

Navigating Sex in College: A qualitative exploration of college students' views on hookup culture and sexual assault

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Introduction:

The prevalence of sexual assaults on college campuses has been gaining more and more attention in recent years. In academia, much work has been done with regard to the role that traditional gender roles play in this issue and how this has led to a predominant rape culture in which rape is common and the predominant attitudes and norms condone, normalize, excuse, and even encourage sexual violence. This problem has even begun to bridge the gap between academia and politics. The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault released their first report in April 2014, leading with a distressing statistic: one in five women experience sexual assault during their college career (Krebs et al., 2007; Fisher, Cullen, and Turner, 2000). And according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2014), college age women are three times more likely to be sexually assaulted than non-college aged women. These statistics are even more staggering when one considers that the majority of sexual assaults that happen on college campuses go unreported (Krebs et al., 2007; Fisher, Cullen, and Turner, 2000).

While this surge in awareness is definitely a step in the right direction, sexual violence is still occurring at a discouraging rate throughout our campuses. Typical strategies such as “disciplinary procedures, educational interventions, and support services for victims” do not seem to be working, as sexual assault rates have not declined over the last fifty years (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006, p. 484; Iverson, 2016). So what is going on that makes sexual assault so ubiquitous on University campuses? With the strong presence of drugs and alcohol, the permissive “bubble-like” world college produces, and the often strict pressure to adhere to hetero-normative gender norms resulting in rampant sexual objectification of women, the four years our young people are spending at college is a time like no other (Capraro, 2010, p.

164; Kimmel, 2008). As this issue has only recently been viewed as a social phenomena, and with so many complex factors involved, no solid and comprehensive theory exists that can adequately explain these offences. More comprehensive research undoubtedly needs to be done as understanding why sexual assaults are happening among this population on such a large scale can help determine what can be done to stop them.

Literature Review:

The first to study the phenomenon of campus sexual assault was Clifford Kirkpatrick and Eugene Kanin (1957), who found that 28% of the 291 college women from 22 different university classes that they surveyed had experienced attempts of “offensive intercourse” during the previous year. While it is unclear exactly what types of offenses these included, 6% of these were said to have involved “menacing threats or coercive infliction of physical pain” (p. 53). This is an extremely important study as it confirms that sexual assault on college campuses has been an issue long before receiving the acknowledgement and discourse it was due (Abbey et al., 2004, p. 274)

Hookup Culture

Research interest in casual sex, defined as sex between two people in a non-committal relationship, exploded after the feminist revolution of the 1960s/70s. Researchers assumed that because sex in a committed relationship was more socially acceptable than casual sex, casual sex would thus be fairly limited among young people. Only recently has research been done finding that casual sex is actually common and not always socially constructed as negative (Bogle, 2008; Currier, 2013, p. 3-4).

The term “hookup culture” has become more and more popular in the last twenty years to describe the dating (or lack thereof) and sexual behavior of American college students. Multiple research studies have been conducted that show a high level of participation in the hookup culture. Paul, McManis, and Hayes (2000) found that 78% of their sample of male and female college students had engaged in at least one hookup. In another example, Armstrong, England, and Fogarty (2012) found that 69% of their sample of female college students reported at least one hookup by graduation. Casual sex has always been a part of human history, but what is currently happening on college campuses is entirely different. College, a place where hookups have always happened, is now being dominated by hookup culture that commands all forms of student intimacy (Freitas, 2013, p.5). There are many theories as to why this is the case. One revolves around trepidation of committed relationships. As Donna Freitas (2013), author of *The End of Sex*, states:

College students learn from the media, their friends, and even their parents that it’s not sensible to have long-term relationships in college. College is a special time in life – they will never get the chance to learn so much, meet so many people, or have as much fun again. Relationships restrict freedom – they require more care, upkeep, and time than anyone can afford to give during this exciting period. (p. 1-2)

According to Elizabeth Armstrong and Laura Hamilton (2013), authors of *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*, found that many of the college men they observed were so entrenched in one-upping their male peers that they were becoming exceedingly picky when it came to relationships. They did not see the point of dating unless it was with a woman that was considered a 10 out of 10. Only then would it be worth all the freedom that one loses (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013, p. 86).

However, the conceptualization of a “hookup” is still so imprecise that even college students, the ones predominantly partaking in this culture, are not sure how to define it (Bogle, 2008; Bruce & Stewart, 2010; Currier, 2013; Freitas, 2013, p. 19; Kimmel, 2008). According to Kathleen Bogle (2008), author of the book *Hooking Up: Sex, dating, and relationships on campus*, “the meaning of hooking up depends on whom you ask” (p. 25). A hookup involves some sort of sexual interaction but could range anywhere from “making out” to full sexual intercourse. Bogle (2008) states that the students she interviewed “consistently identified hooking up as the dominant way for men and women to get together and form potential relationships on campus. This does not mean that everyone on campus engages in hooking up; but students do consider it to be the primary means for initiating sexual and romantic relationships” (p. 25; Bruce and Stewart, 2010; Daniel & Fogarty, 2007; Kimmel, 2008).

In her article “Strategic Ambiguity: Protecting Emphasized Femininity and Hegemonic Masculinity in Hookup Culture,” Danielle Currier (2013) uses the phrase “strategic ambiguity” as a way to better understand the widespread vagueness of a hookup. It serves as an effective impression management strategy to help both men and women maintain their self-image. Men often use the ambiguous hookup as a way to imply they are having sex, whereas women often use ambiguous language as a way to minimize their sexual activity and imply they are *not* having sex (Currier, 2013, p. 17). The ambiguity allows women to avoid the feared label of “slut” while still participating in the normalized culture. This highlights the gender norms in college and the double standard that women face regarding sex. According to Currier (2013), “Women walk a fine line between hooking up ‘enough’ but not ‘too much’” (p. 2). According to a national study on over 1,000 college women conducted by Norval Glenn and Elizabeth Marquardt (2001) the women revealed that disparaging names such as slut, whore, and trash were commonly used to

describe women who hooked up “too much”. This was in stark contrast to the labels of “player” or “stud” that were given to men who frequently hooked up (p. 22).

Despite the vagueness of the term, most can agree that a hookup consists of three main criteria: sexual intimacy, brevity, and no emotional connection (Bogle, 2008, p. 40; Currier, 2013; Freitas, 2013, p. 25). In most cases, staying the night at a hookup’s dorm or apartment opens the door to unwanted drama and is not seen as “casual” enough and should therefore be avoided (Freitas, 2013, p. 28-29). A hookup usually involves alcohol and meeting up with an acquaintance or a “random” person at a party (Bogle, 2008, p. 30; Currier, 2013; Kimmel, 2008, p. 190-191). Because the hallmark of hookup culture is lack of emotional intimacy and a “no strings attached” attitude, romantic relationships are not usually produced and partners either move forward amicably while not acknowledging their sexual encounter, or ignore each other altogether (Bogle, 2008, p. 40; Currier, 2013; Freitas, 2013, p. 23).

There is a complex range of reasons why people hookup. The aversion to relationships that was already mentioned is one possibility but another more complex reason has to do with male bonding. In her interviews with 78 college students, Currier (2013) found that “men have a hyper-focus on heterosexual sexual activity and bonding with other men” (p. 2). This bonding with other men is evident in the hookup culture. After a hookup, men often return to their male friends to detail their exploit and impress them with their sexual prowess (Currier, 2013, p. 17).

David Grazian (2010) explained that for men, the hookup culture often plays out in the form of a “girl hunt.” In this way, going out to parties or bars in same-gendered groups allows men to pursue women in a game of status and numbers. Grazian (2010) states, “Male-initiated games of heterosexual pursuit function as strategies of impression management in which young men sexually objectify women to heighten their own performance of masculinity” (p. 320). The

goal of this hunt is not necessarily to gain sexual pleasure but to perform a role to their male, peer audience. When they do hookup with a woman, men “score” (Grazian, 2010, p. 321). In this way, this system of status is even built in to students’ everyday language. Like notches on a belt, men can calculate their status by their number of sexual conquests (Grazian, 2010, p. 324).

Women on the other hand tend to hookup for slightly different reasons. According to the article “Sexual Assault on Campus: A multilevel, integrative approach to party rape,” Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney (2006) found that women often entered the hookup culture because they found it a source for self-esteem and status (p. 488). Unlike men, women have a much finer line to walk to find the perfect balance between prude and slut. Interestingly, most people who participate in the hookup culture admit that the sex is actually not very good (Kimmel, 2008, p. 215; Orenstein, 2016). According to Armstrong, England, and Fogarty (2012), this is because partner knowledge and affection plays a significant role in sexual enjoyment (p. 458). Dulled senses due to drugs and alcohol may also play a role. Women particularly are reporting less satisfaction than their male counterparts (Orenstein, 2016). This has been traced to a focus on male-centered pleasure within hookups, and women have been socialized to meet men’s sexual desires without much regard for their own (Kimmel, 2008, p. 192; Orenstein, 2016). It seems that the reasons for entering the hookup culture are less sexual and more social.

Transitional Period of College

An interesting new trend in human development has started to emerge piquing the interest of scholars and parents alike. People seem to be entering adolescence earlier and staying longer. Traditionally defined as between the ages of 12 and 15, adolescence is now extending as late as 26 (Kimmel, 2010, p. 126). Individuals are usually considered adults if they are done with their education, living away from home, and have stable careers. But now that people are

entering in to adolescence early with all its hormones and sexual curiosities, and staying longer as they delay marriage and having children, as well as delaying moving out of their parents' homes due to competition in the job market, there is an exceedingly large period of time when an individual is sexually active, single, but not yet considered an adult (Kimmel, 2010, p. 126).

Michael Kimmel (2008), author of *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*, this new phenomenon deserves its own name, as the adolescence of a 14 year-old is very different from that of a 22 year-old. Therefore, both male and female adolescents between the ages of 18 and 26 are caught in "Guyland," a transitional period as adolescents become adults (Kimmel, 2008; Kimmel, 2010, p. 126). Adolescents in this phase most often refer to their peers as "guys," both male and female. It is their way of navigating between the world of childhood, boy, and adulthood, man, and also speaks to the gendered nature of this time in which women are quite literally living in a male dominated world (Kimmel, 2010, p. 130).

As this age bracket is also the traditional age in which to attend college, those in Guyland find themselves grappling with two brand-new phases for which there is little guidance. Like Guyland, college is a time of indeterminacy in which many students feel as though they are just treading water waiting for their lives to really begin (Kimmel, 2010, p. 127). This can lead to students feeling as though their time in college is not "real life" but a fun adventure in which anything goes. For male students, Rocco Capraro (2010), author of "Why College Men Drink: Alcohol, Adventure, and the Paradox of Masculinity," defines adventure as "an act of assertion by which men imagine themselves in a breach of the social contract" (p. 163). Alcohol is complicit in this. In their study on the relationship between drinking and sexual encounters on college campuses, Thomas Vander Ven and Jeffrey Beck (2009) found that college students often employed alcohol-related excuses to justify sexual encounters. They wrote, "One's actions

are treated as being performed by an ‘intoxicated self,’ and not by one’s ‘true self’” (Vander Ven & Beck, 2009, p. 645). This plays in to the lack of responsibility that seems to characterize the college mentality. During her time working in student affairs, Donna Freitas (2013) lived in student residence halls, offering her a glimpse of students’ private lives. There, she noticed a complete change in personality between the sober daytime selves of her students to the drunken nighttime selves. She says, “Alcohol can transform the politest, nicest, students into people who commit shocking, reckless, and dangerous behaviors” (Freitas, 2013, p. 40).

It is widely known that alcohol is a large part of the American college experience. As such, it is important to evaluate the part that alcohol plays in campus sexual assaults. Most studies evaluating the effects that alcohol has on sexual assaults have studied the difference in behavior and the nature of the assault based on whether or not alcohol was consumed (Parkhill et al., 2008, p. 331). However, behavior varies based on the amount of alcohol consumed as well. According to a study done by Wayne State University, that studied men age 18 to 49 who admitted to using some sort of coercive sexual force on a woman, perpetrators who drank heavily, defined as five or more drinks, during the event, misperceived the victim’s sexual intentions for a longer period of time, were more isolating and controlling during the interaction, used more physical force, and committed assaults that were more severe than their non-drinking and light drinking counterparts (Parkhill et al., 2008, p. 332). Interestingly, perpetrators who drank heavily also viewed the incident as more serious, were more likely to acknowledge it as a sexual crime, and took on more responsibility for what happened than the other assailants (Parkhill et al., 2008, p. 332).

The effect this has on our understanding of sexual assault on college campuses is considerable. It gives statistical evidence to the idea that intoxicated men “may be so focused on

their own sexual arousal and feelings of entitlement that they miss or ignore the messages intended to convey a woman's lack of interest" (Parkhill et al., 2008, p. 332). When a woman tries to put a stop to these advances, the man may feel wronged and provoked to violence to which he would never otherwise resort. This study also provides useful information for ways of improving preventative strategies in schools. Alcohol often provides an excuse for bad behavior and makes it easier for these men to admit their wrongdoings by separating themselves from the incident and blaming it on their "intoxicated self" (Parkhill et al., 2008, p. 333; Vander Ven & Beck, 2009, p. 645). However, using alcohol as an excuse can become a habit and prevent them from taking responsibility for poor behavior. Therefore, in their article "How do sexual assault characteristics vary as a function of perpetrators' level of intoxication?" Michele Parkhill, Antonia Abbey, and Angela Jacques-Tiura (2008) suggest, "Sexual assault prevention programs should focus on the cognitive distortions that alcohol produces. Men need to recognize how alcohol affects their perceptions of women and their willingness to use aggression. Men also need to learn that alcohol does not provide an excuse for forced sex and to take responsibility for their behavior when intoxicated" (p. 333).

Much of the literature on this topic focuses on the male experience, assuming that men are the foremost players in the heavy drinking and risky behavior that go on in college. However, recent research has found that women's behavior in college is actually more similar to men's than different. In the article "Drinking like a Guy: Frequent Binge Drinking Among Undergraduate Women," it was reported that women are catching up to men when it comes to the amount of binge drinking they engage in (Young, Morales, McCabe, Boyd, & D'Arcy, 2005). This may mean that Capraro's (2010) definition of adventure in college can be broadened to now include women as well.

This revelry often plays itself out in gendered ways. In fact, Kimmel (2010) describes college as a time of “gender intensification” where the struggle to prove one’s manhood becomes intense due to exaggerated notions of gender norms as well as being surrounded by hundreds to thousands of peers watching and judging (p. 130). As Adams-Curtis and Forbes (2004) explain, “The college experience juxtaposes the powerful motives of sex and aggression in a population that is still forming a stable identity within an environment that includes strong peer pressures for sexual activity and the ritualistic abuse of drugs and alcohol” (p. 91-92). As shown earlier, this is seen in the way men and women navigate the hookup culture and how men particularly perform in this culture as a way to prove their masculinity to other men.

3 Predominant Theories of Sexual Assault

Theories of Sexual Access

There is a noticeable lack of theory in available literature regarding violence against women. When rape was first defined as a social problem in the late 1960s a fair amount of theoretical literature and research was done on the topic, but little has been done since (Rose, 1977, p. 76). Yet, other feminist issues such as sexual harassment, body image, the performing of gender, gender politics in the workplace etc. have been theorized and scrutinized over and over again (Mardorossian, 2002, p. 743).

Of all the research that has been done on the theorizing of rape, most has revolved around feminist and conflict theories, which emphasize power as the motivation to rape, while little has been done surrounding theories of sexual access (Deming & Eppy, 1981, p. 364). Theories of sexual access emphasize the sexual aspect of rape and the need for a sexual outlet as a possible motivation for rape. This has been proven in some literature. In his article “Rape and Social Structure,” Kaare Svalastoga (1962) found that there was a higher rape rate when the sex ratio

showed a surplus of men, since an excess of males would lead to social tensions in the search for consensual sexual partners (p. 50).

Feminists have vehemently rejected this theory claiming that it is the development of one's sexual identity and the power dynamics involved in traditional gender norms that are to blame (Deming & Eppy, 1981, p. 364). This is for good reason, as a study done by Judith Rabkin (1979) on convicted rapists showed that the majority were involved in consenting sexual relationships at the time of the offense, thus providing them with a valid sexual outlet. Similarly, compared with other sex offenders, rapists are less likely to have a previous record of sex offenses but more likely to have a record of nonsexual crimes. Thus making the crime more about the violence and power than the sexual act itself. However, it has gotten to the point that this theory is so universally accepted that to speak otherwise makes one sound insensitive to rape victims or out of touch (Mardorossian 2002, p. 747). In her article "Toward a New Feminist Theory of Rape," Carine Mardorossian (2002) argues that more theorizing on sexual violence is needed to expand upon the personal experience/victimization approach that has heretofore dominated the field and challenge "the assumption that offering anything but the same unequivocal explanation for a [traumatic] experience amounts to denying that experience's destructive effects, or even that experience's 'reality'" (p. 747).

With a topic as new and complex as sexual assault on college campuses, it does not make sense to constrict thought to one accepted theory, rather to keep an open mind, as no one yet knows how to conceptualize this epidemic. Robert Merton's concept of relative deprivation and deviance is one such alternative avenue to keep in mind (Chappell, Geis, Schafer, & Siegel, 1977; Deming & Eppy, 1981; Merton, 1938). In the case of rape, Merton's theory would mean that rape represents the taking of something that is not otherwise available through legitimate

means, thus building on theories of sexual access.

Social Norms Theory

As many of the offenses on college campuses involve alcohol and are non-violent, the perpetrators may not even realize they've done something wrong (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 20014). Could these types of rapes be unique in that they don't have to do with power but with a hyper obsession with sex? The perceived social norms of the college party scene may put undue pressure on men to "get laid" so they feel like they have to revert to illegitimate means of getting this. Related to theories of sexual access, social norms theory moves away from power theory and towards a new theory dependent on situational factors: social norms theory. This is confirmed in available literature. According to Kristen Scholly, Alan Katz, Jan Gascoigne, & Peter Holck, in their article "Using Social Norms Theory to Explain Perceptions and Sexual Health Behaviors of Undergraduate College Students: An Exploratory Study" (2005):

Social norms theory states that behavior is often influenced by how individuals perceive that other members of a social group behave, and that beliefs regarding these practices are often incorrect. If students' misperceptions that exaggerate their peer norms are exposed and replaced with more accurate information regarding peer expectations and practices, the result is often reported to be a decrease in high-risk behavior. (p. 160)

This applies to the amount of binge drinking, sexual activity, drug use, and other high-risk and illegal activity that college students perceive other students to be partaking in.

According to Kathleen A. Bogle, author of *Hooking Up: Sex, dating, and relationships on campus* (2008), college students desperately want to know what is "normal" so that they can traverse the complex waters of student life (p. 72). College is still a time of development and growth, when young adults are finding out who they are and who they want to be. Therefore, they are highly susceptible to messages in the media and even more so to the messages they

receive from their peers (Bogle, 2008, p. 72). They do not need to watch TV or read a magazine to know what is going on with their contemporaries, all they have to do is look around campus. Bogle (2008) describes college as a sort of fishbowl experience where everyone's behavior is constantly monitored by everyone else (p. 73). Despite this close scrutiny, students' perceptions are usually distorted. Although a lot of the "pre-hookup" work is done in public at parties or bars, the hookup itself happens in private. Therefore, to determine what one's peers are doing in the bedroom, or whether any sexual activity occurred at all, is complete speculation (Bogle, 2008, p. 82). Kimmel (2008) found that most men he interviewed thought that about 80% of their male peers were having sex on any given weekend. This is very different than the actual average of 5-10% (p. 209). According to Bogle's 76 interviews with college students, virginity is considered to be extremely rare in college. Almost everyone she interviewed stated this; despite the fact that Glenn and Marquardt (2001), found a 39 percent virginity rate. They also found that the virginity rate remained at 31 percent among senior year college women.

Individual Determinants Theory

Another theory, developed out of psychology, focuses on sexual assault as a result of particular perpetrator or victim characteristics such as gender role attitudes, personality, family background, and sexual history (Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004; Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006, p. 484). According to this theory, childhood sexual abuse is the most consistent predictor of adolescent and adult sexual assault victimization (Abbey et al. 2004). Maria Testa and Kurt Dermen (1999) examined the correlates of rape in a population of women at high risk for sexual assault, high risk being defined as "having more than one male sexual partner within the past year, having had sexual intercourse within the past month, and at least one time per week drinking three to four drinks of alcohol" (p. 553). However, studies like this have a

tendency to sound like they are blaming the victim and could give credence to rape myths associated with victim blaming.

While fascinating and well substantiated, this approach may be better served to explain sexual assaults outside the realm of college as it fails to fully explain why there is a prevalence of assaults in college specifically. Why is this sector of the population so affected? There must also be environmental and situational variables at play.

Feminist Theory and Rape Culture

Feminism is credited with first establishing rape as a social problem rather than simply an isolated issue; thus making feminist theory inextricably joined to discussions on sexual assault (Rose, 1977, p. 76). The primary view of feminist theory is that we live in a patriarchal society in which males and females are sorted in to a gender binary that dictates the appropriate behavior, dress, and other norms attributed to their gender (Butler, 1990; Lorber, 1993). Femininity and masculinity are not innate but learned, practiced, and enacted through an intricate performance (Goffman, 1977; West & Zimmerman, 1987). According to traditional gender roles, males are taught to be physically strong, powerful, independent, self-confident, dominant, aggressive, sexually potent, competitive, rational, unemotional, and have insatiable heterosexual desire (Butler, 1990; Grazian, 2010, p. 321). Females on the other hand are to be passive, soft-spoken, virginal, physically diminutive, emotional, sweet, and nurturing (Butler, 1990; Rose, 1977, 78).

These gender roles often play out in the objectification of women (Rose, 1977, 78). The objectification of women is the act of viewing a woman as an object for male sexual desire rather than a complete human being (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Bartky, 1990). This can be seen in advertising, television and movies, the pornography industry, the prevalence of cosmetic surgery among women etc.

In Feminist perspective, sexual assault is the consequence of all these dynamics, as well as a widespread belief in what sociologists call “rape culture”. Rape culture can be defined as a society in which rape is pervasive and normalized because of societal attitudes about gender, gender norms, and sexuality (Herman, 1988). Actions commonly associated with rape culture include victim blaming, trivializing rape through jokes and other outlets, denial that rape is a problem, sexual objectification, and refusing to acknowledge the mental trauma that victims experience (Herman, 1988; McMahon, 2007)

The primary source of this culture is the lack of respect towards women’s bodies, easily seen through the objectification of women in the media and the socially constructed yet tenaciously pervasive concept that women are inferior to men. This rape culture has serious ramifications for women, though they often go unseen for it has become so engrained in our society that the rituals and actions that uphold it are normalized. In her article “Rape as a Social Problem,” Vicki McNickle Rose (1977) points out that the American dating system is a major contributor to the rape culture and the prevalence of rape in our society. There is an inherent “exchange” element of the system whereby the man pays for the date, whether it is dinner or a simple drink, and the woman is therefore in his debt. This can lead to the man feeling entitled to sexual favors (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987).

Similarly, in his book *Patterns in Forcible Rape*, Menachem Amir (1971) applied the concept of “victim precipitation” to rape, to much criticism (Rose, p. 78). The general premise being that men often think that women implied consent to have relations with him but then withdrew the consent prior to the act. Having a drink with a stranger is interpreted as behavior “precipitated” of rape. Leading people to discount her claim of rape to be unfounded. This is still an active way of thinking today. On college campuses, women are often questioned about their

level of intoxication at the time of the assault and the idea that provocative dress is not an invitation for sexual behavior is only now starting to go out of fashion.

Rape culture also includes a variety of “rape myths” (McMahon, 2007). One rape myth that seems to be particularly established on college campuses is that of false accusations. Sarah McMahon’s (2007) study measuring rape myths; done using surveys, focus groups, and interviews with 205 student athletes at a large public university, found that male student athletes believed that women often fabricated rape stories for revenge or out of regret (p. 364). This idea of false accusations is very prevalent today. One of the reasons may be that no one is able to come to a consensus on how many false reports actually occur. The usual statistic, though hotly debated, is that between 2 and 8% of reports are false, never mind that most go unreported (Krebs et al., 2007). Despite the difficulty in finding a reliable statistic, it can be safely stated that there is danger in assuming many rape accusations are false. Although an in-depth analysis of this topic is out of the scope of this thesis, it should be mentioned that a preoccupation with false reporting could lead to false recantations and the silencing of rape victims (Applegate, 2013, p. 903).

Conceptualization of Key Terms

One of the most difficult issues surrounding this subject is how to define “rape”. In their article “The Sociology of Rape,” Mary Beard Deming and Ali Eppy (1981) had serious issues with the current lack of a clear conceptualization of rape and the development of rape theory (p. 361-362). In the thirty years since, not much has changed. A common understanding of what constitutes rape has yet to be established. The criminal justice system, scholars, and the general public all seem to have different ideas (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004). This contributes to skewed rape statistics as victims’ judgments on whether or not they have been raped and law

enforcement officials' decision to classify offenses as rape, is subjective (Deming & Eppy, 1981, p. 362). The broader category of "sexual assault" is even harder.

Leah Adams-Curtis and Gordon Forbes (2004) suggest the use of a completely new term in order to better understand the vast array of sexual assaults that can occur: sexual coercion. Specifically looking at college women's experiences, their point is that the word "rape" can minimize or even ignore sexual situations in which threat of physical force rather than actual physical force, emotional threats, guilt, incapacitation by drugs or alcohol etc. is used. This is because "much sexual coercion does not meet legal standards for rape" (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 98). Interestingly, they call for a withdrawal of academic use of the term "rape" altogether, as the term sexual coercion includes "behaviors legally identified as rape but is broad enough to include nonforceful coercion and actions that do not involve the genitals" (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 98). There are a lot of issues with this new word choice. By replacing the well-known term "rape" with a subtler, less aggressive phrase, there lies a risk of downplaying what can be a very traumatic experience.

In fact, according to a study of trauma among undergraduate students led by Patricia Frazier (2009) from the University of Minnesota, sexual assault was associated with the most PTSD symptoms of any other common trauma. However, participants who were sexually assaulted were much less likely to appoint this as their worst life event, only 37%, than they were to nominate an unexpected death as their worst event if they experienced it, despite the fact that sexual assault was connected with much higher PTSD levels than bereavement (Frazier et al., 2009, p. 457-458). This requires more study but may be because of the prevalence of downplaying sexual assault, the difficulty in naming and defining the experience, and the high levels of stigma associated with sexual assault (Kahn, 2004).

Similarly the term “sexual coercion” does not sound like an actionable offense even though, with Adams-Curtis and Forbes’ examples of threats and drugging, it is most certainly an assault. This is problematic as sexual assaults already have a very low reporting rate. According to a study done by Bonnie Fisher, Francis Cullen, and Michael Turner (2000) for the U.S. Department of Justice, in which 4,446 college women were surveyed, the overwhelming reason victims gave for not reporting their incident of sexual victimization was that they “did not think it was serious enough to report” (p. 26). The research team defined rape as, “Forced sexual intercourse including both psychological coercion as well as physical force. Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender(s). This category also includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object such as a bottle. Includes attempted rapes, male as well as female victims, and both heterosexual and homosexual rape. Attempted rape includes verbal threats of rape” (Fisher et al., 2000, p. 13). 65% of respondents whose sexual victimization experience fell under the definition above, said they did not report it because it wasn’t serious enough, and 76% of victims of attempted rape, as defined above, said the same (Fisher et al., 2000, p. 26).

According to a study done by Arnold S. Kahn (2004) involving 504 female college students, if the assault involved a significant other, alcohol, or drugs victims were less likely to call it “rape”. These situations are so widespread and normalized that college-aged women do not feel the need to call the police or take any action against the perpetrator. The act of minimizing these situations also minimizes sexual violence against women in general. Adding another term, that is perhaps more palatable to a sensitive ear than “rape”, complicates things further and may make it even harder for victims to come forward.

Instead of coming up with a new word to encompass the many different experiences of

sexual assault, I believe we need to redefine the word rape and de-stigmatize it. According to Kahn (2004), encouraging women to define their rape experiences as rape would “highlight the tremendous problem of rape in our society, hold perpetrators responsible for their behavior, and likely lead to greater enforcement of rape statutes, greater prosecution of rapists, and ultimately reducing the frequency of rape” (p. 15). However, as Kahn (2004) also noted, many sexual assault survivors are able to better cope with what happened to them by defining their experience as something other than “rape”. Should we be defining these experiences for them? This is not an easy question to answer but one that I think rests in the issues of stigma, unclear definitions and conceptualizes of rape, and normalization of sexual violence against women.

With all these debates about the proper definitions of rape and sexual assault, the idea of consent often gets left behind. There is no consensus on what sexual consent consists of or how it should be communicated (Beres, 2007, p. 94). In her article, “Spontaneous Sexual Consent: An Analysis of Sexual Consent Literature,” Melanie Beres (2007) explains that many times in the literature, sexual consent is commonsensically accepted without ever deeply reflecting on what it actually means (p. 95). Sometimes sexual consent is used to “distinguish good sex from bad sex, pleasurable sex from unpleasurable sex...” etc. which is certainly problematic as consensual sex is not always pleasurable and the lines are not always this clear (Beres, 2007, p. 95). Another assumption sexual consent literature often makes is that it is *women giving* consent to men consequently ignoring homosexual sexual relations and the potential for men to give consent (Beres, 2007, p. 96).

Even more complicated, some scholars, such as Donald Dripps (1992), such as define consent as “any yes” regardless of force, coercion, or threats. While others differentiate between valid and invalid consent where no coercion is present in valid consent (Beres, 2007, p. 97).

Even more debates exist on the validity of verbal and nonverbal consent. In 1992, Antioch College, long considered to be a leader in educational progressivism, formally required all students to obtain a positive verbal response throughout every step of the sexual encounter in order for consent to be given (Beres, 2007, p. 102; Kimmel, 2008, p. 240). This policy received a storm of backlash with many saying it was unrealistic and feminism gone too far. According to a study done by Terry Humphreys and Ed Herold (2003) in which 514 students were surveyed on their perceptions of Antioch's consent policy, most students said that they would not support such a policy on their campus because it was "unrealistic and hard to implement and enforce". They also said that it would ruin the pleasure and mood of the experience (p. 48).

For the purpose of my study, working definitions of sexual assault, rape, and consent are crucial. I will therefore be defining sexual assault as any sexual act (vaginal, anal, or oral sex; groping or touching a person's body in a sexual way even with clothes on; forced masturbation) that is performed without a person's active consent (Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan, 2004, p. 272; Fisher et al., 2000). Rape is therefore any sexual penetrative act; vaginal, anal, or oral by the perpetrator or a foreign object, that is performed without a person's active consent (Abbey et al., 2004, p. 272; Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004, p. 98). Active consent being when both parties voluntarily and without coercion agree to sexual activity, through clear, verbal communication or *enthusiastic* nonverbal cues and gestures throughout every moment of the sexual encounter (Beres, 2007).

Methodology:

The purpose of this study was to explore college students' attitudes about hookup culture, the role of sexual consent, and issues that they see surrounding college campus sexual assault

and to discern any trends with regards to these issues among college students along gender lines. I explored these issues by delving in to the participants' personal experiences and observations and analyzing the way they talked about, dealt with, and conceptualized these issues.

Sampling and Recruitment

The research sample was comprised of sixteen individuals between the ages of 18 and 22 who were current undergraduate students at Boston College. By choosing to study students from a single university, external factors that could skew results such as campus location, campus culture, and differing characteristics of the student body could be controlled, creating a high internal validity. Using quota sampling, six freshman were selected as well as ten seniors; one fourth of participants were people of color; ten people chosen, four freshman and six seniors, were considered to be heavy drinkers and six, two freshman and four seniors, were considered to be light drinkers; and within these subcategories an equal representation of men and women were chosen (see Appendix A). Using Parkill and Jacques-Tiura's (2008) research on the relationship between sexual assault and men's drinking behavior as a model, heavy drinking was defined as having five or more drinks within a single night for both men and women. Quota sampling was used not only to represent the correct proportion of men and women and ethnicities at Boston College but also in order for the sample to represent the full range of college experiences.

This study started out as an in-depth analysis of *men's* experiences with hookup culture and views of sexual assault but was altered to include women in order to ground the men's responses and look for similarities and differences in their narratives. Only seniors and freshman were chosen for this study in order to get a clear, beginning and end picture of the life span of the college experience. However, freshman proved to be not clear on their opinions or observations of this topic presumably because they had not yet had time to reflect on their experiences, as

their introduction to college was still very new. Therefore, more seniors were chosen than freshman in order to obtain richer data. An effort was also made to sample people with a variety of drinking patterns in order to get a diverse range of perspectives and experiences within this often seemingly homogenous culture.

I first created a filtering survey in order to meet my quotas and filter out participants who would have made my sample lopsided in one way or another. In order to recruit these participants I posted a recruitment announcement along with a link to this survey on multiple Boston College Facebook groups such as the Official Class of 2019 group and the Class of 2016 group (see Appendix B). I also sent the post to the listserv of the Montserrat Coalition, a group on campus that consists of students with the highest financial need at Boston College. The survey included a space for students to leave their email address that allowed me to, if they fit the needs of the study, contact them through email to set up an in-person interview.

Data Collection and Informed Consent

Each interview took place in a private study room on the 5th floor of O'Neill Library on the campus of Boston College. Upon arrival, the participants were given an informed consent form (see Appendix C) and encouraged to read it thoroughly and ask questions about the research before signing. I performed the informed consent procedure myself with each interview participant. I was certified in October of 2015 by completing the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) web based training course "Basic Courses in the Protection of Human Research Subjects" (see Appendix D).

The interviews were recorded using Quicktime Player on my computer and lasted between 25 and 60 minutes. An interview guide was used but was semi-structured with the intent to guide the interview in a direction relevant to the research while still allowing the interview to

take new and unusual turns based on the participant's responses that I may not have thought of (see Appendix E). The interview guide was amended after the first three male interviews to better align with what those men were stressing. In general, the questions were aimed to examine the hookup culture in light of gender and its relationship to consent and assault. One question in particular asked the participants to respond to a situation in which sexual assault could have occurred. Due to the potential for this question to trigger negative, emotional responses to those who may have experienced a sexual assault or be close to someone who has, a trigger warning was added before the question was asked and the respondent was given the opportunity to skip the question or leave the room at any time. At the end of the interview, I mentioned that university counseling services were available to all students if they felt they needed them and that I was happy to assist in contacting them.

Confidentiality was extremely important in this study and was taken very seriously. All data was de-identified and stored in an electronic format. The participants' identities were coded and later given pseudonyms and no record of their identities were kept.

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed using HyperTranscribe, which allowed me to re-familiarize myself with the interview as I transcribed, write down possible coding categories, as well as evaluate my own interviewing strategies in order to keep improving my future interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 1968). After each transcription I re-evaluated my current list of codes, creating new ones as needed. After all interviews were transcribed I went back to this list of codes and tried to condense the list by combining some themes under more general ones. I then went back to the transcriptions and thoroughly read through four male transcriptions and four female, coding as I went and again revising the research themes and codes used. For the

remainder of the transcriptions I worked only from partial transcripts, choosing only the parts of the interview that were most relevant to this established set of codes. I then separated the sections of each interview that had been coded the same and looked at them as a whole in order to gauge which themes were the most prevalent and to draw conclusions.

Bias

As a college student myself, I am enmeshed in the same norms, pressures, and overall hookup culture as the participants I interviewed. My closeness and familiarity with the subject could lead to bias in what I chose to include and the questions I thought to ask. While, every attempt was made to limit this bias, it is still a limit to the reliability of this study that is worth noting.

Limitations

As a preliminary study this research was done simply to determine trends in the way college students conceptualize these issues and what could be worth looking into further. Students were sampled using nonprobability methods and the sample is relatively small. Therefore the results have a low reliability and are not generalizable to the university's student population nor are they generalizable to the national student population as a whole. Second, all data was self-reported and subject to a social desirability bias. In the future, studies should be conducted with representative samples and use a broader range of measures to assess constructs relevant to gender and issues related to sexual assault. Replication of this study on geographically and ethnically diverse college campuses could also be of interest. Finally, measurement of these constructs as part of prevention program development is an important topic for future research.

Results:

In order to give context to the following results, it is important to note that the findings in this study, with regards to the basic tenets of hookup culture, were very similar to current literature on the subject specifically as in Freitas's (2013) *The End of Sex*. Participants explained the lack of emotional vulnerability involved in hookups, the vagueness of the term, the prerequisite of binge drinking, and the pervasive presence of hookup culture. Ignacio summed up the participants' views that hookups were purely physical when he explained, "Let me see, uh hookup basically is just when, you know, either a female or male are creating interaction and it's solely based on physical pleasure. There's no emotions attached whatsoever. So after that you know, that one-night-stand, basically everything's done. It was just all pleasure, nothing more nothing less." Explaining the vagueness of the term "hookup", Elizabeth said, "I also think that the term hookup is too general and people don't really understand what it means, because I don't really understand what it means. 'Cause like it could mean anything from just making out to just like yeah..." When describing the huge presence hookup culture has on campus, Bryan said, "Friday through Saturday that's like people's occupation you know?" Also extensively covered in the literature is the "girl hunt" that men participate in to show off to their male peers and bond. Alex even used the word "hunt" to describe his and his friends' behavior at parties. "It's almost like a hunt, which just makes it super creepy you know at a certain point. So yeah, it's like trying to show off to your friends about, you know, how skilled you are at the art of flirting or whatever." Although important to note, I will not be delving in to these topics specifically as they are already extensively covered in the literature.

The "It's just college" Mentality

One theme that was apparent in almost all of the participants' interviews was the idea that

the four years spent in college are a special time of unprecedented freedom in which students feel as though they have an obligation to have as much fun as possible. Participants explained that, because college has been built up as the best four years of their lives, many people have a fear of missing out (FOMO) on the revelry. They stress that this is the only time in their lives they will have to act irresponsibly and want to fit in as much partying as possible before the four years are up. Directly applying this mentality to the hookup culture at Boston College, Alex¹, a senior, explained his own experience entering college his freshman year, “Because I was like, well you know everyone else is hooking up, I don't wanna like FOMO and you know miss out on this part of the freshman experience 'cause like you know you're only in college once. Like you know after college you can like settle down and like find a girlfriend or whatever.” Similarly, when talking about the culture of drinking 3-4 nights in a row, Bryan said, “You know we're not gonna be able to do this when we're 45 probably.” Because of the time limit placed on youth, and college being seen as the peak of youth and revelry, students are anxious to try and take full advantage of it. Hannah explains, “I think people very much are like, we have to do it [in reference to hooking up, drinking, and partying] in these four years or it's never gonna happen!”

This mentality was expressed by both male and female participants, indicating that heavy drinking and party culture are no longer only men's territory. This change in culture has been noted in relevant literature, such as in Young, et al.'s article “Drinking like a Guy: Frequent Binge Drinking Among Undergraduate Women,” discussed earlier. The participants also noted this recent shift themselves, for example, Fallon clarified, “I was gonna say that for men there might be more of an emphasis on like ‘fuck everyone in college!’ But I think that's also true for women to an extent. I mean women have a different sort of like, you know, purity thing that

¹ Names have been changed

they're supposed to deal with, so it's a little different. But I don't know, I feel like the 'having as much in college as you can' rule kind of applies to everyone."

The predominant idea that college is a time of wild partying with no responsibilities in sight has also been supported in recent literature on the extension of adolescence. Kimmel's (2008) work on the creation of Guyland seems particularly salient. The use of the term "guy" to refer to both men and women in college marks this period as different from childhood (boy) and different from adulthood (man) (Kimmel, 2008, p. 130). No similar term exists for women so they are referred to as either guys as well or girls. This characterizes the gender inequality that is so discernible in this stage of life. The participants I interviewed were hesitant to call themselves and their peers "men" and "women". Even when I used the words "men" and "women" in my questions, they would almost always respond using the terms "guys" and "girls". For example, when asked, "How are men and women judged differently in the hookup culture? Do you think that they are?" Elizabeth responded, "Guys are like cooler for doing it and like I feel like a girl's always judged more for doing it."

As found by Vander Ven and Beck (2009), students utilize alcohol and college itself as excuses for poor behavior and a way to avoid responsibility, thus permitting their partying to continue unabated. When talking about hooking up with girls, Bryan explains:

I don't feel comfortable enough approaching this person soberly so alcohol can give me a reason. And worse case scenario, like alright if I go over there and I say something stupid, well I'm drunk so you know like she can only be so mad at me... here we kind of have a get out of jail free card. You know like alright so like I hooked up with this girl, I don't even know what her name is, like I'm in college so don't worry like whatever.

Similarly, Elizabeth said, "And I feel like people use like 'oh I'm in college' as like a reason for doing something sometimes. Like I've done that before."

One of the reasons many participants gave for the “I’m in college” excuse was the fact that college is a four-year block of time that will soon end. Callie explained:

It's another four-year block of time. And in that block of time people change a lot, people shift in views and whatever but I guess [long pause] people's decisions now don't seem like they matter. But people's decisions in high school also felt like they didn't matter. So the fact that, I do think that the time limit that is given to middle school, high school, college, it means oh it's just middle school, oh it's just high school, oh it's just college... But the time limit I think definitely dictates whether or not people care. It's like, oh I'll be gone in four years!

The university itself, as an institution, can perpetuate this free for all mentality, making it possible for students to partake in irresponsible behavior with few repercussions. Rocco Capraro (2010) explained that college is a “permissive setting”. Because of the pervasive beliefs that alcohol is consumed frequently and in large quantities, underage drinking usually doesn’t hold as high of consequences as it would in the real world (p. 164). In this way, institutions normalize and propagate high-risk behaviors. Participants noted this phenomenon and explained that it served to validate their notion that these actions were expected in college. When speaking about weed smokers on campus, Elijah alleged, “Yeah I feel like they have more leeway so that if you're doing it and you get caught, then it's like well the worst that's gonna happen is like housing probation but a lot of people can just live off campus.” Finn also highlighted the light punishments given to law-breakers on campus, “Like if a cop actually saw like a party of like 18 year olds drinking like people would get arrested. But like here it's more like, oh we're just gonna write you up.” This further perpetuates the idea that college is not real life but a special block of time in which rules and laws are suspended. Diana stated, “I definitely feel like we're not in the real world. We're so sheltered, we're so in a bubble... I think in general like there's no serious consequences in mind.”

According to participants, the “it’s just college” mentality, along with alcohol, often results in poor behavior on the weekends. Many participants emphasized the difference between students’ weekday and weekend selves. Callie stated:

I do think that during the week that is everybody's like daytime self, like works hard, volunteers, that typical ideal BC student persona is very much shown. You're very involved, you probably go to the Plex a lot, like you work hard, you participate in class and then yeah Thursday through Saturday nights it is basically like all bets are off you can do whatever the hell you want 'cause it's the weekend. And that means you can binge drink every night and you can do whatever you want but on Sunday you have to be kind of back in that mold.

The weekend selves that students present often go against the normalized politeness that is expected during the day. Harry explained:

I mean yeah you see kids in a classroom just completely toned down and then you see them on weekends and they're just complete like jackasses.... What we do in college I mean kind of just like stays with us here. I don't really think it like transfers over in to like our careers and shit outside of BC ... It's like you know a closed environment where we can all act like jackasses every single weekend.

Brooke summed up this phenomenon in a simple statement, “I think people feel invincible.”

However, not all participants agreed with the “it’s just college” mentality. Participants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds explained that this is not at all the case for them. They have to worry about paying their own way through school, including books, food, and tuition, making them feel as though they have already entered the “real world” and are paying their dues as adults. Ignacio insisted, “College is completely real life. You know as soon as I turned 18, well I don't know it is just my personal experience. As soon as I turned 18, my mom basically like you're a grown man you can do whatever the heck you want now.” Brooke was of a similar mindset:

I mean I come from like a kind of economic disadvantaged background. So for me this is like very real 'cause I'm paying for everything, I'm paying for my college, I'm paying for my books. Um I'm paying for my next meal... like I have a lot of like stress about that. And like thinking about like how am I gonna afford my medications this month... but I think people with more money it can be a bubble because their parents are still paying for everything.

Analysis

Despite the perception that *everybody* feels as though college is not real life and thus a time for partying and leaving responsibilities for later, this is very much a classist assumption. Not everyone has the financial capability to ignore responsibilities and partake in the party scene. Perhaps then, this mentality serves to perpetuate economic inequality and is only for an elite few. Nevertheless, if students feel as though college is the only time in their lives to be wild, assume that being wild is a good thing that everyone should experience, and hide behind alcohol and the “it’s just college” excuse, then students can feel empowered to make some pretty poor decisions without perceiving the possible ramifications of their actions, be them emotional, legal, professional etc. Although the “it’s just college” mentality can help individuals get over their discomfort and unease, take chances in social situations, or partake in wild activities, these mental apprehensions that students interpret as barriers to fun, may exist for a reason.

Relationships as Pseudo-Marriages

There is evidence in the relevant literature that shows that committed college relationships are becoming exceptionally serious. Or at least that is the way they are perceived. According to Armstrong and Hamilton (2013), authors of *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*, college men have very high standards when it comes to relationships. This occurrence is also evident in the respondents of this study. Men expressed a reluctance to “settle down” and thus miss out on the joys of single college life. Thinking that only a woman that is a

10 out of 10 would make it worth their while, men keep an eye out for that perfect girl while continuing on in the hookup culture in the mean time. Griffin exemplified this mentality when he said:

I'll see a girl and she could be perfect for me. And I'll be like well I don't wanna do that, I don't wanna take her out. Um and it's just like part of me is just waiting for somebody that I'm willing to step outta the hook up culture and like be with, to make that commitment. And I think like I don't know that's a big part of it for me. Just seeing like this girl and be like wow, like I don't want any of this, I just want her.

Another reason participants suggested relationships were viewed so seriously rests with the college institution itself. At Boston College freshman orientation, students are often told about their school's rank as a frontrunner in the number of inter-student marriages that occur. As Callie explained, this fact can make marriage seem like an inevitable end to all relationships and put a lot of pressure on students:

I know coming in as a BC student, the statistic that it's like oh I don't remember the exact number but it's like half of you will marry a BC grad. Coming in with almost that kind of pressure makes you not want to... like I could marry one of the people that I'm in a class right now with. And you look around and you're like no! Like this is not what I want [laughs]. And I think, I do think the language is really scary... People are viewing relationships as like, oh if I date you in junior, senior year of college, I will marry you! And people are not prepared for that.

One participant suggested that it is because relationships are becoming more and more rare in college that the ones that do exist seem to be becoming more and more serious. Alex considered, "It seems like when you have the word hookup and the word date, they seem to be so like geometrically opposed or whatever that you know if hooking up is so casual, then dating must be so serious." In this way a cycle is created. As hookup culture becomes more pervasive and sexual relationships more casual, relationships are seen as more serious. And as relationships become

more serious, additional people feel pushed in to the hookup culture, thus perpetuating this firm division. Said another way, the two ends of the spectrum are growing farther apart while the middle is lost altogether. As a student in a rare relationship, Hannah has been trying to escape this pseudo-marriage relationship mold but explained how difficult that can be, “Relationships have definitely become like pseudo-marriages. If you're in a relationship, everyone always asks you, ‘Oh like what's your boyfriend doing?’ ‘Ugh I don't know, he's doing something on his own.’ And people just view it as like pseudo-marriage, like this huge deal. Like there's no casual relationships. Casual relationships are friends with benefits. That's it.”

As previous literature suggests, unrealistic expectations of the perfect partner coupled with the view that committed relationships are extremely serious pseudo-marriages, results in very few relationships on this particular campus and campuses all over the country (Freitas, 2013, p. 1-2). Harry described what this looks like when he said, “You never even see, the culture here like you don't see people holding hands. I'll go five days at a time without seeing a couple holding hands. I saw one yesterday. You notice it; you're like what? Like they're dating? That's bold.” Thus, students lack a space in which to express their sexuality and need for affection other than hookup culture and pseudo-marriages.

Analysis

Due to many factors, including the prevalence of hookup culture, high standards, and the rising seriousness surrounding relationships, there is a definite aversion to dating among college students. When juxtaposed with pseudo-marriages, hookups appear even more casual, unimportant, and ultimately inconsequential. This ties to the previous section on students' lack of responsibility and view that actions in college do not hold much weight. Looking at pseudo-marriages and hookups as two ends on a spectrum they can be seen as total opposites. In one, the

partner is respected and cared for, communication is valued, and emotional intimacy is the foundation. In the other, the opposite is true which leads to objectification, lack of respect and caring, and a paucity of intimacy. Hookups have become a short cut to sexual intimacy. In hookups one does not have to break down barriers or become vulnerable. Consequently, students are missing out on an incredibly important part of human development and adolescence: connection.

As already discussed, college is considered a time of exploration, self-discovery, independence, and adventure. As much as the students are taking this to heart in the party culture that is so prevalent in college, they are missing a critical component worth exploring: romantic relationships. Misinformed about what sex and relationships should be like in a loving relationship and unsure how to navigate the dating scene, students enter “the real world” at a severe disadvantage. Kimmel (2008) explains, “Many older guys report having a difficult time making a transition to serious adult relationships. They all say that eventually they expect to get married and have families, but they have no road map for getting from drunken sloppy ‘Did we or didn’t we?’ sex to mature adult relationships... They know little more about themselves and their sexuality at 28 than they did at 18” (p. 192). Findings like this beg the question, why are students so drawn to the hookup culture in the first place?

Women as sexually empowered vs. broken inside

A common topic in the literature focuses on the presence of gendered double standards in hookup culture. The more women that men hookup with, the more these men are celebrated by their peers. They face no negative ramifications to their reputations. Women on the other hand must walk a fine line between hooking up too much and too little (Currier, 2013, p. 2). Hookup too much and she faces labels such as slut and whore (Glenn & Marquardt, 2001, p. 22). The

women interviewed in this study did talk about these unfair double standards, but in a slightly different way. It seems that women are not judged so much as “sluts” if they hook up too frequently, but are considered “sad” and “broken.” This change in language is interesting. As party culture becomes less of a guys’ club and women embrace casual sex and their own sexuality in unprecedented numbers, it seems as though the prude/whore tight rope may be becoming antiquated (Kimmel, 2008, p. 202). Or maybe it just got a new name. Women are now walking a tight rope between appearing sexually empowered and seeming broken, sad, and empty. The judgment one makes may just come from one’s own individual perspective. As Diana explains the slut mentality is still around but new conceptions are emerging:

I think there's probably two parties I think for girls. Like if they're hooking up too much ooo they're a little risqué or whatever; or there might be a camp that says wow they're super empowered and like they own their sexuality... Um and then with guys I think it's more just like a pat on the back scenario... I don't think anyone ever really says to a guy, you know, you've been hooking up with a lot of girls lately, like are you okay? [Laughs] I don't think that's a conversation that occurs.

Despite this change in perspective, the fact remains that only women have to grapple with this minefield of judgment. Unfortunately the community as a whole does not seem to be praising women as empowered. Hannah explained that the main reaction to women hooking up frequently is “oh that’s sad, she must be like broken inside. Whereas for men it’s not seen as sad or like empty, it’s seen as like an accomplishment.” However, many women, like Brooke, take the empowerment approach, “I think it is an empowerment to women; I think it's a lot more like to be like in control of our own bodies.”

Although many women expressed that hookups can be fun and some, like Brooke, found them empowering, it is important to question how empowering hookups can be for women in light of the blatant gendered double standards and expectations. Although they expressed that

they entered in to the hookup culture of their own volition, some women still felt powerless.

Hannah explains her own experience:

After my first time, I kinda just decided that I was gonna be okay with hooking up... But it just made it a lot easier to be like, I'm gonna be a fervent participator in this. That just made it a lot easier in terms of you know, if someone ever approached you, like I'll lean towards yeah like just have fun with it you know. And then that way you're not like placing yourself in a situation where you're saying no and they're not listening. Yeah, which sounds bad, but like I had fun with it. I'll look back and sometimes be like why did I do that? Why did I sleep with him? That wasn't fun. But it was probably a lot better than saying no and pissing him off and yeah... It made me feel more in control.

Hannah's solution for gaining power in a culture where she had none was to simply give in to the predominant customs. She later explained that this solution did not work very well. "I know that when I've hooked up with people, and then thought to myself, you know that was really what I wanted to do, that was great, then whenever I would see the guy again it just seemed like he felt like he had this power over me and he had like you know gotten me. He had gotten in my pants and now he was like the superior one, and that kind of pissed me off." Hannah felt like she had made an empowered choice, but later realized that the men she was hooking up with did not see it this way at all.

Analysis

Hookup culture is a complex system of dos and don'ts that is hard to navigate for women particularly. Feminist movements to embrace female sexuality and gender equality has led to more women entering in to casual sex, however campus culture does not seem to be changing as quickly. Women are entering in to the hookup culture sexually empowered but are met with sexism and double standards at every turn. This maze is nearly impossible to traverse and leaves women confused and dispirited. With women such as Hannah, this can have troubling emotional consequences. Women, for example, are more likely to regret a hookup after it has happened.

Elizabeth Paul and Kristen Hayes (2002) found that women were more likely than men to experience regret after a hookup, usually taking the form of shame and self-blame (p. 655).

Many scholars have questioned women's claims of empowerment in light of the institutionalized sexism that exists within party culture. Freitas (2013) brings up the presence of popular sexist party themes on campus such as office bros and secretary hoes, professors and schoolgirls, and golf pros and tennis hoes (p. 84). The party culture on campus thus places men in positions of power and blatantly objectifies women. Kimmel (2008) also highlights what he claims to be a myth of female empowerment when he states, "What appears on the surface to be mutual turns out to be anything but. Despite enormous changes in the sexual attitudes of young people, the gender politics of campus sex don't seem to have changed very much at all. Sex in Guyland is just that – guy's sex" (p. 192). Although women seem to be gaining some ground in sexual equality, specifically with this study's finding that the term "slut" is going out of style, hookup culture remains very much a man's game. As we will see, sexual double standards play out just as much in to the sexual act itself as they do in the before and after.

Neglect of Female Sexual Pleasure

Female participants frequently stated that hookup sex was definitely not "good" sex. Callie said, "I don't think people expect to have good sex... like very few people go out and be like, I wanna have good sex tonight." Callie extended her response by saying that many factors play in to this detail such as not knowing partners' likes and dislikes, feeling self-conscious, and the involvement of alcohol. In a study done by Michael Kimmel (2008) only 34% of women reported having an orgasm in their most recent hookup involving sexual intercourse and just 58% of men (p. 210). While men are obviously receiving more sexual satisfaction from these encounters, 58% is still not very high. Hookups do not seem to be the hedonistic sources for

pleasure that they advertise themselves to be. For women in particular, hookup sex has been proven to be unsatisfactory. According to Peggy Orenstein (2016), author of *Girls & Sex: Navigating the complicated new landscape*, and corroborated by Kimmel's (2008) study, women are reporting vastly less sexual satisfaction than their male counterparts (Orenstein, 2016).

One explanation for this is the lack of emphasis placed on women's pleasure. As we've already seen, Kimmel (2008) alleges that sex in Guyland is all about the men. This experience was evident in my interviews. Some of the women explained that, because the emphasis is placed on pleasing the man and making sure he gets what he wants, women may not even know what pleases them sexually or think to ask for it. When talking about oral sex, Diana stated, "I think like girls feel like they're supposed to, like that's what a guy wants, more than anything else. Whereas I don't even think many girls know that that's something they might want [Laughs]." Oral sex is a useful case study of the sexist double standards involved in hookup sex. Each participant was specifically asked about the gendered expectations of oral sex and their answers all followed a similar trend. Respondents stated that performing oral sex on a woman was an "intimate" act that would only be deemed acceptable in relationships. Ignacio stated, "A guy who is going to return oral sex, to me, would have to be in a very committed relationship with his girl." Similarly, Fallon said, "I've heard both guys and girls say that like a woman getting oral sex is like way more intimate And so I'm like okay, I understand not wanting to do something you think is intimate with someone random, but then why does that same rule not apply for oral sex for men, you know?" Bryan explained men's mentality regarding oral sex further when he stated, "I think oral sex is viewed as like you're almost sacrificing yourself, you know, for someone else's pleasure. So like a dude would think that 'I would never stoop to that level' type deal. I think that's the actual like thought process that people have... that's beneath

me, like that's not my job type deal you know?" Female oral sex is thus conceptualized as an act of sacrifice for another's pleasure. However, this conceptualization goes against everything that a hookup is supposed to be – casual, lack of an emotional connection, and indifference. Women's pleasure is only to be considered in a committed relationship where their partner is supposed to care about their well being.

The extent to which women's pleasure has been neglected and overlooked is most evident in what the respondents did not say. When asked the questions, "Why do you think women feel expected to perform oral sex? In your view, why don't men feel this same expectation?" four out of the eight male respondents, and zero female respondents, admitted that this had never crossed their minds. Elijah, after pausing for a few seconds, responded, "That is a very good question [laughs]. That's very interesting, um I cannot say that I've thought about this before." Harry had a similar response when he said, "Wow, that's... okay that's an interesting question. God I've never really... okay I'm trying to think of how to answer this one." And the trend continued with Curtis when he said, "Um that is a tough one [laughs]... I don't know. I... that's a good question." This is clearly contrasted with the women's responses. For example, Grace admitted, "Yeah I... yeah I wonder about that a fair amount." The fact that so many male respondents had no idea that this was a common occurrence, whereas the women all knew what I was talking about, highlights the inequality between sexual pleasure and lack of discussion regarding female sexual pleasure in particular.

As the pleasure of hookup sex is held in suspicion, participants, both male and female, underscored the fact that oftentimes hookups are less about sex than they are about the social situation. As already discussed, men's motive for engaging in hookups is predominantly to show off their sexual prowess to male counterparts, not the sex itself (Grazian, 2010, p. 322). When

asked why men hookup, Harry said, “Statistics. Just boost his numbers. Um yeah physical pleasure's part of it but honestly like I would even say from personal experience, like a lot of the times I'll just do things. I don't even really care physically. One day, I was just like I'm not in to this at all. I'm literally just doing this to pad my stats a little bit.” Hooking up is less about sexual pleasure for men than it is about social status.

So why are women hooking up? As women's pleasure is often forgotten in these encounters, their reasoning must, like men's, have more to do with social factors. Grace, a non-participant in the hookup culture, echoed this puzzlement when she said, “Like, a lot of times the one night stand kind of hooking up isn't that pleasurable for women, especially if there's alcohol involved... So that's why I kinda don't understand.” When asked why women are entering the hookup culture, the overwhelming response from participants was: I don't know. Over and over again, when asked about men's involvement, both men and women cited status, some degree of pleasure, and social norms. But when it came to women, many respondents, both men and women, came up empty. Elizabeth tried to answer this difficult question when she said, “Alright I think for a guy it's probably like... makes them seem cooler I guess and just like is a confidence booster. But for girls, I don't know. I think it's er it's like sometimes the same for some girls. They just like doing that and it makes them feel good. I think other girls... er I don't really know actually [laughs]. Yeah I have no idea.” Curtis also tried to explain but was unsure in his answer. “Um I'm trying to think for women, I think... it's tough. I mean [sighs] yeah I think social pressure for both, I think is probably the best one I can give you.”

Some respondents did have theories as to why women entered the hookup culture such as having stories to trade, self-esteem, and some element of status, which is supported in the literature (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006, p. 488). But the number of respondents who

were at a loss when it came to answering this question may mean that the majority of these explanations are not convincing. One explanation though was mentioned more than any other: women are looking for a relationship. Interestingly, it was also only talked about by female respondents (with one exception). Women are seeking a connection and intimacy and enter the hookup culture either in the hope of a hookup turning in to a relationship or because it's the only option available to have a sexual connection with the opposite sex. Brooke explained, "I feel like girls are also looking for a relationship. So like it's more of a bonding experience for them and looking for like... I mean it can get lonely in college." The fact that only female respondents mentioned this motive underlines the clandestine and shameful nature of this drive. Hookup culture is supposed to be casual, with no strings attached. Therefore, women do not want to appear needy for fear that they will be judged for not playing by the hookup rules, and hide these motivations and fears from the men with whom they hookup.

The clandestine nature of this motive may also explain why men talked about this motive so little. Only one man mentioned intimacy and relationships as a motive for entering the hookup culture. Ignacio stated, "Some of us here and there, we can take [hookups] as, you know, a quick replacement to the heart. Um usually that hookup and a one-night-stand can fill it up, temporarily. Not permanently, but temporarily." Although Ignacio is the only man who mentioned this component, that does not necessarily mean it is not true for the rest of the respondents. Due to the pressure put on college-aged men to exhibit traditional male traits such as strength, rationality, and appearing unemotional, men may experience these feelings but are scared to admit them (Butler, 1990; Grazian, 2010, p. 321).

Analysis

The disparity involved in oral sex is troubling. It points to the greater issues of sexual double standards, objectification, and an overall lack of affection involved in hookups. It is not difficult to see the potential negative ramifications that could result from a culture that emphasizes the avoidance of vulnerability, caring, and responsibility while stressing anonymity, sexual conquest, and self-centered sexual pleasure. This is of course going to lead to objectification, usually of the less powerful participants, women.

For women, navigating sex in the world of hookups more often than not means negotiating men's pleasure and overlooking their own. This leads to a large number of sexually unsatisfied women and confusion over why they entered in to the hookup in the first place. This is another reason that may contribute to the regret women often feel after a hookup and the emotional stress that can ensue (Paul & Hayes, 2002).

Distinction between sexual assault and rape leads to fear among men

All of the women in this study and some of the men defined sexual assault and rape as intimately intertwined. Griffin said, "Sexual assault I mean essentially is rape." And Bryan said the definitions are "really kind of similar." The most frequent definition given was that sexual assault included any sexual touching or act, with the exception of penetration, performed without consent. Rape was then defined as "the next step": penetrative acts. For example, Finn said, "And like, it's just like the next step. Like sexual assault like you aren't having sex yet but like you're like basically almost forcing them like to it. And then rape is like actually having that sex." Diana explained further saying:

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual advance, any sort of touching. And I think you could even, well I guess assault implies physical but like if someone says something to you that's like sexually charged and makes you uncomfortable like that's a sort of violation that I would maybe put under that umbrella or at least in that realm. And then I think rape... I think rape is more like under

sexual assault, is like any sort of penetration or intercourse.

These definitions do seem to fit with standard governmental and legal definitions. Sexual assault is used as an umbrella term that covers rape, attempted rape, and unwanted fondling or sexual touching with rape being defined as unwanted penetrative acts. According to the Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network, “Rape is a form of sexual assault, but not all sexual assault is rape. The term rape is often used as a legal definition to specifically include sexual penetration without consent. For its Uniform Crime Reports, the FBI defines rape as ‘penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim’” (RAINN, 2009).

However, half of the men in this study had different definitions. They claimed that “sexual assault” was radically different from “rape” and a differentiation should be made. Harry explained:

I think rape can and should have a worse connotation. I think sexual assault is where the lines are greyed more... I think rape is just very overtly horrible and clear no. I think sexual assault is just where you know like a girl doesn't maybe for example, express like clear like no but like at the same time doesn't really give a clear yes. I think it's just like the situations in which it's not totally and utterly clear that like how the girl feels about it... I think it's a big issue in our culture right now and will be, because I think all too often, like I'm not trying to downplay how bad these instances are. I'm not trying to downplay what I view of sexual assault, but I think a lot of times what I would consider sexual assault, aka blurred lines type situations, get called rape and I think that's a dangerous attitude to have in our culture, because there is a distinction, I think.

In Harry's definition, rape is when a clear no is given and the assailant proceeds anyway. Sexual assault is when consent is blurred. Alex gives a similar definition when he said, “Rape is the complete domination over the other person's will, either through violence or through incapacitation... when there is like loud and clear ‘not in to this,’ that's when it definitely crosses

from an unwanted sexual advance that you know, that goes, that's um that's a sexual assault in to a rape.” When asked if consent needed to be verbal, Alex responded, “I think negative, like a removal of consent needs to be verbal. But an affirmation does not.” His definition of rape is therefore when sex occurs after a clear removal of consent. This plays in to the dangerous belief that silence counts as consent.

The idea that sexual assault is not as clear-cut as rape and is thus an entirely different crime, lends itself to the rape myth that rape must be violent (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

Ignacio exhibited this belief when he stated:

Rape it's more, it's more of a violent thing... Um but for sexual assault, it's more of a guy or a woman you know it can be either one. A woman can approach a guy; a guy can approach a woman. And um they can easily sexually touch them in any way shape or form uh that is sexual... Uh without the consent of the person being touched. But the person being touched has a say in it. Like she can, or he can, you know scream or you know go on a rampage and say 'oh my god this guy sexually assaulted me.' But in rape it's more, it's more of a violent thing where a guy or a woman could approach someone else and violently, you know, string them down and force sex upon them. So that's how I separate sexual assault and rape. One is more violent than the other.

If we were to use Harry, Alex, and Ignacio's definitions of sexual assault and rape then the majority of assaults occurring on college campuses would not qualify as rape.

As explicated in his response earlier, Harry believed that treating sexual assault and rape as synonymous is “dangerous” and a clear distinction should be made. He clarified why he thinks this is dangerous later in the interview and said, “I don't wanna downplay sexual assault 'cause I mean that guy's still guilty of putting the girl into a position where she wasn't comfortable, and he did sort of coerce her, but at the same time too like you know we could so very easily get branded a rapist and have our lives ruined.” Harry is differentiating between sexual assault and rape by categorizing one as not as bad as the other. If a man commits sexual assault, then that is

bad, but he still does not deserve to get branded a rapist and have his life ruined, because he sexually assaulted, not raped. Rape is thus criminalized and demonized while sexual assault is conceptualized as a mistake easy to make. Alex also saw sexual assault as a mistake that should not ruin a perpetrator's life forever. He said:

I don't necessarily want to say like everyone who has participated in a sexual assault is necessarily a bad person. People can be confused. People don't know where the line is between an unwanted sexual advance, a sexual assault, and a rape... It's like you, if the desire to, or if the drive to hook up mixed with the lack of education, makes someone make a decision that they regret later on, I don't think that makes them, necessarily a bad person

Thus, sexual assault is conceptualized as more nuanced, gray, and not as big of a deal as rape.

Despite half of the men citing definitions of sexual assault and rape that were in line with legal understandings, some of these men contradicted themselves throughout the interview and showed that they were not as clear on the definitions as they appeared. For example, Finn, who's above definition of sexual assault and rape was in line with RAINN's definition, defined consent as "a verbal agreement that like yeah, you're okay with uh having sex." He then clarified that consent must be verbal if either or both parties are drunk. However, when given the hypothetical situation mentioned earlier involving two intoxicated parties having sex after a party, Finn said:

Um, I don't know. It's a weird situation because I mean I guess like dictionary term it would be assault. But like if both of them were intoxicated it's sort of like hard to really like fault him for um doing that. But um I don't know like it's just a weird situation 'cause like she never really gave him consent... it's a really big grey area as to whether or not it's like actually sexual assault.

In this scenario, the woman was drunk and never gave verbal consent, so according to Finn's own definition of consent, consent was not given and this should be a clear-cut case of sexual assault or rape. The fact that Finn was so unsure about whether or not to classify this as an assault shows that definitions may not hold true in real-life situations and he may not be as clear

on those definitions as he seemed. Therefore, the actual number of men in this study who hold definitions in line with RAINN may be less in practice.

This may also have to do with the fact that almost every single male respondent reported feeling personally fearful of being accused of a sexual assault and emphasized the need to look at both sides of a situation when an accusation has been made. Distinctions between sexual assault and rape can lead to a fear of being accused as sexual assault is seen as easily mistaken. Also confusion over the definition of consent makes this terrain scary for men, because they feel as though one wrong move could end their lives, and they are not sure where to step. Curtis explained, “Um I think as a guy, you tend to be concerned about a false allegation. I mean especially you know where there's alcohol involved. You wake up the next morning and you know maybe you thought it went really well and the woman did not.” Similarly, Griffin explains how easy it can be to commit a sexual assault. He said, “I've like brought girls back to their room just for like, because I was like this isn't, like you're not even gonna remember. Like this is, it like would be rape. And it's scary. Because when you get that [drunk] and like bad things can easily happen to you... it's just like one thing that like personally I'm like really scared about.” For Griffin, the opportunity to take advantage of drunken women has presented itself to him on multiple occasions. His reflection on this fact, and the fear it engenders shows how easy he thinks it would be to commit this offense. He also highlights the fact that when girls get extremely intoxicated, bad things “can easily happen,” thus calling reference to the rape myth that blames victims for being too intoxicated (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Although I do not think Griffin is a large proponent of rape myths, and probably did not mean to blame women for being too intoxicated, I do think that this is an element that helps explain why Griffin thinks he is at such a risk for committing sexual assault that he needs to be “really scared” about it.

Although only one of the male respondents reported knowing someone who had been sexually assaulted, five reported knowing someone, some very distantly, who had been falsely accused. Harry said:

I know examples of guys who just didn't have a girl say no. And then the next day, they'll get like slammed with rape accusations. It literally ruins a person's career, it ruins your whole life... it's definitely a fear. And also like, I know stories like my brother knew a kid... who basically got like falsely accused and had his life basically ruined... more radical feminists tend to just feel as if, like tend to just discredit like men's fears, and that kind of thing you know. It is a huge fear whenever we go out because you know we do one wrong thing within a bedroom at a situation with just two people and our lives could be potentially destroyed.

Because people who “just didn’t have a girl say no” are considered sexual assaulters and not rapists, according to Harry’s definition, the fact that these men are being called rapists seems unjust. Harry and the other men in this study who share his fear of accusations, are not just scared of being falsely accused, they are scared of actually committing sexual assaults. This could be because, according to some definitions and the separation of sexual assault from rape, sexual assault seems like an easy mistake to make. Making one wrong move, a sexual assault, and thus being branded a rapist, is seen as unjust as consent is difficult to navigate and sexual consent can easily be a simple misunderstanding.

This was also found in comparable studies. In McMahon’s (2007) study with 205 student athletes, participants expressed the idea that rape can be accidental and is sometimes fabricated by women. “Examples included when both the victim and perpetrator are drunk or when there are so-called slipups or accidents that happen” (McMahon, 2007, p. 363). The danger of being too concerned about false accusations has already been discussed but should be underscored here. Thinking that false accusations happen more often than they do, the most used estimate being between 2 and 8% of reports, can result in false recantations and the silencing of the victim

(Applegate, 2013, p. 903; Krebs et al., 2007).

Race also plays in to this fear of accusations. Ignacio said:

Yeah we guys, especially minority males on campus, we're definitely scared of that... Um you know as a Latin male here on campus I try to steer away from trying to hookup as much, because if I do then, I'm afraid that that might occur to me and you know if I am falsely accused of something, who're are they gonna believe more? The woman or the male that was trying to hookup at the party? And of course they're gonna believe the woman... But yes I'm extremely terrified of being falsely accused for something that I didn't do.

This fear is real enough for Ignacio that it changes the way he interacts with the hookup culture completely, even limiting his involvement in it. Not only does he feel that his gender will play a role in not being believed, he also has his race to think about.

Because of this fear, many of the men were absolute that the police, universities, and society needed to do a better job of gaining the facts on both sides and not blindly believing the accuser. Curtis said:

I think we need to make sure that, while we certainly deal with the issue; that we don't, that we still gain the facts. That we don't come at it from one side, either from the guy's side or the girl's side. I think you have to examine each case as an individual event... A lot of times you know we see in the news these days where um someone's guilty until proven innocent. I think you know you have to gather the facts. You have to take a step back and not allow an emotional decision to be made. And I think at times that's what happens with some, with a lot of these very mainstream issues right now.

This distrust of jumping on the bandwagon and assuming the assailant is guilty was evident in the answers of many respondents. This comes from not only a fear of accusation, but also a suspicion that many of these cases could be false. Elijah, an RA, understands that false accusations are not common, but still echoes Curtis' wariness of jumping on the bandwagon, when he said, "While it's very low numbers that people lie about that, I feel like teaching people

that you have to believe someone, is something that should not be done. I feel like validation is correct and like empathizing and being there, but I don't feel like you have to like formally and outright say that you believe someone.” According to Elijah, RAs are trained to respond in a certain way to residents who come to them claiming they have been raped. RAs are to always validate the victim and ensure that they feel believed.

Every woman interviewed, and one man, said that they did not think false accusations are an issue that needs to be resolved. Bryan explained, “I don't think people understand how, I don't understand thankfully, how shitty of a process it is to go to somebody and say, ‘hey I was just sexually assaulted.’ And I don't think that's something that people take lightly. So I don't think that people would really lie about that.” Callie agreed when she said, “I don't know enough people who would be willing to, ‘I want to fuck with someone's life therefore I am going to accuse them of raping me because, or sexually assaulting me.’ Because I just, there's so many problems with that. You get almost nothing back from that. If anything you probably get stigmatized.” Elizabeth took it a step further and said, “I really don't think that's a big issue and like I think a lot of times people want to say they're false accusations just 'cause they don't wanna face the reality of sexual assault happening on their own campus.”

Interestingly, when asked about men's fears of being accused of sexual assault, many women responded that this was a good thing and maybe even leveled the playing field. Diana considered, “I think maybe, you know, just as unfair as it is for girls to like have a way higher likelihood of being assaulted, like what's unfair for guys is they have to be a little more ginger in the way they approach hookup scenarios.” Women are constantly on the lookout for a dangerous situation, so they are not very sympathetic to men's fears. An even playing field of awareness, when it comes to hookup and party culture, is not something that women are used to. Grace

explained her frustration with her boyfriend when he became too intoxicated at a party:

It's [sexual assault] like pretty much on my mind anytime I go out. Even just like in the Mods... But at a certain point like it just bothered me a little bit that he wasn't even aware of where I was or who I was talking to. Whereas like I'm always aware of like who's looking at me and how much I've had to drink. Because like, he didn't have to worry about how much he was drinking because no one was like gonna take advantage of him when he was stumbling to the bathroom.

Similarly, Brooke said, “You're kinda on constant alert 'cause, you know, if you're in an 8 man, like one or two of you are gonna like statistically are gonna end up getting raped or something like that, or sexually assaulted.” This is also demonstrated in relevant literature. Kimmel (2010) says that, for women, “the threat of rape alters the meaning and feel of the night” (p. 560).

Perhaps men and women are not so different after all, as exhibited by the testimony of both male and female respondents, rape, both the threat of being raped and the threat of committing/being accused of committing rape, definitely alters the feel of the night for both genders.

Analysis

It is heartening that most of the respondents in this study did not hold mythical definitions of rape as the “men jumping out of the bushes in the middle of night” scenario and many understood that sexual assault and rape are synonymous. It is important to encourage this type of thinking because the alternative can be extremely dangerous. When so distinctly differentiating between rape and sexual assault, people can often become confused and contradictory, as we have seen. More troubling, using this framework, sexual assault can appear to be not as serious as rape. This produces apathy towards sexual assaults and normalizes them in to simple “mistakes”.

Most of the participants gave very intense and dramatic definitions of “rape.” For example, Alex gave the definition as “complete domination over another person’s will.” While a

very moving definition and one that really captures the offence, these extreme depictions can make it very hard to classify campus situations as rape. Many of these instances do not seem violent or clear cut enough to be classified in such a way. According to Harry's definition of sexual assault as "blurred lines" the majority of campus assaults would not classify as rape at all. Sexual assaulters are just like them; rapists are the real criminals.

Men's fears come not only from a misplaced belief that false accusations is something that happens enough to warrant concern, but also the fear that they will actually commit an assault. Because sexual assault is so removed from "rape" there is this conception that some of these assaults could occur as a result of a drunken misunderstanding and deserve to be pardoned. This has dangerous ramifications of normalizing dangerous and immoral behavior as well as dismissing the pain sexual assault victims must deal with.

In fact, only two male participants mentioned the psychological impacts on sexual assault victims at all. One of whom was, probably not coincidentally, the only man to disclose he knew someone who had been sexually assaulted. The men often lamented that men's lives should be ruined over an accusation, but they never discussed the disrupted lives of survivors. Similarly, when talking about their fear of being accused or making a costly mistake, the men discussed it in terms of their fear of the ramifications, rather than their fear of hurting another human being. For example, when Harry said, "It is a huge fear whenever [he and his male friends] go out because you know we do one wrong thing within a bedroom at a situation with just two people and our lives could be potentially destroyed." He never mentioned the other person in that bedroom and what she could be feeling.

And she is probably feeling quite a bit. According to a study of trauma among undergraduate students already mentioned, sexual assault was associated with the most PTSD

symptoms of any other common trauma (Frazier et al., 2009, p. 457). Campus sexual assault prevention programs need to emphasize how survivors feel after these assaults and the impact it can have on their lives.

Also, with all this talk of labels and definitions, it is important to let victims label their own experiences. As Kahn (2004) noted, many sexual assault survivors are better able to process what happened to them by defining their experience as something other than “rape”.

Empowering each individual survivor to reclaim his or her experience involves listening. We need to listen to the victim and not silence them. Even though Elijah brought up his concerns with being taught to always believe the victim, with substantial stigma and emotional trauma associated with sexual assault and the low numbers of false reports, we must. Otherwise we play in to the structures that have been silencing women for centuries.

Pressure to be “Alpha” by any means necessary

The pressure that men feel to impress their male counterparts with their skills at flirting and seducing women has been much discussed so far. As already mentioned, respondents frequently referenced the “girl hunt” culture and the pressure to conform to it. But the specific ways this has influenced the way that men think and deal with issues of sexual assault is worth noting. Many of the men interviewed used the term “alpha” to describe the ideal that they feel they must strive towards. Alex explained, “So definitely when you go out with like a group of dudes, you'll get that, ‘I'm gonna show like I'm the alpha male right here’. Even if it is like your friends and you know them super well. You just, it's just an underlying I don't know biological and social drive to like be that guy.” This idea of biology also came up a few times in the men's interviews. Harry in particular felt very strongly about the role biology plays. He said:

I think guys place a very high premium on being alpha males and like being dominant, being assertive, confident, and so

guys have to initiate in order to show those characteristics. Because at the end of the day it's, you know, it's kinda like evolutionary based. Like women are gonna be at the end of the day attracted to guys who exhibit those characteristics. Why? 'Cause in the caveman days, women you know would want like the alpha male of the group to be their protector. So you know it's very, I use the term alpha and beta a lot. But I mean I think it comes off as beta if you are I guess too weak to initiate with a girl and you try to wait for her to make a move.

Not only is biology used to explain the intrinsic assertiveness of men; he also used it to explain how it functions to attract members of the opposite sex and facilitate the hookup process. Harry was not alone in this thinking. Ignacio also emphasized the need for men to be “alpha” not only to impress their male counterparts but also women. Ignacio explained, in his view, how to effectively pick up women saying, “Depends on your game. You know whether you're good or not... you just gotta make sure your presence is known. You just gotta make sure you're the alpha in the situation.” Both Harry and Ignacio are assuming that this assertive “alpha” presence is what women want and thus is the best way to conduct oneself in the hookup culture. Therefore, the “girl hunt” culture that rests on impressing other men, itself rests on the assumption that it is impressive because it is what women want.

However, this assumption can lead to some troubling conclusions. As already mentioned, in order for consent to be recognized at Antioch College, students must obtain a positive verbal response at every step of the sexual encounter (Beres, 2007, p. 102; Kimmel, 2008, p. 240). In response to this policy Harry stated:

I know like this might incite some people who are kinda feminist, but like I think it's really idealistic. I think at the end of the day, a guy who does that, like just because traditionally guys haven't done that, so I think that a guy who started doing that now I honestly just don't think would be attractive to women because like I said, there is, at the end of the day, and people can deny this, but there is like a primal animal component to attraction. And I think a guy who, you know, every step of the way before he does anything has

to get the girl's approval demonstrates a lack of confidence, a lack of assertiveness, a lack of leadership, at the end of the day that just you know, in the most like primal animal sense, it's just not like attractive.

According to Harry, women are only attracted to confident, assertive, leaders and asking for consent is foregoing that confidence and appears weak and unattractive. This mentality can obviously have very serious ramifications with regards to obtaining consent. Not only can asking for consent seem weak, it also gives the person an out. Each respondent in this study was asked to respond to the following situation:

A girl and a guy are hooking up after a party, both have had a lot to drink, he pulls out a condom and starts to put it on. She doesn't say anything but her eyes keep closing and she isn't very actively involved. They have sex. Fall asleep afterwards... move on with their lives.

Griffin responded that this situation should probably be classified as a sexual assault but the lines were blurry as the man was also drunk and she did not give a clear no. When asked why he thought the man in this situation did not ask for consent, Griffin responded:

Like if he were to not go through with it and wake up, like say they still woke up next to each other, um and then like if he was telling his friends about that and like, 'oh like we got to here but like I didn't do it' then he would most likely be ridiculed. And I think in your drunken state, you're subconsciously thinking about that like 'oh I need to tell so and so this, like that this happened, like I hooked up with her'. And you just like kinda gloss over like the idea of asking her and then never do it.

By not giving the woman an out and the opportunity to say no, the man in this scenario secures his status and avoids having to make a more clear cut decision to continue even after she says no. This pressure is so intense that men feel like they need to obtain sex and assert their inner "alpha" by any means necessary. This idea is corroborated in Kimmel's (2008) study in which he found men frequently described lying, purposefully getting women drunk, and "not taking no for

an answer” in order to get “laid” (p. 217-218). The idea that asking for consent is not masculine and could result in judgment by women, coupled with the fear of ridicule and judgment by male peers is a dangerous situation indeed.

The pressure to conform to this idealized masculinity can not only affect the way men act within their own hookups, it can also affect the way they deal with those of their friends and the men around them. Griffin explained that negotiating close relationships with “his boys” while still trying to do what he knows is right is something he struggles with, especially as a freshman. He said, “Especially with college guys, I feel like there is such- like that pressure to like, when you're with your boys um to like... and if one of your boys is like, ‘oh like give her another drink’, you like you don't wanna be like ‘no like that's, like she's already had enough.’ You're just gonna be like ‘oh okay.’” The peer pressure to follow the “guy code” can thus result in a culture of enabling coercive sexual behavior even when the majority of men know it is wrong (Kimmel, 2008, p. 219).

However, not all those interviewed viewed consent as being discordant with masculinity. Going back to respondents’ answers to the policy at Antioch, an interesting finding emerged. In direct contrast to the Humphreys and Herold (2003) study that found most students disliked this policy as it was considered unrealistic and unromantic, these opinions only arose in the answers of three respondents (p. 48). Only three out of the sixteen respondents, two men and one woman, thought that Antioch’s policy was unreasonable. Harry’s response above is one example; Griffin gave another when he said, “It's so hard to do. Um because like if you're in the moment, it's such a buzz kill to be like ‘oh like can I take off your shirt or like do you wanna have sex?’ Like that doesn't really fit in the mood... It's hard when you're like hooking up with someone and you

don't know them to bring that up.” And Hannah simply said, “I think it is, you know, just a little over the top.”

The overwhelming majority of respondents stated that they thought this policy was extremely smart, especially with regards to sex among acquaintances and strangers. Diana affirmed, “Yeah. I think it's good. Again, like I could see how, if you're like you've been in a relationship with someone for five years, like you're not gonna like yes yes yes, like eventually you'll get to a place. But in a hookup scenario, absolutely. Especially if you don't know the person very well.” Amy echoed this sentiment when she said, “But definitely in terms of a hookup culture I think it... like say it's someone that you don't know, I feel like it definitely, that should definitely be the model.” Brooke explained further:

Um if it's someone you know well I think it's kinda different 'cause you kinda know where it's going and you're more comfortable with each other so it's kinda like easier to read body language. But if it's a stranger, I think that is a good idea. 'Cause then you're just, there's no blurred line, no grey area. You kinda know exactly what's going down and if they're okay with it. And like it doesn't make anyone feel awkwardly pressured in to it like when they're in the moment and they're kinda like ‘oh wait slow down’ but they don't wanna say it 'cause they don't wanna feel like weird about it. So it kinda prevents that and makes them feel like very comfortable, very safe.

Finn thought that the verbal component of this policy was effective for helping to navigate a drunken hookup specifically. He said, “I think it has to be verbal if like you're both drunk. ‘Cause like something that, with alcohol something can be like misinterpreted as like a yes signal when in reality it was like ‘no I'm not okay with this!’”

These respondents were also aware of the criticisms this policy has received and addressed those as well. Bryan was especially emphatic about the usefulness of a policy such as Antioch’s and said, “There’s no reason not to do it... like this isn't the movies you know? Like

I'm not gonna sweep this girl off her feet, we're both drunk.” This addresses the criticism that the policy is unromantic or will ruin the mood. Specifically looking at the responses in this study, this speaks to Harry’s assertion that consent is not manly or sexy. By asking for consent, Harry thinks this is taking away some of that spontaneity and manly assertiveness that is present in almost every sex scene in pop culture.

Callie thinks that criticisms of this policy are ridiculous and are simply because people are too uncreative to think of sexy ways to ask for consent. She said:

I think it is, it can be awkward. But so is sex. Um that's just a part of it. That's just something that you're gonna have to confront. And again it is... it's awkward 'cause it's a lack of creativity on someone's part. 'Cause again, you don't have to say like ‘do you want me to put this in here?’ You don't have to say that [laughs].

Similarly, Grace said, “I think there are ways to do it that still count as like verbal consent um but don't have to be, ‘is this okay?’ ‘Yes’... Yeah I think it's good and like you can ask in sexy ways [laughs] about things.”

Analysis

The pressure that college men feel to adhere to a strict “alpha” code is wrapped up in the idea that male dominance and assertiveness is a biological trait that cannot be negotiated. However, this is a very limiting idea of manhood and restricts men to stringent norms that can be harmful, especially in an isolating bubble like college that intensifies the expression of traditional gender norms (Kimmel, 2010, p. 130). Not only can this result in detrimental behavior that objectifies and harms women, it can also be mentally harmful to men. Take Griffin, who described his own struggle to comply with social norms while knowing those norms were immoral. This is a tough road to navigate for an 18-year-old.

At the core of this issue is the idea that consent is antithetical to idealized masculinity. The problem this poses for consent is two-fold. First, asking for consent is seen as showing weakness, not taking initiative, and failing to adequately woo a woman with your sexual confidence. This is assumed to be unattractive to women and is thus deemed unmanly and will fail to impress one's male peers. Many men such as Harry think that consent is not sexy, to both men and women. This needs to change. As evidenced in the testimony of the majority of participants, maybe it has already started. As Callie joked, people need to be more creative in the ways they ask for consent. But this can only happen if norms of masculinity are questioned and consent is reimagined. Honest dialogue needs to be encouraged among college students surrounding these issues such as how to navigate consent in a way that seems reasonable with the flow and apparent spontaneity of the situation. Callie's call for creativity can be realized with sex positive conversations about how others have navigated consent, what works, what does not, and idea for the future. We also need to debunk the view that masculinity must involve taking charge and not listening to one's sexual partner. The majority of the respondents within this study are already doing just that. The ideas are there but just need to be circulated and discussed in order to get everyone on the same page.

Students are desperate for frank conversation

In every interview conducted, the respondents expressed the need for more conversation. They felt that honest dialogue needed to be encouraged on their campus with regard to these issues. When talking about the effectiveness of a university-wide Bystander Intervention program, Brooke stated:

I think it's a lot of telling people what to do and not talking to them about it. I think people would more accept it if they... like would accept it more if it was like a conversation. Um if people were more active in it and talked about it more and it was like kind of

almost a common thing to talk about, I think it would be like a lot better.

This point was especially salient for men. Every single female respondent said that they have talked about many different aspects of campus sexual assault with their female friends on more than one occasion. But only two male respondents, Bryan and Ignacio, said they talked about it often with friends.

Perhaps one of the reasons that guys seem so unwilling to talk about these issues is that they may feel personally attacked whenever the conversation arises. When talking about his recent experience with Bystander Intervention training, Finn stated, “It almost seems like um it seems a lot more like ‘oh like one of you guys is gonna be a person that rapes somebody.’ Like it seems a lot more aggressive than like if you were talking to a bunch of girls.” Not only may men feel attacked for the crimes of a minority of their gender but they may also feel attacked if they try to assert opinions that are not necessarily politically correct. Harry said:

I think it's very difficult especially in a pretty liberal campus like BC, um you know there's a pretty loud group of like, you know, like the sexual assault groups and whatnot like are very quick to like... I'll put it this way, I think men are too afraid to speak out and kind of say you know some of these counter opinions because like we're so afraid we'll get like branded all sorts of things like, you know there's the term like rape culture and like it really is annoying. I mean people are so quick to throw out like ‘oh you're promoting rape culture.’

While there are problematic and worrisome issues with Harry’s rebuff of the legitimacy of rape culture, he does bring up an important point that men oftentimes feel afraid to express their true opinions or experiences because they are afraid of being judged. In my interviews with men, a lot of them said things like “I’m trying to say this the right” (Curtis) and were careful with their word choices. While admirable that they do not want to offend, it is important that in serious conversations we look past political correctness to get at the heart of what men and

women are really feeling and experiencing to educate and correct inappropriate behaviors.

Alex brought up a lot of important issues and explained how he thinks it should be addressed when he said:

I think it should be a required part of orientation. And framed in way, not to be like, this is how to keep you from raping women. No, this is how you should be a decent dude. Um this is how we act on this campus, these are the norms, know them. And not in a way that's like sex is bad. It's like, it's gonna happen. Hopefully you'll get laid, hopefully you'll be drunk a lot of the time. Just don't fuck up. 'Cause I know you don't wanna fuck up. And here's how you know not to. Um so a more sex positive, culture positive, like drinking culture positive kind of way. And being like, just be careful. These are some signs; these are like how other people have handled these situations... There's been times a day after [a night out] where I'm like ugh I shouldn't have like went in for the kiss 'cause I should have picked up on this sign or that sign. And I'm like well I made an ass of myself, and hopefully like I'm not hated now. Um and I don't know if guys necessarily talk about that to each other where they're like 'oh I think I crossed the line.' I don't think people ever do that. Which might be problematic. Because you know, if you know that other people have crossed the line, and that they're attempting to be better or something like that, you know. And you know if people talk about that line more often, maybe that would help like make it not a fine line.

Students need to talk about these issues so they can help each other navigate the complex landscape of college. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be happening much on the Boston College campus. When talking about sexual assault on her specific campus, Grace described, “It kind of freaks me out like how quiet the issue is on BC's campus. 'Cause I feel like it definitely happens. And not that I think like a person should be publically shamed, but then at a certain point like I feel like I would almost rather know like this is happening And it's like real.” The lack of conversation serves to make this issue seem as though it is not really happening. Many other respondents echoed the silence surrounding the issue and the uncertainty as to whether it was really happening. Harry said, “Um but I haven't at least seen or heard enough here to

basically warrant calling [college campus sexual assault] an epidemic just because I don't think it's super widespread.” Griffin also said, “You know I'll be playing basketball, I'll go up and like someone fouls me and I'll be like ‘oh like you raped me.’ Um so yeah it's like it's not used as a negative term really. Or like I wouldn't like use that negatively with my friends. Yeah it doesn't seem like it's happening.” Because of the lack of exposure given to this issue, sexual assault does not seem to be a horrific problem happening around him and Griffin does not feel the weight of the word “rape” and the weight it could carry for the people who hear him.

This finding is further compounded when one considers that the only man who vehemently stated that sexual assault on college campuses was definitely an epidemic was also the only man who stated that he had female friends who had been sexually assaulted. Ignacio said, “It's basically an epidemic; it's an outbreak. I can't believe how many of them are assaulted per night, per weekend. It's a scary thing honestly it really is.”

Analysis

With an issue as complex and pervasive as college campus sexual assault, it can seem as though it is an unwinnable battle. However, students, the ones at the front lines, have many ideas and opinions on this issue that deserve to be heard. University administrations, governments, and academia should listen to these students as they are the ones with first hand, intimate knowledge of this problem and have the largest stake in it being solved. Listening to the students I interviewed, it was abundantly clear that they are desperate for conversation. In a time of indeterminacy and self-discovery, students are caught somewhere between adulthood and adolescence and crave some sort of roadmap or support to help them navigate the rough terrain. Frank conversation among peers, describing their failures and missteps, their confusion and pain, as well as their successes and ways they have cracked the life code of college could be

invaluable for students. It is also important that conversation surrounding this topic allows all opinions to be heard in a positive and welcoming environment. Programs such as Bystander Intervention should also be conversational as well as informative, while being careful to educate and not attack the male gender as a whole. Not only could this help alleviate some of the emotional and mental stresses of college, it could also help lesson the peer pressure, insecurities, misconceptions, and indifference that so often lead to problematic behavior and sexual assaults.

Implications/Conclusions:

The findings of this study all have to do with students feeling as though they are not responsible for their own decisions and failing to empathize, often objectifying, with fellow students. There needs to be a shift in the way college students are introduced to the brand new world of college. They need to realize that their decisions do in fact matter and rape prevention education needs to include frank conversation among students of all genders, both in single gender groups and mixed. These programs should be teaching more about how to negotiate consent, the sexual double standards that exist, along with how to traverse peer pressure and impossible gender ideals.

The students in this study not only exhibited almost all the same behaviors as mentioned in recent literature, but most of the time they knew they were exhibiting them. They mentioned relevant theories and concepts such as “rape culture”, prefaced some of their comments with “I know this is generalizing” and “I know this is not how I should be thinking about this but...”, and were very reflective in their own experience with the hookup culture. Conversation is key in case like this. The students have a lot of the knowledge and the tools they need to discuss these issues frankly and intelligently, but few have the entire story. They merely need some help

distributing these ideas to the general student population, in a forum in which they can learn from each other.

Appendices

Appendix A:

Men

		<i>Heavy Drinkers</i>				<i>Light Drinkers</i>			
Seniors	Alex	white	3 days	9+ drinks	Elijah	black	1 day	3-4 drinks	
	Bryan	white	2 days	9+ drinks	Curtis	white	1 day	1-2 drinks	
	Harry	white	2 days	9+ drinks					
Freshman	Griffin	white	2 days	7-8 drinks	Finn	white	1 day	3-4 drinks	
	Ignacio	hispanic	2 days	5-6 drinks					

Women

		<i>Heavy Drinkers</i>				<i>Light Drinkers</i>			
Seniors	Hannah	white	2 days	7-8 drinks	Amy	white	1 day	1-2 drinks	
	Diana	white	2 days	5-6 drinks	Grace	white	1 day	3-4 drinks	
	Fallon	hispanic	3 days	5-6 drinks					
Freshman	Callie	asian	2 days	5-6 drinks	Brooke	white	2 days	1-2 drinks	
	Elizabeth	white	1 day	5-6 drinks					

Appendix B:

Masculinity/Femininity, Sexual Ideologies, and Navigating Sex in College

Calling all Boston College undergraduates 18 years of age or older!

Please consider participating in this undergraduate thesis research study.

This study focuses on the issues and norms associated with hookup culture, masculinity/femininity, and issues surrounding sexual assault. Not much research has been done with regards to the difference between men and women's lived experiences regarding sex on college campuses. This research hopes to fill in that gap.

It won't take more than an hour! If you're interested click on the link below to sign up.

[Link to Survey](#)

Appendix C:

Consent Form

Boston College Sociology Department

Informed Consent to be in the study: *Masculinity/Femininity, Sexual Ideologies, and Navigating Sex in College*

Researcher: *Brittany Duncan*

Type of consent: *Adult Consent Form 18+*

Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study of the experience of undergraduate students at BC in regards to their masculinity/femininity, sexual ideologies, and how they think about navigating sex in a college environment.
- You were selected to be in the study because you are an undergraduate student at Boston College over the age of 18.
- Please read this form. Ask any questions that you may have before you agree to be in the study.

Purpose of Study:

- The purpose of this study is to learn about the social and personal experience students at BC in the environment of “hookup culture”.
- The total number of people in this study is expected to be 10 women and 10 men.

What will happen in the study:

- If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to participate in an in-person interview that will last approximately 60 minutes. This interview will be recorded.

Risks and Discomforts of Being in the Study:

- I predict there will be little or no risk. Nevertheless, you may feel confused or uncomfortable when talking about your masculinity/femininity, sexual ideology, and how it affects your experience.
- This study may include risks that are unknown at this time.

Benefits of Being in the Study:

- The purpose of the study is to better understand the difference in male and female perspectives on hookup culture, sex in college, and the impact of gender norms on college life.
- The benefits of being in this study are: You may feel satisfied after reflecting about who you are in terms of your masculinity, gender norm beliefs, and sexual ideologies by comprehending how this has affected your college experience. Knowing that you are helping others be aware of the role the male sexual experience in colleges by contributing to the literature on related issues may also make you feel satisfied.

Payments:

- If there will be no payment for participation in this study.

Costs:

- There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

Confidentiality:

- The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we may publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file.
- All electronic information will be coded and secured using a password-protected file. Only Professor Gray and the primary researcher, Brittany Duncan, will have access to interview transcripts and all other research information. Transcripts and research records will be destroyed after completion of this project at the end of the Spring 2016 semester.
- However, the Institutional Review Board at Boston College and internal Boston College auditors may review the research records.

Choosing to be in the study and choosing to quit the study:

- Choosing to be in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to be in this study, it will not affect your current or future relations with the University.
- You are free to quit at any time, for whatever reason.
- There is no penalty or loss of benefits for not taking part or for quitting. This will not affect or jeopardize your present or future faculty/University relationships.
- During the research process, you will be notified of any new findings from the research that may make you decide that you want to stop being in the study.

Getting Dismissed from the study:

- The researcher may dismiss you from the study at any time for the following reasons: (1) it is in your best interests (e.g. side effects or distress have resulted), (2) you have failed to comply with the study rules.

Contacts and Questions:

- The researchers conducting this study are BC undergraduate Brittany Duncan and Professor Paul Gray. For questions or more information concerning this research you may contact Brittany Duncan at (617) 516- 8398 or duncanba@bc.edu. If you prefer, you may also contact Paul Gray at paul.gray@bc.edu
- If you believe you may have suffered a research related injury, contact Brittany Duncan at 617-516-8398 who will give you further instructions.
- If you have any questions about your rights as a person in this research study, you may contact: Director, Office for Research Protections, Boston College at (617) 552-4778, or irb@bc.edu

Copy of Consent Form:

- You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records and future reference.

Statement of Consent:

- I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form. I have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to be in this study. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form.

Signatures/Dates

- Study Participant (Print Name): _____ Date _____
Participant: _____ Date _____

Appendix D:

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT***

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Brittany Duncan (ID: 5142249)
- **Email:** duncanba@bc.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Boston College (ID: 1155)
- **Phone:** 6125168398

- **Curriculum Group:** Human Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Social/Behavioral Research Course
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Report ID:** 17544324
- **Completion Date:** 10/06/2015
- **Expiration Date:** 10/05/2018
- **Minimum Passing:** 75
- **Reported Score*:** 79

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED
------------------------------------	----------------

Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127)	10/06/15
Students in Research (ID: 1321)	10/06/15
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	10/06/15
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	10/06/15
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	10/06/15
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	10/06/15
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	10/06/15
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	10/06/15
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	10/06/15
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	10/06/15
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	10/06/15
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	10/06/15
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	10/06/15
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects (ID: 488)	10/06/15
Boston College (ID: 12098)	10/06/15

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI ProgramEmail: citisupport@miami.edu

Phone: 305-243-7970

Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

Appendix E:

Interview Guide

Tell me a little about yourself: how old are you, where did you grow up, family, hobbies....

Make sure they get at:

1. Where grew up
2. Family
3. Religion
4. College major
5. Relationship status
6. How much would you say you are involved in sports? Hobbies?
7. What sexuality do you identify with most?
8. Political beliefs

Interview prompts:

1. Does BC have a hookup culture? Can you explain it to me?
 - If they don't hit on these points...
 - a. How would you define the word "hookup"?
 - b. Do most people participate?
 - c. What happens after a hook up?
 - d. Has "an average night out" changed over the years for you? Do you think hookup culture is different for seniors vs. freshman? (do seniors hook up less?)
 - e. Do you usually go out with male friends? Do you think that has shaped the way you think about hookup culture/participate in it?
 - f. What role does alcohol play? – Different for women?
2. Why do you think men are frequently seen as the initiator in heterosexual relationships?
3. What other reasons, besides physical pleasure, might make a man want to hook up with a woman? Woman hook up with a man?
4. How are men and women judged differently in hook up culture? Why do you think this is?
5. Why do you think women feel expected to perform oral sex? In your view, why don't men feel this same expectation?
6. Do you think students think about sex the same way as our parent's generation?
7. Hookup culture: positive or negative?
8. BC students often embrace the "work hard, play hard" mentality. Why do you think the weekend party culture at BC seems to be so disconnected from our weekday selves? Is there a disconnect here between acceptable moral codes?
9. I've heard some people say, college isn't quite real life; it's a protected environment, not out in the "real world" yet. What do you think about that?
 - a. Do you think this makes people feel as though their decisions, even if poor, don't matter that much? The "it's just college" mentality?
10. How would you define the word "rape"? "Sexual assault"?
11. What do you consider consent?
 - a. What do you feel about the new recommendation that one should obtain verbal consent at every step of the sexual encounter?
 - b. Do you think alcohol can limit the ability to interpret consent clearly?

12. What do you think when you hear the phrase “College campus sexual assault epidemic”? What about when you see it on the news? Or hear people talking about it on campus?
13. What is BC doing to address this issue? Is anything missing? Do men and women take different messages from these initiatives? On a larger scale, what steps should we be taking to address this issue?
14. Because this is very much displayed a woman as victim, man as perpetrator issue... how do you navigate this topic as a man? Do you discuss it with male friends?

The next question I'm going to ask asks you to imagine a scenario that may cause you to feel uncomfortable or upset. I want to remind you that you can stop participating at any time and you can choose not to respond to this question.

15. A girl and a guy are hooking up after a party, both have had a lot to drink, he pulls out a condom and starts to put it on. She doesn't say anything but her eyes keep closing and she isn't very actively involved. They have sex. Fall asleep afterwards... move on with their lives. Common at BC? Is this assault?

- Is there anything we haven't touched on that you'd like to talk about?

If you are feeling upset as a result of participating in this interview, the university counseling services are available to you. If you have any questions about how to access these services I would be happy to help.

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