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The Acceptance of Modern Myths About Sexual Aggression Scale: Development and Validation in German and English

Heike Gerger, Hanna Kley, Gerd Bohner*, and Frank Siebler

Department of Psychology, Universität Bielefeld, Bielefeld, Germany

Scales of rape myth acceptance (RMA) often yield low means and skewed distributions. This is proposed to be because of a change in rape-related beliefs toward more subtle content. Incorporating insights from racism and sexism research, a 30-item self-report scale measuring the acceptance of modern myths about sexual aggression (AMMSA) is presented. Across four studies (total $N = 1,279$), the reliability and validity of parallel German and English versions of the AMMSA scale were examined. The results show that both language versions are highly reliable; compared with a traditional RMA scale, means of AMMSA scores are higher and their distributions more closely approximate normality. Cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses provide evidence for the AMMSA scale's concurrent and predictive construct validity. Aggr. Behav. 33:422–440, 2007. © 2007 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a worldwide problem, with lifetime prevalence rates in some countries reaching up to 50% and higher [Rozee and Koss, 2001; United Nations, 2000]. The negative effects of sexual assault and other forms of violence on the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of victims are very well documented [e.g., Briere and Jordan, 2004; Dutton et al., 2006; Resnick et al., 1997]. Understanding the causes of sexually aggressive behavior therefore is an important goal for research. In this article we focus on the assessment of beliefs that have been shown to sustain and contribute to the causation of sexual violence: the acceptance of myths about sexual aggression [see Bohner et al., 1998; Malamuth, 1986]. In doing so, we build on the concept of rape myths, which was introduced in the 1970s [Brownmiller, 1975; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1974], but also incorporate beliefs about other types of sexual aggression such as sexual assault and harassment. We focus here on sexual violence committed by men against women because this is the perpetrator-victim-constellation that rape mythology refers to (and the one which is objectively most common; see Krahé and Scheinberger-Olwig [2002]).

Defining Rape Myths

Various definitions of rape myths have been proposed in the literature [Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; for reviews, see Bohner, 1998; Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994]. Apart from considerations of content—obviously, rape myths are beliefs about rape—these definitions tend to incorporate three aspects, which constitute the meaning of the term "myth" across scientific disciplines [see Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994]. Accordingly, rape myths (1) are false or biased beliefs, (2) are widely shared, and (3) serve to explain and justify existing "cultural arrangements." This may be illustrated with a definition proposed by Lonsway and Fitzgerald [1994]: "Rape myths are attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently

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*Correspondence to: Gerd Bohner, Universität Bielefeld, Abteilung für Psychologie, Postfach 100131, 33501 Bielefeld, Germany.
E-mail: gerd.bohner@uni-bielefeld.de

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held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women'' (p 134).

Interestingly, this definition does not address any specific contents of rape myths (such as ''attitudes *about* X or Y'')—instead, content is defined only indirectly via the functions of denial and trivialization that rape myths are assumed to serve. Whereas Lonsway and Fitzgerald [1994] point out that this openness in terms of content may facilitate an operational approach to rape myths, we feel that it may also make it difficult to distinguish rape myths from other types of belief, such as more general pro-violence attitudes. Conversely, two aspects of Lonsway and Fitzgerald's definition may be seen as unnecessarily restrictive: (1) It is often difficult or impossible to determine if a given rape myth fulfills the criterion of being ''false,'' either because it is immune against empirical falsification (e.g., ''Many women *secretly* desire to be raped''; Payne et al. [1999]; emphasis ours) or because it is prescriptive in nature (e.g., ''A woman *should be* responsible for preventing her own rape''; Costin [1985]; emphasis ours). (2) The characterization of rape myths as ''widely and persistently held'' implies that a given belief that once used to be widely held, and was thus identified as a rape myth, would lose its conceptual status as a rape myth if, over time, fewer people were willing to endorse it.

Given these problems, we [Bohner, 1998; p 12–14] have proposed that it would be more expedient to define rape myths not as false, but rather as ''wrong'' in an ethical sense; this aspect, however, is already implied by their function of denying and justifying aggression, so it need not be stated separately. Also, questions of prevalence and consistency of rape myths over time seem to be better treated as empirical problems rather than matters of definition, so they need not be included in a general definition either. In contrast to Lonsway and Fitzgerald [1994], our own general definition of rape myths thus addresses the content and functions of rape myths as the two central components. Accordingly, *rape myths are descriptive or prescriptive beliefs about rape (*i.e.*, about its causes, context, consequences, perpetrators, victims, and their interaction) that serve to deny, downplay or justify sexual violence that men commit against women* [Bohner, 1998; p 14].

Rape Myths and Their Functions

Over the last three decades, various scales measuring rape myth acceptance (RMA) have been developed and widely used [e.g., Burt, 1980; Costin, 1985; Feild, 1978; Payne et al., 1999; for reviews, see Bohner, 1998; Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994]. Within social psychology, early studies were focused on responsibility attributions in relation to rape scenarios [e.g., Jones and Aronson, 1973; for reviews, see Krahé, 1991; Pollard, 1992]. One of the main findings was that perceivers' level of RMA was positively related to their attribution of responsibility to the victim, and negatively related to their attribution of responsibility to the perpetrator. RMA may thus be understood as a general cognitive schema that guides the interpretation of specific case information. Another line of research used RMA measures in the context of predicting men's rape proclivity. These correlational studies generally showed that higher RMA was related to greater rape proclivity [e.g., Malamuth, 1981; Malamuth and Check, 1985; Quackenbush, 1989; for reviews, see Bohner, 1998; Murnen et al., 2002]. For example, Malamuth [1981] asked males to report the likelihood ''that they personally would rape if they could be assured of not being caught and punished'' (p 140) along a five-point scale, and assessed these men's RMA using a scale developed by Burt [1980]. Results showed a correlation between the likelihood of raping (LR) and RMA that was as high as $r = .60$ [Malamuth, 1981; p 144]. In a recent meta-analysis, the mean correlation between Burt's RMA scale and Malamuth's LR measure was found to be $r = .26$ across 11 studies [Murnen et al., 2002; p 369].

Other research has addressed the assessment of RMA in relation to demographics, education levels, as well as various attitude and individual-difference measures [for a review, see Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994]. Also, RMA has been studied in relation to linguistic aspects of writing and reading about rape [Bohner, 2001; Henley et al., 1995], and some researchers have examined the impact of RMA on processing styles in risk perception and judgments of own vulnerability [Bohner et al., 2002; Grayson and Schwarz, 1999].

In an extensive research program, we have been studying gender-specific functions of RMA. Specifically, we have proposed that the acceptance of rape myths may serve as an anxiety buffer that allows women to reduce their subjective vulnerability to sexual assault and protect their self-esteem. Women who endorse rape myths believe that rape only happens to a certain type of women (e.g., who behave ''inappropriately''), whom they perceive as dissimilar from themselves, whereas women who reject rape myths construe rape as a potential threat to all women, including themselves. Supporting

these assumptions, several studies have shown that women low in RMA who were exposed to situations in which rape was salient subsequently reported lower self-esteem and more negative affect, whereas women high in RMA who were exposed to the same situations remained largely unaffected [Bohner and Lampridis, 2004; Bohner et al., 1999, 1993].

Turning to specific functions that RMA serves for men, Bohner and his colleagues argued that rape myths may be used to rationalize and justify men's own tendencies to engage in sexual aggression [see also Burt, 1980]. Going beyond the correlational evidence discussed above, there is now substantial evidence that RMA plays a causal role in predicting rape proclivity. Specifically, we have demonstrated that men whose own level of RMA had been made accessible by the initial completion of an RMA scale showed a higher correlation between RMA and rape proclivity compared with men who completed the RMA scale only after the rape proclivity measure [Bohner et al., 1998, 2005]. Furthermore, male students who had received experimentally manipulated feedback stating that other students' level of RMA was high (vs. low) later reported that they would be more (vs. less) likely to commit sexual violence [Bohner et al., 2006]. In all of these studies, we used our own scenario-based measure of rape proclivity, which has some advantages in terms of validity over Malamuth's LR measure [see Bohner et al., 1998]. A similar measure will be described below and used in this research. Our studies on normative influences of RMA on rape proclivity may be seen as a laboratory equivalent to applied work by Berkowitz and his colleagues [e.g., Berkowitz, 2002; Fabiano et al., 2003]. These authors have proposed and successfully applied a social norms approach to violence prevention that builds on replacing men's erroneous perception of pro-violent norms with more realistic (i.e., less pro-violent) peer-group norms. Finally, recent research revealed that RMA predicts judgments of both victim blame and rape proclivity within the same sample of men, suggesting that the justification of sexual violence may go hand in hand with a certain readiness to commit such violence [Abrams et al., 2003; Michaelis and Bohner, 2005].

A Problem With Traditional Measures of Rape Myth Acceptance

Despite this evidence for the usefulness of the RMA construct, researchers have faced a problem with established RMA scales in recent years. The problem is that participants' answers are often close to the low endpoint of the response scale, producing RMA distributions that are severely positively skewed. For example, the means of the Illinois RMA (IRMA) scale reported by Payne et al. [1999; p 52] were 2.1 for female students and 2.7 for male students, on a response scale ranging from 1 (*not at all agree*) to 7 (*very much agree*). In our own research [Bohner et al., 2006], using a German version of Costin's [1985] R scale [Bohner, 1998], we observed means of 2.6 (Experiment 1, control condition) and 2.7 (Experiment 2) on a 1–7 scale, as well as considerable positive skewness for male university students. Even lower means (in the range of 2.0–2.2) and more skewed distributions were obtained in several studies with female students [Bohner, 1998; Bohner et al., 1999].

Skewed distributions have obvious disadvantages when it comes to testing correlational or experimental hypotheses, where the most common statistical tests require a normal distribution of scores or error terms. Furthermore, in studies aimed at reducing RMA or other violence-related target variables through appropriate interventions, any beneficial effects of an intervention may be difficult to demonstrate if the means of the target variable are already close to the bottom of the scale. In our own research, for instance, information about allegedly low peer-group norms of RMA (using Costin's R scale) appeared to be less effective in reducing male participants' own RMA than was feedback about allegedly high peer-group norms in increasing RMA [Bohner et al., 2006; Experiment 1]. Also, when our aim was to test if rape proclivity would be affected by a wider range of levels of norm feedback, we found it impossible to create a symmetrical design comprising low (−1 SD), high (+1 SD), very low (−2 SD), and very high (+2 SD) levels of norm feedback relative to participants' own scores, because the very low feedback would have fallen outside of the scale range [Bohner et al., 2006, Experiment 2].

From our point of view, low means of self-reported RMA do not necessarily indicate a very low level of RMA, but may instead reflect that (a) respondents nowadays may have become more aware of the politically correct answers to the mostly explicit and obvious items used in typical RMA scales, and (b) the content of common myths about sexual aggression may have changed. This may be due to a similar historical development as was observed in the areas of sexism and racism over the last decades. About 10 years ago, Swim et al. [1995] proposed that, much like racist attitudes, sexist beliefs may have become increasingly subtle

and covert. Whereas "old-fashioned" sexism was characterized by the endorsement of traditional gender roles, discriminating treatment of women, and stereotypes about lesser female competence, Swim and her colleagues suggested that modern sexism, like modern racism, was characterized by the denial of continued discrimination, antagonism toward women's demands, and a lack of support for policies designed to help women. Research using sexism and racism scales that address these more subtle content areas generally supported the concepts of modern racism and sexism [e.g., Sears, 1988; Swim et al., 1995].

If our assumption regarding a similar development in the content of rape myths is true, then it should be useful to develop a scale measuring myths about sexual aggression with more subtle and less obvious item wording. Following the approach taken in research on modern forms of racism and sexism [see Swim et al., 1995], such a scale should assess both less obvious myths about rape and myths about less severe forms of sexual aggression. This should produce higher acceptance rates than the blatant item content of classic RMA scales, and accordingly higher means and more symmetrical distributions. This is why we decided to develop a new scale assessing the *acceptance of modern myths about sexual aggression* (AMMSA). Building on our introductory discussion, we define myths about sexual aggression as *descriptive or prescriptive beliefs about sexual aggression (*i.e.*, about its scope, causes, context, and consequences) that serve to deny, downplay, or justify sexually aggressive behavior that men commit against women*.

On the basis of a scale assessing AMMSA, a more realistic and precise measurement of beliefs that serve to deny and trivialize sexual aggression should become possible. We generally expected that AMMSA would predict rape proclivity and victim blame in a similar way as traditionally assessed RMA does. Other functions of RMA should also be served by AMMSA, e.g., its anxiety-buffering function for women who are exposed to information about sexual violence [Bohner et al., 1993, 1999; Bohner and Lampridis, 2004]. Although this aspect was not examined in this research, we will return to this issue in the "General Discussion" section.

The Acceptance of Modern Myths About Sexual Aggression Scale

The content of rape myth items used in different scales varies widely [for reviews, see Bohner, 1998; Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994]. However, most of the common myths tend to blame the victim (e.g., "Women often provoke rape through their appearance or behavior"), exonerate the perpetrator (e.g., "Men often can't control their sexual urges"), and deny or belittle the violence inherent in rape (e.g., "Women often make up rape accusations as a way of getting back at men"; "A woman who is raped might as well relax and enjoy it"; see Burt [1991]). As the above examples show, these content domains have been covered with rather blatant item wordings. In developing more subtle AMMSA items, we followed the lead of developments in the area of modern sexism research. The formulation of items for the original AMMSA item pool was thus inspired by the content categories proposed by Swim et al. [1995], now applied to victims of sexual violence as the target group. Furthermore, items were also designed to reflect the classic themes of rape myths but using more subtle wording compared with previous scales.

With these guiding ideas in mind, the authors first generated a pool of 60 items in German; this was done in individual brainstorming sessions. Overall, the initial items could roughly be described as reflecting the following content categories: (a) *denial of the scope of the problem* (e.g., "Many women tend to misinterpret a well-meant gesture as a 'sexual assault'"); (b) *antagonism toward victims' demands* (e.g., "Although the victims of armed robbery have to fear for their lives, they receive far less psychological support than do rape victims"); (c) *lack of support for policies designed to help alleviate the effects of sexual violence* (e.g., "Nowadays, the victims of sexual violence receive sufficient help in the form of women's shelters, therapy offers, and support groups"); (d) *beliefs that male coercion forms a natural part of sexual relationships* (e.g., "When a woman starts a relationship with a man, she must be aware that the man will assert his right to have sex"); and (e) *beliefs that exonerate male perpetrators by blaming the victim or the circumstances* (e.g., "Alcohol is often the culprit when a man rapes a woman").

After an initial examination of the items and group discussions regarding their accordance with the underlying conceptualization of sexual aggression myths, redundant items and items with unsuitable content were consensually deleted, leaving an intermediate pool of 43 items for preliminary testing in Study 1. On the basis of item-to-total correlations and item means in Study 1, 30 items were then selected for inclusion in the German-language scale (see below for detail). The English version of the AMMSA scale was generated by carefully translating the 30 German AMMSA items.

This translation was performed according to guidelines for the successful translation of instruments in cross-cultural research [Brislin, 1970]: One bilingual person translated the questionnaire from German to English, and another bilingual person translated it back to German. Differences in the original and the back-translated versions were discussed and resolved by joint agreement of the authors and translators. This resulted in some modifications of the final item wording in both language versions.

Scale Validation

To assess the construct validity of the AMMSA scale, it was administered along with other instruments over a series of studies, and its correlations with other relevant constructs were analyzed to determine its validity. Most of the constructs we included represent indicators of convergent validity to the extent that we expected to find substantial correlations with AMMSA. However, we also hoped to gain some insights into discriminant validity based on the relative magnitude of those correlations: The highest correlations were expected to emerge for closely related constructs, whereas more moderate correlations were expected to emerge for constructs that share only some conceptual overlap, as detailed below. Finally, we expected to find AMMSA to be uncorrelated with a measure of socially desirable responding.

Specifically, we hypothesized that AMMSA would be correlated highly with conceptually highly similar constructs, including a traditional RMA measure (the IRMA; Payne et al. [1999]), hostile sexism (HS; Glick and Fiske [1996]), and several measures of rape-supportive attitudes first studied by Burt [1980], including sex-role stereotyping, adversarial sexual beliefs (ASB), and acceptance of interpersonal violence (AIV). Furthermore, AMMSA was hypothesized to be a good predictor of rape proclivity in males [see Bohner et al., 1998]. Owing to the content covered by the AMMSA scale, which also includes forms of sexual aggression other than rape, including harassment, it was further hypothesized that AMMSA in males would correlate highly with a measure of the likelihood to sexually harass (LSH; Pryor, [1987]).

Among the constructs that were hypothesized to show more moderate correlations with AMMSA were the "belief in a just world" [Lerner, 1980], empathy (Schmitt [1982]; here a negative correlation was predicted), right-wing authoritarianism [Altemeyer, 1998] and social dominance orientation [Pratto et al., 1994]. For each of these constructs, there is some conceptual overlap with AMMSA, but both the validation constructs and AMMSA include other facets as well. By putting blame on the victim and denying the need for policies to help victims, sexual aggression myths can be thought of as covering aspects of both the "belief in a just world" and a lack of empathy, both applied to the area of sexual violence [Bohner, 1998; Burt, 1991]; however, aggression myths also contain other facets, as detailed above. Similarly, just-world beliefs as a general construct include aspects other than victim derogation (e.g., the belief that a person's positive outcomes are usually well deserved), and the general trait of empathy applies to a variety of targets and situations [e.g., Batson, 1995; Schmitt, 1982]. In line with this reasoning, Bohner [1998] found small to moderate but significant correlations between a traditional RMA measure and just-world beliefs ($r = .23$) as well as interpersonal trust ($r = -.24$). Right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation represent general attitude measures whose constituent beliefs lie at the heart of outgroup derogation [Kreindler, 2005]. Sexual aggression myths may be conceptualized as tapping an intergroup component as well, with typical perpetrators belonging to a high-status group (men) and typical victims belonging to a low-status group (women) that is derogated and denied support for its demands [Bohner, 1998]. Accordingly, we hypothesized that right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation would show moderate positive correlations with AMMSA. Finally, we hypothesized that AMMSA would correlate positively with benevolent sexism (BS; Glick and Fiske [1996]), although less highly than it would correlate with HS. This is because, on the one hand, BS entails subjectively more positive attitudes toward women than do sexual aggression myths; on the other hand, previous research has demonstrated that people high (vs. low) in BS show greater victim blame if a victim is seen to have behaved inconsistently with the traditional female gender role [Abrams et al., 2003]. Therefore, it was plausible to predict a moderate positive correlation overall between BS and AMMSA.

Finally, to provide additional evidence for discriminant validity, we included an impression management scale [Paulhus, 1998] in two studies. It was of course desirable that AMMSA scores should be independent of a tendency toward socially desirable responding; this would be indicated by correlations with impression management that are close to zero.

TABLE I. Sample Characteristics for Studies 1–4

	Study			
	1	2	3	4
N total (retest)	201 (28)	40	190 (25)	848 (224)
German	201 (28)	40	190 (25)	285 (97)
Male	93 (11)	40	87 (12)	83 (27)
Female	106 (17)		101 (13)	197 (67)
English				563 (127)
Male				148 (35)
Female				403 (92)
Age				
Mean (retest)	23.45 (23.39)	25.88	32.48 (32.60)	29.54 (29.53)
Range (retest)	18–59 (19–35)	19–49	16–72 (19–67)	14–99 (18–61)
Composition in % (retest)				
Students	99.0 (96.4)	97.5	41.0 (47.8)	49.0 (56.5)
Employees	1.0 (3.6)	2.5	56.6 (52.2)	44.8 (39.9)
Not employed			2.4 (.0)	6.2 (3.6)
Location	Campus of the University of Bielefeld	Campus of the University of Bielefeld	Trains to and from Bielefeld	Internet (35 countries)
Language	German	German	German	German and English

METHOD

We present four studies conducted to develop and validate the AMMSA scale. Several hypotheses were tested using data from more than one study. Therefore, we first describe the methodological aspects of each study in a joint method section, before turning to the results and discussion of findings. In Studies 1–3, we focused on the validation of the German version of the AMMSA scale. In Study 4, we examined both the German and English versions with regard to their comparability and psychometric properties in a large Internet sample.

In all reported studies the items of different scales used for validation were presented intermixed in a random order. Participants were asked to indicate how much they agree with each item on a 7-point scale ranging from 1, *totally disagree*, to 7, *totally agree*. In total, 1,279 (716 German-speaking and 563 English-speaking) participants took part in the four studies. Detailed sample characteristics are presented in Table I. The recruitment procedures varied between studies, as detailed below. To stimulate participation, participants were entered in a cash lottery (Studies 1, 3, and 4), received a small gift (Study 1), or were paid 3€ (Study 2).

Study 1

The main aim of Study 1 was the selection of a smaller number of items to be included in the German AMMSA scale from a pool of 43 items [see Gerger et al., 2003]. Participants in this study were 201 male and female individuals who were recruited on the campus of the University of Bielefeld, a medium-sized university in the Northwest of Germany. Practically all participants were students from different faculties at the university. As an incentive they could choose to receive either a chocolate bar or a highlighter.

Participants completed the 43 items of the item pool. To select items for inclusion in the final scale, we used two criteria: item means and item-to-total correlations. Because we expected to find sex differences in item responses, as had been shown for other measures of RMA [e.g., Bohner, 1998; Payne et al., 1999], different criteria regarding item means were applied to the data of males and females. Items showing means higher than 2.0 within the female sample and 2.5 within the male sample, respectively, as well as item-to-total-correlations higher than .20 were selected. This resulted in 30 items that were retained for analyses and used in Studies 2–4. The English and German item wordings, item-to-total correlations, and item means from Study 4 are presented in the Appendix.[1]

To gain initial insights into the scale's construct validity, we additionally administered the short form

[1]The original list of 43 German items, including item statistics from Study 1, may be obtained by writing to the first author.

TABLE II. Content and Reliability of Scales Used for Construct Validation

Scale (no. of items)	Item example	Cronbach's α				
		Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4 (German)	Study 4 (English)
IRMA (17)	A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape.	.87	.91	.90	.88	.91
SRS (9)	It is acceptable for the woman to pay for the date.[a]	NA	.75	NA	NA	NA
ASB (9)	Men are out for only one thing.	NA	.85	NA	NA	NA
AIV (6)	People today should use 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' as a rule for living.	NA	.70	NA	NA	NA
LSH (8)	(see text in Method section for Study 2)	NA	.80	NA	NA	NA
HS (11)	Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.	.86	.92	NA	.90	.88
BS (11)	Women should be cherished and protected by men.	.84	.83	NA	.85	.79
SDO (16)	Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.	NA	NA	.87	.86	.91
RWA (12)	The real keys to the "good life" are obedience, discipline and virtue.	NA	NA	.86	.80	.85
JWB (6)	I think people try to be fair when making important decisions.	NA	NA	.73	.77	.70
Empathy (18)	I rarely feel particularly moved by others' problems and experiences.[a]	NA	NA	.79	NA	NA
IM (10)	I sometimes tell lies if I have to.	NA	NA	.72	.72	.66

Note: IRMA, Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale; SRS, sex-role stereotyping; ASB, adversarial sexual beliefs; AIV, acceptance of interpersonal violence; LSH, likelihood to sexually harass; HS, hostile sexism; BS, benevolent sexism; SDO, social dominance orientation; RWA, right-wing authoritarianism; JWB, just-world beliefs; IM, impression management; NA, not assessed.
[a]Reverse-scored item.

of the IRMA scale [IRMA-SF; Payne et al., 1999; German version: Kley et al., 2002], and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory [Glick and Fiske, 1996; German version: Eckes and Six-Materna, 1999] with its 11-item subscales HS and BS. Item examples of these scales along with coefficients of internal consistency are provided in Table II. Cronbach's α was satisfactory for all scales, so scoring was done for each scale by averaging across all of its items.

To obtain data on retest reliability, we sent a retest questionnaire to those students who had agreed to complete a second questionnaire about 4 weeks later. This questionnaire consisted of the AMMSA and IRMA-SF scales. Participants who returned the completed retest questionnaire ($N = 28$) were entered in a lottery featuring cash prizes that totaled 100€.

Study 2

Study 2 was conducted to analyze correlations between the newly constructed 30-item AMMSA scale on the one hand, and measures of pervasive cultural attitudes related to gender and violence as well as sexual harassment on the other hand. Forty male participants who were recruited at the University of Bielefeld completed a survey consisting of a German scale assessing the LSH [Schmidt et al., 2003; based on Pryor, 1987], and a battery of items adapted from Burt [1980] assessing "rape-supportive beliefs" that had been shown to correlate highly with RMA: sex role stereotyping (nine items), ASB (nine items), and AIV (six items).

The German LSH scale consists of four critical scenarios and five fillers; critical scenarios depict a situation in which a man has the power to sexually exploit a female subordinate. Participants are asked to imagine they were the male protagonist and to indicate on a 1–7 scale (*not at all likely* to *very likely*) how likely it is that they would engage in each of three behaviors in the given situation. For each scenario, two of these behaviors represent severe and less severe forms of sexual harassment, respectively. For example, in a scenario where a male film director is in a position to hire one of several actresses, the harassing behaviors are: "You give the role to the actress who agrees to have sex with you" (severe) and "You ask the actress to whom you are personally most attracted to talk with you about the role over dinner" (less severe). The LSH score is formed by averaging across the eight critical behaviors (two behaviors times four scenarios). To assess rape-supportive beliefs, we used our own translation of Burt's items. Item examples of these scales along with coefficients of internal consistency are shown in Table II. Cronbach's α was satisfactory for all scales, so scoring was done for each scale

by averaging across all of its items. Participants received 3€ as a reward.

Study 3

Although the samples of Studies 1 and 2 had consisted almost exclusively of students (see Table I), a third study was conducted with the aim of analyzing the psychometric properties and construct validity of the 30-item AMMSA scale in a more general sample. We presented the German AMMSA scale to 190 passengers in commuter trains running between the city of Bielefeld and other towns in the area. As shown in Table I, the majority of this sample consisted of employees, although again a substantial percentage was students. Participants could choose either to complete the questionnaire during their train ride or to take the questionnaire home and mail it back using a return envelope. The questionnaire included the AMMSA and IRMA-SF scales, an 18-item scale assessing empathy [Schmitt, 1982], a six-item scale assessing the belief in a just world [Dalbert et al., 1987], and a 10-item scale assessing impression management [Musch et al., 2002; based on Paulhus, 1998]. People who agreed to complete the questionnaire received a chocolate bar.

In this study, we also conducted a retest with 26 participants. The retest questionnaires were sent to participants as an e-mail attachment approximately 4 weeks after the distribution of questionnaires in the trains. In addition to the AMMSA and IRMA-SF scales, retest participants completed a 16-item scale of social dominance orientation [Six et al., 2001] and a 12-item scale of right-wing authoritarianism [Funke, 2005]. Retest participants were entered in a lottery featuring cash prizes that totaled 100€.

Item examples of all scales used in Study 3, along with coefficients of internal consistency, are shown in Table II. Cronbach's α was satisfactory for all scales, so scoring was done for each scale by averaging across all of its items.

Study 4

In Study 4, German and English versions of the 30-item AMMSA scale were administered via the Internet. Our main aim was to check the two language versions for comparability with regard to their psychometric properties. Electronic questionnaires were made available online on the homepage of the social psychology section of the University of Bielefeld. Participants were recruited by posting links to the questionnaire on various online research laboratory sites; in addition, university teachers were asked to invite their students to take part in the study, and the authors mailed the link to e-mail addresses from their personal address books. Participants had the opportunity either to complete the questionnaire online or to download it, complete it offline, and then reconnect to the Internet to submit the completed questionnaire.

A total of 879 questionnaires was received. To minimize potential problems associated with data collection via the Internet [see Birnbaum, 2004], we asked potential participants to complete the whole questionnaire, to answer the questions honestly and conscientiously, and to participate just once. These instructions seem to have contributed to a low dropout rate: Only 31 cases (3.5%) had to be excluded from analyses for one of the following reasons: multiple submissions (18), largely incomplete responses (11), or a response pattern that suggested that a participant had not followed instructions, e.g., marking the scale endpoint of 7 on virtually all items (2). The final sample (see Table I) thus consisted of 848 participants; of these, 285 completed the German version, and 563 completed the English version. There were roughly equal numbers of students and nonstudents. Most of the participants in the German-language sample were from Germany (92.1%); the next-largest group was people from Austria (3.9%). Most of the participants within the English-language sample were from the United States of America (65.4%), followed by people from the United Kingdom (6.6%), Canada (5.9%), and the Netherlands (5.5%). The questionnaire consisted of the AMMSA and IRMA-SF scales, the 12-item Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) scale [Altemeyer, 1998; Funke, 2005], the 16-item Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) scale [Pratto et al., 1994; Six et al., 2001], the six-item just-world beliefs scale [Dalbert et al., 1987], and the 10-item impression management scale [Musch et al., 2002; Paulhus, 1998].

A total of 224 individuals (26.4% of the full sample) took part in a retest that was sent to participants via e-mail 4 weeks after they had returned the completed questionnaire of the first inquiry. The retest questionnaire contained the AMMSA and IRMA-SF scales and the ambivalent sexism inventory with its subscales hostile and ambivalent sexism. Item examples of all questionnaire measures used in Study 4, along with coefficients of internal consistency, are shown in Table II. Cronbach's α was generally satisfactory, with the exception of the English impression management scale ($\alpha = .66$). Although somewhat low, this figure falls within the range of reliability coefficients ($\alpha = .65$, .67, and .69) that Musch et al.

[2002; p 124] reported for this scale across three studies. We thus again computed scores for each scale by averaging across all of its items.

In addition, retest participants read four scenarios describing sexually aggressive behavior of men against women, which were adapted from Bohner et al. [1998]. For example, one scenario read:

> "Paul has gone out a few times with Susan whom he met recently. One weekend they go to a film together and then back to his place. They have a few beers, listen to music and do a bit of petting. At a certain point Susan realizes she has had too much to drink to be able to drive home. Paul says she can stay over with him, no problem. He is keen to grab this opportunity and sleep with her. She objects, saying he is rushing her and anyway she is too drunk. He doesn't let that put him off, he lies down on her and just does it."

At the end of each scenario, participants were asked to answer four questions concerning victim blame, e.g., "How much do you think Susan should blame herself for what happened?" (scale from 1, *not at all*, to 7, *completely*). Across the four scenarios, the resulting 16-item victim blame measure was highly reliable, with $\alpha = .91$ for both the German and English version.

Male participants were additionally asked to complete three items assessing their own feelings and likely behavior if they were in the situation described; two of these items were later averaged across the four scenarios to yield a measure of rape proclivity: (1) "Would you have behaved like this?" (scale from 1, *certainly no*, to 7, *certainly yes*) and (2) "How much would you have enjoyed getting your way?" (scale from 1, *not at all*, to 7, *very much*). The reliability and validity of this rape proclivity measure had been established in previous research; specifically, its internal consistency was satisfactory to high [Bohner et al., 1998, 2005, 2006; Eyssel et al., 2006], and it covaried significantly with self-reports of sexually aggressive behavior [Bohner et al., 2005]. In this study, Cronbach's α was .81 for the German version and .76 for the English version.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factor Analyses, Reliability, and Scoring

Factor analyses. To examine if meaningful and consistent subscales might be created, exploratory factor analyses of the 30 AMMSA items were conducted with the samples from Studies 1, 3, and 4 (separate for the German and English versions).[2] To determine the optimal number of interpretable factors, we took three steps: First, we extracted principal components and inspected the scree plots of initial eigenvalues. This criterion consistently suggested a single-factor solution across samples. The eigenvalues showed a marked decline after the first component, and then trailed off without any further sharp demarcations. The first five eigenvalues were, Study 1: 7.91, 1.78, 1.60, 1.48, and 1.36; Study 3: 9.50, 1.62, 1.41, 1.29, and 1.24; Study 4 (German version): 9.31, 1.75, 1.58, 1.33, and 1.25; and Study 4 (English version): 9.38, 1.56, 1.39, 1.27, and 1.19.

Second, to get more precise quantitative estimates for the number of factors in each study, we conducted parallel analysis [Horn, 1965] on each of the datasets. This procedure compares the eigenvalues of empirical components with those of components derived from random datasets of identical sample size and number of variables. It is thus preferable to using a (necessarily arbitrary) fixed eigenvalue criterion. Specifically, we used an SPSS program (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) presented by O'Connor [2000] in which components are retained as long as their empirical eigenvalue is greater than the 95th percentile of the distribution of corresponding random data eigenvalues [see Cota et al., 1993]. These analyses yielded inconsistent results across studies: In Study 1, two components were retained; in Study 3, one component was retained; and in each of the datasets of Study 4, three components were retained.

In a third step, we thus computed congruence coefficients [Tucker, 1951, cited in Bortz, 1999; p 538] for one-, two-, and three-factor solutions across studies, to determine which solution would yield the most consistent pattern. A commonly used criterion for congruence of factor solutions is a congruence coefficient of at least .90 [e.g., Bortz, 1999]. These analyses showed that only the one-factor solution was highly consistent, with all coefficients being greater than .95, whereas for the two- and three-factor solutions, all coefficients fell short of the .90 criterion. For the time being, we thus concluded that the 30-item AMMSA scale may be viewed as measuring a unidimensional construct.[3]

[2]The data from Study 2 were not factor analyzed because in that study, the number of participants was only slightly larger (40) than the number of items (30).

[3]Our somewhat inconsistent factor-analytic results are not uncommon when compared to research on traditional rape myth scales. Although most RMA scales in the literature are multi-faceted in terms of the content areas that inspired item generation, those few studies that have examined their dimensionality provide little

Reliability and scoring. Reliability analyses of the 30-item AMMSA scale yielded very high internal consistencies, Study 1: $\alpha = .90$, Study 2: $\alpha = .95$, Study 3: $\alpha = .92$, and Study 4: $\alpha = .92$ for both the German and English versions. The test–retest reliability coefficients were also satisfactory overall, Study 1: $r_{tt} = .67$ (over 3 weeks), Study 3: $r_{tt} = .88$ (over 6–10 weeks), and Study 4: $r_{tt} = .81$ and .84 for the German and English version, respectively (over 4–13 weeks). Item-to-total correlations ranged from .24 to .64 in Study 1, from .21 to .71 in Study 2, from .34 to .82 in Study 3, from .32 to .74 in Study 4 (German version), and from .31 to .69 in Study 4 (English version). Therefore, all items were retained, and the mean across the 30 items was defined as a participant's AMMSA score.

Means

Table III shows AMMSA scale means in comparison with IRMA scale means across all four studies, separately for the English and German versions and for male and female participants. Across all four studies the AMMSA scale means were significantly higher than the IRMA scale means (for *t*-test results, see Table III). This speaks to the more subtle nature of the beliefs assessed by the AMMSA scale. Furthermore, as expected, male respondents consistently tended to report higher AMMSA than did female respondents, although this difference was clearly significant only in Study 4 (Study 1: $t(197) = 1.35$, $P = .178$; Study 3: $t(186) = 1.68$, $P = .096$; Study 4, German version: $t(278) = 3.85$, $P < .001$; Study 4, English version: $t(549) = 4.73$, $P < .001$).

The English-speaking and German-speaking subsamples of Study 4 differed significantly, with participants taking the English version scoring higher on both AMMSA [males: $t(229) = 3.39$, $P = .001$; females: $t(598) = 6.11$, $P < .001$] and IRMA [males: $t(229) = 3.12$, $P = .002$; females: $t(598) = 3.55$, $P < .001$]. Participants who completed the German version were mainly from Germany, whereas participants who completed the English version were mainly from USA. This pattern may thus reflect a cultural difference in the endorsement of myths about sexual aggression, given that it was found on two different scales. However, these results should be interpreted with caution, because our Internet samples were not representative for people from the participating countries. Instead, owing to the sampling procedures, students (see Table I) and people with academic professions (56.8% of employed participants) were clearly over-represented.

Another potential source of the observed difference may be item biases [see, e.g., Van de Vijver and Leung, 1997]. As our main focus was on structural equivalence of the German and English scales as a whole, a full-blown analysis of item bias would be beyond the scope of this paper. We do note, however, that participants taking the English versions scored higher consistently across most items. With regard to AMMSA, there were only two notable exceptions: Against the general trend, participants taking the German (vs. English) version had significantly higher scores on item 2 (''Once a man and a woman have started 'making out', a woman's misgivings against sex will automatically disappear''; $M = 2.59$ vs. 1.99), $t(840) = 5.74$, $P < .001$, and on item 9 (''If a woman invites a man to her home for a cup of coffee after a night out this means that she wants to have sex''; $M = 3.65$ vs. 2.39), $t(843) = 10.64$, $P < .001$. In each case, the English and German item may not be fully equivalent in terms of their meaning: In German, there is no fully satisfactory equivalent to the colloquial term ''making out'' (which may represent too broad a range of meanings even within the English-speaking community);[4] also, owing to an oversight, the German version of item 9 retained a specific reference to a ''visit to the disco,'' which may

(*footnote continued*)
evidence for a consistent pattern or particular number of theoretically meaningful factors [for a review, see Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994]. For examples, Briere et al. [1985] identified four factors in Burt's [1980] RMA scale, and Feild [1978] found eight factors for his attitudes toward rape scale. The reported results on these subcomponents remain purely descriptive, however, and neither paper provides a compelling theoretical rationale for a multidimensional approach. Bohner [1998] examined the factorial structure of his German version of Costin's [1985] 20-item R scale. Although Costin himself had identified three, albeit highly intercorrelated, factors, a single-factor solution was suggested by scree plot analyses across more than a dozen independent studies with the German version of the scale. In analyzing the IRMA, Payne et al. [1999] compared three structural models representing a unidimensional, a multidimensional, and a hierarchical solution. They concluded that a hierarchical model best described the structure of the IRMA as consisting of both a general myth component and seven subcomponents. The data on construct validation that Payne and colleagues report, however, all refer to the IRMA (and its short form) as a whole, treating the scale as unidimensional. Whether the differentiation of IRMA subcomponents provides a theoretical improvement, perhaps in terms of differential functions for specific groups of people, or by showing a differential pattern of correlations with other constructs [as suggested by Payne et al., 1999] thus remains to be empirically tested.

[4]It is interesting to note that one of the IRMA items also containing the expression ''making out'' (Item 3) showed higher scores in the German (vs. English) version as well, against the general trend of item differences.

TABLE III. Comparison of AMMSA and IRMA Scale Means for Male and Female Respondents

	Study				
	1	2	3	4 (German)	4 (English)
Male respondents					
AMMSA					
M	3.45	3.21	3.33	3.15	3.60
SD	.91	1.13	.93	.93	.98
IRMA					
M	2.53	2.17	2.37	2.11	2.52
SD	.90	.94	.94	.77	1.07
N	93	40	87	83	148
t-test for difference AMMSA–IRMA	15.41***	11.92***	19.57***	18.83***	20.95***
Female respondents					
AMMSA					
M	3.30	NA	3.11	2.72	3.18
SD	.70		.85	.81	.89
IRMA					
M	2.21	NA	2.10	1.78	2.04
SD	.64		.71	.69	.92
N	106	0	101	197	403
t-test for difference AMMSA–IRMA	24.81***		22.92***	27.37***	38.18***

Note: AMMSA, acceptance of modern myths about sexual aggression; IRMA, Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (short form); NA, not assessed. Values could range from 1 to 7, with higher values indicating higher rape myth acceptance. *N* values are smaller than those reported in Table I because of missing data.
***$P < .001$.

imply a stronger reference to sexual intentions than the more general expression "a night out." It should thus be considered either to drop items 2 and 9 or to improve their wording in future research with the AMMSA.[5]

Distributions

Sample distributions of AMMSA and IRMA from Study 4 are displayed in Figure 1. These show that the AMMSA scale distribution was close to a normal distribution for both language versions. This was confirmed by the nonsignificant results of Kolmogoroff-Smirnov tests, $P = .53$ and .60, respectively. The IRMA scale distributions, however, showed marked and significant deviations from normality, $P < .01$ for both the German and the English versions. Across Studies 1–3 as well, the German AMMSA scale was normally distributed, whereas the IRMA scale distribution showed marked positive skewness. One of the central aims of our research, namely to create a scale with symmetrical, close to normal distribution, was thus achieved.

Validity

Concurrent construct validity. Correlations of AMMSA and other measures used for construct validation are reported in Table IV. First, we had predicted to find evidence for the construct validity of the AMMSA scale in high positive correlations of AMMSA scores with the most closely related constructs: RMA as measured with a standard instrument (the IRMA-SF), Burt's rape-supportive beliefs (sex-role stereotyping, ASB, and AIV), the LSH, and HS. As shown in Table IV, each of these constructs was indeed highly and significantly correlated with AMMSA, supporting our predictions. AMMSA and IRMA-SF were consistently correlated across all four studies, with coefficients ranging from $r = .79$ to .88. The link between AMMSA and rape-supportive beliefs in Study 2 were almost as high, with coefficients between $r = .75$ and.77. (It should be noted, however, that Burt's scales have been criticized for showing some item overlap with rape myth scales—e.g., most of the AIV items actually pertain to violence against

[5]Dropping these items from the current analyses would not have changed any of the conclusions reported.

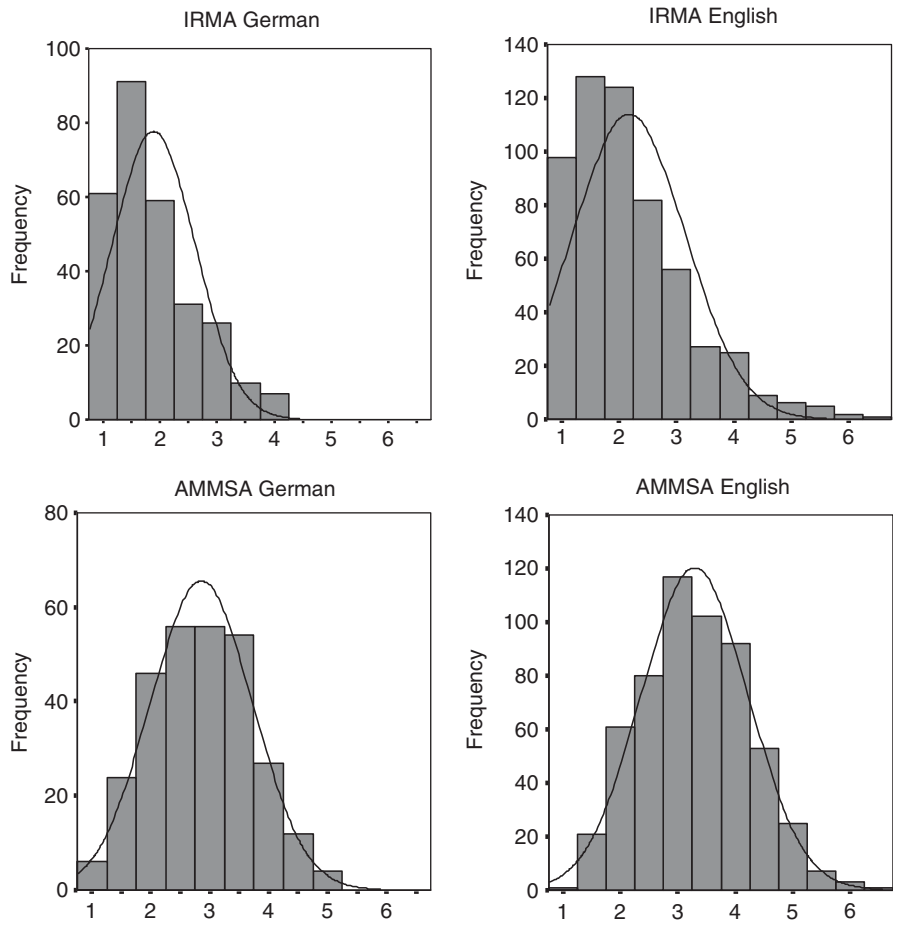

Fig. 1. Distributions of the English and German Versions of the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (IRMA) Scale (short form) and the Acceptance of Modern Myths About Sexual Aggression (AMMSA) Scale (Study 4).

women—which may partly explain the magnitude of the observed correlations). Men scoring higher on AMMSA in Study 2 showed a greater self-reported LSH ($r = .60$). Finally, across three studies, the correlation between HS and AMMSA was high and positive as predicted ($r = .76$ to $.82$).

Moderately high correlations with AMMSA were predicted for BS. Indeed, across three studies and four samples, such correlations were obtained, with coefficients ranging from .37 to .53. Furthermore, across samples, these correlations were smaller than those between HS and AMMSA as hypothesized. Moderately high positive correlations of AMMSA and social dominance orientation ($r = .48$–$.58$) were obtained as predicted. A similar pattern had been predicted for AMMSA and right-wing authoritarianism; supporting this prediction, the observed correlations in Study 4 were .52 and .44, whereas in Study 3, the observed correlation of .75 was higher than expected. It should be noted, however, that the sample size for this coefficient was very small ($N = 25$), so it may be a statistical outlier. The results from three studies showed that people with higher AMMSA scores were more likely to believe in a just world ($r = .17$–$.39$). The coefficient for the German sample of Study 4 was rather low but significant; overall, the observed correlations are similar in magnitude to the results of previous research [Bohner, 1998]. A negative correlation between the trait of empathy and AMMSA was found in Study 3 ($r = -.30$) as predicted: People who endorse myths about sexual aggression tend to empathize less with others overall.

Finally, AMMSA scores were uncorrelated with impression management scores across three samples. In both Studies 3 and 4, participants' responses to AMMSA items did not reflect a tendency toward socially desirable responding ($r = -.06$–$.03$, all *n.s.*). Overall, then, we found ample evidence for the AMMSA scale's convergent and discriminant construct validity.

TABLE IV. Correlations of AMMSA with Related Constructs

	Study				
	1	2	3	4 (German)	4 (English)
IRMA	.79	.88	.87	.83	.80
N	201	40	190	285	563
SRS	NA	.75	NA	NA	NA
N		40			
ASB	NA	.76	NA	NA	NA
N		40			
AIV	NA	.77	NA	NA	NA
N		40			
LSH	NA	.60	NA	NA	NA
N		40			
HS	.79	.82	NA	.76	.80
N	201	40		97	127
BS	.53	.37	NA	.33	.45
N	201	40		97	127
SDO	NA	NA	.58	.48	.52
N			25	285	563
RWA	NA	NA	.75	.52	.44
N			25	285	563
JWB	NA	NA	.39	.17	.30
N			190	285	563
Empathy	NA	NA	−.30	NA	NA
N			190		
IM	NA	NA	.03[a]	−.01[a]	−.06[a]
N			190	285	563

Note: AMMSA, acceptance of modern myths about sexual aggression; IRMA, Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Short form); SRS, sex-role stereotyping; ASB, adversarial sexual beliefs; AIV, acceptance of interpersonal violence; LSH, likelihood to sexually harass; HS, hostile sexism; BS, benevolent sexism; SDO, social dominance orientation; RWA = right-wing authoritarianism; JWB, just-world beliefs; IM, impression management; NA, not assessed.
[a]not significant. All other correlations displayed are significant at $P < .01$.

Predictive validity. In addition to the concurrent assessment of validation constructs, we also examined predictive validity by correlating AMMSA scores that were assessed in the first wave of Study 4 ($t1$) with measures of victim blame (male and female respondents) and rape proclivity (only male respondents) assessed in the second wave ($t2$) several weeks later (see Table V). Regarding victim blame, as predicted, all coefficients were positive and significant for both males and females taking the German and English versions. Whereas the correlations within the male samples turned out to be comparably high ($r = .69$ and .61, respectively), the link between AMMSA and victim blame was higher for female respondents taking the English version ($r = .76$) than for female respondents taking the German version ($r = .43$), $P < .01$. For rape proclivity, a high positive correlation with AMMSA was found only for the German-speaking sample ($r = .67$), $P < .01$, whereas—unexpectedly—the correlation for the English-speaking sample ($r = .15$) was not significant. Whether this difference between language samples may reflect a problem regarding conceptual equivalence, or simply chance variation because of the small sample size (see "General Discussion" section), should be further examined in future studies.

TABLE V. Correlations of AMMSA at Time 1 with Victim Blame and Rape Proclivity at Time 2 (Study 4)

	English version	German version
Male respondents		
Victim blame	.69**	.61**
N	34	27
Rape proclivity	.15	.67**
N	33	27
Female respondents		
Victim blame	.76**	.43**
N	90	67

**$P < .01$.

Summary of Findings

Our diverse recruitment strategies enabled us to study participants of different ages, professions, socioeconomic status, and countries of origin. Overall, the 30-item AMMSA scale turned out to be reliable and valid. This was true for both the German version across the four studies and the English version in the Internet study. As expected, a symmetrical, approximately normal distribution of AMMSA scores was a stable characteristic of the scale across the four studies. Internal consistencies were very high overall, and, considering that the AMMSA scale is meant to assess attitudes, which are assumed to be less stable than personality traits, it showed highly satisfactory levels of retest-reliability over 3–12 weeks. Evidence for its concurrent and predictive validity comes from meaningful patterns of correlations with scales measuring constructs that were hypothesized to be conceptually related to AMMSA in differing degrees.

General Discussion

Our attempt to create a scale measuring the acceptance of more subtle, modern myths about sexual aggression met with success. The four studies reported here provide strong support for the reliability and validity of the German and English

versions of the AMMSA scale, using different samples and methodologies.

Across four studies the 30-item AMMSA scale proved to be essentially unidimensional, highly internally consistent, and reliable across a time span of several months. Correlation analyses involving constructs that were assumed to be conceptually related to AMMSA in differing degrees provided clear evidence for the scale's construct validity. In Studies 1 and 2, initial evidence for the scale's reliability and validity was provided with student samples. This evidence was corroborated in Study 3 with a mainly nonstudent sample of commuters, and further strengthened in Study 4 using a large Internet sample of people who answered the AMMSA scale in either in German or English. Results for the English and German versions were largely comparable regarding the scale's dimensionality, reliability, and construct validity.

High correlations with the IRMA scale [Payne et al., 1999], an established measure of RMA, clearly speak to the AMMSA scale's construct validity. Importantly, however, the more subtle formulation of AMMSA items overall led to higher agreement and thus higher means on the AMMSA scale compared with the IRMA scale as predicted. The distribution of AMMSA scores across studies was symmetrical and close to a normal distribution, whereas IRMA scores showed severely skewed distributions. Compared with the IRMA and other available rape myth scales [e.g., Costin, 1985], the AMMSA scale is thus more likely to meet the criteria required for the computation of various inferential statistics, especially if sample sizes are small in a given study.

The pattern of correlations of AMMSA scores with other constructs speaks to the new scale's convergent as well as discriminant validity. Convergent validity was established via high correlations with constructs that express hostility toward women and masculine ideology, such as HS [Glick and Fiske, 1996] and a range of rape-supportive beliefs [Burt, 1980]. In these respects, the AMMSA scale seems to function in a similar way as was shown for traditional rape myth scales [see Murnen et al., 2002]. As expected, lower positive correlations were found between AMMSA and constructs involving outgroup derogation, including right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation [see Kreindler, 2005], as well as between AMMSA and a general measure of the belief in a just world [Lerner, 1980]. The latter finding replicates a similar pattern found by Bohner [1998] using Costin's R scale. The correlation between AMMSA and less openly hostile sexist attitudes, as measured by the BS subscale of the ambivalent sexism inventory [Glick and Fiske, 1996] was also substantial and positive, though lower than the correlation between AMMSA and HS. As predicted, a moderate negative correlation was found between AMMSA and a general measure of empathy. Finally, scores on the AMMSA scale were shown to be independent of impression management [Paulhus, 1998].

Some of our data provide initial evidence for links between men's AMMSA scores and their behavioral tendencies to engage in sexual aggression. Cross-sectional data from Study 2 revealed a high correlation between AMMSA and the LSH, a self-report measure of harassment proclivity [Pryor, 1987; Schmidt et al., 2003]. The longitudinal part of the design of Study 4 further showed that AMMSA was a strong predictor of rape proclivity in relation to specific acquaintance-rape scenarios for participants completing the German version of the AMMSA scale. This replicates findings obtained with other rape myth scales and other rape proclivity measures [e.g., Bohner et al., 1998; Malamuth, 1981; Quackenbush, 1989]. Within the sample of participants who had answered the English scale version, unexpectedly, the respective correlation was nonsignificant.

Other judgments assessed in relation to the acquaintance-rape scenarios in Study 4 were those of victim blame. Both male and female participants were more likely to blame female victims of sexual violence to the extent that they endorsed modern myths about sexual aggression. The AMMSA scale thus again shows a pattern comparable to other rape myth measures [see Pollard, 1992]. Although all coefficients were significant within combinations of language version and participant sex, for female participants the link between AMMSA and judgments of victim blame was higher within the English-language sample than within the German-language sample.

The observed differences in correlation patterns between the English and German versions of the AMMSA with respect to rape proclivity and victim blame may indicate that different cultural backgrounds might influence the connection between modern RMA and judgments related to specific rape scenarios. However, the male subsamples of the retest in Study 4 were rather small, so statistical power of this part of the study was very low. Specifically, post-hoc power analysis [Erdfelder et al., 1996] indicated that the power to detect a medium-sized population effect at $P = .05$ (two-tailed) was only .42. In light of this fact, and

taking into account that significant correlations between rape proclivity and RMA have been established with larger English-speaking samples [e.g., Abrams et al., 2003; Bohner et al., 2006; Malamuth, 1981], we expect to find significant positive correlations between AMMSA and rape proclivity with larger samples in future studies. In sum, then, our set of findings across four studies is highly encouraging.

Limitations and Outlook

The samples in each of our four studies were convenience samples. Two samples consisted almost exclusively of university students, one mainly of commuters, and one of Internet users. Furthermore, our recruitment strategy in the Internet study led to a large proportion of participants whose professions were associated with psychology. In spite of these limitations, however, the diversity of recruitment strategies ensured access to a wide range of people from the general population across the four studies, and the majority of findings closely replicated across samples. Nevertheless, it might be a good idea to take socio-demographic data into account more systematically in future research using the AMMSA scale.

Further validation of the AMMSA scale should be undertaken in experimental studies. We [Eyssel et al., 2006] have started using the scale to study the effects of information about others' AMMSA on men's rape proclivity. Initial results are promising; they showed that participants reported lower rape proclivity if they were led to believe that others' AMMSA was low (vs. high). Similar effects of low vs. high AMMSA scores on rape proclivity were found if these scores were presented as judgmental anchors and participants were only instructed to consider their appropriateness (e.g., "Do you think the mean response of male students to this item is higher or lower than *X*?"—presented along with an AMMSA item; *X* being a high or low score). These results provide strong evidence for the proposed function of AMMSA justifying and rationalizing men's behavioral tendencies toward sexual aggression.

To explore further AMMSA's predictive validity in the realm of sexual aggression, it would be highly useful, within ethical limits, to study real-life behavior in addition to self-report evidence. Are men scoring high on AMMSA more likely to exhibit sexual aggression than are men scoring low on AMMSA? One possibility of studying this would be by using a recently developed computer harassment paradigm, where male participants have the opportunity of e-mailing pornographic or sexist material to a "female chat partner," who is in fact simulated by a computer program [see Maass et al., 2003; Siebler et al., 2007].

We also recently examined the proposed moderating function of AMMSA regarding women's reactions to information about rape in a laboratory experiment [Beßling and Bohner, 2006]. Female participants whose AMMSA scores had been assessed before the experiment were led to expect meeting another female student for a getting-acquainted conversation. Depending on experimental condition, the other student had ostensibly indicated that she wanted to talk about her own rape (rape-salient condition) or about her studies at the university (control condition). In addition, the other students' similarity to the participant was varied: She was either highly similar (same birthday, similar attitudes and hobbies) or dissimilar (different birthday, opposing attitudes, different hobbies). As a central dependent variable, we assessed participants' affective state in anticipation of meeting the other student. Our central hypothesis was that high AMMSA would allow participants to distance themselves from the dissimilar target person's experience, such that negative affective reactions would be buffered; this buffering effect would be undermined, however, by high target similarity. As predicted, AMMSA scores and target similarity jointly moderated participants' reactions, replicating and extending work by Bohner and Lampridis [2004]: High-AMMSA participants indeed showed significantly less negative affect in anticipation of meeting a rape victim if the victim was dissimilar rather than similar. For low-AMMSA participants, the anticipated meeting with a rape victim resulted in negative affect regardless of the target's similarity. These results support the proposed anxiety-buffering effect of modern myths about sexual aggression. They further suggest that this effect may be mediated by chronic differences in the construal of rape victims as dissimilar to oneself, as proposed by Bohner [1998; Bohner and Lampridis, 2004].

To summarize, the AMMSA scale provides a reliable and valid new measure of beliefs about sexual aggression. Its German and English versions show comparable psychometric characteristics. Experimental studies provide initial evidence for its usefulness in studying the functions of sexual aggression myths.

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APPENDIX

TABLE A1. The Acceptance of Modern Myths About Sexual Aggression Scale

	English version		German version	
Items of the AMMSA scale (English/German)	Item-total-correlations	Means	Item-total-correlations	Means
1. When it comes to sexual contacts, women expect men to take the lead/Wenn es zu sexuellem Kontakt kommt, erwarten Frauen, dass der Mann die Führung übernimmt	.41	4.13	.47	3.04
2. Once a man and a woman have started "making out", a woman's misgivings against sex will automatically disappear/Wenn ein Mann und eine Frau erst einmal "angefangen" haben, verlieren sich die Bedenken der Frau gegen Sex von selbst.	.55	1.96	.57	2.56
3. A lot of women strongly complain about sexual infringements for no real reason, just to appear emancipated/Viele Frauen beschweren sich schon aus nichtigem Anlass lautstark über sexuelle Übergriffe, nur um als emanzipiert zu gelten	.66	2.67	.74	2.49
4. To get custody for their children, women often falsely accuse their ex-husband of a tendency toward sexual violence/Um das Sorgerecht für die Kinder zu bekommen, unterstellen Frauen ihrem Ex-Ehemann gerne zu Unrecht einen Hang zu sexueller Gewalt	.66	3.32	.62	2.99
5. Interpreting harmless gestures as "sexual harassment" is a popular weapon in the battle of the sexes/Harmlose Gesten als "sexuelle Belästigung" auszulegen ist eine beliebte Waffe im Kampf der Geschlechter	.59	3.72	.58	2.94
6. It is a biological necessity for men to release sexual pressure from time to time/Bei Männern ist es biologisch bedingt, dass sie von Zeit zu Zeit sexuellen Druck ablassen müssen.	.55	3.82	.50	3.61
7. After a rape, women nowadays receive ample support/Nach einer Vergewaltigung erhalten Frauen heutzutage Unterstützung von allen Seiten.	.52	3.29	.39	2.60
8. Nowadays, a large proportion of rapes is partly caused by the depiction of sexuality in the media as this raises the sex drive of potential perpetrators/Ein Großteil der Vergewaltigungen wird heutzutage durch die Darstellung von Sexualität in den Medien mitverursacht, da diese den Sexualtrieb potentieller Täter weckt.	.43	3.39	.37	3.12
9. If a woman invites a man to her home for a cup of coffee after a night out this means that she wants to have sex/Wenn eine Frau einen Mann nach dem Discobesuch auf eine Tasse Kaffee in ihre Wohnung einlädt, dann ist sie auf ein sexuelles Abenteuer aus	.44	2.38	.45	3.62
10. As long as they don't go too far, suggestive remarks and allusions simply tell a woman that she is attractive/Solange sie im Rahmen bleiben, sagen Anzüglichkeiten und Anspielungen einer Frau einfach nur, dass sie attraktiv ist.	.50	3.53	.50	3.43
11. Any woman who is careless enough to walk through "dark alleys" at night is partly to be blamed if she is raped/Wer als Frau so unvorsichtig ist, nachts durch dunkle Gassen" zu gehen, trägt eine gewisse Mitschuld an der eigenen Vergewaltigung.	.51	2.13	.33	1.61
12. When a woman starts a relationship with a man, she must be aware that the man will assert his right to have sex/Wenn eine Frau mit einem Mann eine Beziehung eingeht, muss sie sich darüber im Klaren sein, dass der Mann sein Recht auf Sex einfordern wird	.63	2.74	.55	2.43
13. Most women prefer to be praised for their looks rather than their intelligence/Die meisten Frauen möchten lieber für ihr Aussehen gelobt werden als für ihre Intelligenz	.49	3.61	.32	3.57
14. Because the fascination caused by sex is disproportionately large, our society's sensitivity to crimes in this area is disproportionate as well/Weil Sex an sich eine unverhältnismäßig große Faszination ausübt, ist unsere Gesellschaft für Straftaten in diesem Bereich auch unverhältnismäßig sensibel	.41	3.74	.55	3.13
15. Women like to play coy. This does not mean that they do not want sex/Frauen zieren sich gerne. Das bedeutet nicht, dass sie keinen Sex wollen.	.51	3.49	.66	2.74
16. Many women tend to exaggerate the problem of male violence/Viele Frauen neigen dazu, das Problem der Männergewalt zu übertreiben	.69	2.77	.71	2.67
17. When a man urges his female partner to have sex, this cannot be called rape/Wenn ein Mann seine Partnerin zum Sex drängt, kann man das nicht Vergewaltigung nennen	.31	3.72	.47	2.56
18. When a single woman invites a single man to her flat she signals that she is not averse to having sex/Wenn eine alleinstehende Frau einen alleinstehenden Mann in ihre Wohnung einlädt, zeigt sie damit, dass sie sexuellen Aktivitäten nicht abgeneigt ist	.42	2.93	.47	2.84
19. When politicians deal with the topic of rape, they do so mainly because this topic is likely to attract the attention of the media/Wenn Politiker/innen sich mit dem Thema Vergewaltigung beschäftigen, dann vor allem deshalb, weil dieses Thema ihnen die Aufmerksamkeit der Medien garantiert	.37	4.32	.37	3.86

TABLE A1. Continued

Items of the AMMSA scale (English/German)	English version		German version	
	Item-total-correlations	Means	Item-total-correlations	Means
20. When defining "marital rape", there is no clear-cut distinction between normal conjugal intercourse and rape/Bei der Definition von "Vergewaltigung in der Ehe" gibt es keine klare Grenze zwischen normalem ehelichen Geschlechtsverkehr und Vergewaltigung	.50	2.46	.46	2.41
21. A man's sexuality functions like a steam boiler—when the pressure gets to high, he has to "let off steam"/Die Sexualität des Mannes funktioniert wie ein Dampfkessel – wenn der Druck zu groß wird, muss er einfach "Dampf ablassen"	.65	3.27	.48	2.55
22. Women often accuse their husbands of marital rape just to retaliate for a failed relationship/Frauen bezichtigen ihre Männer häufig einer Vergewaltigung in der Ehe, um sich für eine gescheiterte Beziehung zu rächen	.66	2.60	.67	2.39
23. The discussion about sexual harassment on the job has mainly resulted in many a harmless behavior being misinterpreted as harassment/Die Diskussion über sexuelle Belästigung am Arbeitsplatz hat vor allem dazu geführt, dass manches harmlose Verhalten jetzt als Belästigung missverstanden wird	.60	3.66	.73	2.97
24. In dating situations the general expectation is that the woman "hits the brakes" and the man "pushes ahead"/Beim Kennenlernen entspricht es der allgemeinen Erwartung, dass die Frau "bremst" und der Mann "Gas gibt"	.40	3.80	.44	3.27
25. Although the victims of armed robbery have to fear for their lives, they receive far less psychological support than do rape victims/Obwohl die Opfer bewaffneter Raubüberfälle um ihr Leben fürchten müssen, erhalten sie wesentlich weniger psychologische Unterstützung als Vergewaltigungsopfer	.38	4.35	.55	3.73
26. Alcohol is often the culprit when a man rapes a woman/Wenn Männer vergewaltigen, ist oft der Alkohol schuld	.43	3.62	.37	2.59
27. Many women tend to misinterpret a well-meant gesture as a "sexual assault"/Viele Frauen neigen dazu, eine nett gemeinte Geste zum "sexuellen Übergriff" hochzuspielen	.68	3.16	.65	2.71
28. Nowadays, the victims of sexual violence receive sufficient help in the form of women's shelters, therapy offers, and support groups/Für die Opfer sexueller Gewalt wird heutzutage durch Frauenhäuser, Therapieangebote und Selbsthilfegruppen schon genug getan	.53	3.59	.48	2.43
29. Instead of worrying about alleged victims of sexual violence society should rather attend to more urgent problems, such as environmental destruction/Anstatt sich um angebliche Opfer sexueller Gewalt zu kümmern, sollte sich die Gesellschaft eher dringenderen Problemen widmen, wie zum Beispiel Umweltzerstörung	.49	2.59	.44	2.06
30. Nowadays, men who really sexually assault women are punished justly/Heutzutage werden Männer, die Frauen wirklich sexuell belästigen, auch gerecht bestraft	.31	2.91	.35	2.49

Note: Data are based on Study 4; $N = 505$ for the English version and $N = 262$ for the German version. These *N*s are smaller than those reported in Table I because of missing data.
Values could range from 1, *totally disagree*, to 7, *totally agree*.