although actors and musicians may be more popular and admired than successful sport persons, however, from a moral perspective their lifestyle and acts may be more harshly evaluated and considered less normative than that of a sportsperson (Bricheno & Thornton, 2007). Furthermore, we can distinguish between different kinds of success, such as success connected to high social status and success based on competence or hard work. Future studies could focus on whether these two sources success have different effects on the evaluation of the perpetrator and the rape case.

Although previous research mostly treated RMA as a stable construct, nevertheless, there is some evidence that RMA can be influenced by situational variables such as perceived social norms (Bohner et al., 2006). Despite this general treatment of RMA as a stable attitudinal dimension, we cannot rule out the possibility that perceived success of the perpetrator could potentially increase RMA. Such a connection would imply that the causal connection between the variables would be the opposite of what was tested in the current research. Therefore, future research should test the effect of celebrity status using an experimental design for example by its direct manipulation (see, Knight et al., 2001) to establish the causal connection between these two variables. Future studies could also test the moderating effect of RMA to find out whether celebrity status of the perpetrator affects people with high and low RMA differently.

In conclusion, we found that an excuse for the perpetrator, such as celebrity status can affect the evaluation of a rape case, especially when this information is in line with people's

prior beliefs about rape. Because our study was a case study, one of the strengths of our study became one of its weaknesses. Therefore, in Study 5 we aimed to test our results that not fame, but celebrity status affects the perception of rape in an experimental setting. In Study 4 we examined the case of a swimming coach. Therefore in Study 5 we tested the effect of a different type of famous person because famous people represent different types of role models (e.g. swimming coach vs musician) with different perceived traits (sportsperson can be perceived as a hardworking person, while a fashion model as an incompetent but beautiful person). Furthermore, relying on the findings of Study 3, we extended our setting and examined the effect of outgroup membership and its interaction with celebrity status on the evaluation of a rape case.

Study 5: The relation between celebrity status, outgroup membership, and the evaluation of a rape case

Previous studies found that group membership of the victim can influence the evaluation of a rape case (e.g. Bongiorno et al., 2016). In Study 2 and 3 we found that when the victim is the member of another group, people tend to blame the victim more and label the case less as rape, although we did not find this connection between group membership and rape evaluations in Study 3, when the perpetrator was a member of a low status, highly reject outgroup. In contrast with this, in Study 4 we found that the perpetrator's celebrity status affected the evaluation of a rape case when the case was uncertain, However, we could not control for some important possible confounding variables. Therefore, we have inconclusive evidence that an irrelevant trait of the perpetrator that points to the direction of blaming him can affect the evaluation of a rape case.

Research Aims and Hypotheses

In Study 5 our main purpose was to clarify the connection between group membership and celebrity status, as elements that can potentially increase or decrease victim blaming, perpetrator blaming, and rape labelling. Based on previous literature (e.g., Knight, Giuliano, & Sanches-Ross, 2001) we hypothesized that when the perpetrator is famous, participants will label the case less as rape (H1), blame the perpetrator less (H2), and blame the victim more (H3). While in case of group membership, our research contradicts the literature, therefore we simply wanted to explore, whether group membership affects the evaluation of a rape case, increases or decreases victim blaming when the perpetrator is either famous or not.

Materials and methods

Participants

Participants were recruited via social media forums using convenience sampling ($N =$ 516; 16.9% male 77.3% female, 5.8% did not wish to answer, age: $M = 27.80$; $SD = 10.40$). Therefore, participants opinion is not representative to Hungary. Sixteen participants reported that they are part of a minority group (3.5%) and only two people indicated a Roma identity who were removed from the study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four different conditions).

Measures and procedure

We used an online between subject experimental setting and conducted the study following the IRB approval of Eötvös Loránd University. We report all data exclusions and measures that are relevant to the research question in this study.

To test our hypothesis, we applied a 2 (celebrity status) x 2 (perpetrator's group membership) design with 4 vignettes. We altered the scenario to be more suitable for the current context. After asking their informed consent, participants were randomly presented one of these 4 vignettes, which were identical, we only manipulated celebrity status and/or group membership. To increase credibility of the story, we changed the context of the

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scenario, although the main points remained the same as in Study 3 (see Appendix A10). We measured victim blaming with one item ("*I think Júlia [the victim] is responsible for what happened.*"), perpetrator blaming with one item ("*I think Feke [the perpetrator] is responsible for what happened*") and participants labelled the case whether they considered it a rape or not, both were measured on a 5-point scale from 1 = it was certainly not rape to 5 = it was certainly rape. After that participants completed a attention check about the scenarios, where they had to decide about two statements whether they are true for the scenarios depending on the scenario (Feke [the perpetrator] works on the kitchen/is a Roma person/is a celebrity/is a Roma celebrity), to test whether they have noticed the different group membership and/or celebrity status of the perpetrator.

We also measured participants anti-Roma attitudes with a feeling thermometer as in Study 3.Then, participants completed the shortened form of the validated Hungarian version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (5 items hostile sexism scale, α = .81; 5 items, benevolent sexism scale, α = .79; Glick & Fiske, 1996, Szabó, 2008), and the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (18 items, α = .92; McMahon & Farmer, 2011) on a 7-point scale (from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree).

Results

Only 463 (89.7%) of participants passed the attention check (non-Roma non-celebrity perpetrator condition *n* = 112, Roma non-celebrity condition *n* = 122, non-Roma celebrity condition *n* = 117, Roma celebrity condition *n* = 112) regarding the group membership or celebrity status of the perpetrator, which means, that the scenario was not that easy to understand.

Participants moderately agreed that what happened was rape (*M* = 3.61 *SD* = 1.90), they strongly blamed the perpetrator (*M* = 4.38 *SD* = 1.63), and they blamed the victim moderately (*M* = 3.30 *SD* = 1.58). People were significantly less prejudiced ($t(1518) = 4.42$ p

< .001) against Roma people ($M = 47.78$ $SD = 31.54$) than in the representative sample of Study 3 ($M = 59.35$ $SD = 27.69^4$).

To test our hypothesis, we ran a two-way ANCOVA to examine the effect of group membership and celebrity status on rape labelling, perpetrator blaming, and victim blaming. We controlled for gender and RMA, because this way RMA would not cause the difference between the evaluations. We found that celebrity status had a significant main effect on rape labelling ($F(1,482) = 5.16$ p = .024) but outgroup membership did not ($F(1,842) = 1.72$ p = .190, and there was no significant interaction between the effects of celebrity status and outgroup membership ($F(1,482) = 0.01$ p = .936). We found neither main effect of celebrity status ($F(1,482) = 1.10$ p = .294) or outgroup membership ($F(1,482) = 0.60$ p = .440), nor interaction between celebrity status and outgroup membership ($F(1,482) = 2.43$ p = .120) on perpetrator blaming. We found the same results for victim blaming: celebrity status $F(1,482) = 0.66$ p = .416, outgroup membership $F(1,482) = 2.95$ p = .086, interaction: $F(1,482) = 1.43$ p = .232). We ran a planned independent sample t-test to understand the difference in rape labelling, and found that people labelled the case less as rape ($t(514) = 1.97$ p = .049), when the perpetrator was a non-celebrity ($M = 3.79$ $SD = 1.88$) than a celebrity ($M = 3.46$ $SD = 1.94$).

Similarly, to Study 3, we ran an analysis to test the moderation effect of anti-Roma attitudes on the relation between condition and the evaluation of rape cases. However, in contrast with Study 3, anti-Roma attitudes neither had a main effect nor had an interactional effect on rape labelling, perpetrator blaming, or victim blaming.

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[4] We changed the direction of the feeling thermometer of Study 3 for the ease of understanding

Discussion of Study 5

The aim of Study 5 was putting together the findings of Study 2-4 and examine whether perpetrator's group membership and celebrity status influence the evaluation of a rape case.

In line with our predictions we found that people's perceptions of rape were influenced by celebrity status of the perpetrator but not by his outgroup membership. Similarly, to the results of Study 3, we found that perpetrator's Roma outgroup membership did not affect the results. As we mentioned in Study 3, this result contradicts previous literature, and we can only speculate about the reasons why. Both in Study 3 and 5 the rape case was uncertain. Therefore, in line with the findings of Eyssel and Bohner (2011) we assume that people evaluated the rape case more according their rape myths acceptance, which in case of higher acceptance could mean that factors that blame the perpetrator would not or affect less the evaluation. Another possible explanation is that our mostly participants consisting of mainly students did not want to show their anti-Roma attitudes diminishing the overall effect of outgroup membership.

In line with our predictions and with the findings of Study 4, we found that celebrity status serves as an excuse and people are less likely to label a case as rape, if it is committed by a famous person. This result is in line with the stereotype about rape, that famous people do not rape because they can have sex with women easily because of their celebrity status, and that rapists are deprived and violent people. This fits with previous research about the connection between the perpetrator's celebrity status and the evaluation of the rape case (Devine & Caughlin, 2014; Loeffer & Lawson, 2002; Knight, Giuliano, & Sanchez-Ross, 2001).

However, our findings contradict the results of previous literature that Black celebrities face a more severe evaluation (Knight, Giuliano, & Sanchez-Ross, 2001), because

we found no interaction effect between outgroup membership and celebrity status. Our results suggest that Roma celebrity people do not face a harsher moral evaluation if they commit rape compared to non-Roma celebrities. This result is connection with the absence of the effect of outgroup membership, but other explanations are also possible. The result could derive from Roma stereotypes, that a Roma person who is a well-known musician has to be really talented to defeat discrimination and become famous. These perceptions could make the Roma celebrity more sympathetic and lift him to the level of the non-Roma celebrity, but as we did not directly measure these stereotypes, this interpretation remains speculative.

Although in Study 5 we overcome a few limitations of Study 2-4, this study was not without limitations either. First, although we used an attention check, which was successfully completed by most of the participants, we cannot be sure that the manipulation was strong enough to test the effect of celebrity status or group membership. Because we supposed, that scenarios of Study 2 and 3 were too contradicted with the Roma stereotypes, we have changed the scenario to a more suitable one. However, we cannot be sure, that the scenarios were credible enough.

In summary, we found that celebrity affects how people perceive rape cases, but we did not find a main effect of outgroup status, and therefore cannot identify a causal relationship between outgroup status and rape evaluations. Furthermore, results regarding celebrity status suggest that this status is an excusing factor for both Roma and non-Roma perpetrators, and it can decrease whether people label the case as rape.

Study 6: Group-based male entitlement in contrast with personal entitlement predicts rape myths acceptance

Rape myth acceptance is strategically used to achieve socially motivated goals: to justify the system and protect the status quo which is why rape myth acceptance is positively associated with system justification (e.g. Papp & Erchull, 2017). Both system justifying beliefs and the endorsement of rape myth suggest that the person is motivated to maintain the idea that the system and existing status relations are just and fair (Chapleau & Oswald, 2013). It follows that people who are in a higher status and benefit more from the system would be more motivated to protect it. In a study, when a low-status victim accused a high-status perpetrator and the jury tended to prosecute him, participants who opposed equality showed higher rape myths acceptance, but when the perpetrator was not about to be prosecuted, they endorsed rape myths less. People who opposed equality less reported higher rape myth acceptance, when they thought that the lower status victim would not report the higher-status perpetrator (Chapleau & Oswald, 2013).

As high-status members of society may be more motivated to believe that the status relations are fair and should be upheld, they are also more likely to feel a sense of entitlement. Psychological entitlement is a "stable and pervasive sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more than others" (Campbell et al., 2004 p. 32). It refers to socially recognized rights of specific groups or individuals that appear in beliefs, expectations, rules, and obligations (Feather, 2003). Entitlement does not necessarily reflect actual achievements, but it can derive from such achievement. It is a psychologically pervasive and global phenomenon which means that it is present across social situations. We can distinguish entitlement from deservingness, as the latter means that people think they can get rewards in exchange of their personal effort, whereas entitlement means that people want to get rewards as a result of a

social contract. However, entitlement research usually relies on measures that include both deservingness and entitlement (see Campbell et al., 2004).

There are two approaches to examine entitlement. One approach focuses on the pathological aspects of entitlement, which is a component of narcissistic personality, whereas the other focuses on the social psychological aspects of the concept, such as interpersonal relations, perceived deservingness, social justice, and fairness (Zemotjel-Piotorwska et al., 2015). The approach that handles entitlement as part of narcissistic personality cannot explain why societal factors and oppressive beliefs are connected to entitlement, because that perspective presents entitlement as a personal level psychological variable. Furthermore, the idea that entitlement is connected to narcissism underscores the belief that rapists are psychologically troubled people. This would suggest that both entitlement and rape are individual level problems, not embedded in status relations within society, therefore, no societal level changes are needed to reduce rape in society. Therefore, this approach to entitlement produces similar biases as rape myth acceptance and could bias research about the issue as well. The social psychological approach, on the other hand, does not treat entitlement as a pathology or a personality trait, but suggests that entitlement is a behavioral tendency consisting of perceived social obligations, and perceived deservingness of benefits and support related to one's social position or situation, not related to personal efforts or actions (Feather, 2003; Zemotjel-Piotorwska et al., 2015). This perspective is weakly related to the perspective, that treats entitlement as a part of narcissistic personality (Bouffard, 2010; Zemotjel-Piotorwska et al., 2015).

Although different types of entitlements may be related to each other, there are important differences between them (Bouffard, 2010; Hill & Fischer, 2001). Personal entitlement is when a person feels entitled to a particular outcome or level of outcomes and feels that they should receive that outcome (Major, 1987), while group entitlement is a

prescriptive view of the group's status for what the ingroup is entitled (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999). The source of personal entitlement is the self, while group entitlement is based on group membership.

Social context affects beliefs about entitlement, and rewards people differently on the basis of their social groups (Ridgeway, 2001). In line with outcome bias based on the outcomes (e.g. how pay differences are justified by meritocracy beliefs), certain social groups are perceived as more socially worthy and more competent than other groups (Allison, Mackie, & Messick, 1996). Through the different feedbacks (e.g. benefits, social goods) members of low status groups learn that they deserve less, and they are less entitled, while members of advantaged groups learn that they deserve more and they are more entitled than others (O'Brien & Major, 2009).

Men in powerful political positions, in better paid jobs, and in higher positions are just a few of various examples that strengthen the view that men deserve more in life than women. Therefore, men tend to score higher in entitlement than women, which is one of the most direct evidence, that group status affects entitlement (e.g. Nadkarni & Malone, 1989; Tschanz, Morf, & Turner, 1998, Pelham & Hetts, 2001). This suggest that masculine entitlement is directly connected to men's higher status in society and it is a male privilege (e.g Kaschak, 1992). Furthermore, even women's gender role socialization strengthens this view, because it teaches that women's role is to satisfy men's needs (e.g. Hill & Fischer, 2001).

Previous research relied on the concepts of sexual, general, and patriarchal entitlements, but did not necessarily differentiate between them. General entitlement means "that what [men] do or want takes precedence over the needs of women and that [men's] prerogatives should not be questioned" (Gilbert, 1992, p. 391). It is directly connected to gender inequality suggesting that because men are perceived as superior, they can have anything and they can expect to get everything (Stoltenberg, 1989). Sexual entitlement is the belief, that men deserve sex whenever

and however they want, just because they are men (Beech & Mann, 2002; Pemberton & Wakeling, 2009). Furthermore, sexual entitlement strengthens the belief that men cannot control their sexual drives, which have to be satisfied (Hill & Fisher, 2001). Although sexual entitlement is specifically about the sexual superiority or needs, it is also a general view because it can govern its behavior in different domains, not only in sexuality (Polashek & Ward, 2002). Patriarchal entitlement normalizes that men have the power and control over the women's body and sexuality and depict it as natural (Lynch & Nowosenetz, 2009; Schuhmann, 2010). Although there are differences between the aforementioned types of entitlement, they all contain the idea that men have the power and the right to control women (and women's body) by birthright, and that they can use this power to maintain the current status quo. Therefore, because the source (men's birthright) and aim (maintain the current status quo and men's superior position in society) of these entitlements are the same, we propose to unite these types of entitlement as group-based male entitlement.

Entitlement is related to rape-related attitudes (Bouffard, 2010; Hill & Fischer, 2001). Previous studies suggest that men are sexually aggressive because they feel entitled to sex (e.g., Jewkes et al, 2011; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Walster, Walster, & Traupmann, 1978,) and that perpetrators both hold rape supportive beliefs and a sense of entitlement (Scully & Marolla, 1985). Hill and Fischer (2001) found that there is a relationship between sexual and general male entitlement and date rape myths acceptance (specific rape myths in the context of a date, highly correlated with general rape myths acceptance), and even the likelihood of raping. General and sexual entitlement fully mediated the relation between masculine gender role, and date rape myth acceptance, likelihood of raping, and victim blaming. Bouffard (2010) examined the relationship between personal, sexual, and patriarchal entitlements and rape related attitudes, and found that entitlement predicts rape myths acceptance. However, rape myths acceptance was only significantly correlated with sexual and patriarchal entitlement, but not

with personal entitlement, which strengthened the hypothesis that rape myths acceptance is a socially embedded problem. Therefore, male group entitlement or general masculine entitlement is a result and logical outcome of male power and privilege in a patriarchal society in which the prevalent view is that sex is a male right and privilege, and men have a strong, uncontrollable desire to have sex (e.g. Hill & Fisher, 2001).

Research Aims and Hypotheses

The aim of our study was to examine the relationship between rape myths acceptance and entitlement, specifically personal entitlement and group-based male entitlement. Specifically, we wanted to examine, whether rape myths are more strongly connected to group status-related entitlement than entitlement that derives from peoples' personal success. On the one hand, previous studies did not distinguish well enough between the two constructs. On the other hand, the literature mentions different kinds of entitlement, which is connected to gender inequality, to men's higher status, or to their social roles. However, they were not conceptualized in a way that all these slightly different types of entitlements derive specifically from the group-status of men in a patriarchal or gender unequal society. Therefore, in our study we wanted to conceptualize and operationalize group-based male entitlement that is different from personal entitlement, because the feelings connected to it may be similar, its source is different. Personal entitlement is derived from the person's personal traits or achievements, whereas group-based male entitlement is derived simply from group membership. Also, status-related entitlements have been measured before, but their measurement was too different from the measurement of personal entitlement, offering no possibility for direct comparisons. Therefore, another aim of our study was to develop a scale to be able to measure group-based male entitlement in a comparable way to personal entitlement. Based on previous research we hypothesized that only group-based male entitlement would predict rape myths acceptance,

while personal entitlement would not and that group-based male entitlement would predict the evaluation of a rape case, and this connection would be mediated by rape myths acceptance.

Materials and methods

Participants

Participants were invited to participate in an online study on relations between men and women in society. Undergraduate students of ELTE participated in this study (N = 482 23% men, 76% women, age: $M = 21.11$ $SD = 2.09$) for course credits. The study received IRB approval from the University of Groningen. We report all measures and data exclusions that are relevant to the research question in this study.

Measures and procedure

For measuring personal entitlement, we used the Psychological Entitlement Scale consisting of 9 items (Campbell et al., 2010). A 7-point Likert-scale was used for all measures from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree. We adapted the personal entitlement scale to measure perceptions of male entitlement as well by changing reference to self to men (e.g. *I honestly feel men are more deserving than women.*).

Participants completed the Hungarian version of the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (18 items, $\alpha = .90$; McMahon & Farmer, 2011), and the short version of Modern Sexism Scale (5 items, $\alpha = .78$; Swim et al. 1995) both of them on a 7-point Likert-scale.

Participants were presented with a scenario (see Appendix A11). The dependent measures were a two-item scale of victim blame (based on Bongiornio et al. 2016, *Julia is responsible for what happened. Julia deserved what happened.;* $\alpha = .80$;) again using a 7-point Likert-scale. Participants labelled whether they considered the case a rape or not on a 7-point scale from 1 = it was certainly not rape to 7 = it was certainly a rape.

Results

As a first step we tested whether personal and group-based male entitlement items loaded onto two separate factors. We conducted an EFA using Principal axis factoring with Promax rotation on the personal and male entitlement items. Based on Hinkin (1998) we removed items which loaded lower than .40 on the intended factor or loaded with a difference of less than .20 on both factors. Considering that we used identical items for the two types of entitlement, when an item was excluded from one factor, we excluded its pair from the other factor. The remaining items tap directly into deservingness and entitlement. Omitted items were related to male supremacy (e.g. Men *have a right to* demand the best because they are worth it.) or a specific issue that could not be generalized to other situations that easily (e.g. *In situations such as the Titanic (in which a passenger liner sank), men deserve to be on one of the first lifeboats*.). This left us with four items at the personal and group level which loaded well on respectively the personal (.51 - .85, α = .81) and male entitlement factor (.62 - .83, α = .77). (KMO = .804 χ^2 (28) = 1373,16 p < .001 explained variance is 52.22% see Appendix A12.). In further support for our theoretical distinction between personal and male entitlement, correlations between these scales are moderate (r=.33 p < .001; see Table 20).

In order to test the convergent validity of the measure, we compared men's and women's personal and group based male entitlement. We found that both in personal entitlement (men: M = 2.95 SD = 1.27, women: M = 2.66 SD = 1.02) and group based male entitlement (men: M = 1.93 SD = 0.98, women: M = 1.63 SD = 0.71) men scored significantly higher than women (personal: t(480) = 2.49 p = .013; group based male: t(480) = 3.55 p < .001).

Means, standard deviations, and correlations of the main variables are reported in Table 20.

Table 20 Means and correlations for the variables of Study 6.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Personal entitlement	2.73	1.09					
2. Male entitlement	1.70	0.79	.33***				
3. RMA	2.90	0.90	.20***	.35***			
4. Modern Sexism	3.47	1.11	.12**	.26***	.52***		
5. Rape labelling	3.87	1.27	-.17***	-.10*	-.42***	-.36***	
6. Victim blaming	3.45	1.80	.20***	.23***	.57***	.44***	-.80***

** p < .01 *** p < .001

In order to test whether there is an indirect effect of RMA on the relation between male (but not personal) entitlement and victim blame, we conducted pathway analyses in MPlus Version 7.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015). As the normal distribution criteria of the variables was violated based on the inspection of the histogram, we used the robust Maximum likelihood procedure (MLR; Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2010). We controlled for Modern Sexism in the model. In order to set up the most adequate model, we relied on model building - model trimming technique (see e.g. Kugler et al.2014; Shah et al., 2005). We set up a fully saturated model, which shows a perfect fit with χ_2, RMSEA, and SRMR values of 0, and a CFI and TLI values of 1. In this model we found that personal entitlement does not, but male entitlement predicted rape myths acceptance, and that both personal entitlement and male entitlement predicted rape labelling and victim blaming, and this connection was fully mediated in case of male entitlement (see Table 21 for more information). As a next step, we trimmed the non-significant pathways of our original model, in order to create a simultaneously sufficient and parsimonious final mediation model. This model showed good fit to our data (χ_2 = 807.203, df = 15, CFI = .995, TLI = .974 RMSEA = .053 [.000; .105], SRMR = .010). <mark>**Hiba! A hivatkozási forrás nem**</mark>

található. shows only the significant paths with standardized estimates. We report the direct

and indirect effects on blame perception in Table 22.[5]

Table 21 Standardized estimates of direct and indirect effects on victim blaming and rape labelling on the fully saturated model in Study 6

	Standardized β	SE	P
Male ent. → victim blaming (total effect)	.18	.05	<.001
Male ent. →RMA → victim blaming (indirect effect)	.14	.02	<.001
Male ent. → victim blaming (direct effect)	.04	.05	.425
Personal ent. → victim blaming (total effect)	.11	.05	.020
Personal ent. →RMA → victim blaming (indirect effect)	.01	.02	.614
Personal ent. → victim blaming (direct effect)	.10	.04	.019
Male ent. → rape labelling (total effect)	-.05	.05	.314
Male ent. →RMA → rape labelling (indirect effect)	-.11	.02	<.001
Male ent. → rape labelling (direct effect)	.05	.05	.311
Personal ent. → rape labelling (total effect)	-.13	.05	.005
Personal ent. →RMA → rape labelling (indirect effect)	-.01	.02	.618
Personal ent. → rape labelling (direct effect)	-.12	.04	.006

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[5] We analyzed our female and male sample together, on one hand because we wanted to test our hypothesis generally and because the low number of men in our sample, however we found the same results when we analyzed the samples together.

In line with our hypotheses, we revealed an indirect effect male entitlement on victim blaming and rape labelling mediated by RMA. Those who believed in male entitlement more, had a higher RMA which predicted higher victim blaming. However, we also found a weak direct effect between personal entitlement and victim blaming, whereas there was no indirect effect personal entitlement and victim blaming and rape labelling through RMA (See Table 22 and <mark>Hiba! A hivatkozási forrás nem található.</mark>).
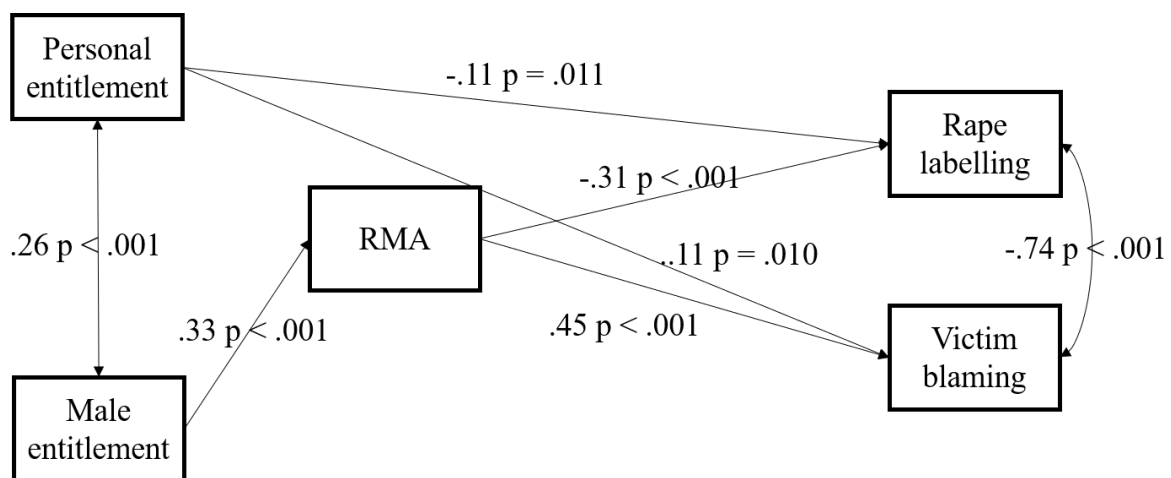

Figure 11 Standardized path model of the direct and indirect effects on rape evaluation

Table 22 Standardized estimates of direct and indirect effects on victim blaming and rape labelling on the built model in Study 6

	Standardized β	SE	P
Male ent. → victim blaming (total effect)	.15	.02	<.001
Male ent. →RMA → victim blaming (indirect effect)	.15	.02	<.001
Male ent. → victim blaming (direct effect)	-	-	-
Personal ent. → victim blaming (total effect)	.11	.04	.010

Personal ent. →RMA → victim blaming (indirect effect)	-	-	-
Personal ent. → victim blaming (direct effect)	.11	.04	.010
Male ent. → rape labelling (total effect)	-.10	.02	<.001
Male ent. →RMA → rape labelling (indirect effect)	-.10	.02	<.001
Male ent. → rape labelling (direct effect)	-	-	-
Personal ent. → rape labelling (total effect)	-.11	.04	.011
Personal ent. →RMA → rape labelling (indirect effect)	-	-	-
Personal ent. → rape labelling (direct effect)	-.11	.04	.011

Discussion of Study 6

The purpose of Study 6 was to on the one hand distinguish between personal and group based male entitlement in the context of rape and on the other hand, examine how rape myth acceptance explains the role of group based male entitlement on victim blaming and definitions of rape. In order to measure personal and group based male entitlement, we constructed a scale based on Campbell's Psychological Entitlement Scale. In line with previous studies (e.g. Pelham & Hetts, 2001), we found that both on personal and group based male entitlement scale men score significantly higher than women providing evidence for convergent validity. In line with our expectations, we found only a moderate correlation between personal and group based male entitlement despite using the same wording of the items. This suggests that although personal and group based male entitlements are not completely independent, they are clearly distinguishable phenomena.

In line with Studies 2-5, we found that rape myths acceptance predicted the evaluation of rape cases. Participants who endorsed rape myths more, blamed the victim more and labelled the case less as rape. In line with our hypothesis, the results revealed that group based male entitlement predicted rape myths acceptance (H1) while personal entitlement did not (H2). We also found that participants who endorsed male entitlement more, accepted rape myth more and consequently blamed the victim more and considered the case less as rape (H3). We also found a weak direct effect of personal entitlement on victim blaming and rape labelling, but the connection was not mediated by rape myth acceptance. Although personal entitlement did not predict rape myths acceptance when male entitlement was in the model, the two types of entitlements were weakly positively correlated. These results supplement previous research that suggested a connection between entitlement and rape-related attitudes (Bouffard, 2010). However, in contrast to earlier studies we only found the connection with group based male entitlement. Because previous studies argue (Hill & Fisher, 2001) that male entitlement is a result of male privilege and power, our findings suggest that rape myths are connected to beliefs about male supremacy and women's lower status more than about feelings about deservingness and personal entitlement.

This study gave us a first indication of the connection between personal and group based male entitlement, rape myths acceptance, and rape evaluation. However, there are some limitations to these findings. Firstly, the male entitlement scale shows a floor effect, while the mean of personal entitlement is quite low too. Although the mean of personal entitlement was not much higher on Campbell's Psychological Entitlement Scale ($M = 3.05$ $SD = 1.55$ on a 7-point scale), these results either suggest that people feel less entitled in our sample or they are not willing to indicate their sense of entitlement. Therefore, in future research the language of the items should be made more subtle to decrease skewness. This would be useful for two reasons, first, there would be more variance with the more subtle items, and second, they

would be more comfortable expressing agreement with the items. Until such a scale is developed, we have to be aware of these significant limitations of our measure when we interpret our results. Furthermore, we relied on a student sample with a majority of women respondents, which may have been the reason that the mean scores of rape myths acceptance, personal and group based male entitlement were quite low. Therefore, our model needs to be tested using a more diverse sample in the future.

Our hypothesis was theory driven about causality but tested using cross-sectional nonexperimental design. This way, we cannot assume that group based male entitlement is the source of rape myths acceptance and not the other way around. Therefore, future research should test the connection experimentally to understand the causal connection between group based male entitlement, rape myths acceptance and the evaluation of rape cases.

In summary, we replicated that rape myths acceptance is connected to the evaluation of a concrete rape case and found that people who generally endorse rape myths blame the victim more and label the case less as rape. Furthermore, we found evidence that personal entitlement does not, but group based male entitlement predicts rape myths acceptance. This finding strengthens the argument that rape myths acceptance is not only an individual level variable, but it is connected to gender relations in a patriarchal and unequal society, specifically to the idea that men as a group are more entitled.

General Discussion and Implications

In this PhD dissertation we examined the psychological factors that affect judgements about rape cases, victim blaming and labelling rape cases. In six studies, we showed that general attitudes toward rape affect the evaluation of rape cases by redirecting the attention to irrelevant aspects of rape. This effect was especially strong when less information is available, and the rape is less certain. In these cases, people willingly complete the missing information

in line with their general attitudes. We found that situational factors are highly relevant in the evaluation of rape cases, that group membership could both serve as an excuse and blame depending on the status of the victim or the perpetrator. We found that celebrity status could also work as an excuse, especially when the rape case is uncertain. Furthermore, we found evidence that rape myths acceptance is an instrument to maintain men's higher status and the current status quo in the society, and that rape myths acceptance is deeply embedded construct into our social system.

Firstly, we focused on the notion of rape myths acceptance. As a first step in Study 1 and 2, we validated the Hungarian version of the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale using a convenience and a representative sample. In line with previous research (McMahon & Farmer, 2011), we confirmed the adequacy of the five-factor model with a good fit to our data. We established the scale's convergent validity by identifying that men accept rape myths more than women, construct validity by showing that people who endorse hostile sexism and benevolent sexism more highly accept rape myths more. Furthermore, we found that people who believe in a just world, and people who endorse social dominance accept rape myths more. These results show that rape myths acceptance is part of a generalized hostility toward women and gender inequality (Amnesty International, 2012) and serves to justify men's dominance over women both in harsh and subtle ways (European Commission, 2016). We established the scale's discriminant validity by identifying its connection with just world beliefs (in Study 1), implying that similarly to just world beliefs, rape myths acceptance can help decrease anxiety over getting raped and gives a false sense of security that bad things, such as rape could only happen to women who somehow deserve it (Hafer, 2000; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Vonderhaar & Carmody, 2015).

We also examined how rape myth acceptance affects the evaluation of a specific rape cases. In line with previous studies (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010) we found throughout Studies 2

to 6 that people who endorse rape myths more, blame the victim more, and label the case less as rape. These results emphasize, that rape myths serve to deny that rape can happen to anyone and decrease threat perception and anxiety, suggesting that an "innocent" rape victim is a threat to the belief that people always get what they deserve. We also found that rape myths acceptance predicted rape evaluation stronger than hostile and benevolent sexism. Putting this together with the relatively high correlation between the two constructs, our findings support the assumption that rape myths acceptance is a different concept than sexism and gives a different perspective to understand rape-related attitudes.

As one of the aims of our studies was to understand the specific factors that affect rape evaluations, first, we examined the role of stereotypicality of rape cases in Study 2 and in Study 4. We found that when a rape case was not stereotypical, people blamed the victim more, and labelled the case less as rape in comparison to a more stereotypical case. When the case was not stereotypical (i.e. its evaluation was uncertain), rape myths acceptance stronger predicted rape evaluation, in comparison with the stereotypical case (in which case rape was undisputable). These findings suggest that in line with previous research (Eyssel & Bohner, 2011) rape myths acceptance affects the way of thinking as a cognitive schema, and if there are uncertainties, we rely on our preexisting attitudes to fill in the blind spots.

To continue to investigate situational factors that could affect rape myths acceptance, we examined how victims' and perpetrators' group membership affects the evaluation of rape cases. In Studies 2 and 3 we manipulated the group membership of the victim, while in Studies 3 and 5, the group membership of the perpetrator was manipulated. Our research has shown that situational factors (such as group membership or celebrity status) are relevant especially when they function as excuses for the perpetrator for committing rape (rather than in blaming the victim) in an uncertain rape. This finding is important because most rape cases are uncertain and counter-stereotypic in reality and do not fit the assumptions that rape is

committed by strangers using physical threat to rape. Furthermore, it is also common that victims do not report the case. Again, in line with the findings of Eyssel and Bohner (2011), people view rape cases according to their previous attitudes, and tend to stick to these attitudes. Our findings indicate that rape myth acceptance can function as such pre-existing attitude toward rape and motivate people to seek consistent information (e.g. blaming factors to the victim, excusing one to the perpetrator) and give more weight to them in evaluating the case.

Furthermore, Study 4-5 we found that people used positive information about the perpetrator in evaluating an uncertain rape case. This understanding highlights the responsibility of rape case reporting, clearly indicating that offering additional, irrelevant, but positive information about the perpetrator can increase victim blaming and excusing the victim especially if the information meets people's preexisting beliefs about rape. This is not only relevant for the evaluation of individual cases, but also because media reports of rape affect public opinion and the normative context in which all rape cases are evaluated.

Nevertheless, the different results between the contexts with a neutral outgroup (Study 2) and a low status outgroup (Study 3 and Study 5) suggest that the type of group membership matters, and rape cases are evaluated not only based on the acts of the perpetrator and the victim, but also by the group membership. Although we only examined perpetrators with lower outgroup status, we did not find evidence for different evaluations in their case compared to ingroup perpetrators either in Study 3, or in Study 5. This result suggests that perpetrator blaming is less affected by the same factor than victim blaming.

In Studies 4 and 5, we examined celebrity status as a factor that could blame less the perpetrator and therefore influence rape evaluations. In Study 4 we examined a real-life situation, where we found that people who endorsed rape myths more thought that the perpetrator's celebrity status is important in the evaluation of the rape case. However, this was

only the case when the case was still uncertain. In Study 5 we found experimentally that celebrity status does affect the evaluation of rape cases. On the one hand, these findings again support the theory that rape myths function as cognitive schema (Eyssel & Bohner, 2011) and predispose the perception of a rape case, and on the other, that celebrity status can function as an excuse for celebrities (Knight, Giuliano, & Sanchez-Ross, 2001), even if they admit that they committed rape.

In the last part of the dissertation, our aim was to show how rape myth acceptance is embedded in beliefs about men's unique position in society. There are several studies, including ours, that examine the relationship between rape myths acceptance and sexism (e.g. Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994) and system justification (Chapleau & Oswald, 2014). However, none of them focuses on ideologies and attitudes connected to men's position, therefore in this study we examined the role of entitlement in endorsing rape myths and the consequent effect on rape evaluations. Firstly, we argued that personal and group-based male entitlement should be distinguished in order to capture the aspect of male entitlement that reflects ideologies about gender relations in society. In order to do that we created a scale for both constructs. In line with previous studies (Bouffard, 2010, Hill & Fisher, 2001) and our hypotheses we found that while personal entitlement does not predict rape myths acceptance, group-based male entitlement does. Furthermore, group-based male entitlement predicted both rape labelling and victim blaming, but this prediction was fully mediated by rape myths acceptance. This finding suggests that group-based male entitlement could be the underlying mechanism that connects RMA to the ideas of social inequalities through the justification of men's higher status in society, and it is connected more strongly to the evaluation of rape cases than personal entitlement. These results imply that rape myths acceptance is not only an individual level variable, but it is deeply embedded in the society, because group-based male entitlement through rape myths serves to justify men's higher status and control over women.

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The validation of a scale to measure rape myths acceptance has a great importance. It is helpful for researchers to be able to measure the construct and conduct research about it in a non-Western social context, which is relatively low in gender equality, and victim blaming is an everyday phenomenon. Because rape myths acceptance has an important role in committing rape (Bohner, Siebler, & Schmelcher, 2006) and in how people react to others or to their own rape experience, the scale could be used in intervention and educational programs, to tackle the topic. Furthermore, rape myths acceptance serves as a social norm as well, to which people adjust their behavior, therefore, awareness about low levels of rape myths acceptance (as a result of campaigns for example) could actually decrease people's rape myths acceptance.

Another message of our study is that it is important to see rape impacted people as allies to rape victims. On the one hand, they can offer a direct support to the victims, because they are close to them, and victims felt safe to share they trauma with them. On the other hand, they can have an important role in interventions and social change movements. Based on previous findings (Drury & Kaiser, 2014), they can confront people's rape myths more effectively than victims, because they do not seem to directly benefit from change, just like men are sometimes more effective in confronting sexism than women.

Furthermore, our findings support the experience, that people are more likely to blame the victim, if the rape was counter-stereotypical and fill the blind spots with their rape myths. Therefore, this phenomenon is especially harmful and can cause "second rape", when victims seek help from police force, health professionals, or from the justice system. This is especially dangerous, because most of the rape cases are counter-stereotypical, the perpetrator is not a deviant or violent stranger. In addition, situational factors can bias the perception even further in line with rape myths acceptance and cause even harsher evaluation of the victim. When victim has the courage to seek help, he/she meets with these people first or regularly,

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therefore, it is extremely important to educate these people about the social psychology of rape, it is not only for them to help to process their trauma, but for the whole society, because stronger support of the victims, less minimalization of their trauma, and more serious punishment to the perpetrators would increase trust in the police and send the message and affirm the norm, that rape have various forms, and neither of them is acceptable.

Furthermore, we found, that irrelevant factors bias the perception in line with rape myths. Therefore, not only professionals who directly meet with the victim should be educated, but the media also, who presents the cases to the wider public. However, there is a good tendency in the last years in the language that journalists use about rape or intimate partner violence, there is still room for change. Based on our results, it is questionable, how to present the side of the perpetrator, who is often more powerful than the victim, therefore not only people's rape myths, but his higher powerfulness in comparison to the victim also points into the direction of excusing him. Furthermore, the presentation of the victim, as a vindictive or insecure person who somehow deserved or triggered the case should be not accepted anymore, there should be always emphasized, that rape is the perpetrator's choice.

In line with previous research, we found that rape myths acceptance is embedded in different oppressive belief systems, such as sexism or group-based male entitlement. Intervention programs should not only focus on rape myths acceptance and target its reduction in itself but should consider talking about myths as a part of an oppressive social system. People through endorsing rape myths want to preserve status quo, therefore, if the lower status group (i.e. women) wants to change it will probably face with backlash, while higher status group (i.e. men) could be powerful allies to achieve a more fair system. Therefore, education programs have to tackle the importance of gender relations in this topic, and educate men as well, because living in a fair and safe system should be everyone's interest.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although we mentioned specific limitations in the discussions of every study, we would like to mention general ones that apply to the whole dissertation. First of all, we have to mention the limitations of the scale we used. Similarly, to the Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (e.g. Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999) which was the bases to the Updated form, our scale had a non-normal skewed distribution in Study 1 and 2 where we validated it. This slight positive skewness could be the indicator that UIRMA is still not sensitive enough to capture subtle rape myths. Because there is no other rape myth acceptance scale available in Hungarian, another pitfall of the validation was that we could not use any other scale to measure rape myth acceptance. For the sake of validity, it would have been useful to test the relationship between UIRMAS and another rape myth acceptance scale. Although other studies tested the validity between IRMAS and different measures (e.g. with Acceptance of Modern Myths about Sexual Aggression; Hantzi et al., 2015) and they found that the scale is a valid measure of rape myth, we did not directly test this. Another weakness of the scale is the reliability of its 5th factor. Because the factor structure was adequate based on the CFA, we did not modify it. Nevertheless, we did not use the subscales to test our hypothesis and relied only on the whole scale. Future research could focus on the 5th factor and develop more items to achieve better reliability.

In Study 1, Study 4, and Study 6 we relied on correlational data. Although our results supported the association between the constructs that we included in our studies, but could not identify their causal connections, and therefore offer only limited information about potential areas of interventions. Regarding Study 1, a fruitful area would be to investigate whether victims share their trauma more frequently with people with lower rape myth acceptance, or the knowledge that a close person became the victim of rape decreases rape myth acceptance.

Regarding Study 6, future research should examine the relation between group-based male entitlement and rape myths acceptance in contexts which vary in gender equality, to identify whether group-based male entitlement plays a role in outcomes related to rape myths acceptance

Furthermore, we found some results contradicting previous evidence. Although we found that irrelevant factors are important in the evaluation of rape cases, data regarding outgroup membership was hard to explain. As we mentioned it in the discussions, in this domain we had to speculate about the meaning and the mechanisms behind the results. We supposed that outgroup membership was not relevant, because people do not want to blame the perpetrator more, especially in the presence of high RMA, therefore, they did not take this factor into account in the evaluation, in contrast when the victim is an outgroup member and this puts another layer of blame to her (although in Study 3 we found that in case of a Roma victim people blamed her less). In contrast, our result regarding the irrelevant factor of celebrity status, which is an excusing factor did affect the evaluation of a rape case. Therefore, future research could examine whether this factor does not work as an excuse for the victim. These result that factors that can potentially increase excuse vs blame work differently suggest that rape myths may work in more subtle ways than we were able to measure.

Regarding the scenarios that we used, we varied them to make them more suitable for every situation. Although we made these alterations with Bongiorno et al's (2016) results in mind about the stereotypical and counter-stereotypical rape cases, we cannot be sure, that this did not affect the results.

Although we have used data that was representative or demographically similar to the Hungarian population, there were studies, where more women participated than men. Therefore, in these cases we did not have the option to analyze the results both for men and

women, which would have been interesting in the case of some of the studies. Specifically, in Study 4 and 6 when we run path analyses requiring higher number of participants, or in Study 5 where we did two-way interactions for the 4 conditions and the separation of men and women was not possible with the available sample size.

Furthermore, we collected data for Study 1, 2 and 4 before, Study 6 during and Study 3 and 5 after the #MeToo movement, and Study 5 after the conviction of Harvey Weinstein, which could have affected our results. The movement went viral in Hungary and created a huge public response. However, public response was ambivalent, and there were people who found the campaign a witch hunt which blew up the phenomenon, falsely accusing men for everyday courtship, doubting the frequency of sexual assaults in general, whereas others acknowledged the seriousness of the problem (Kende et al., 2020). This may have led to a higher awareness about the nature of everyday rape cases and alter perceptions about victims and perpetrators. Maybe victims are no longer seen as girls who "just wanted to have fun" who deserve their misfortune, and perpetrators are no longer seen as deviant, violent and deprived people, but recognizing that they can be celebrities and regular people alike.

Conclusions

The novelty of the research presented in the dissertation is that it examines a psychological construct – rape myth acceptance – that was not examined in Hungary before. The results show that rape myths acceptance predicts the evaluation of rape cases, that is, whether people label cases as rape or not, whether they blame the perpetrator or the victim. Furthermore, the research shows that rape myths acceptance is a stronger predictor of rape evaluations that other previously identified constructs, such as sexist beliefs or belief in a just word. This finding suggests that rape myth acceptance is a distinct and more relevant concept to understanding the perception of rape cases than sexism in general. Relatedly, we validated

the Hungarian version of the Updated Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale to be able to measure rape myths acceptance in the Hungary. This is inevitable to conduct further research in the topic. Another unique aspect of our research is the comparison of the rape myths acceptance of people who have different prior experiences with rape. Understanding their attitudes toward rape has relevance for designing interventions as these people may be more invested in bringing about change than unimpacted individuals. Furthermore, we examined situational factors that affect rape evaluations systematically in four studies and identified more and less important factors influencing rape evaluations, such as group membership and celebrity status. Finally, we introduced a new construct, group-based male entitlement, which differs from personal entitlement, and is a possible underlying mechanism of rape myths acceptance.

The main strength, of this research is that (a) we systematically examined the role of situational factors and prior attitudes toward rape in the biased perception and evaluation of rape cases (b) using different methods (e.g. case study, survey, and experiment) and (c) different samples and cases to offer theoretical insights and increase generalizability of the results. Finally (d) we conducted the research outside the Western world in an underrepresented region of social psychological research, and especially of research on rape and rape myths. This region is not simply underrepresented in these research areas, but also the level of sexism is higher and gender equality is lower in Hungary than in the US or in Western Europe (Global Gender Gap Index, 2020). Therefore, our findings could show that the connection between rape myth acceptance, the biased perception of the perpetrator and the evaluation of a rape case is also pronounced in a cultural context in which sexism appears in more overt, more hostile and more explicit ways than in the most commonly studied countries, such as the US. These understandings could help us to understand, which

mechanism are different in this gender unequal social, and which are universal and applicable in different contexts.

The aim of the doctoral dissertation was to examine the role of general attitudes and situational factors in the evaluation of rape cases. Our results helps us understand why people do or do not (a) necessarily label every rape case as rape, (b) consider every rapist a criminal, (c) seek belief consistent information to excuse the perpetrator, (d) perceive sexual assaults as a milder form of misbehavior, (e) blame the victim, and (f) minimize the impact of the rape on the victim. Furthermore, that they (g) use belief consistent information to blame the victim (h) does not take perpetrator blaming information into account, and that (i) prior attitudes toward rape are deeply embedded into the societal context. In counter-stereotypical and uncertain contexts, irrelevant information, such as the perpetrator's success or the victim's outgroup membership can seriously affect the evaluation of the event as rape or the evaluation of its severity especially for people who tend to accept rape myths. Importantly, these judgements can be made without having to change their overall opinion about rape as a reprehensible crime.

Our results have importance in the field of applied social psychology; therefore, it can be useful for professionals (e.g. psychologists, health care professionals, judges, police officers) who work with rape victims, and for those who design interventions. On the one hand, having a validated scale to measure rape myths acceptance is crucial for testing the effectiveness of interventions. On the other hand, the results show that either rape victims are more likely to share their trauma with those who accept rape myths less or knowing someone who is a rape survivor decrease RMA. If the first explanation is true, professionals should communicate more openly that they reject rape myths, and they will believe to the victims, while if the second explanation is true, it is important to raise awareness to the problem in a more personal way. Furthermore, educational programs should emphasize that rape myths

functions as a cognitive schema and as social norms, and this means that people for look for information that are consistent with their prior attitudes toward rape, and that other people's rape myths acceptance affects their endorsement of rape myths. As other studies show, professionals are not immune to these biases either. Therefore, it is essential to educate them about the rape myths, because they cannot only cause "second rape" and traumatize the victim again, but influence whether a perpetrator is convicted or not. Finally, we have to emphasize that rape never happens in a social vacuum, but in the normative context of the society. Thus, attitudes that maintain the social hierarchy has an important role whether people accept rape myths or not, therefore, interventions have to concentrate not only on rape myths acceptance, but on related factors, such as sexism, gender system justification, or group-based male entitlement. As we acknowledge this, we have to recognize our own responsibility as individuals as well as members of society in maintaining sexual assaults and rape by transforming the ill-chosen slogan of the police in Pécs into "it's not your fault, but you can do something against it".

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Appendix

A1 The two uncertain and the undisputable vignette in Study 2.

András who is a coworker at an IT corporation is accused to committing rape against the Slovenian Julija who is an intern at the firm. After the firm's Christmas party András and Julija went to András's apartment together where the man tried to undress the woman. Julija said that she asked András to stop several times, but she didn't resist physically. Then the man pushed her to the floor and had sex with her. After a few days of thinking Julija reported the case to the police but she didn't really cooperate with them.

Gábor who is working at a small firm is accused by committing rape against Szilvia. Szilvia as the accountant of the firm met with Gábor at a meeting where they talked about running which they both loves. After their first run together Gábor invited Szilvia to his apartment. When Gábor tried to undress Szilvia while she said many times that she does not want to have sex with him, but physically she did not resist. Gábor took down his pants and had sex with her. After a few days Szilvia told the story to one of her friends who suggested that she should report the case. Szilvia went to the police and reported the case but it was really hard for her to work with them.

Gyula, a university student is accused by committing rape against another university student, Éva. Éva worked at a cafeteria. She was walking home after a night shift in a dark alley, when Gyula held her down from behind her back, punched her, pushed her to the ground and coerced her to have sex with him. Éva said that she screamed and tried to escape but she couldn't. At the same night Éva went to the police and reported the case.

A2 Moderation analysis

However we found that the evaluation of the unambiguous rape case predicts rape labelling ($t(3,1003) = 6.06$, $p < .001$) and victim blaming ($t(3,1003) = 3.87$, $p < .001$) in case of the uncertain rape scenario, we found that RMA predicted the labelling ($t(3,1003) = -12.10$, $p <$

.001) and the victim blaming ($t(3,1003) = 12.60$, p < .001) of the uncertain rape case beyond and above the evaluation of the unambiguous rape case.

A3 Comparison of the two scenarios in stereotypicality

We found no difference in rape labelling (scenario 1: *M* = 5.96 *SD* = 1.43 scenario 2: *M* = 5.88 *SD* = 1.48 t(24) = 0.40, p = .692), perpetrator blaming (scenario 1: *M* = 6.04 *SD* = 1.60 scenario 2: *M* = 6.04 *SD* = 1.43 t(24) = 0.00, p = 1.00) and in victim blaming (scenario 1: *M* = 2.32 *SD* = 1.31 scenario 2: *M* = 2.28 *SD* = 1.40 t(24) = 0.27, p = .788).

A4 Measurement invariance on gender in Study 2

Model	χ^2 (df)	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	90% CI	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	ΔCFI	ΔTLI	ΔRMSEA
Configural	649.965 (284)	.937	.924	.056	.050-.061				
Metric	657.909 (298)	.938	.929	.054	.048-.060	7.944 (14)	.001	.005	-.002
Scalar	693.627 (312)	.935	.928	.054	.049-.060	35.718 (14)	-.003	-.001	.000

A5 Variables of the vignette of Study 3

Ibolya and József are friends. [József/Ibolya is Roma, Ibolya/József is not.] Ever since they are working together, they are attracted to each other. One night they bumped into each other in a bar where they had a good time, they danced and talked. After the party, József invited Ibolya to his home for a drink. When they arrived at the apartment, they started to kiss and József started to undress Ibolya. Ibolya, told to Robert that she does not want to go this far, but that she did not resist physically and continued kissing. After the sex Ibolya was sad and felt used but she did not do anything about what happened did not to nothing.
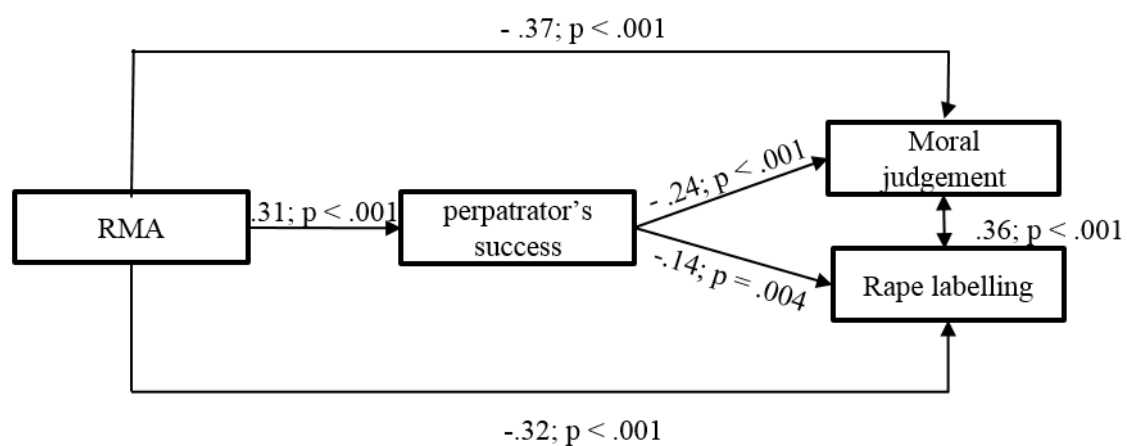
A6 Standardized estimates of direct and indirect effects on moral judgement and rape labelling in Study 4A Self-selected community sample

	Standardized β	95% CI	SE	p
RMA → Moral judgement (total effect)	-.44	[-.58 ; -.30]	.08	< .001

	Standardized β	95% CI	SE	p
RMA → Perpetrator's success → Moral judgement (indirect effect)	-.07	[-.11 ; -.03]	.02	< .001
RMA → Moral judgement (direct effect)	-.37	[-.51 ; -.23]	.07	< .001
RMA → Rape labelling (total effect)	-.37	[-.51 ; -.23]	.08	< .001
RMA → Perpetrator's success → Rape labelling (indirect effect)	-.04	[-.08 ; -.01]	.02	.008
RMA → Rape labelling (direct effect)	-.32	[-.46 ; -.19]	.07	< .001

Note: 95% Confidence intervals were calculated with 1000 bootstrap samples.

A7 Standardized path model of the direct and indirect effects on Moral judgement and Rape labelling in Study 4A Self-selected community sample


A8 Standardized estimates of direct and indirect effects on Moral judgement and Rape labelling in Study 4A Student sample

	Standardized β	95% CI	SE	p

RMA → Moral judgement (total effect)	-.30	[-.41; -.19]	.06	< .001
RMA → Perpetrator's success → Moral judgement (indirect effect)	-.10	[-.14; -.05]	.02	< .001
RMA → Moral judgement (direct effect)	-.20	[-.32 ; -.08]	.06	.001
RMA → Rape labelling (total effect)	-.22	[-.33 ; -.10]	.06	< .001
RMA → Perpetrator's success → Rape labelling (indirect effect)	-.06	[-.10 ; -.02]	.02	.003
RMA → Rape labelling (direct effect)	-.16	[-.28 ; -.04]	.06	<.010

A9 Standardized path model of the direct and indirect effects on Moral judgement and Rape labelling in Study 4A Student sample
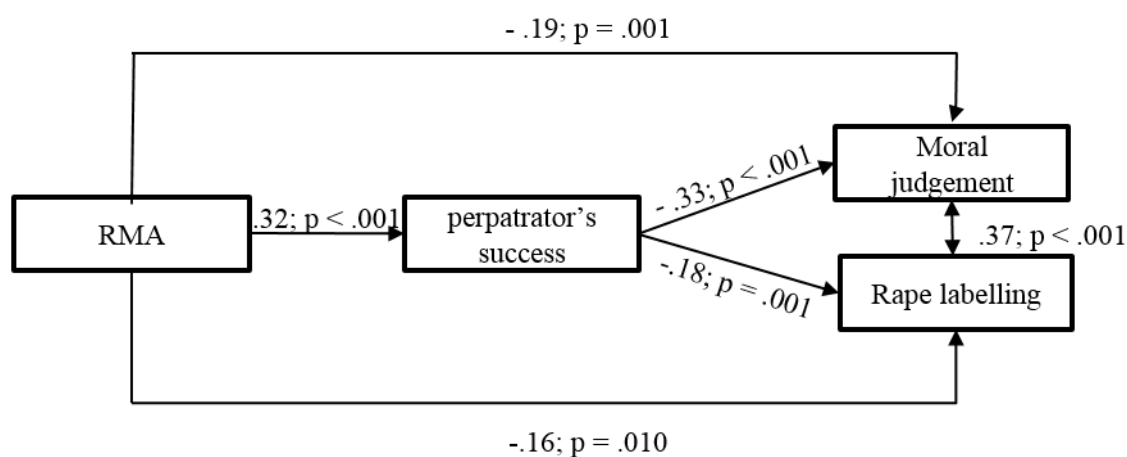
A10 Variables of vignette of Study 5

Julia and József known each other for years, because they worked together at the canteen of

the local school. József, whose nickname is Feke [because of his Roma origin/who is a well-

known musician since then who is often gives concerts in national alternative music festivals/ because of his Roma origin, who is a well-known musician since then who is often gives concerts in national alternative music festivals]. The carnival ball of the pupils in the school takes place at the school's canteen every year. This year both Julia and Feke worked [Julia in the kitchen, while Feke played music for the children]. They have not talked too much, but when they were next to each other, it was clear that they liked to each other. After the ball, Feke invited Julia to his apartment for a drink after a long day. They started to kiss, and Feke started to undress Julia. Julia told to Feke that she does not want to go this far, but she did not resist physically and continued kissing. After the sex Julia was sad and felt used but she did not do anything about what happened.

A11 Vignette of Study 6

Robert and Julia work at a multinational company. They both attended the company's Christmas party, where they danced and talked a lot. After the party, Robert invited Julia to his home for a coffee. When they arrived at the apartment, they started to kiss. Robert started to undress Julia. Later, Julia said that she had repeatedly asked Robert to stop doing this, but that she did not resist physically. Robert did not listen to her and continued. After a few days, Julia decided to file a claim of rape with the police.

A12 Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Personal and Male entitlement Scale

Item number	Factor	Item	Pattern	Structure	Communality
1	1	I honestly feel I'm just more deserving than others.	.886	.851	.741
2	3	Great things should come to me.	.431	.553	.430
3	1	In situations such as the Titanic (in which a passenger liner sank), I would deserve to be on the first lifeboat!	.608	.660	.440
4	1	I *have a right to* demand the best because I'm worth it.	.533	.609	.517
5	4	I do not necessarily deserve special treatment.	.714	.773	.625
6	1	I deserve more things in my life than other people.	.791	.772	.651
7	3	People like me deserve an extra break now and then.	.480	.561	.375
8	1	Things should go *as I wish them to*.	.506	.546	.307
9	1	I *have a right to* feel entitled to more of everything.	.771	.774	.561
1	2	I honestly feel men are more deserving than women.	.786	.803	.657
2	3	Great things should come to men.	.668	.658	.496
3	2	*In situations such as the Titanic (in which a passenger liner sank),* men deserve to be on one of the first lifeboats!	.394	.464	.303
4	3	Men *have a right to* demand the best because they are worth it.	.566	.592	.416
5	4	Men do not necessarily deserve special treatment.	.538	.513	.285

6	2	Men deserve more things in life than women.	.703	.691	.484
7	3	Men deserve an extra break now and then.	.685	.605	.404
8	2	Things should go *as men wish them to*.	.604	.625	.433
9	2	*Men have a right to* feel entitled to more of everything.	.603	.630	.424

Pattern/Scale Loadings and Communalities of EFA for Each of the Items of the Developed Personal and Group entitlement scale