

**UNDERSTANDING THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS REPORTING SEXUAL
VIOLENCE AGAINST BLACK WOMEN**

by

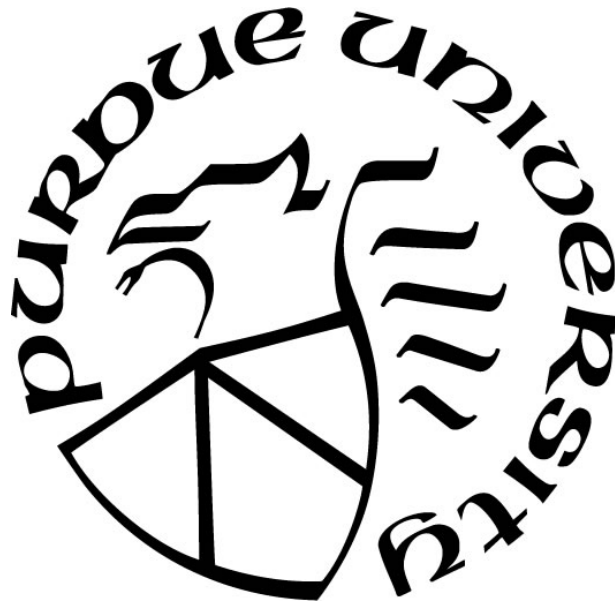
Crystal Thornhill

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**THE PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

Dr. Ayse Ciftci, Chair

Department of Educational Studies

Dr. Blake Allan

Department of Educational Studies

Dr. Amanda Case

Department of Educational Studies

Dr. Natasha Watkins

Department of Human Development and Family Studies

Approved by:

Dr. Janet M. Alsup

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to any Black women and girls who have been impacted by sexual violence or trauma in their lifetime.

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ABSTRACT

Black women appear to be less likely than other groups to report sexual violence (Catalano et al., 2009). There are a number of factors that may potentially impact Black women's reporting sexual violence, such as fear of shame or rejection from religious congregations or social groups, fear of police officers, and a history of violence amongst family members that may normalize sexual violence to the level of not reporting (Truman & Morgan, 2016). This study examined the connection between the strong Black women's ideal, trust of law enforcement, and Black identity on Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence among 112 women. In this study, I also explored the impact of previous sexual violence on Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. The responses from participants showed that whether or not someone had experienced sexual violence was a significant predictor of people's attitudes towards reporting. The participants were significantly more likely to have negative attitudes towards reporting if they had previously experienced sexual violence. In addition, the relationship between mistrust of police and negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence was more significant when the Black female participant had experienced sexual violence. Future studies should continue to explore the impact of experiencing sexual violence on Black women's attitudes towards reporting.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

When I first started doing hospital advocacy and trauma work, I worked with a Black woman named Whitney (a pseudonym) who had been raped by two strangers on the side of the road. When she arrived at the hospital, to make sure she was stable and not in critical condition, I began my role of talking with her about her options to complete a rape kit or file a police report. Whitney appeared hesitant to complete this, and I reassured her that she could change her mind at any time during the process. While I was speaking with her, she was asked by a medical professional where the rest of her clothes were. Later, the person who was bagging up her clothes for evidence asked where her pants were, and the victim experienced that question as if she was being judged for not wearing enough clothes. She reported being concerned that the medical staff thought she deserved to be raped because of the way she was dressed. This questioning made her uncomfortable and hesitant to answer questions from the police because she had started to distrust the people who were supposed to be helping her. She further disclosed that, as a result of this distrust, she was fearful of being judged. This example shows the impact that not being responded to in a meaningful way when accessing formal support can have on a victim, and how that negative response can increase hesitation to trust any other formal support system.

Whitney is just one of the thousands of women who have survived sexual violence. It is important to note that although women can be raped or sexually assaulted by people of any gender, the majority of reported sexual violence is done by male perpetrators, regardless of a woman's sexual orientation (CDC, 2013). Research shows that 61.1% of bisexual women report sexual violence by an intimate partner (with more of those reports being by women who are reporting men), compared to 43.8 % of lesbians and 35% of heterosexual women (CDC, 2013). Although there are higher percentages of reported sexual violence by lesbian and bisexual women, the actual number of women reporting sexual violence by women perpetrators is significantly lower than the number of women who reported sexual violence by male perpetrators, regardless of their sexual orientation (Smith, Zhang, Basile, Merrick, Wang, Kresnow & Chen, 2018). One study published in the *Journal of Public Health* reported that there were approximately 72 times more women who experienced sexual violence by male perpetrators than women who experienced sexual violence by women (Blosnich & Bossarte,

2009). Based on the low levels of reporting sexual violence by female perpetrators, this study will focus primarily on sexual violence by male perpetrators.

The number one killer of Black women ages 15 to 34 is homicide by an intimate partner (Violence Policy Center, 2015), and Black women make up approximately half of female homicide victims (Violence Policy Center, 2015). Even though Black women make up 13% of the population in the United States, Black women are victims of intimate partner homicide at three times the rate of their White counterparts, which is the highest rate of any ethnicity (Petrosky et al., 2017). Black women are being more lethally impacted by sexual violence than any other group in the United States (Catalano, Smith, Snyder, & Rand, 2009).

In regard to rape and sexual assault, the rate of sexual violence continues to be higher for Black women. In the United States, White women make up 17.8% of rapes and Black women make up 18.8% (Morgan & Kena, 2017). In spite of the similar percentages of rape for Black and White women, for every White woman who reports being raped, five do not, and for every Black woman who reports being raped, 15 do not, which is significant difference when considering how similar the rape prevalence rates are for the two groups (Morgan & Kena, 2017). In addition, Black women are also less likely than White women to go to the hospital or access sexual assault crisis services after being sexually assaulted or raped (Weist et. al, 2014).

Overall, Black women appear to be less likely than other groups to report sexual violence (Catalano et al., 2009). There are a number of factors that may potentially impact Black women's reporting sexual violence, such as fear of shame or rejection from religious congregations or social groups, fear of police officers, and a history of violence amongst family members that may normalize sexual violence to the level of not reporting (Truman & Morgan, 2016). In addition to these factors, there are systematic barriers to reporting sexual violence such as fear of revictimization (Campbell, Ahrens, Sefl, Wasco, & Barnes, 2001), and cultural barriers such as a cultural expectation that Black women remain strong by upholding community and by protecting Black men, even when those men may be the perpetrators of sexual violence (Donovan & Williams, 2002).

Among these factors, the strong Black woman ideal (also known as the strong Black woman stereotype or the superwoman stereotype) may be the most critical to understand, as this role may perpetuate the idea that Black women are strong, independent, caring, self-sacrificing, and self-contained (Donovan & West, 2015; West, Donovan, & Daniel, 2016). Because of this

ideal the research shows that Black women are often sacrificing of their own physical and mental health to help others and uplift those around them, which can have harmful outcomes such as increased distress and rumination (Giscombe & Lobel, 2005), compulsive eating (Harrington, Crowther, & Shipherd, 2010), emotional suppression (Thom et al., 2006) and higher rates of obesity and heart disease (Woods-Giscombe, 2010). Many of these problematic and physiological issues that may be connected to strong Black woman characteristics may make it harder for a Black woman to ask for help when she has experienced a trauma such as sexual violence.

In order to understand the strong Black woman ideal, it is critical to understand the history of Black women in the U.S. Part of the long history of Black women is a history of slavery and sexual violence that must be acknowledged in order to understand why Black women have lower levels of reporting and asking for help. Since the middle passage (i.e., the sea journey undertaken by slave ships for slave trade), sharecropping, and Jim Crow (Jones, 1985), Black women endured sexual violence at the hands of White men without any sort of recourse or consequence for perpetrators through the eras of slavery (Wyatt, 1997). During the slave era, sexual exploitation, rape, and forced breeding of enslaved Black women were used to establish dominance and keep Black women oppressed and beholden to their owners, all of which was legal because they were seen as property during this period in history (Higginbotham, 1992; Talty, 2003). Additionally, Black women were more fearful of running away if they would be leaving a child behind, and much of the rape and violence they endured was used to perpetuate the belief that they were hypersexual or sexually uninhibited (Wyatt, 2008). This long history of enslavement and mistrust of authority has made it hard for Black women to trust the legal system to protect and support them. In spite of the negative implications of the strong Black woman ideal, this identity does appear to hold positive connotations for people as well. Being a strong Black woman has been shown to increase self-efficacy and positive self-image for Black women (Black & Peacock, 2011).

This study will examine the connection between the strong Black women's ideal, trust of law enforcement, and Black identity on Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. The study will also explore the impact of previous sexual violence on Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. The literature defines reporting sexual violence in one of two ways—formal or informal reporting. Formal reporting is defined as disclosure

seeking help from formal support systems such as mental health professionals, police, or medical professionals (Tillman, Bryant-Davis, Smith, & Marks, 2010). Informal reporting is defined as disclosure seeking help from informal support systems such as friends, family, and colleagues (Tillman et al., 2010). Although disclosure-seeking help from mental health professionals is defined as “formal reporting,” it is important to note that mental health professionals can be used as a form of informal support if talking with that professional does not result in reporting sexual violence to law enforcement. For the purposes of this study, I conceptualize reporting as formal reporting to formal support systems, since those are the reporting systems that are documented and have the ability to take victims through the proper channels of seeking justice against a perpetrator and getting the appropriate support to potentially avoid further trauma (Starzynski, Ullman, Filipas, & Townsend, 2005).

Statement of Purpose

Not reporting sexual violence is one of the risk factors that put women at a higher risk for experiencing sexual violence again (Fulu, Jewkes, Roselli, & Garcia-Moreno, 2013; Heise, 2011), whether it is from an intimate partner or from a non-partner sexual assault (Heise & Kostadam, 2015). Therefore, thinking more conceptually about why Black women are not reporting sexual assault and ways to increase rates of reporting could help to reduce the number of sexual assaults and decrease the high rates of homicidality caused by sexual assault within the Black female community. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to determine the connection between the strong Black woman ideal, trust of law enforcement, and Black identity on Black women’s attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

Importance of the Study

This study is important in a number of ways. First, it focuses on a population that is highly vulnerable. Black women continue to be victims of intimate partner homicide at three times the rate of their White counterparts, which is the highest rate of any ethnicity (Petrosky et al., 2017). In addition to this, Black women make up approximately half of female homicide victims (Violence Policy Center, 2017). Second, learning more about what role the strong Black woman ideal plays in attitudes towards reporting is important information in regard to informing

future prevention for sexual violence against Black woman. The desire of Black women to protect others and themselves from having to interact with law enforcement may be getting them killed; therefore, learning more about what factors may be more highly correlated with positive attitudes towards reporting may help mental health professionals and law enforcement to think about more nuanced ways to approach Black women who may be hesitant to disclose sexual violence. Understanding more about Black women's fear of reporting sexual violence may also allow psychologists to better serve Black women while they make the decision about whether or not they want to file a report with the police or go to the hospital for a rape examination.

This study is also relevant to the connection between sexual violence and homicidality in the Black community, as well as the high rates of repeat victimization for those women who do not report. As a result, this study can help counseling psychologists and other clinicians to understand the urgency for getting Black women who have experienced sexual violence connected with formal support systems and maintaining that connection while they work through any trauma or negative emotions that they may be experiencing. Overall, this study is important to counseling psychology because it contributes to the mission of creating equity and cultural competence in the care of clients and deepens the knowledge of the potential impact of their cultural experiences.

Relevance to Counseling Psychology

The current study is in accordance with counseling psychology's unifying themes. Gelso and Fretz (2001) conceptualized five unifying themes as what distinguish counseling psychology from other specialties in psychology: (1) a focus on intact, as opposed to profoundly disturbed personalities; (2) a focus on people's assets, strengths, and positive mental health regardless of disturbance; (3) a focus on relatively brief interventions; (4) a focus on person-environment interactions; and (5) a focus on education and career development. In recent years, multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice have emerged as a sixth theme. The current study is most relevant to four of these, themes including focus on intact personality, focus on assets, focus on person-environment interaction, and focus on multiculturalism and diversity.

First, this study focuses on intact personalities because it is focused on Black women who are a part of the general population. As a result of them being a part of the general population, it is assumed that they do not have profoundly disturbed personalities. The population is a non-

clinical sample of Black women who are involved in a study about their attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Second, counseling psychology focuses on people's assets, strengths, and positive mental health. This is evidenced in the study by the assessment of the strong Black woman ideal and Black identity so as to have a deeper understanding of the strengths and assets of their identity. Examining the role that the Strong Black women ideal and Black identity have in women's decision to access help when experiencing sexual assault is important, as is identifying what factors related to identity may make it both easier and harder for Black women to seek help when experiencing trauma. Better mental health support for Black women experiencing sexual violence will ultimately result in more positive mental health for these women and more ability for Black women to focus on their strengths. The third component is person-environment interaction, which is an opportunity to acknowledge the impact of the environment on the participants. This study assesses the impact of prior interactions with police, as well as prior experiences that may have shaped one's thoughts and feelings about their racial identity and Black female identity through the measures in the study. The study also examines Black women's prior history of sexual victimization on their attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. The last component of counseling psychology that this study connects with is the multiculturalism and diversity component. This study is focused on the impact of the intersection between Black identity and gender to understand the effect of the strong Black woman ideal and Black identity on attitudes towards reporting sexual violence, while also examining how race and other aspects of identity may be impacted by Black women's trust of police officers and prior history of sexual violence. These four themes connect counseling psychology to this study and explain the potential positive effect of this research within this particular field.

This study is also relevant to counseling psychology because it addresses one of the potential reasons for inequity in support services for Black women who have experienced sexual violence. Creating a deeper understanding of the strong Black woman ideal may help to reduce a barrier for Black women to access formal support systems. Helping to understand this barrier as counseling psychologists will help to provide a better quality of care for Black women who may be afraid to ask for help or may be skeptical about the services that are available to them.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a literature review on Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence within the theoretical framework of the sociohistorical impact of slavery and racism on Black women. I will give a brief literature review on sexual violence and Black women and what is known about Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. I will then provide an overview of the sociohistorical impact and history of slavery and sexual violence towards Black women since the middle passage. Next, I will focus on my variables (i.e., the strong Black woman ideal, trust of law enforcement, and Black identity). I will also discuss the impact of previous sexual violence as a variable moderating the relationship between the independent variables and attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Finally, I will provide the rationale for my study, research questions, and hypotheses.

Sexual Violence and Black Women

For the purpose of this study, sexual violence or sexual assault is intentional unwanted or forced completed or attempted sexual contact, to include vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse or object penetration (ACOG, 2014). These terms will be used interchangeably throughout this literature review, due to them being used interchangeably throughout the literature for this study. Every 98 seconds an American in the U.S. is sexually assaulted, and most of those sexual assaults or rapes occur in people between ages 12 and 34 years old (Department of Justice, 2015). The Department of Justice reported in 2000 that 90% percent of adult rape victims were female (Snyder, 2000), and college-aged women (ages 18 to 24) were three times more likely than other aged women to experience some form of sexual violence (Sinozich & Langton, 2014).

Thirty-eight percent of victims of sexual violence experience work or school problems, and 37% experience family and friend problems (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Eighty-four percent of victims of intimate partner violence experience professional or emotional issues (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Additionally, in a study about female veterans, 30% percent of women reported having experienced a rape met criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) nine months after experiencing sexual violence (Rothbaum & Foa, 1992). These statistics make it clear that sexual violence is an issue that has impacted the lives of people and

specifically women throughout this country. Sexual violence has caused trauma, drug problems, and death for women throughout the United States, and must be explored and thought about with urgency due to the far-reaching impact that not addressing sexual violence has had on people's lives. This issue should be examined further in order to understand how it negatively impacts certain communities and how the rates and effects of sexual violence could potentially be reduced.

One population of people who are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence are Black women. The number one killer of Black women ages 15 to 34 is homicide by an intimate partner (Africana Voices Against Violence, 2002). Black women experience intimate partner violence at a higher rate than other women—40% versus 31.5% (Breiding et al., 2014). According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), more than 20% of Black women are raped during their lifetime, which is more than are likely to experience rape among women overall (14.8%) in their lifetime (Breiding et al., 2014). More recent statistics about Black women are sexual violence specifically are not currently available due to how limited the data is about Black women specifically.

There have been a number of explanations for these high rates of sexual violence against Black women. Some have argued that Black women are exposed to higher rates of trauma as children, increasing their likelihood of experiencing sexual violence as adults (Roberts, Gilman, Breslau, Breslau, & Koenen, 2011). Research shows that when children experience sexual abuse, they are more likely to experience sexual assault or re-victimization as an adult that is forcible and often occurs while the victim has drugs or alcohol in her system (Mokma, Eshelman, & Messman-Moore, 2016).

Child abuse victims often blame themselves for their own perceptions of their actions or behaviors that they feel may have caused them to be molested or abused (Janoff-Bulman, 1979; Ullman & Filipas, 2005), often by attributing their abuse to characteristics associated with their personality. As a result of their self-blame, they often hold on to their judgmental thoughts about their behavior and engage in further self-blame for the actions or behaviors that may lead up to sexual abuse as an adult (Janoff-Bulman, 1979; Ullman & Filipas, 2005). The child abuse victims who blame themselves for personal characteristics that led to their sexual abuse are more likely to experience more negative outcomes (Littleton, Magee, & Axsom, 2007), such as to experience greater alcohol use and posttraumatic symptoms (Filipas & Ullman, 2006; Briere,

2000) that put victims at a higher risk of experiencing adult sexual assault or sexual violence and potentially not reporting it (Messman-Moore & Long, 2003; Mokma et al., 2016).

Another explanation for high rates of sexual violence towards Black women may be the representation of Black women in the media. Several scholars have highlighted that the negative stereotypes about Black women in the media encourage objectification and violence against them (Woodard & Mastin, 2005). In an analysis of media coverage of Black women, *Essence* magazine (2000) found that Black women are portrayed negatively twice as frequently as they are portrayed more positively in the media. One of the negative stereotypes that is commonly portrayed in the media is the *Jezebel*. This is a promiscuous woman with a high sexual appetite (Harris-Perry, 2011). This stereotype comes from the time period of slavery where Black women were forced to work half naked in the fields. These women were generally treated poorly and exploited sexually. Identifying *Jezebels* as promiscuous and with a strong desire to have sex made it easier to rape and sexually abuse them by making assumptions that they were hypersexual and enjoyed being objectified (Harris-Perry, 2011). These stereotypes continue today in the way some Black women are portrayed on shows like *Love and Hip-Hop* or in hip-hop music videos where women are portrayed as half-naked sexual objects that are always interested in engaging in sexual behavior. These negative portrayals may be increasing the likelihood of Black women being perceived in a way that makes it more socially acceptable to act upon them in a sexually violent way. Another stereotype that has been created to counteract the Jezebel stereotype is that of the strong Black woman. This idea will be explained in detail later in this chapter.

It is also important to note that there is a limitation in the literature available about Black women and sexual violence. When a search is done on PsychInfo for “Sexual Violence,” 7,269 articles are listed on the topic. When a search is done on PsychInfo for “Black Women and Sexual Violence,” 50 articles are listed and 77 articles are listed when “Black Women and Rape” is searched. The research that is referenced for my study is limited and that also means what is known about Black women who have experienced sexual violence is also limited. It is important to think about the impact of this limited knowledge on policy and preventative measures that have been taken to stop or reduce sexual violence against Black women. This may also be a contributing factor for the high rates of sexual violence in this community as well as implications for the importance of this topic in academia and public health currently.

Reporting Sexual Violence

Even though ideally sexually assault could be prevented completely, it is still important to focus on low levels of sexual violence reporting. In order to access resources after experiencing sexual violence, it is important to support people in seeking help. While informal resources, such as friends and family can be there to encourage you access more formal resources or while you process your emotional response to the trauma, formal support systems such as police and medical professionals are a critical support for people because they are needed to help connect victims to resources such as therapy, education, legal justice, or other support to help decrease the likelihood of prolonged trauma and re-victimization (Starzynski et al., 2005). Furthermore, in order for women to have positive gains from accessing formal support, it is important that these victims are responded to in a positive way (Filipas & Ulman, 2001).

In 2014, 284,000 cases of rape and sexual assault occurred among people who were 12 years of age and older, and only one third of those were reported to police (Department of Justice, 2015). According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN, 2016), seeking justice through reporting sexual violence can help victims in the process of recovery from sexual violence and help prevent perpetrators from being sexually violent towards someone else. However, there is some research that indicates that people may be hesitant to report sexual violence. A study done by Sinozich and Langton (2014) reported that only 16% of female students felt that they received support from any victim services agencies.

In a study with 220 female survivors of sexual violence (10% being Black women), Spencer, Mallory, Toews, Stith, and Wood (2017) reported that one of the reasons women indicated for not reporting sexual violence was that they felt that the incident was not that big of a deal. Their study also indicated that some people did not want to report their sexual violence incident because they did not feel like it warranted a report, since from their perspective they did not feel threatened or seriously unsafe due to the incident. In the same study, a significant number of women reported that they are not aware of their options. Lastly, fear due to possible repercussions or not being believed were additional reasons why these survivors did not report sexual violence (Spencer et al., 2017).

Five percent of the women in the Spencer et al. (2017) study were also fearful specifically of being blamed for being in the situation. Some admitted to engaging in victim blaming by blaming themselves for putting themselves in the situation and essentially feeling

that they no longer had the right to report because of their own decision making. Some of the women in the study also acknowledged being afraid to report sexual violence because they were fearful of the incident not being handled appropriately when it is reported. They reported not being aware of how the process would go or how they would be would treated based on inconsistencies in the treatment of perpetrators when sexual violence reports are filed (Spencer et al., 2017; Vopni, 2006).

There have been a number of studies that focused on the reporting of sexual violence among female survivors (Freyd & Birrell, 2013; Spencer et al., 2017; Sutton & Simons, 2015). These studies all suggest that some of the other common factors contributing to low levels of reporting include survivors blaming themselves and feeling that they no longer had the right to report because of their own decision making (Freyd & Birrell, 2013; Sutton & Simons, 2015). While these studies offer a critical view of the circumstances of female survivors of trauma, they also lack some additional information regarding factors that specifically impact Black women reporting sexual violence.

There are additional factors that may impact underreporting for Black women specifically. One of those factors is that Black women continue to be stereotyped as promiscuous, which may make it hard for them to be perceived as victims of sexual violence (Collins, 1998) and for them to think they will be believed when they experience sexual violence. Another factor is the desire to protect Black male offenders from prosecution, since they make up 85% of the sexual assault perpetrators that sexually assault Black women (Washington, 2001). The desire to protect Black men may make it more challenging for Black women to report due to a fear of being disloyal or betraying the Black community (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005). Another factor that may be specific to the Black community may be a desire to address the sexual violence within the Black community, to serve justice independent of the United States justice system (Vivolo, Matjasko, & Massetti, 2011). However, there is limited literature on this topic that is specific to community ways of addressing sexual violence (Javdani, & Allen, 2011). Lastly, one of the barriers may be negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence to legal, medical, and mental health professionals. This factor will be examined further throughout this study.

There is limited literature about the factors that contribute to Black women not feeling that they can report sexual violence (Washington, 2001; Bryant-Davis & Ocampo 2005; Collins,

1998). Even though there is some literature on different factors regarding being a strong Black woman, trust of law enforcement, and racial identity, we know less about their impact on reporting sexual violence. This study examines each of these factors and their impact on Black women and their attitudes toward reporting sexual violence. In order to understand the impact of these factors, it is important to understand the sociopolitical context of how these factors have impacted Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence throughout history.

Theoretical Framework

Much of this historical information about Black women appears to have impacted how they are perceived today. Due to the long history of Black women being seen as sexual property, which is further perpetuated through the Jezebel stereotype (Collins, 2005), many men perceive Black women as being able to be sexually violated because stereotypes allow them to assume that Black women derive pleasure from any sort of sexual advances (Collins, 1990; Talty, 2003). This can increase the likelihood of sexual violence for Black women both within the Black community and between racial groups (Wades-Gayles, 1993). Much of the sexual violence that Black women experience today is occurring within the Black community. In other words, most sexual violence that Black women are enduring is being perpetrated by Black men (Catalano & Rand, 2006; Washington, 2001). However, due to a number of different factors including the history of slavery, there may be a preference to not report the sexual violence and perhaps to desire to protect the perpetrators (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Patton & Snyder-Yuly, 2007). Black men could be killed, hung, shot, or brutally beaten for even being accused of looking at White women, and they also experienced the same brutal enslavement that Black women did. As a result, Black women may be more hesitant to report Black men and may have a desire to protect them because of a shared struggle and history in spite of potential abuse or sexual violence (Tillman, Bryant-Davis, Smith, & Marks, 2010). In addition, the continued harsher punishment for Black people in the legal system, as well as the harsher punishment for Black people in crimes against White people, may continue to perpetuate the idea that the predominately White legal system does not care about Black bodies as much as it does others. This may also make it more difficult for Black women to report sexual violence (Tillman et al., 2010; Wyatt, 1992).

I propose the sociohistorical context of slavery and racism may be the underlying contextual factors that explain much of why Black women may be fearful of reporting sexual violence (Tillman et al., 2010; Wyatt, 1997). In the United States, throughout the time of slavery, Black women (as with Black people generally) were viewed as property, and they were unable to enter into any legally recognized marriages or relationships (Neville & Pugh, 1997). Black women were bartered and traded for their bodies' labor value amongst the White male elite during and right after slavery—from the 1500's to the late 1800's, or for approximately 400 years (Wyatt, 1997). During this time White men used Black women for labor value and for producing children with physically superior Black men, and they were traded and exchanged for other Black bodies (Staples, 2001). Black women's bodies were accessible to men at all times during this period, for reproducing or as a way of exerting power (Staples, 1982; Stember, 1976). Many Black men during that time were treated as animals for their physical abilities and strength. Black men would then in turn sometimes sexually and physically force themselves on Black women that they had access to because they were incentivized to do so. Using their force on Black women gave Black men an outlet to gain power and wield control over someone else after not having any control in the system they were in (Staples, 1982). White men also exercised physical power over Black women with rape and brutality because they also had free access to Black women who were traded within the high-class White community for goods and other resources (Staples, 1982; Wyatt, 1997). This dynamic between Black women and men continued throughout slavery and set the tone for how Black women were perceived and experienced from then on (Tillman et al., 2010).

Black women often tried to maintain a sense of control during slavery by trying to maintain monogamous relationships with the Black men that they were forced to breed with; however, this was not always possible because of the lack of control that they had over their bodies (Jones, 1985). Black women would try and exchange sex for material goods for their families, such as extra food, clothes, or to ensure that they were not separated from their families (Jones, 1985). The fear of being separated if they did not comply with White men often caused them to appear to consent or agree to this sexual exploitation and violence throughout slavery (Frazier, 1939; Hernton, 1965). As a result of Black women being so sexually accessible to White men during the slavery era, the rape of Black women for all men became normalized as a way of exercising power (Tillman et al., 2010; Wilderson, 2017; Wyatt, 1997). Black men also

participated as a way of adopting the behavior of the men with the most power during that time (Staples, 1982). As a result, during slavery most of the sexual violence that Black women experienced was by people that they knew, whether that was men they were dating, friends, relatives, or White men that had the power to rape women whenever they wanted without fear of penalty (Staples, 1982; Tillman et al., 2010). Also, because Black women were viewed as property, it was highly unlikely for Black men to be punished for raping them either (Staples, 1982; Talty, 2003). This behavior continued to perpetuate the idea that Black women were objects that could be violated and acted upon without fear of repercussions (Staples, 1982).

Once slavery ended and Black women were seemingly given human rights, many of the blatant instances of sexual violence by White men decreased, and Black women began selling their own bodies as a way of supporting their families (Staples, 1982). One way that they did this was prostituting themselves, often to the same White men who used to own them (Henriques, 1967; Staples, 1982). Black women were often incentivized to allow White men to degrade them during these sexual encounters and were able to charge more money if they allowed predominately White men to beat them during these sexual encounters (Henriques, 1967; Staples, 1982).

During the early 1900s after slavery ended, Black women who accepted degrading treatment in exchange for money often opted to engage in prostitution if they were unable to achieve jobs cleaning houses or offices for White women (Staples, 1982). Many Black women also found these jobs to be degrading because they often involved being treated like “house slaves” and raising White peoples’ children instead of their own (Henriques, 1967; Staples, 1982). Some women preferred prostitution as a more acceptable way to make a living because they did not want to go back to working for White families again, but others were unable to get these jobs cleaning homes because they were perceived as hypersexual by White families or employers and were not deemed fit to be in those spaces (Henriques, 1967; Staples, 1982).

This history of degradation for Black women is so tied to Black women’s sexuality and bodies makes it difficult for Black women to overcome (Staples, 1982; Tillman et al., 2010). This history of being violated by men without any recourse or way of stopping it has put women at a disadvantage. In addition to this, throughout the first four or five hundred years of Black women being in the United States, they had been raped by the same race of people, often in the same social or socioeconomic class of people they were supposed to be reporting sexual violence

to once slavery ended. Many of the law enforcement and government officials owned slaves, which meant that Black women were powerless to stop them because of their lack of empathy to Black women's struggles with violence (Breiding et al., 2014; US Bureau of Justice, 2006). Black women's violent relationships with White men appeared to change the way that Black women were seen and treated by Black men, and no one in power stopped Black men from raping them or assaulting them (Bryant-Davis, & Ocampo, 2005). Since the 1500s when Black women were forced to come to the United States, no one has stopped Black women from experiencing painful, degrading, and dehumanizing sexual violence (Staples, 1982). With such a long history of violence without consequences, Black women have learned to not report sexual violence, especially to a system created by men who used to buy, sell, and rape them whenever they wanted (Tillman et al., 2010). This negative history is what many women have to overcome when they decide to report an instance of sexual violence. In spite of the fact that much of the sexual violence Black women experience today is perpetrated by Black men, many women have to weigh the idea of reporting Black men to the people who taught them how to rape them in the first place, and that history is hard to overcome (Collins, 1998; Washington, 2001). Slavery went on for over 400 years, and that deeply-ingrained experience of racism seems to inform so much of how Black people are treated today. It may be impossible for Black women to imagine the thought of involving law enforcement or the government into that sacred bond based on shared understanding.

This option of accepting degrading treatment from men in exchange for money was sometimes the only option for some Black women, and this dynamic continues today in the way Black women are portrayed in pornography and in the current sex trafficking that occurs in the United States (Tillman et al., 2010). Black women are still treated more aggressively and violently for less money within sex trafficking today (Tillman et al., 2010; Wilderson, 2017). They continue to be hypersexualized, and this has had such severe consequences for their lives, such as being treated more aggressively by men and having higher rates of intimate partner violence that lead to higher rates of homicide as well (Tillman et al., 2010). For example, men who are found guilty of raping women receive shorter sentences for raping Black women than for raping White women (Tillman et al., 2010).

There has been a recent push for women (i.e., the "Me Too" movement) to stand up and speak up against sexual violence, which occurs in the work place or by men in positions of

power (Garcia, 2017). Even within this movement, which was started by Tarana Burke (a Black woman), women of color do not appear to be speaking up, and when they do, they do not appear to be believed in the same way as White women (Rodriguez, 2018). For example, Harvey Weinstein only disputed the accusations made by women of color, and Bill Cosby and R. Kelly were originally acquitted for their accusations of rape and sexual assault by predominately Black women, which supports the idea that we do not trust Black women in society today (Rodriguez, 2018). The current sociopolitical climate supports the 400 years of Black women's bodies not being valued to the same degree as White women, and this continues to add to the fear of reporting sexual violence today. In addition to this, the strong Black woman ideal is another factor that may be impacted by the sociopolitical history of Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

When reflecting on the sociohistorical impact of slavery and racism, there were three variables that seemed to still be important factors in how Black women think about reporting sexual violence at the internal or interpersonal level. Issues that are more systemic were not the focus of this study due to wanting to address variables that can be addressed by Black women primarily preventatively or on a community level. The long history of Black women having to protect themselves and be strong in the face of adversity by a system that has not valued them for over 400 years continues to perpetuate the need for the Strong Black woman Ideal to be explored further. The history of understandable mistrust towards systems of justice, is the reason for mistrust of police being the second variable, since they are the front lines and face of the justice system in the United States. Lastly, the history of racism and the impact of Black identity on the experience of Black women is the reason why the Black racial identity is the third variable. Together these three variables are reflective of the sociohistorical issues that may contribute to Black women's attitudes about reporting sexual violence and will each be explored further in the next section.

Strong Black Woman Ideal

The strong Black woman (SBW) is a Black woman who cares deeply for others, sometimes to the detriment of her own needs (Collins, 2005; Romero, 2000). She is perceived as loyal to family and friends, and this woman is often associated with more demure, educated Black women who hold everything together while remaining calm. This ideal seems to be what

many Black women strive for, but this image is often associated with internalizing a lot of stressors and not asking for help, all in order to maintain the image. This concept of internalizing issues may mean that Black women who more strongly identify with the SBW image may be discouraged to report sexual violence.

Historically, the idea of being a SBW is traced back to slavery, where the poor treatment of Black women was justified by a belief that Black people were very strong and could withstand higher levels of physical and emotional mistreatment (Wyatt, 2008). This idea of superior strength has continued on to today through an expectation and belief that Black women can withstand high levels of pain, suppress their fears, and avoid showing weakness due to their history of being so strong and enduring so much suffering (Abrams, Maxwell, Pope, & Belgrave, 2014). This SBW ideal has been preferred throughout history as opposed to the alternative perspective of viewing Black women as *Mammies* (domestic women who bear and raise everyone's children, including those of their White employers whose houses they clean). Another perspective has been that of women being hypersexualized or viewed as *Jezebels*, which is another stereotype that is rooted in slavery (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007).

As Black women have evolved, a strong Black woman went from being a Mammie or domestic worker to being able to care for others and be more poised and polished. With cultural icons like Michelle Obama and Oprah, being strong is not just about being strong but also being educated, as well as able to withstand emotional turmoil. Being strong has evolved to be more about appearing to not be suffering or weak in spite of challenges. Being poised and not appearing overwhelmed is key for being perceived as an SBW in today's society and taking care of family while also working to be financially independent. The financial expectations and appearing poised are the parts of being an SBW that have become a part of being an SBW. This is how the identity has evolved out the Mammie identity from slavery to become an identity of its own.

The idea of being viewed as an SBW has come under more scrutiny more recently because of the negative expectations and limitations (e.g., Watson & Hunter, 2016; West, Donovan, & Daniel, 2016) that are associated with being identified as an SBW (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007; Collins, 1998). For example, SBWs are expected to be able to withstand large amounts of stress without engaging in any coping behaviors, such as accessing mental health services (Schreiber, Stern, & Wilson, 2000; Watson & Hunter, 2016), which may make doing

things like going to the hospital or seeing a psychologist after experiencing trauma such as sexual violence seem like an inaccessible option. Another example would be the need for SBWs to counterbalance the negative perceptions that people have about them. The stereotypes and perceptions that people have about Black women—e.g., that they are not as educated and that they are often perceived to be hostile or “angry”—may sometimes cause Black women to work harder to prove that they are not stereotypes (Watson & Hunter, 2016; Woods-Giscombé, 2010) which may make it harder for them to ask for help when experiences stressors. Sometimes those desires to prove that they are smart can cause Black women to not ask for help or let anyone know that they need additional support (Watson & Hunter, 2016), which could impact attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. To further complicate things, there are also expected roles of caretaking and nurturing that can go along with the SBW stereotype that are often contradictory to the idea that SBWs are strong and independent (Settles, Pratt-Hyatt, & Buchanan, 2008). This contradiction often causes Black women to reject more traditional gender roles for women as compared to White women. This rejection of traditional gender roles often meant that the way they displayed their womanhood was often rejected by society (Donovan & West, 2015; Speight, Isom, & Thomas, 2013).

Research has also examined the impact of social media on the SBW ideal. In today’s society, many Black women access other women for social support using the internet through social media (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015), and for people who have limited interaction with Black women, social media may be their primary source for formulating beliefs about Black women. Social media can also be one of the main ways for Black women to support and communicate with each other about Black culture and what it means (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015). This is evidenced by a study reporting that 67% of Black adults use Facebook according to the Pew Research Center (2014). The study by Duggan et al. (2015) found that high use of Black-oriented social media and blogging actually increased depression and anxiety for Black women, even if they endorsed strong Black women ideas. Based on the research indicating that the SBW ideal makes it difficult for Black women to ask for help or reach out to mental health providers when they are experiencing stress or mental health concerns, this may make it more challenging for these women to access resources when experiencing sexual violence or symptoms related to trauma. These results continue to indicate that endorsing strong Black woman ideals may not be as protective for Black women as

expected. Because the SBW ideal has not been researched in relation to many topics beyond mental health issues (Watson & Hunter, 2016), it is important to determine how the SBW ideal and racial identity potentially impact the prior history of sexual violence, mistrust of police, and attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

Even though there is no empirical study that connects the SBW stereotype with the reporting of sexual violence, this is a critical variable in explaining the attitudes for reporting sexual violence, because high levels of adherence to the SBW ideology may feel unsupported which may lead to challenges with emotion inhibition and regulation. These challenges may impact a woman's attitudes and desire to report sexual violence. This study will examine whether or not subscribing to the SBW ideal is a barrier to reporting sexual violence. Prior research has shown that surviving trauma increases the likelihood of endorsing SBW views in addition to experiencing problems with regulating emotions (Schreiber et al., 2000; Watson & Hunter, 2016). Therefore, I believe it is critically important to study the impact of this ideal on attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. In addition, learning more about how prior experiences of sexual violence impact the relationship between attitudes towards reporting sexual violence and the SBW ideology will be beneficial in the treatment of Black women who have experienced sexual violence as well. Another variable that impacts Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence is their trust of law enforcement or police, which will be explored further in the next section.

Mistrust of Police

There has been much discussion in recent years about mistrust of law enforcement due to all the police brutality, mass incarceration of men of color, and police shootings of unarmed Black men—as a factor making it more difficult for Black women to come forward to report sexual violence with any belief that they will be able to seek justice (Moore et al., 2016). In 2010, more than 9 percent of police were reported for sexual assault, and this police misconduct appears to be targeted towards people of color according to the media and the reports from groups such as Black Lives Matter (Carpenter, 2014). A 2014 report by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the National Women's Law Center found that Black girls are being arrested far more often even though they have similar rates of misconduct to White girls. Black girls are also perceived as more aggressive, threatening, and dangerous by police than White girls

(NAACP National Legal Defense and Educational Fund & National Women's Law Center, 2014), which may result in them being treated more negatively. Additionally, a study by Johnson, Gilbert, and Ibrahim (2015) reported that Black women are the most likely group to be unarmed when shot and killed by police according to nationwide data about fatal interactions with police. These negative and deadly interactions with police may make it hard for Black women to report sexual violence and may have an impact on Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence due to a fear of being harmed, killed or not given help when they ask for it.

Another concern for many Black women in regard to police is a continued desire to protect Black men. The majority of sexual violence for Black women is intraracial, meaning that its usually Black men doing it (US Bureau of Statistics, 2016), which may make it difficult for Black women to report due to a desire to protect Black men. Because of how harshly Black men are treated by police and the false accusations of rape they have faced throughout history that have often resulted in lynching and violence (Wyatt, 1997), Black women may be reluctant to expose Black men to today's justice system and law enforcement. Additionally, it appears that Black women are less likely to be believed (Garcia, 2017; Graham, 2018) because of general attitudes toward sexual assault and racialized stereotypes, especially if they are not certain that they will receive the support that they are looking for. Depending on how Black women feel about their own Black racial identity, the idea of reporting a Black man to police may have more of an impact on their decision to go to the police.

Black Racial Identity

There are different theories that explain the development of racial identity (e.g., Hoffman theory and the Cross theory). One popular theory about racial identity is Cross's theory of Black racial identity (Cross, 1991) which specifically focuses on Black people and includes five phases: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization and internalization-commitment. These five phases are defined by Cross (1991) as follows:

- In the first phase, pre-encounter, Black people take on the beliefs of the dominant identity, including the idea that being White is good. During this phase, Black people do not think about race or the implications of race.

- In the second phase, encounter, an event or series of events forces a Black person to acknowledge the impact of racism and the reality that they cannot ever be White. During this phase, Black people must look at their identity as members of a group targeted by racism.
- In the third phase, immersion/emersion, Black people want to surround themselves with symbols of racial identity and avoid symbols of whiteness. Black people also look for opportunities to explore their history and culture with their friends and peers.
- In the fourth phase, internalization, Black people begin to develop their own sense of racial identity. Their Black identity becomes more expansive and less defensive during this phase, and Black people become more open to establishing relationships with White people who are respectful of their identity.
- The last phase, internalization-commitment, Black people find ways to turn their sense of being Black into a part of their overall identity, and they continue to think about the betterment of the community as a whole. During this final phase, there is a continued sense of comfort about one's race and the people around them.

In this study, I will use Cross's theoretical model to reflect the different stages of racial identity development (Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002), as it will allow for a clearer understanding of the relationship between racial identity development and attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. More specifically, using this model will allow for a deeper understanding of how the different stages of racial identity development positively or negatively interact with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

At this time there is limited research connecting racial identity development to attitudes towards reporting sexual violence, however in a previous study done in 2017 with 192 Black women in marriages where domestic violence occurred, showed that having a more developed racial identity was associated with seeing fewer benefits to staying in an abusive relationship and a greater willingness to help victims of sexual violence (Blackmon et al., 2017). In this study, Blackmon and colleagues used the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS; Vandiver et al., 2002) to measure participants' racial identity. The CRIS includes 7 subscales, including pre-encounter assimilation, pre-encounter miseducation, pre-encounter self-hatred, immersion-emersion anti-white, internalization Afrocentricity, and internalization multiculturalist inclusive. Their results indicated that the subscales that were connected to the early stages of racial development (e.g.,

the pre-encounter, encounter, and immersion/emersion phases of the Cross model) were more highly associated with the belief that Black women benefit from domestic violence by gaining sympathy from others and are at fault for being in abusive relationships.

Participants in the study who subscribed to Black racial identity attitudes associated with the early stages of development (i.e., the pre-encounter and immersion-emersion anti-White attitudes subscales) were more likely to report beliefs that justify domestic violence and are less likely to be willing to help victims of domestic violence. A Black racial identity that is more associated with an Afrocentric worldview, subscribing to the internalization Afrocentricity subscale, predicted a willingness to help other victims of domestic violence, but still held the belief that Black women can benefit from domestic violence. A more developed racial identity (i.e., internalization multiculturalist inclusive) predicted a belief of less justification of domestic violence, a willingness to help victims of domestic violence, and less of a belief that Black women benefit from abuse.

The results of this study support the need for more culturally sensitive training around domestic violence attitudes that take people's racial identity development into consideration. Another study by Bent-Goodley (2001) reported that there are internal barriers or issues internal to Black women as a social group that prevent Black women from addressing or reporting sexual violence, or, more specifically, domestic violence. This study again shows that understanding the challenges brought on by Black identity specifically is important, because it impacts Black women's ability to seek support after experiencing sexual violence. This research supports further use of the Cross model (1991) and the CRIS scale (Vandiver et al., 2002) as ways of assessing racial identity for Black women in order to deepen the understanding of how identity can impact someone's response to sexual violence. The lack of additional information connecting Black racial identity speaks to the need to explore the connection between the CRIS scale (Vandiver et al., 2002) and attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Since this study is one of the first to explore the connection, more information is not available to show a stronger connection between the Cross model subscales, Black identity development, and attitudes towards reporting. This study will hopefully contribute to the body of research on this topic.

Exploratory Variables

In this study, I will also examine prior sexual violence as an exploratory variable. Based on the literature, prior sexual violence appears to be critical in sexual violence reporting (Fulu et al., 2013). Research shows that experiencing sexual violence or sexual abuse as a child or adolescent increases the likelihood of being victimized again as an adult (Mokma et al., 2016). Not reporting instances of sexual violence further increases the likelihood of experiencing sexual violence as an adult (Mokma et al., 2016). As a result, fear of reporting is a potential factor for those women who have experienced sexual violence, and prior victimization is a predictor of sexual violence. With the numbers of incidents of sexual trauma already being so high in the Black community, not reporting sexual violence increases the likelihood that Black women will experience re-victimization or will encounter sexual violence for the first time as an adult (Fulu et al., 2013). This study will explore the impact of prior sexual violence on the relationship between Black identity, the SBW ideal, and mistrust of police on attitudes towards sexual violence in order to better understand the impact of a prior history of sexual abuse. Black women who have experienced sexual violence may have different attitudes towards reporting sexual violence based on their prior experiences with reporting or attitudes towards how their sexual violence was perceived within their communities. This study will explore what role prior sexual violence may play in how women think about reporting. For participants who have experienced prior sexual violence, it is important to understand the impact this may have on the independent variables (i.e., Black identity, the SBW ideal, and mistrust of police) in this study and the way Black women may think about reporting sexual violence as a result.

Rationale for the Current Study

In this study, I will examine the impact of the following variables: the strong Black woman ideal, trust of law enforcement, and Black identity on Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. The study will also explore the moderating impact of prior sexual violence on the relationship between the three variables listed above and attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Based on the literature, these variables need to be explored further in order to understand the impact that they have on attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Having a deeper understanding of these variables will help professionals to develop interventions

and programming that are more culturally conducive to the challenges and barriers unique to Black women's willingness to report sexual violence.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Overall, the present study aims to create a better understanding of the relationship between being the Strong Black Woman ideal, perceptions of police, and Black identity on a Black woman's attitudes towards accessing resources that could be instrumental in decreasing the likelihood of her experiencing future sexual violence or any sexual violence at all. Understanding this relationship further could be vital to determining ways to decrease the high rates of sexual violence in the Black community.

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical evidence, I have developed four research questions and four related hypotheses:

RQ1: To what extent does the strong Black woman ideal explain attitudes towards reporting sexual violence?

H1: Strong Black woman ideal will be negatively correlated with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

RQ2: To what extent does Black racial identity explain attitudes towards reporting sexual violence?

H2a: Pre-encounter subscales (i.e., pre-encounter assimilation) will be negatively correlated with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

H2b: Immersion and internalization subscales (i.e., internalization Afrocentricity and internalization multiculturalist inclusive) will be positively correlated with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

RQ3: To what extent does mistrust towards police explain attitudes towards reporting sexual violence?

H3: Mistrust towards police will be negatively correlated with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

RQ4 (Exploratory): To what extent does a prior history of sexual violence moderate the relationship between the SBW ideal, lack of trust of law enforcement, and Black racial identity and attitudes towards reporting sexual violence?

CHAPTER 3. METHOD

The purpose of the proposed study was to determine the impact of the strong Black woman ideal, trust of law enforcement, and Black identity on Black women's attitude towards reporting sexual violence. This study used a quantitative approach where an online-based survey was used to collect data. In this chapter, I will describe the participants, sampling procedure, and measures.

Participants

The qualified Black female participants were those who (a) identified as Black or African American, (b) were 18 or older, (c) lived in the U.S., (d) and spoke English. Women who did not speak English were excluded from the study because the study was only available in English. Women who did not live in the US at the time of the study were also excluded in order to make sure the study was reflective of attitudes about reporting sexual violence for Black women in the United States.

To determine a sufficient sample size to test the hypotheses, a priori analyses was conducted in G-POWER (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009; Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) using an alpha level of .05 and power of 0.8. Cohen's f^2 , the ratio of explained variance and error variance, was used as the effect size measure (Cohen, 1988). I expected that the predictors (i.e., Black Identity, Strong Black Woman Ideal, and Mistrust of Police) would explain at least 15% of the variance in the model ($f^2 = 0.15$). Therefore, based on the aforementioned conditions, the power analysis indicates a sample size of 77 would be sufficient to detect the expected minimal effect size however in order to have more power than the R-squared, more than 77 participants may be needed.

Participants in this study were 112 Black or African American identified female participants who completed the survey. The participants were widely diverse and varied by sexual identity, level of education, age, family income and whether or not they experienced sexual violence.

Sexual Identity. Within the sample, 71.4% ($n = 80$) identified as heterosexual or straight, 12.5% ($n = 14$) identified as bisexual, 2.7% ($n = 3$) identified as pansexual and the same number

of participants identified as lesbian. Only one participant (.9% identified as queer, with 9.8% ($n = 11$) identifying as not clearly specified.

Level of Education. Of the 112 participants, 65.2% ($n = 73$) of the participants were currently enrolled in postsecondary education and 34.8% ($n = 39$) were not currently pursuing a degree. Of the participants currently in postsecondary school, about 47.3% were currently in graduate school ($n = 35$). Of the 39 participants not currently in postsecondary, 10.3% ($n = 4$) completed some college, 2.6% ($n = 1$) completed an Associate's degree, 17.9% ($n = 7$) had a Bachelor's degree, 41% ($n = 16$) had a Master's degree, and 25.6% ($n = 10$) had a Doctorate.

Age. Most of the participants were between 18 and 24 years old (36.6%; $n = 41$). Participants ages 25 to 34 were 29.7% ($n = 36$) of the sample, participants ages 35 to 44 were 18.9% ($n = 21$) of the sample, participants ages 45 to 54 were 7.2% ($n = 8$) of the sample, and 8.1% of the sample ($n = 9$) are ages 55 and above. Overall, the participants ranged in age from 18 to 72 with an average age of 32 ($SD = 13.210$).

Family Income. Within the sample 20.5% ($n = 23$) of participants family income was less than \$25,000 a year, 17% of participants family income ($n = 19$) was between \$25,000 and \$49,999 a year, 19.6% of participants ($n = 22$) family income were between \$50,000 and \$75,000 a year, and 42.9% of participants ($n = 48$) family income was more than \$75,000 a year.

Sexual Violence. Within the sample, 53.6% ($n = 60$) of the participants endorsed "yes" to the question, "Have you ever experienced unwanted or forced completed or attempted sexual contact, to include vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse, or object penetration?" and 46.4% ($n = 52$) reported "no" to the question about experiencing sexual violence. Of the participants who indicated that they had experienced sexual violence ($n = 60$), only 13.6% ($n = 8$) of them reported the experience and 86.4% ($n = 51$) did not report the experience. One of the participants who experienced sexual violence did not answer the question. Of the participants who reported they all reported to different people, such as: friends, the police, their university, parents, siblings, a Peace Corp Safety Officer, and a Sexual Assault Response Counselor. It is important to note that of the 8 participants who stated that they reported, 3 of them did not report to a formal reporting source, but to family or friends instead. Only 5 of the participants actually reported their experience to a formal reporting system with is only 8.3% of the participants who experienced sexual violence.

Social class. Participants were asked to endorse where they stood in comparison to other people in the United States using a ladder, with “A” being the top of the ladder and “J” being the bottom of the ladder. Within the sample, .9% ($n = 1$) of the participants endorsed “B” on the ladder of where they stand compared to others, 6.3% ($n = 7$) of the participants endorsed “C” on the ladder, and 14.3% ($n = 16$) of the participants endorsed “D” on the ladder. The majority of the participants endorsed “E” (28.6%, $n = 32$) on the ladder. Within the sample, 23.2% ($n = 26$) of participants endorsed “F” on the ladder making it the second more popular letter. Of the participants, 17% ($n = 19$) endorsed “G,” and 5.4% ($n = 6$) of the participants endorsed “H.” Of the participants 2.7% ($n = 3$) endorsed “I.” None of the participants endorsed “A” at the top of the ladder or “J” at the bottom of the ladder.

Sampling Procedure

Sampling combined purposive (or selective) sampling and snowball sampling. Once the IRB approval was obtained, the email to encourage people to take the survey was sent out in the Fall of 2018 via the Purdue University email system (see Appendix A). A follow up email was also sent out via the Purdue email system a week later (see Appendix B). I also shared my survey on a number of different listservs (e.g., professional organizations) focusing on Black women. I also tried to diversify my sample and recruit participants through the events on Purdue’s campus targeted at minority students and Black organizations catered to college students at Purdue in sororities. I also used snowballing on social media to attract other Black female participants (see Appendix C) who were not college educated. By using snowballing, I was able to have my study shared on social media accounts to attract more Black female participants. I also encouraged people both on campus and within my social networks (both on and offline) to share the study with other Black women they knew who may be interested in participating. Overall my efforts to recruit Black women as a graduate student on a predominately white campus were substantial. It took a great deal of effort and a lot of community support to retrieve enough participants to reach the appropriate effect size. I would not have been able to collect the number of people I did without the support of other Black women and other community allies encouraging people they know to engage with my research. The initial page of the online survey was the informed consent form (see Appendix D) which requires that each participant gives consent to continue with the survey. Participants were then reminded that their participation was confidential and voluntary,

and they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Each participant was also reminded that the risks were minimal and provided with information for resources related to the sexual violence before they start completing the survey.

Measures

Participants completed a survey consisting of the following sections: Demographics I (see Appendix E), Demographics II (see Appendix F), Superwoman Scale (see Appendix G), Cross Racial Identity Scale (see Appendix H), Perceptions of Police Scale (POPS; see Appendix I), and Attitudes Towards Reporting Sexual Violence (see Appendix J).

Demographics

All of the Black female participants answered questions about educational background, age, relationship status, racial background, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background (see Appendix E). Next the participants answered questions about sexual victimization (which were asked separately from the other demographic information) such as, “Have you ever experienced unwanted or forced completed or attempted sexual contact, to include vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse, or object penetration?” This question from the Berry and Rutledge study (2016) was used to determine with a yes or no answer whether or not each participant has experienced prior sexual violence. In addition to this, participants were also asked, “If you have experienced sexual violence, did you report it?” (see Appendix F).

The Strong Black Woman (SBW) Ideology Scale

The SBW ideology scale was a 16-item survey made up of two subscales from the Stereotypic Roles for Black Women Scale (Thomas, Witherspoon, & Speight, 2004). The first subscale consists of 11 items focused on the *Superwoman stereotype* for Black women (e.g., “It is difficult for me to share problems with others,” and “I am overworked, overwhelmed, and/or underappreciated”) and had an internal consistency reliability of .67 for the subscale. The second subscale consists of 5 items focused on the *Mammy stereotype* (e.g., “I often put aside my own needs to help others,” and “I feel guilty when I put my own needs before others”) and had an internal consistency reliability of .52 for the subscale. This reliability was relatively low for the

Mammy subscale by itself; however, the reliability for the total score of both the *Superwoman stereotype* and *Mammy stereotype* subscales together is .74 (Romero, 2000), which is an acceptable reliability for the strong Black woman ideology scale. I used the SBW scale, which is a combination of the two subscales, for this study. This scale is a freestanding scale, although it is made up of questions from the aforementioned subscales, it has been used independently in studies as its own measure. The present study yielded Cronbach's alpha of .813 for the SBW scale.

The participants of that study responded to each question on a 5-point Likert scale with a 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 5 being "Strongly Agree." The complete measure is a 16-item scale made up of the two subscales. In order to score the scale, the mean of the scores can be averaged. The higher the average, the more the participant identifies with the strong Black woman stereotype (Romero, 2000).

In one of the first studies done on the SBW ideology, the construct validity of the measure was assessed (Harrington & Crowther, 2007). During this study, the predictive validity of the measure showed that the SBW ideology scale was significantly associated with depressive symptoms and worry ($\beta = .32$ and $.34$, respectively; $p < .001$), indicating that the measure does predict mental health concerns for participants whose mean high scores are elevated (Harrington & Crowther, 2007). In the 2010 study by Harrington, Crowther, and Shipherd, the SBW scale predicted emotional inhibition, regulation difficulties, and self-silencing ($\beta = .40$ and $.43$, respectively; $p < .001$). This study also showed that this scale is useful across demographics (age, education, income; r s ranging from $-.01$ to $.13$, $p > .05$) or with religious affiliation ($r = -.04$, $p > .05$), showing that it can be used to assess Black women of different backgrounds. This measure can be found in Appendix G.

Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS)

The Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) was a 40-item scale (Vandiver et al., 2002), a 7-point Likert scale with a 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 7 being "Strongly Agree." The scale is made up of six subscales that are used to assess Black racial identity attitudes: Pre-Encounter Assimilation (e.g., "I am not so much a member of a racial group, as I am an American"), Pre-Encounter Miseducation (e.g., "Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work"), Pre-Encounter Self-Hatred (e.g., "I sometimes struggle with negative feelings about

being Black”), Immersion-Emersion Anti-White (e.g., “I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people”), Internalization Afrocentricity (e.g., “I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective”), and Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive (e.g., “I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone [e.g., Asians, Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Whites, etc.]”). The internal consistency scores range between .72 and .87 for the subscales. The CRIS is correlated with the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI), which is another Black identity scale that is slightly older and comes from the racial identity develop model by Cross (1991). This scale has been used in many previous studies to assess racial identity development (Worrell, Andretta, & Woodland, 2014; Blackmon et al., 2017).

I used the Blackmon et al. (2017) study as a guide and scored this scale by splitting the subscales into an early racial identity subsection (e.g., Pre-encounter Assimilation, Pre-encounter Miseducation, Pre-encounter Self-Hatred, and Immersion-Emersion Anti-White) and a more mature racial identity subsection (e.g., Internalization Afrocentricity and Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive). The scores for each of the subscales in the subsections were added up and averaged together. The scores were compared to see which subsection score is higher. Each of the subsection scores was used to assess correlation with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. The early racial identity subsection yielded Cronbach’s alpha of .749 and the mature racial identity subsection yielded a Cronbach alpha of .716 for the current study.

Perceptions of Police Scale (POPS)

The Perceptions of Police Scale (POPS) was a 12-item scale (Nadal & Davidoff, 2015) that was designed to assess perceptions of police and police bias. The participants in Nadal & Davidoff’s study responded to each question on a 5-point Likert scale with a 1 being “I strongly agree” and a score of 5 being “I strongly disagree” (e.g., “Police officers protect me”; “The police do not discriminate”). This scale has a reliability of .92 for the overall scale. This scale has two subscales, General Attitudes toward Police (.91; nine items) and Perceptions of Bias (.88; three items). The General Attitudes toward Police subscale includes questions such as “Police officers protect me,” and the Perceptions of Bias subscale includes questions such as “Police officers treat all people fairly.” This scale was validated using data splitting for cross validation. Half the 326 participants in Nadal and Davidoff (2015) study completed the Perceptions of

Police Scale and the other half tested the construct validity of the measure by completing the Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS) of what they thought the POPS is trying to measure. The principal components analysis was conducted, and for the measure, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .895 and significant with Bartlett's test of sphericity, χ^2 of 1125.31 ($df = 66, p > 0.00$). In the study by Nadal, Davidoff, and Allicock (2017), the researchers used POPS to assess general attitudes towards police and how they differed by race, and found Black participants ($n = 48$) to have more negative views of police than both White people ($n = 78$) and Latinx people ($n = 101$). For each of the questions, the higher scores indicate more favorable perceptions of police and lower scores indicate less favorable perceptions of police. All the scores were added and averaged, and this overall score was used for each participant in my study. The present study yielded a Cronbach alpha of .935 for this scale.

Attitudes Towards Reporting Sexual Violence

Since there are no measures that assess attitudes towards sexual violence within psychology, I used a modified version of Berry and Rutledge Questionnaire (Berry & Rutledge, 2016; Appendix I) from the medical literature. I decided to look at the way attitudes towards reporting sexual violence are assessed within the medical profession, since I am approaching reporting sexual violence as a public health issue that increases the likelihood of Black women being sexually or physically assaulted as a result of intimate partner violence. Berry and Rutledge (2016) asked five questions about attitudes towards reporting ($r = .65, p = .000$) that have been altered to 9 questions regarding attitudes towards reporting sexual violence to police officers instead of just health care providers primarily (e.g., "I would volunteer information to law enforcement about past sexual assault experiences," and "If asked I would tell the following person(s) about past sexual assault"). All of these questions contain 4-point Likert scales that have different meanings depending on the questions. This scale has been used in previous studies within the medical field to assess for attitudes towards disclosing information about sexual trauma or violence history. In a study of 945 low-income women accessing services at family planning clinics, the questions were used to anonymously assess attitudes towards disclosing sexual violence (Littleton, Axsom, Breitkopf, & Berenson, 2006). The study showed that less educated Latina women were less likely to want to disclose to a formal reporter such as a

medical professional or a member of law enforcement (Littleton et al., 2006). The present study yielded a stronger reliability with a Cronbach alpha of .867 for the scale.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

In this chapter, I review the results of the study. I describe the data screening and preliminary analyses. Then I present the statistical analysis and any significant findings will be identified from my primary research questions and hypotheses.

Data Screening and Preliminary Analyses

Before completing the data analyses, the data was assessed for accuracy by ensuring that the information was generated accurately from the Purdue Qualtrics excel file to the SPSS file that was used for the analysis. Next, I completed the screening steps to remove cases that provides data that was not valid.

There were a total of 176 participants who accessed the survey. I deleted five participants because they refused to take the survey. Then I deleted one because they did not identify their gender and five because they identified as male or both male and female. Next, 14 people were deleted due to not identifying as Black women. Lastly, I deleted 39 participants who did not complete at least one complete measure of the study. Much of this attrition occurred about midway through the test during the one measure that was three pages long. I attribute this to participants' fatigue.

I ran the descriptive statistics of the primary variables (see Table 1). Post hoc and preliminary statistics were run on the Strong Black Woman (SBW) Scale ($M = 3.49$, $SD = .54$), as seen in Table 1 and 2. This measure was correlated with the Mature Racial Identity racial identity variable $r = -.31$, $p < .01$ and Perceptions of Police Scale $r = .26$, $p < .05$. More specifically, SBW had a negative relationship with the Mature Racial Identity and positive relationship with positive perceptions of police.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Primary Variables and Normality of Distribution

Variables	Scale Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis	<i>r</i>
The SBW Ideology Scale	1-5	3.49	.54	-.11	-.48	.813
Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS)						
Early Racial Identity	1-7	5.13	.83	-1.46	3.66	-.749
Mature Racial Identity	1-7	3.89	.90	.21	-.01	-.716
Perceptions of Police Scale (POPS)	1-5	3.64	.75	.23	-.98	-.935
Attitudes Towards Reporting Sexual Violence	1-4	2.60	.54	-.15	.06	.867
Sexual Violence Question	1-2	1.46	.50	.15	-2.02	--

Note: SBW= Strong Black Woman Ideal

Next, I ran preliminary statistics on the Cross Racial Identity Scales Early Racial Identity subscale ($M = 5.13$, $SD = .83$). The same statistics were run on the Cross Racial Identity Scales of Mature Racial Identity subscale ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .90$). The measure was correlated with Perceptions of Police measure $r = -.21$, $p < .05$, indicating a negative relationship between mature racial identity and positive perceptions of police (please see Table 2).

I ran statistics on Perceptions of Police Scale measure ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .75$). This measure was correlated with The Attitudes Towards Reporting Scale ($M = 2.60$, $SD = .54$). These two measures were correlated $r = -.33$, $p < .01$. This indicates a negative relationship between positive perceptions of police and positive attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. This relationship is evidenced in Table 2.

Table 2.

Bivariate Correlations of Primary Variables

	1	2	3	4	5
1. SBW Ideology Scale	-				
2. CRIS Early Racial Identity	-.18**	-			
3. CRIS Mature Racial Identity	-.31**	-.12	-		
4. POPS	.26**	.06	-.21*	-	
5. Attitude Towards Reporting Sexual Violence	-.11	-.03	-.06	-.33**	-
6. Sexual Violence Question	-.18	-.05	-.03	-.1	.49**

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

CRIS = Cross Racial Identity Scale; SBW= Strong Black Woman Ideal, POPS = Perceptions of Police Scale

Primary Analyses

In this section, I describe the hierarchical regression analyses used to review the research questions and associated research hypotheses related to attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

H1: Strong Black woman ideal will be negatively correlated with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

H2a: Pre-encounter subscales (i.e., pre-encounter assimilation) will be negatively correlated with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

H2b: Immersion and internalization subscales (i.e., internalization Afrocentricity and internalization multiculturalist inclusive) will be positively correlated with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

H3: Mistrust towards police will be negatively correlated with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

RQ4 (Exploratory): To what extent does a prior history of sexual violence moderate the relationship between the SBW ideal, lack of trust of law enforcement, and Black racial identity and attitudes towards reporting sexual violence?

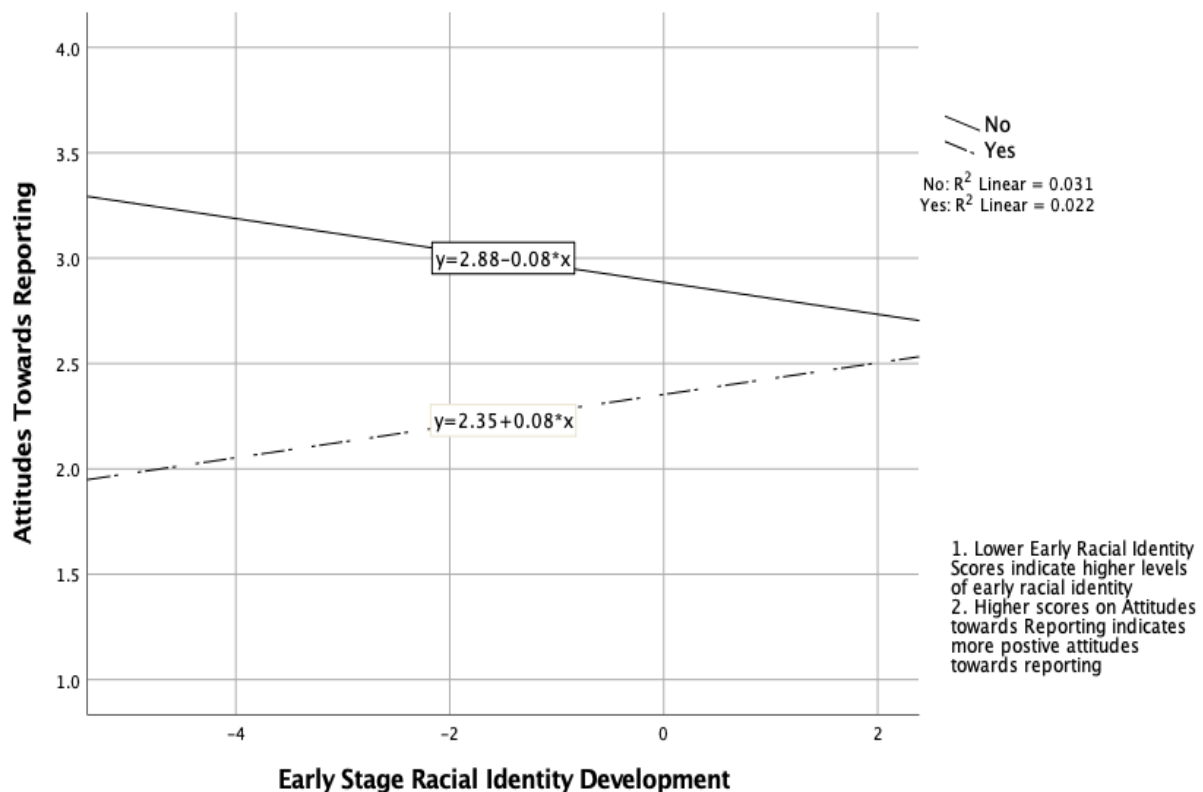
The data were standardized using z-scores. A multistep regression analysis and moderation analysis were completed to determine the impact of the moderators on the dependent variables. More specifically, in the first step for the regression analysis, I entered SBW, lack of trust, the two scores from the CRIS (i.e., early racial identity attitudes, mature racial identity

attitudes, and the Sexual Violence (SV) Question. In step two, I entered the interaction between the measures and the previous sexual violence measure (1. SV x SBW; 2. SV x Lack of Trust of Police; 3. SV x Early Racial Identity; 4. SV x Mature Racial Identity). The interaction represents the effect of the independent variable and the moderator in the prediction of the dependent variable (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).

The first step of the regression was significant, $F(5, 105) = 10.543, R^2 = 33.4, p < .001$. In other words, 33.4% of the variance in attitudes towards reporting can be explained by the independent variables. Two variables significantly and uniquely contributed to the attitudes towards reporting violence. Perceptions of police was a significant predictor of attitudes towards reporting sexual violence ($\beta = -.314, t = -3.757, p < .001$). Prior experience of sexual violence also predicted attitudes towards reporting sexual violence ($\beta = -.461, t = -5.617, p < .001$). In the second step of the regression, adding the interaction terms did not explain additional variance in the outcome, $F(4, 101) = 1.702, p = .155$.

Figure 1

Correlation of Attitudes towards Reporting and Early Racial Identity Development



Finally, the interaction between participants response to the sexual violence question and early racial identity subscale was a significant predictor in attitudes towards sexual violence when all the different interactions are considered, $SE = .045$, $t = -2.031$, $p = .045$ (see Figure 1). Although step 2 did not explain significant additional variance, this interaction was significant and the interaction terms added 4.2% of explained variance in the outcome, which is substantial, especially considering the small sample size available for this study of minority participants. The final regression explained 37.6% of the variance in the outcome.

Table 3

Regression Results for Attitudes Towards Reporting Sexual Violence

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>R</i> ² Change	<i>F</i>
Step 1**					.334	.334	10.543
Early Racial Identity	.002	.045	.003	.038			
Mature Racial Identity	-.057	.047	-.106	-1.229			
POPS**	-.170	.045	-.314	-3.757			
SV Question**	-.250	.045	-.461	-5.617			
Step 2					.376	.042	1.702
Early Racial Identity	-.009	.045	-.016	-.195			
Mature Racial Identity	-.058	.047	-.106	1.228			
POPS	-.152	.047	-.281	-3.233			
SBW Ideology Scale	-.011	.050	-.020	-.218			
SV Question	-.243	.044	-.447	-5.506			
SV Question x SBW Scale	.099	.052	.177	1.925			
SV Question x POPS	-.033	.048	-.060	-.689			
SV Question x Early Racial Identity*	.092	.045	.172	2.031			
SV Question x Mature Racial Identity	.066	.047	.123	1.416			

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

POP= Perception of Police; SBW= Strong Black Woman Ideal; SV = Sexual Violence Question

Evaluation of Hypotheses

This section summarizes my findings as they relate to the hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

My first hypothesis was not supported by the data. Endorsing high scores on the strong Black women ideal was not correlated with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

Hypothesis 2a

This hypothesis was not supported by the data. Endorsing a high score on the pre-encounter scale was not a predictor of attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Although the measure was not a significant predictor, the interaction between participants response to the sexual violence question and early racial identity subscale was a significant predictor in attitudes towards sexual violence when all the different interactions are considered in step 2 of the regression. This does not support my hypothesis but it does show an interaction has occurred between the two variable.

Hypothesis 2b

This hypothesis was not supported by the data. Endorsing scores on the immersion and internalization subscales or the mature racial identity subscales, was not significantly correlated with attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

Hypothesis 3

Endorsing high levels of mistrust towards police did uniquely predict negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. The more mistrust towards police the more likely a Black female participant is to have negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence to anyone.

Exploratory Variable

The exploratory variable about whether or not someone had experienced sexual violence also was a significant predictor of people's attitudes towards reporting. The participants were

significantly more likely to have negative attitudes towards reporting if they had previously experienced sexual violence.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to determine the impact of the strong Black woman ideal, trust of law enforcement, and Black identity on Black women's attitude towards reporting sexual violence. In this chapter I will review and interpret the results of the data. Then I will explain some of the threats to validity of the study, limitations, and implications for future counseling psychology practice and research.

Discussion of Hypotheses

As a result of my literature review, I developed three hypotheses and an exploratory research question that I will discuss and interpret in this section. First, I would like to highlight and explain more about the population in my study.

Participants

The Black women in my study reported a higher rate of experiencing sexual trauma than the national average for both women and for Black women specifically. More specifically, 53.9% of the sample reported experiencing sexual violence. Within the literature it is reported that Black women experience intimate partner violence at a higher rate than other women—40% versus 31.5% (Breiding et al., 2014), and the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) reported, more than 20% of Black women are raped during their lifetime, which is more than are likely to experience rape among women overall (14.8%) in their lifetime (Breiding et al., 2014). These statistics indicate that the number reported in my study is higher than the national statistics for rape or IPV when assessed separately. It is also important to note that the participants did not have to specify what type of sexual violence they experienced to know how these statistics compare when combined. Based on the participants in my study, there may be higher rates of sexual violence among Black women of all ages and backgrounds than may be officially reported. The high rates of sexual violence that were endorsed in this study further proves the importance of continuing to explore the reasons why Black women are not reporting sexual violence. It also emphasizes the importance of continuing to learn how to reduce

the high rates of sexual violence within the Black community, both from the clinical and research perspectives.

The findings of this study also indicated that only 13.6% of the participants actually reported experiencing sexual violence to someone in authority, such as police, doctors or counselors. However when looking closely only 8.3% of the participants actually reported to formal reporting sources, the others disclosed to family or friends. These numbers are less than the national average that indicates one third of people aged 12 or older report sexual violence to the police (Department of Justice, 2015). This difference in could mean that more people are experiencing sexual violence than is currently being reported, more Black women are experiencing sexual violence before age 12 or that Black women may be reporting to people other than the police and the information is not being disseminated to them. Overall, this sample indicates the need to learn more about how sexual violence is impacting the Black female community and a need to understand how to decrease the amount of sexual violence within the community through reducing the negative attitudes about reporting.

H1: Endorsing high scores on the strong Black woman ideal will be correlated with negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

My first hypothesis was not supported. In other words, being a strong black woman was not proven to be correlated with negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. It appears that the ideals about strong black women being able to care for others while still appearing strong does not impact their attitudes towards report sexual violence. Endorsing strong black women qualities does not appear to correlate with specific attitudes about reporting which is a good sign that regardless of how much that archetype exists, it does not imply a particular feeling about reporting sexual violence one way or the other.

These results emphasize the idea that Black women who endorse strong black woman ideals do not necessarily have negative attitudes about utilizing support when experiencing sexual violence. Since many of the stereotypes regarding Black women involve them not utilizing support or asking for help (Abrams, Maxwell, Pope, & Belgrave, 2014), these results challenge the belief and encourage psychologists to consider the ways that Black women are more dynamic in the way that they think about being strong and taking care of others. These results also may indicate that Black women may have different definitions about what being

strong means. It is possible that being a strong black woman is not just a stereotype but an ideal that empowers Black women to make informed decisions about how to address issues of sexual violence. It may also mean that the stereotype that all Black people, specifically Black women have the same ideas about the police and reporting sexual violence is incorrect. Lastly, the research showing that Black women who endorse SBW ideals are utilizing social media connect with other Black women similar to them (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015), may be important to further explore. It is important to understand how these Black women are supporting each other and how they are encouraging each other to potentially reevaluate the way they think about seeking help.

H2a: Endorsing high scores on the pre-encounter subscales (i.e., pre-encounter assimilation) will be correlated with negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

This hypothesis was not supported by the data. Endorsing high scores on the pre-encounter subscales (early racial identity subscales) was not correlated with negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. It may be that Black women overall do not have overarching unified beliefs about reporting sexual violence that relate to their racial identity. Early racial identity may be related to mistrust of the system that is used to report sexual violence, but it appears that that the mistrust of authority does not translate to a change in attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Although there is a history of mistrust, it may not translate to their attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. It appears that there is no clear connection for people between experiencing sexual violence and attitudes towards reporting. The history of mistrust towards systems of authority appears to be more focused on negative attitudes towards telling anyone, regardless of whether it was a person of authority or not.

H2b: Endorsing high scores on the immersion and internalization subscales (i.e., internalization Afrocentricity and internalization multiculturalist inclusive) will be correlated with positive attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

Endorsing high scores on the immersion and internalization subscales was not correlated with positive attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Having a more developed racial identity does not appear to have an impact on attitudes towards reporting sexual violence, even though early racial identity proves to be correlated with negative attitudes. It may be that having

more mature racial identity development means that their race is more clearly integrated with other aspects of their identity. Research shows that a more integrated identity allows for more individualistic thinking (Taub, & McEwen, 1992). This means that people are able to consider all the different aspects of their identity when making a decision instead of focusing on one aspect of their identity only when they decide how to think about or behave in a situation. In a study by Taub and McEwen (1992), the Black participants were found participants to be more comfortable with individual differences and cultural differences when they were further along in their racial and personal identity development. This supports the idea that mature racial identity development is connected with less unified thoughts regarding issues, even ones that are intensely charged for minoritized people such as sexual violence. It appears that people become more open to more ways of thinking as they enter the later stages of identity development where they internalize their racial identity and start to think about how they can use it to better the community around them (Cross (1991). As a result, the Black women in the study may have been thinking more individualistically about their attitudes towards reporting and not thinking about it solely through the lens of their racial identity. This may be making their racial identity less impactful on their ideas and beliefs about reporting sexual violence.

H3: Endorsing high levels of mistrust towards police will uniquely predict negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence.

This hypothesis was supported. More specifically, endorsing high levels of mistrust towards police did uniquely predict negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. The more mistrust towards police the more likely a Black female participant is to have negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence to anyone. Clearly the sociohistorical context of Black women and negative attitudes towards mostly white men in positions of authority (which makes up the majority of the police) seems to still be impacting Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Black women have been documented being beaten, shot, tazed and assaulted by police on the news today and throughout history (Tillman et al., 2010; Wyatt, 1997). This history of violence and the current dynamics between the police and minoritized groups may be continuing to exacerbate Black women's mistrust of police currently (Johnson, Gilbert, & Ibrahim 2015; NAACP National Legal Defense and Educational Fund & National Women's Law Center, 2014). The history of violence between police and Black people also increases the

fear that the Black women may not be believed by the police, which may be another reason why Black women may have negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. This history of mistrust is a clear predictor of negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence that may be caused by a history of negative attitudes about reporting anything to the police within the Black community as a whole (Johnson, Gilbert, & Ibrahim 2015). This relationship continues to highlight the importance of addressing the problematic relationship between victims of sexual violence and police, more specifically between Black women and police. Ensuring that Black women feel that they will be trusted may decrease the mistrust between them.

Exploratory Research Question: To what extent does a prior history of sexual violence moderate the relationship between the SBW ideal, lack of trust of law enforcement, and Black racial identity and attitudes towards reporting sexual violence?

The participants attitudes towards reporting sexual violence were moderated by whether or not they had previously experienced sexual violence. The interaction between participants response to the sexual violence question and early racial identity subscale was a significant predictor in attitudes towards sexual violence when all the different interactions are considered in step 2 of the regression. Since the sample size was so small, detecting an interaction may be more challenging. The results indicate that less integrated racial identity may be related to negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence which is supported by the previous literature (Blackmon et al., 2017).

Early racial identity development has been linked to highlight the benefits of staying in an abusive relationship (Blackmon et al., 2017). This may be a result of the common mistrust of white people and systems that are involved in reporting sexual violence for people who are early in their understanding of their racial identity (Tillman et al., 2010; Wyatt, 1997). It is also possible that experiencing sexual violence may have been the catalyst to the participants' lack of belief in a just world. Sexual violence may be the catalyst or encounter that causes lack of trust or anger for Black women that may have caused them to not believe in reporting moving forward. It is also possible that the trauma of experiencing sexual violence for the some of the participants may be making it difficult for some of the participants to evolve through the stages of development. Due to the history of mistrust of the system within the Black community dating

back to slavery, there is not a lot of support for looking outside of the Black community for help (Tillman et al., 2010; Wyatt, 1997).

For Black women who have never experienced sexual violence, there may still be a belief in a just world that when something bad happens you are supposed to call the police for help which may explain the positive attitudes towards reporting for people who had not experienced sexual violence and are in the early stages of identity development.

This question indicates that experiencing sexual violence and potentially reporting sexual violence was a negative experience for the Black female participants who had experienced sexual violence in this study. In addition, this finding indicates that the experiences of women who have experienced sexual violence has led to more negative attitudes towards reporting sexual violence moving forward. Evidence shows that these prior sexual violence experiences increase the likelihood of another one occurring (Mokma et al., 2016), so not reporting them or having a negative experience may make these women more vulnerable to experiencing this violence again. Negative attitudes about reporting also may increase the likelihood for experiencing sexual violence again due to not reporting the initial incident or fear of reporting in the future due to a prior negative experiencing. Addressing these negative attitudes toward reporting appears to be a public health issue that could decrease the high rates of sexual violence and mortality for Black women (Fulu et al., 2013). Reflecting on how experiencing sexual violence is impacting Black women specifically and thinking of ways to change their thinking about reporting sexual violence could reduce the messages that other Black women may be receiving regarding reporting.

Limitations

There are a number of important factors that may be limitation in my study. One threat to validity was experimental mortality. The participants consisted of Black women, some of whom were college-educated and of college age, and some who were not college-aged and had more varied educational backgrounds. If more participants from one of these groups than the other were to not complete the study, this could skew the results of the study in a way that may not have been reflective of the cross section of participants that I wanted to participate. In order to avoid this, the study was set up to encourage participants not to skip questions. In addition to this, the survey was less than 100 questions in total, to help avoid participant fatigue causing any

of the participants to drop. The longest scale was 56 questions, and it was split across multiple pages to help encourage participants to continue with the study and not drop out. I believe that taking these precautions decreased the likelihood of experimental mortality.

The generalizability of this study is also an issue due to the majority of the Black female participants being college educated. With the majority of the sample being highly educated, the results may not be reflective of the experiences of Black women who did not go to college or complete any postsecondary education. There may be some differences in perspectives on reporting sexual violence that may need to be explored further before the study could be generalized.

Another limitation of the study is self-selection bias. Participants who agreed to engage in and complete the study may be uniquely concerned or invested in sexual violence research. Also, the people who chose to complete the study may have been personally impacted by sexual violence. As a result, you may have participants who are more engaged with the topic that may not be reflective of the general Black female population that is made up of people with different levels of education.

Implications for Research

This study examined the impact of racial identity development, the Strong Black Woman archetype and perceptions of police on attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. More research needs to be done on how prior experience of sexual violence may impact each of these variable relationships in more detail. Learning more about patterns and correlations between each of the variables will help to learn more about what areas would be more effective for interventions to help reduce the negative attitudes towards reporting. In addition, getting more detailed information about how many Black women have had multiple occurrences of sexual violence may also help to understand the relationship between reporting and number of instances of trauma. Learning more about that relationships may also be useful for future research about ways to help victims who have experienced sexual violence, and how that may look different for people who have been victimized multiple times.

This study is important for future research because it helps to start the exploration of how racial identity impacts attitudes towards reporting. It speaks to the fact that we need to ensure that the interventions being done need to be tailored to the specific stage of racial identity

development that the participant is in. In addition, this research shows signs that we may not fully understand the Strong Black Woman archetype and how it impacts reporting sexual violence. We may need to learn more about how that identity may be empowering women and not discouraging them to connect with one another. Overall, more information is needed on how to build interventions based on what we know about Black women to reduce their negative ideas about reporting. The hope is that learning more about what is causing their negative attitudes will help to decrease them so that Black women can encourage the community as a whole to come forward when experiencing sexual violence. Qualitative studies may be a great way to collect rich information about the experiences of Black women and learn more about their negative attitudes in a way that could contribute to future research and better clinical practice.

More specifically, more information about how the education level of Black women may impact their attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Future research on women of more of a variety of education levels could help us learn more about the impact of education. In addition, more research about the type of sexual violence that the participants have experienced could add to the current research. Having more information about what type of sexual violence the participants experienced, whether IPV or sexual assault/rape might help make the research richer. Learning about relationships between the different types of sexual violence and attitudes towards reporting could be a great contribution to research and possibly help with more specialized treatment. In addition, possibly learning the age of the initial experience of sexual violence could help to make the data more informative as well. Having a better sense of correlations related to age of experiencing sexual violence might help to understand how racial identity development and attitudes towards reporting may be impacted or stunted by a traumatic incident across participants.

Implications for Clinical Practice

This study examined some of the factors that impact attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. This study highlighted the importance of examining more effective ways of improving the dynamic of reporting sexual violence for Black women. Looking more closely at the impact of reporting sexual violence on trauma is important for improving the experiences of victims. In addition, thinking about how racial identity development impacts people ability to think

positively about reporting sexual violence also supports the need for more culturally focused clinicians. Helping therapists to think critically about racial identity development and the sociohistorical impact of slavery and racism on Black women would allow for more positive attitude about reporting sexual violence to doctors, counselors and police.

It also is important for Counseling Psychologists to be on the front lines of addressing the power dynamics and injustice experienced by Black women. With all of the power, privilege and access many Counseling Psychologists have, it is important to be thinking about police brutality and systemic harm. If we do not advocate for equity and justice for Black women by systems of power, then we are not living by the values of our profession. Centering the experiences of marginalized people is a responsibility that goes beyond writing articles and teaching, but includes informing and shaping our experiences with both majority and minority members to create social justice for all.

APPENDIX A. INITIAL RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Subject Header: Survey Invitation: Understanding Black Women's Attitudes Towards Reporting Sexual Violence

Dear Student,

I am a Counseling Psychology doctoral candidate conducting my dissertation research with Dr. Ayse Ciftci at Purdue University. We are inviting you to participate in our research study examining Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. This research will help us to better understand the factors that impact Black women's abilities and desires to report sexual violence.

In order to participate, you need to be 18 years old and identify as a Black woman.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an online survey that should take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Your answers will be completely anonymous and results will be reported as a summary of the statistics from all the participants.

Please feel free to forward this e-mail invitation to your friends who also identify as Black women who are eligible to participate in the study.

This study has been approved by Purdue University's Human Subjects Board. If you have any questions concerning this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me at cthornhi@purdue.edu or my dissertation chair at ayse@purdue.edu.

Please go to: {survey link} for more information or to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time and help!

Sincerely,

Crystal Thornhill, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology
Purdue University
Beering Hall of Liberal Arts and Education
100 N. University Street
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2098
cthornhi@purdue.edu

APPENDIX B. FOLLOW-UP REMINDER RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Subject header: REMINDER: Understanding Black Women's Attitudes Towards Reporting Sexual Violence

Dear Student,

I am a Counseling Psychology doctoral candidate conducting my dissertation research with Dr. Ayse Ciftci at Purdue University. This is a reminder that you have been asked to participate in a study examining Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. Please consider participating in this study if you have not already done so. If you've already completed the questionnaires, thank you!

In order to participate, you need to be 18 years old and identify as a Black woman.

The participation will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete the survey questions. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Your answers will be completely anonymous and results will be reported as a summary of the statistics from all the participants.

Please feel free to forward this e-mail invitation to your friends who also identify as Black women who are eligible to participate in the study. This study has been approved by Purdue University's Human Subjects Board. If you have any questions concerning this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me at cthornhi@purdue.edu or my dissertation chair at ayse@purdue.edu.

Please go to: {survey link} for more information or to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time and help!

Sincerely,

Crystal Thornhill, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology
Purdue University
Beering Hall of Liberal Arts and Education
100 N. University Street
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2098
cthornhi@purdue.edu

APPENDIX C. FACEBOOK STATUS

Hello all! I am conducting my dissertation research examining Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and must identify as a Black or African American woman. I hope that you will consider participating in my study and/or sharing this study with any of your friends who may be eligible.

Thanks in advance for all your help! [link to survey]
(Crystal Thornhill cthornhi@purdue.edu)

APPENDIX D. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research Project Number #1812021404^[1]_{ISEP}
RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET
Black Women's Attitudes Towards Reporting Sexual Violence
Ayşe Çiftçi, Ph.D.
Crystal Thornhill, M.A
Purdue University
Department of Educational Studies

Purpose of Research

You have been invited to participate in a research study designed to investigate the factors that impact Black women's attitudes towards reporting sexual violence. By conducting this study, we hope to learn more about internal factors that could increase the likelihood of Black women reporting sexual violence and create more understanding of barriers to reporting. Your participation is not required, but it would be greatly appreciated as it can contribute to development of interventions that would help decrease sexual violence for Black women.

Specific Procedures

If you would like to participate in this study, please check the "Yes, I am ready to participate" box below and then click the "Next" button.

Duration of Participation

Your participation in this study is expected to require approximately 20-25 minutes.

Risks

The risks of participating may be more than minimal due to the sensitivity of the topic of sexual violence.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study. However, the findings from this study may increase understandings of factors that contribute to why Black women may or may not report sexual violence. The findings may inform interventions and services that could potentially help Black women who are dealing with barriers to reporting sexual violence.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

Your responses are completely anonymous, and any information you provide will be confidential. Only Crystal Thornhill, M.A., and Ayşe Çiftçi, Ph.D., will have access to the data. All data obtained during the recruitment process will be destroyed once data collection is complete. All data from the surveys will be coded and entered into a computerized data file, which will be stored in password-protected computers accessible only to the study personnel.

The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at Purdue University responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

Your participation in the study is voluntary. Although we would appreciate you answering all questions as openly and honestly as possible, you may decline to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. If you agree to participate you may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research project, you can contact Ayşe Çiftçi, Ph.D., the first point of contact, at ayse@purdue.edu. You may also contact Crystal Thornhill, M.A., at cthornhi@purdue.edu. If you have concerns about the treatment of research participants, you can contact the Institutional Review Board at Purdue University, Ernest C. Young Hall, Room 1032, 155 S. Grant St., West Lafayette, IN 47907-2114. The phone number for the Board is (765) 494-5942. The email address is irb@purdue.edu.

Yes, I am ready to participate.

>>NEXT: [Link to the survey.](#)

APPENDIX E. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: Male

Female

Please specify: _____

3. What is your race: Asian/Pacific Islander

Black/African American

Hispanic/Latino

Native American/American Indian

White/Caucasian

Other/Multi-Ethnic

4. Sexual orientation: _____

5. Are you currently a student? ___ Yes ___ No

6. If yes, what is your current year in school?

___ First year undergraduate

___ Second year undergraduate^{[[SEP]]}

___ Third year undergraduate^{[[SEP]]}

___ Fourth year undergraduate^{[[SEP]]}

___ Above fourth year undergraduate

___ Masters

___ Doctoral^{[[SEP]]}

___ Other: (specify) _____

7. If no, what is your highest level of education completed?

Some high school, no degree

High school degree^[L]_[SEP]

Some College, no degree

Technical degree

Associates degree^[L]_[SEP]

Bachelor's degree^[L]_[SEP]

Master's degree^[L]_[SEP]

Doctorate degree^[L]_[SEP]

Other: (specify) _____

8. Please indicate your approximate family income (in U.S. dollars):

Less than \$25,000

\$25,000 – \$49,999

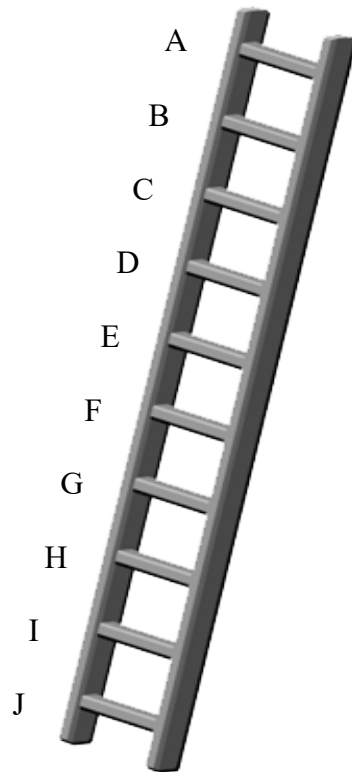
\$50,000 - \$74,999

More than \$75,000

9. Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in the United States. At the top of the ladder are the people who are best off—those who have the most money, the most education, and the most respected jobs. At the **bottom** are the people that are the worst off—who have the least money, least education, and the least respected jobs or no job. The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top; the lower you are, the closer you are to the people at the very bottom.

Where would you place yourself on this ladder?

Please choose the letter on the rung where you think you stand at this time in your life, relative to other people in the United States. _____



10. How many people are in your household? _____

APPENDIX F. DEMOGRAPHICS II

1. Have you ever experienced unwanted or forced completed or attempted sexual contact, to include vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse, or object penetration?

Yes

No

2. If you have experienced sexual violence, did you report it?

Yes

No

3. If you did report it, who did you report it to? _____

APPENDIX G. ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS SCALE

Directions: This is a scale to determine attitudes and beliefs. There are no right or wrong answers. Please use the following scale to complete the questions.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
1. Black women have to be strong to survive.				1 2 3 4 5
2. I am often expected to take care of family members.				1 2 3 4 5
3. If I fall apart, I will be a failure.				1 2 3 4 5
4. I often put aside my own needs to help others.				1 2 3 4 5
5. I find it difficult to ask others for help.				1 2 3 4 5
6. I feel guilty when I put my own needs before others.				1 2 3 4 5
7. I do not want others to know if I experience a problem.				1 2 3 4 5
8. People often expect me to take care of them.				1 2 3 4 5
9. I tell others that I am fine when I am depressed or down.				1 2 3 4 5
10. It is difficult for me to share problems with others.				1 2 3 4 5
11. I should not expect nurturing from others.				1 2 3 4 5
12. I am overworked, overwhelmed, and/or underappreciated.				1 2 3 4 5
13. I am always helping someone else.				1 2 3 4 5
14. I will let people down if I take time out for myself.				1 2 3 4 5
15. It is easy for me to tell other people my problems.				1 2 3 4 5
16. I feel guilty if I cannot help someone.				1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX H. CROSS RACIAL IDENTITY SCALE

Please answer the following questions using the scale below.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Neutral Strongly
Agree Disagree

1. As an African American, life in America is good for me.
2. I think of myself primarily as an American, and seldom as a member of a racial group.
3. Too many Blacks “glamorize” the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don’t involve crime.
4. I go through periods when I am down on myself because I am Black.
5. As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.).
6. I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people.
7. I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective.
8. When I walk into a room, I always take note of the racial make-up of the people around me.
9. I am not so much a member of a racial group, as I am an American.
10. I sometimes struggle with negative feelings about being Black.
11. My relationship with God plays an important role in my life.
12. Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work.
13. I believe that only those Black people who accept an Afrocentric perspective can truly solve the race problem in America.
14. I hate the White community and all that it represents.

15. When I have a chance to make a new friend, issues of race and ethnicity seldom play a role in who that person might be.
16. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone (e.g., Asians, Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Whites, etc.).
17. When I look in the mirror at my Black image, sometimes I do not feel good about what I see.
18. If I had to put a label on my identity, it would be “American,” and not African American.
19. When I read the newspaper or a magazine, I always look for articles and stories that deal with race and ethnic issues.
20. Many African Americans are too lazy to see opportunities that are right in front of them.
21. As far as I am concerned, affirmative action will be needed for a long time.
22. Black people cannot truly be free until our daily lives are guided by Afrocentric values and principles.
23. White people should be destroyed.
24. I embrace my own Black identity, but I also respect and celebrate the cultural identities of other groups (e.g., Native Americans, Whites, Latinos, Jews, Asian Americans, gays & lesbians, etc.).
25. Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.
26. If I had to put myself into categories, first I would say I am an American, and second I am a member of a racial group.
27. My feelings and thoughts about God are very important to me.
28. African Americans are too quick to turn to crime to solve their problems.
29. When I have a chance to decorate a room, I tend to select pictures, posters, or works of art that express strong racial-cultural themes.
30. I hate White people.
31. I respect the ideas that other Black people hold, but I believe that the best way to solve our problems is to think Afrocentrically.
32. When I vote in an election, the first thing I think about is the candidate’s record on racial and cultural issues.

33. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, because this connects me to other groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.).
34. I have developed an identity that stresses my experiences as an American more than my experiences as a member of a racial group.
35. During a typical week in my life, I think about racial and cultural issues many, many times.
36. Blacks place too much importance on racial protest and not enough on hard work and education.
37. Black people will never be free until we embrace an Afrocentric perspective.
38. My negative feelings toward White people are very intense.
39. I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.
40. As a multiculturalist, it is important for me to be connected with individuals from all cultural backgrounds (Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, etc.).

APPENDIX J. ATTITUDES TOWARDS REPORTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Please answer the questions below as you would if you had experienced a prior sexual assault. Also for the purpose of this study, a health care provider is defined as a doctor, nurse, psychologist, or other medical professional that would have the ability to aid in you or someone else reporting sexual violence.

1. I would answer truthfully if asked directly by law enforcement about past sexual assault.

Very Unlikely

Unlikely

Likely

Very Likely

2. I would answer truthfully if asked directly by my health care provider about past sexual assault.

Very Unlikely

Unlikely

Likely

Very Likely

3. Law enforcement could help me if I disclosed past sexual assault.

Very Unlikely

Unlikely

Likely

Very Likely

4. My health care provider could help me if I disclosed past sexual assault.

Very Unlikely

Unlikely

Likely

Very Likely

5. How comfortable are you with being asked about past sexual assault experiences by your health care provider?

Very Bothered

Somewhat Bothered/Upset

Comfortable

Very Comfortable

6. How comfortable are you with being asked about past sexual assault experiences by law enforcement?

Very Bothered

Somewhat Bothered/Upset

Comfortable

Very Comfortable

7. If asked, I would tell the following person(s) about past sexual assault:

Health care provider

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Family member

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Friend^[1]_[SEP]

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Law enforcement

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

8. I would volunteer information to my health care provider about past sexual assault experiences without him or her asking.

Very Unlikely

Unlikely

Likely

Very Likely

9. I would volunteer information to my law enforcement about past sexual assault experiences without him or her asking.

Very Unlikely

Unlikely

Likely

Very Likely

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