

# Explaining Collegiate Sexual Assault Offending and Victimization Using a Feminized Routine Activities Framework

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## Abstract

We extend the literature on collegiate sexual assault by examining patterns of victimization and offending across multiple college campuses. We argue that routine activities are influenced by a gender structure that informs “likely” offenders and “suitable” victims and conceptualize college campuses as hot spots for sexual aggression. Using Campus Sexual Assault Survey data, we find that the odds of victimization are increased among women reporting low academic engagement and high engagement with Greek organizations. The odds of offending increase among males reporting heavy involvement with athletic events. Substance use and IPV increase the odds of victimization and offending.

Keywords: Collegiate Sexual Assault, College Violence, Routine Activities, Violence against Women, Sexual Aggression

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## Introduction

College life has traditionally been viewed as a positive life event where young people develop new friendships and begin a transition into adult life. However, institutions of higher education have increasingly received attention for Title IX violations in recent years. For many, Title IX is associated with protecting female students against sex and gender discrimination in athletics by educational institutions. However, it is a wide-reaching civil rights law passed in 1972 as an addition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational institution that receives federal funding.

Eight years after Title IX became law, five students sued Yale College, arguing that their Title

IX rights had been violated due to the school’s failure to provide students with a way to file sexual harassment complaints. *Alexander v. Yale*, 631 F.2d 178 (2d Cir. 1980), established that an institution’s failure to address sexual harassment could be considered sex discrimination in education. Over a decade later, as a part of the Higher Education Amendments of 1992 (s. 1150, 102nd), Congress enacted the “Campus Sexual Assault Victim’s Bill of Rights.” Further legislative actions were taken to protect the victim’s rights and to ensure that institutions adequately address complaints of sexual violence on campuses. In 2011, The Office of Civil Rights within the Education Department issued a “Dear Colleague Letter,” which further outlined educational institutions’ responsibilities to ensure

Title IX compliance regarding sexual harassment, including sexual violence. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education (2019), since the publication of the “Dear Colleague Letter,” The Office of Civil Rights has conducted 502 investigations at institutions across the country that have allegedly violated Title IX rights in the handling of sexual violence complaints. As of September 27, 2019, the Department of Education lists 350 pending cases of Title IX violations with sexual violence listed as the type of discrimination. The renewed focus on universities’ failures to abide by Title IX serves as a reminder that sexual assault is a significant social issue. Indeed, the fact that universities are facing a higher degree of scrutiny about their treatment of women who report being sexually violated illustrates sexual violence on college campuses as a growing, publicized issue.

While political and public attention on collegiate sexual assault may be relatively recent, research has long-established that college students are disproportionately involved in sexual assaults. Sexual assault on college and university campuses occurs at nearly five times the rate of the U.S. population as a whole (Fisher, Cullen, and Turner 2000; Black Black, Basile, Breiding, Smith, Walters, Merrick, Chen, and Stevens 2011). Most females have experienced some form of sexual aggression since entering college (Garrett-Gooding and Senter 1987), with about 15% of women reporting being victimized in an academic year (Fisher, Cullen, and Turner 2000). Despite the disproportionate representation of college students in sexual assault experiences, few studies have simultaneously examined patterns of sexual assault offending and victimization on college campuses.

Of the studies that have been done on this issue, several rely on routine activities (RA) theory to frame their analysis. RA theory posits that crime occurs when daily activities of social life bring together a motivated offender, a “suitable” target, and a lack of “capable” guardianship converge (Cohen and Felson 1979; Felson and Cohen 1979). We are unaware of any existing study of collegiate sexual assault that analyzes more than one component of RA theory. Most studies have focused on investigating either patterns of victimization (e.g., Franklin and Menaker 2018; Schwartz and Pitts 1995; Krebs Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, and Martin 2009) or offending (e.g., Benedict 1997; Copenhaver and Grauerholz 1991; Crosset Ptacek, McDonald, and Benedict 1996; Garrett-Gooding and Senter 1987; Jackson and Veneziano 2006; Lackie and deMan 1997; Ryan and Kanjorski 1998; Murnen, Wright, and Kaluzny 2002; Sanday 1990; Schacht 1996; Schwartz DeKeseredy, Tait, and Alvi 2001) thus precluding a comprehensive portrait of this issue. Also, prior

research on this issue often relies on data collected before 1990. Furthermore, the few studies that utilize relatively recent data are limited in their generalizability due to restricted sample sizes or single-state focus. Given the recent attention on collegiate sexual assault as well as the decreasing stigmatization of abuse, admissions of sexual violence victimization may be more widely reported, thus providing us with updated information about patterning.

Utilizing 2005-2006 survey data from multiple universities and relying on a RA framework, we investigate patterns of sexual assault victimization and offending on college campuses. After briefly summarizing the theoretical framework, we discuss the importance of the broader gender structure in shaping the usual activities. Following, we argue that college life is a unique social experience in its emphasis on drinking and partying among a young adult population. Following the work of Schwartz and Pitts (1995), we conceptualize university campuses as a “hot spot” for sexual aggression. Next, we specify models that separately and systematically elucidate patterns of collegiate sexual assault victimization and offending. We close by discussing the implications of these findings, as well as the social responsibilities of scholars, college administrators, and policy makers to maintain awareness of the prevalence of this gendered crime.

### **Theoretical Framework: Routine Activities (RA) Theory**

RA theory seeks to explain crime, including crimes of sexual violence, by focusing on everyday life as potentially criminogenic. As the theory’s name suggests, crime is conceptualized as an opportunistic event that arises from commonplace, routine practices (Felson and Cohen 1979; Felson 1998). Fundamentally speaking, the theory proposes that opportunities for crime occur when three conditions converge: a motivated offender, a “suitable” target, and a lack of guardianship. Thus, crime happens when the usual activities of everyday life bring together a motivated offender and suitable victim with no competent or capable guardians (Cohen and Felson 1979). Although crime may still occur if one of these factors is removed, it is most likely when all three of these conditions are present (Felson and Cohen 1979). Usual or routine activities may include any action that frequently occurs to meet the needs of an individual. These include, but are not limited to, behaviors that meet survival, recreational, relationship, work, or school needs (Felson 1994, 1987; also see Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garafalo 1978).

Concerned about explaining crime distribution across time and space, Cohen and Felson (1979) hypothesized that explaining crime requires understanding it as a result of a specific location, at a particular time, involving particular people. In short, criminal opportunities are not equally arranged throughout society, so although RA theory seeks to explain interpersonal, criminal encounters, the theorists acknowledge that our usual activities are influenced by broad structural relations and social expectations (also see Garland 1999; Gottfredson 1981). In their original work, Cohen and Felson (1979) pointed to [White] women's entry into the paid labor market as providing new opportunities for crime through a shift in daily activities. Specifically, they hypothesized that increased time in public spaces and decreased home-based guardianship was expected to result in an increased likelihood that motivated offenders would encounter suitable targets in the absence of adequate supervision.

Since its development, the RA perspective has been used to explain a broad range of crimes, but attention on sexual violence is particularly pertinent to the present study. Belknap (1987) conducted the first examination of rape using a RA framework. Using ten years of data collected through the National Crime Survey, she concluded that rapes often occurred in ways that were consistent with RA theory. Specifically, rapes generally involved single women victims who were 15-34 years of age, conditions that made them more likely to engage in out-of-home interpersonal encounters alone actively. Other studies have similarly supported this perspective when investigating patterns of rape and sexual assault in the general U.S. population (e.g., Deslauriers-Varin 2010; Mannon 1998; Messner and Blau 1987). For example, Maume (1989) found that lifestyle factors and increased opportunities for crime were more predictive of rape rates than any individual or demographic factors. Although these studies examined sexual aggression among various populations at various times, each suggests that gender inequality can create opportunities to facilitate violence against girls and women.

#### *Gendering Routine Activities*

As stated above, daily activities are informed by broader structural relations, especially with regard to explaining sexual violence. Scholars have argued that routine activities are structurally gendered, and thus, RA theory benefits from incorporating feminist ideas to understand better offender motivation and target suitability (e.g., Mustaine and Tewksbury 2002; Schwartz and Pitts 1995; Schwartz et al. 2001; Tewksbury and Mustaine 2003). Feminist

perspectives have been successful at challenging gender stereotypes and establishing more equal outcomes in educational and professional settings. The Title IX Educational Amendment mentioned previously is a primary example.

Acknowledging gender inequality as an institutionalized issue helps explain how and why interpersonal encounters can be consistently experienced as gendered. Notions of masculinity, including the importance of being powerful and commanding, demanding control, and being able to express anger, leads to a reproduction of existing inequalities that favor masculine perspectives. Given the link between gender and our sexed bodies, these masculine notions are relatively socially acceptable when performed by persons with a male body. To be clear, the standpoint presented here should not be viewed as a personal attack on men or males, but as a statement about the dominance of masculine ideals in our social history, expectations, and interactions.

Conceptualizing RA theory with a gendered lens allows us to reveal how violence against women occurs as a product of unequal, and specifically patriarchal, relations (Mustaine and Tewksbury 2002). Scholars defined patriarchy as a historically and spatially dynamic practice identified by the extent to which social organization is male-centered or male-dominated (Johnson 2004). It is associated with ideologies that hold femininity as inferior to masculinity and women, in general, as inferior to men (Berkowitz 1992; DeKeseredy and Kelly 1993; Sanday 1990; Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997). Whether intentional or not, when our social relations are dominated by masculinity, it can encourage beliefs and values that establish, permit, and justify the sexual assault of women. Research has long-established that men are expected to initiate sexual encounters and may need to do so persistently for sex to occur even when women refuse sexual advances (Berkowitz 1992; DeKeseredy and Kelly 1993; Garrett-Gooding and Senter 1987; Ryan and Kanjorski 1998; Sanday 1990; Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997; Thompson and Cracco 2008).

Despite the structured formation of our usual, daily activities, situational variations are essential to consider when explaining differential risks of crime (Mustaine and Tewksbury 2002). Stated alternatively, all women are not equally at risk for sexual assault, just as all men are not equally likely to participate in sexual assaults. Therefore, while unequal gender relations may inform a criminogenic setting (i.e., contact between a motivated male offender and "suitable" female victim), the activities of an individual's everyday life still matter for actual

occurrences of offending and victimization (Schwartz and Pitts 1995).

### *Routine Activities of College Life*

College life provides a unique setting and distinct routine activities. Literature commonly identifies partying, defined as consuming alcohol and other substances (Boyd and d'Arcy 2003; Nichols 1993; Welte and Barnes 1982), as a normative aspect of college life (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013). According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (2013), approximately 80% of college students consume alcohol while enrolled in college, and about half of these students report drinking an excessive amount of alcohol in a short time at parties. Russell and Arthur (2015) found that many college students reported that they drink to create and maintain social relationships, push boundaries, create relational bonds through storytelling, and as a way to manage the stress of academic pressures and social interactions. Partying is also used to gain and maintain social status on campus as those who do not attend parties are seen as social outcasts (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013). Thus, the widespread collegiate norm of partying influences all college students, even those who do not participate in it.

### *College as a "Hot Spot" of Sexual Assault*

We argue that college life is unique in its emphasis on encouraging young populations to drink and party. Still, we further recognize these activities as embedded in a gendered social structure in which masculinity is expected to control or dominate femininity, which may help explain the relatively high prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses. Sherman Gartin, and Buerger (1989) developed the notion of "hot spots" to describe areas in which a large number of criminal offenses are concentrated. According to Brantingham and Brantingham (1999), hot spots appear when routine activities and environmental conditions, including the perceived risk of punishment (or lack thereof), combine to increase opportunities for crime.

There is some indication that hot spots are crime-specific; that is, hot spots may be defined as places where certain crimes are concentrated (Sherman, Gartin, and Buerger 1989). Given the relatively high rate of sexual assault on college campuses as compared to the general U.S. population, we conceptualize college campuses as hot spots for sexual aggression. Below, we detail our argument that sexual offending and victimization may be explained by the presence of masculine-centered organizations, a partying-oriented lifestyle, and a lack of perceived

punishment -- all of which blend in an area where young persons are entering adult life largely outside of the gaze of long-standing familial control.

Indeed, peer networks are commonly associated with various forms of offending (Warr 1998), and masculine-centered, and "hypermasculine" peer groups are common on college campuses. Membership in a fraternity and participation in collegiate athletics have been linked to an increased likelihood of sexual offending (Crosset et al. 1996), with a large number of sexual assault perpetrators involved with fraternities and athletic teams (Copenhaver and Grauerholz 1991; Sanday 1990; Schacht 1996). Lackie and deMan (1997) concluded that affiliation with a fraternity is one of the predominant indicators of sexually aggressive behavior. Analyzing fraternity gang rapes, Sanday (1996) concluded that rape increases group solidarity and "proves" masculinity amongst offending participants. Women's affiliation with athletics and Greek organizations may similarly influence sexual victimization (Garrett-Gooding and Senter 1987; Lasky Fisher, Henriksen, and Swan 2017). Women college athletes appear to have an increased risk of sexual assault, presumably due to their exposure to male athletes (Benedict 1997). Also, some scholars found that sorority members are more likely than non-members to report being raped in college (Kalof 1993), although Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) found no such relationship. These contrary findings are explained by arguing that sorority membership may be related to sexualized victimizations through "partying" with sexually aggressive men involved in fraternities (e.g., Franklin et al. 2012).

"Partying" is strongly correlated with collegiate sexual assault (Tewksbury and Mustaine 2001). Evidence suggests that over half of sexual assaults involve the use of substances by the victim, the offender, or both (Abbey 2002; Fisher, Cullen, and Turner 2000; Testa and Parks 1996). Krebs et al. (2009), for example, found that most sexual assaults occur after the victim had consumed alcohol, and Schwartz and Pitts (1995) concluded that victimization risk increases if a woman is drinking in public (i.e., bars and parties), arguably because it increases her risk of exposure to motivated offenders. Reflecting this latter finding, researchers noted that some undergraduate men use alcohol to facilitate sex with a woman (Tyler, Hoyt, and Whitbeck 1998), sometimes encouraging consumption to make her more vulnerable to sexual advances (Schwartz and Pitts 1995). Alcohol appears to limit the victim's self-protective decisions while encouraging the offender's sexual aggression (e.g., Franklin 2011; Franklin et al. 2012; Vogel 2000). The U.S. Department of Justice (2000) speculated that alcohol's ability to incapacitate

might be why 90% of sexual assault victims reported no weapon used during the commission of the act.

As mentioned previously, Title IX and The Clery Act established federal mandates for recording and reporting sexual violence, which were enacted to protect college students from criminal victimization. Yet, concerns about the effective use and implementation of these laws have been documented (e.g., Ahn 2010; Karjane, Fisher, and Cullen 2002; Walker 2010). A large number of schools are currently under investigation for Title IX violations for improper handling of sexual assault cases.

RA theory argues that offenders are less likely to commit a crime if they expect to be caught and apprehended (Cohen and Felson 1979). Without the threat of apprehension, motivated offenders are not deterred. Thus, a college's failure to accurately report sexual violence and to hold persons accountable for sexually violent acts are consequential. Indeed, college students are not ignorant of their universities' responses to sexual victimization on campus (Karjane et al. 2002).

## Data and Methods

To our knowledge, no existing studies of collegiate sexual assault analyze more than one component of RA theory. For example, Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) and Schwartz and Pitts (1995) examined sexual assault victimization among college students, Schwartz et al. (2001) focused on patterns of offending, and Tewksbury and Mustaine (2003) examined normative activities associated with capable guardians. Extant studies also primarily rely on data collected before 1990. In the present paper, we overcome these limitations. We separately assess how routine activities of college life influence patterns of victimization and offending, and we use data collected from two large public U.S. universities in the 2005-2006 academic year.

The data used for this project comes from The Campus Sexual Assault Survey (CSAS). Access to this data is heavily restricted; however, the authors were permitted access following approval of a data security plan, completion of a written pledge of confidentiality and NIJ Privacy Certificate, and appropriate IRB approval. The CSAS was conducted during the 2005-2006 school year at two large public universities, one in the South and one in the Midwest. Using a web-based survey design, the CSAS asks questions about students' demographic identifications, academic performance, academic and social engagement, substance use, dating behaviors, sexual assault experiences, and attitudes towards sexual violence against women to collect information about the prevalence, patterns, and reporting of various types

of sexual assault. To minimize response bias, the survey instrument constructed questions about sexual violence, relying on behavioral-specific items. As such, questions did not invoke the words "rape" or "assault" as such phrasing has previously been shown to be methodologically problematic (see Fisher 2009; Koss 1992; Scully and Marolla 1984; Warshaw 1994).

Students were eligible to participate in the survey if they were currently enrolled at least three-quarters time as an undergraduate student and were aged 18 to 25. To encourage sample variation by college year classification, an equal number of first years, sophomores, juniors, and seniors were selected. Sampled students were initially contacted via email. Recruitment emails described the study, informed students that the survey could be completed in about 15 minutes, and provided a hyperlink to the study website. If students did not complete the survey within one week, a follow-up email was sent and a printed letter was mailed to encourage their participation further. Follow-up emails continued to be submitted for several weeks (see CSAS User Guide for additional information). Survey completers were provided a \$10 Amazon.com gift card, which was obtainable through a separate website.

The final sample included 6,821 undergraduate respondents. The response rate for women was approximately 42%, totaling 5,446; the response rate for men was about 34% or 1,375. The response rates for this study is slightly higher than average, but the general descriptive statistics of respondents depicts a similar picture to sexual assault surveys completed at other universities (e.g., Fisher et al. 2000; Garrett-Gooding and Senter 1987; Lisak and Miller 2002). Comparisons of respondents and non-respondents on age, university, race-ethnicity, and academic year classification reveal negligible non-response bias (see The CSAS User Guide).

We examine two dependent variables that seek to measure sexual assault experiences since entering college, one related to victimization and one related to offending. Although we recognize guardianship as a critical element of crime patterning, our data does not contain adequate measures for guardianship. The CSAS defines sexual assault as forced or unwanted sexual contact, including sexualized touching, oral sex, and/or vaginal or anal penetration. Victims were defined as women who reported being sexually assaulted since entering college. Although we recognize that men are also at risk of being sexually victimized, we elect to focus the present paper on women students given the existing state of the literature and the practical matter that our sample includes a significantly higher number of women victims.

Six items were used to capture sexual assault victimization. These items inquired about whether or not the woman reported experiencing sexual assault victimization through physical force, threats of physical force, verbal coercion, or various consenting incapacities (i.e., unconscious, asleep, drugged, or otherwise incapacitated). Because we are interested in examining patterns of any sexual assault experience, we calculated a summation score that was used to compute a single dichotomous measure (yes or no) capturing sexual assault victimization since college enrollment.

Six items were also used to capture sexual assault offending. The items asked men respondents to report any instance whereby they attempted or completed sexual contact that used physical force, threats of physical force, verbal coercion, or relied on their victim's incapacity to provide consent (i.e., unconscious, asleep, drugged, or otherwise incapacitated). As with the victimization data, we are interested in identifying patterns of any form of sexual assault offending, so we created a dichotomous measure where an affirmative answer indicated offending.

To appropriately identify patterns of victimization and offending within a RA framework, we controlled for additional factors. Consistent with prior studies, we characterize normative college activities into three conceptual categories: (1) campus involvement, (2) "partying" activities, and (3) dating behaviors. Each of these conceptual categories, as defined, suggest risk for victimization and offending and contain multiple indicators as described below.

Campus involvement reflects information about the respondent's academic engagement and participation in masculine-dominant social organizations. Academic engagement is measured with a single indicator -- grade point average (GPA). Respondents were asked to report their GPA using a 5-response scale ranging from below 0.67 to 3.67 or higher. We created a dichotomous measure defining low academic engagement for those who reported a GPA below the mean score of 2.67. Participation in masculine-dominant social organizations was measured with two indices, one that reflects involvement with Greek organizations and another that reflects involvement with athletics. Participation in Greek organizations is based on answers to 4 questions inquiring about the participant's Greek organization membership, residence in Greek housing, attendance at fraternity parties, and frequency of fraternity party attendance. By summing answers to these questions, we created a scale with higher numbers indicated greater involvement in Greek life and divided the summation scale into a dichotomous measure with scores above the mean indicating relatively high Greek

involvement. We similarly created a high athletic involvement scale by combining, summing, and dichotomizing at the mean, responses from 2 items that asked if respondents were directly involved with a sports team or consumed alcohol primarily at sporting events. Although these measures likely tap into two different populations --athletes and fans/attendees at athletic events, it arguably collectively captures activities in masculine-centered peer groups, especially since ample research links sports to masculinity through its emphasis on competition and aggression (e.g., Griffin 1992; Howe 2003). This link explains why feminine contingencies like "the women's team" are often placed at the front of discussions about women's athletics.

"Partying" activities measure the respondent's alcohol and drug consumption behaviors, including the frequency of alcohol and drug use, consuming drinks left unattended, and accepting premade drinks from unknown others. The CSAS asks 42 questions about the respondent's use of alcohol and drugs since entering college. Given extant literature on the significance of these activities, we examined their effects in a variety of ways. None of these resulted in substantial variation, so we present the most parsimonious index herein. Heavy alcohol consumption was assessed across four questions asking about the number of alcoholic drinks typically consumed in a day and the frequency of weekly alcohol use, drunkenness, and binge drinking. By summing each of these together, we create a scale with higher numbers indicating heavier alcohol consumption, then divide it at the mean. We, similarly, created a measure of heavy drug use across 13 CSAS questions about the frequency of illicit substance use since entering college. However, we exclude marijuana given both the prevalence of use and to remain consistent with prior studies (see Raskin, White, and Rabiner 2012). Although alcohol and drug use frequency is important, we also include a measure of risky drinking behavior, which captures two items asking respondents if they consumed drinks left unattended and if they consumed drinks from unknown others.

Dating behaviors reflect the respondent's history with intimate partner violence (IPV). Questions about IPV ask about physical and emotional abuse in romantic relationships, both of which were related to sexual violence in prior studies (e.g., Classen, Palesh, and Aggarwal 2005; VanZile-Tamsen, Testa, and Livingston 2005). Although we examined the quantity of sexual partners' influence on victimization and offending, it did not change any of the results reported herein, so we omit it from the present discussion for parsimony.

In addition to variables related to RA theory mentioned above, we also control for various other factors common in researching sexual violence. For example, we control for years in school and the respondent's race. Prior research finds conflicting effects of a year in school on sexual assaults; however, most scholars agree that first-year college students may be especially vulnerable (e.g., Armstrong and Hamilton 2013; Bohmer and Parrot 1993; Boumil, Friedman, and Taylor 1993; Krebs et al. 2009; Sweeney 2011). Race is sometimes considered significant in predicting sexual aggression, with Whites being less likely to be assaulted (Porter and Williams 2011). Although we investigated marital status and sexual orientation effects on victimization and offending, the addition of these variables did not alter the overall model estimates. Since these variables were heavily skewed towards non-marriage (97.1%) and heterosexuality (95.9%), we do not present them in the following models.

## RESULTS

Table 1 contains descriptive statistics for all variables. Consistent with prior studies (Fisher, Cullen, and Turner 2000; Lisak and Miller 2002), we find that about 34% of women report being a survivor of sexual assault, and about 5% of the men indicate behaviors consistent with committing sexual assault. In addition, we find that nearly 21% of all students surveyed experienced IPV since entering college. Approximately 36% of students reported heavy alcohol use, and 8% engaged in heavy drug usage. The majority of the sample self-reports as White, and as expected, given the sampling design, the respondents are almost equally divided by college year classification (first-year, sophomore, junior, senior).

Our subsequent analysis employs logistic regression analysis since our outcomes of interest are dichotomous. We separately estimate a series of victimization and offending models. The fully specified victimization model is shown in Model 1 of Table 2. The data indicate that several routine activities significantly increase the likelihood of sexual assault. Specifically, net of other factors, the odds of victimization are about 33% higher among women with lower than average GPAs as compared to those with higher than average GPAs (OR=1.34).

Interestingly, we find that participation in only some masculine-centered social organizations increases victimization. The odds of victimization for women who report being consistently involved in Greek organizations are about 19% higher than those who are not (OR=1.19); however, high involvement

with athletics is not statistically significantly related to sexual assault victimization. Partying, including heavy alcohol (OR=1.70), substance (OR=1.52) use, and risky drinking behaviors (OR=2.00), are positively related to victimization. Dating behaviors are related to victimization, with those reporting a history of IPV being over three times higher to be victimized (OR = 3.33). Finally, we find that first-year college students (OR=.60) and women who self-report as White (OR=.86) are less likely to report being sexually victimized. We discuss these findings in relation to prior studies in more detail below. Statistical analysis investigating patterns of offending is reported in Model 2 of Table 2. Like our victimization findings, several routine activities, though not necessarily the same ones, significantly increase the likelihood of sexual assault offending. The odds of sexual assault offending are increased among those reporting heavy involvement in athletic activities (OR=1.47), but heavy Greek involvement and GPA are not significant predictors. The odds of participating in sexual assaults are about two times higher among men reporting partying (OR=1.78 for heavy alcohol, OR=2.00 for other drug consumption). Additionally, the odds of having committed sexual assault are about 3.5 times higher among men who report being involved in IPV as compared to those who do not (OR = 3.48). Finally, although the data indicate that year in school (OR=.87, first-year college students) and race (OR=.70, self-reporting as White) are negatively associated with sexual assault offending, these associations are not statistically significant.

## Discussion and Conclusion

While sexual aggression among the general population is not unusual, it is even more common on college campuses. Collegiate sexual assault has recently received heightened public scrutiny; however, sexual assault on college campuses is not a new phenomenon. Prior research identifies college life as a unique context by which the routine activities of young adults may increase sexual aggression. Yet, we are unaware of any previous study that uses contemporary data to investigate patterns of sexual assault victimization and offending on multiple campuses within a RA framework. In the present study, we use RA theory to examine how behaviors of college students influence sexual assault victimization and offending. Our findings indicate that certain routine activities significantly increase women students' likelihood of victimization. For example, a lack of academic engagement (operationalized as GPA) increases the likelihood of sexual assault victimization, which may suggest that students with lower GPAs spend more

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Dependent and Independent Variables**

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Victim (Yes)	.342	.475	0	1
Offender (Yes)	.052	.222	0	1
Gender (Female)	.798	.401	0	1
<i>Campus Involvement</i>				
Low Academic Engagement	.109	.312	0	1
Heavy Greek Affiliation	.197	.398	0	1
Heavy Athletic Affiliation	.262	.440	0	1
<i>Partying</i>				
Heavy Alcohol Use	.362	.481	0	1
Heavy Drug Use	.078	.269	0	1
Risky Drinking Behaviors	.399	.490	0	1
<i>Dating behaviors</i>				
IPV	.209	.406	0	1
<i>Other Controls</i>				
Race (White)	.80	.399	0	1
Year in School				
First-Year	.239	.426	0	1
Sophomore	.246	.430	0	1
Junior	.260	.439	0	1
Senior	.254	.436	0	1

**Table 2: Logistic Regression Predicting the Likelihood of Victimization and Offending**

Variables	<u>Model 1</u> Victimization	<u>Model 2</u> Offending
<i>Campus involvement</i>		
GPA	1.34* [.11]	.92 [.41]
High Greek Involvement	1.19* [.08]	1.05 [.32]
High Athletic Involvement	1.07 [.08]	1.47** [.28]
<i>Partying</i>		
Heavy Alcohol Use	1.70* [.08]	1.78* [.30]
Heavy Drug Use	1.52* [.13]	2.00* [.33]
Risky Drinking	2.00* [.07]	--
<i>Dating behaviors</i>		
IPV	3.33* [.08]	3.48* [.28]
<i>Other Controls</i>		
White	.86** [.09]	.70 [.36]
First-Year College Student	.60* [.09]	.87 [.37]



findings that most sexual assaults occurred after the victim had consumed alcohol. To be clear, these findings do not suggest that survivors are at fault for their victimization but rather that partying behaviors increase the likelihood of victimization, perhaps by exposing oneself to potential motivated offenders. As mentioned earlier, research indicates that some men encourage women students to consume substances to make sexual engagement more probable (Franklin 2011; Franklin et al. 2012; Schwartz and Pitts 1995; Tyler, Hoyt, and Whitbeck 1998), thus, motivated offenders may interpret partying as indicative of a “suitable” target. As discussed above, this perception should, of course, be understood in light of a gendered social structure.

While we are unable to ascertain the temporal ordering of IPV and sexual assault, we find that a history of IPV is strongly associated with sexual assault victimization. This indicator has not been regularly scrutinized in previous collegiate sexual assault studies. However, the strength of the relationship indicates that it should be included in subsequent studies, especially given the prevalence of violence in romantic relationships (Nabors 2010; Nabors and Jasinski 2009).

Our victimization model differs from those of Krebs, et al.’s (2009). In their study, year in college is positively associated with sexual assault; however, we find that first-year women students are less likely to report being sexually victimized. In the supplemental analysis, not presented above, we found that each year in school was associated with a continued increased likelihood of victimization. It appears, then, that as one remains in an institution of higher learning, opportunities to encounter motivated offenders without capable guardianship heightens. When only sexual assaults that occurred in the past 12 months are examined (excluding first-year students as the previous 12 months included time before college), sophomores report the highest numbers of assaults. Our finding is consistent with the previous literature that suggests that first-year college students are the most likely of all student classifications to be sexually victimized (Bohmer and Parrot 1993; Boumil, Friedman, and Taylor 1993; Franklin et al. 2012, Sweeney 2011), but the length of time in school increases the overall chances of being a victim (Krebs et al. 2009). This finding comports with the RA framework – the longer an individual engages in activities that place them in situations with motivated offenders and no capable guardianship, the more opportunities for victimization occur.

Our likelihood models of offending also produce salient findings. Although the offending models have some similarities with our victimization models, differences in predictor effects are undoubtedly

apparent. As was valid with the victimization models, a history of IPV is strongly associated with participation in sexualized offending. Interestingly, however, we do not find the support that Greek affiliation increases the likelihood of offending. Instead, the data reveal that increased offending is only significantly associated with high athletic involvement. These latter effects on masculine-centered organizations differ across the victim and offender models. In explaining this unexpected finding, it is essential to remember that the dataset used herein did not include victims and offenders of the same situational event. That is, our unit of analysis is that of the individual, not that of the assault itself. Our unit of analysis, then, may explain differences in predictor effects across victimization and offender models. This finding serves as a reminder about the importance of remaining mindful of the unit of analysis in both identifying patterned behaviors and explaining seemingly contradictory findings across models.

Although the present project extends our knowledge by using contemporary data from multiple universities and in estimating victimization and offending models, limitations remain. First, we are unable to provide an exhaustive examination of routine college life. Future studies should seek to include additional indicators that better measure the content of peer groups and the particular situation in which a sexual assault occurs. Such measures will provide information about the potential for guardianship, which is a crucial feature of the RA framework. The data also preclude us from creating comprehensive measures about college students’ lived situations and experiences. For instance, in the present analysis, we rely on GPA as the sole indicator of time spent in academic engagement. We recognize, however, that GPA does not provide a direct measure of (non)academic pursuits. Second, critics may have concerns about the age of the survey data and sample skewness. For example, the current study relies on data collected in 2005-2006. As we stated earlier, prior studies on college sexual assault often focus on questions about offending or victimization and rely on data collected before 1990. Still, the CSAS data used herein allows us to examine patterns of victimization and offending.

Regarding sampling bias, we acknowledge that the CSAS sample is skewed towards women and Whites. Women are generally more likely to respond to surveys (e.g., Sax, Gilmartin, Lee, and Hegedorn 2008), and this gender ratio in response remains true among undergraduate students (Sax, Gilmartin, and Bryant 2003), especially on the topic of sexual assault (Groves, Presser, and Dipko 2004). We hope that future data will be collected from universities and

colleges with a more diverse student population and that researchers will design surveys that encourage responses from various racial, ethnic, and gender identity categories. Third, web-based surveys are sometimes cited for accentuating issues of response bias. We argue that web-based surveys are suitable for collecting data on sensitive information, especially from young populations. The online format may allow for greater perceptions of confidentiality. Koss and Gidycz (1985) found that male offenders were more likely to admit to acts of sexual aggression when they self-reported via a survey as compared to being asked by an interviewer. The same logic may apply here; given the stigma associated with sexual assault experiences, survivors and offenders may be more likely to complete questionnaires more truthfully when an interviewer is not present. Finally, data security restrictions preclude us from examining the data separately by the university; therefore, we are unable to analyze potential regional, size, and sample differences, which could provide useful insights into variations in correlates and predictors across campuses.

Sexual assault is a complex and pervasive social problem. In the past several years, we have seen an increase in the passage of laws attempting to protect students against sexualized crime and greater institutional accountability for the enforcement of these laws. In 2017, however, President Trump's Administration began rescinding some of these laws. While the #MeToo movement may indicate a broad, grassroots movement aimed at challenging the devaluation and oversexualizing of women and girls' bodies, we are deeply concerned about the negative consequences of these Title IX-related repeals. To this end, we urge scholars to remain vigilant in their investigations and edification of this issue so that policy analysts, educational administrators, and the public at large do not lose sight of the socio-cultural correlates of collegiate sexual assault.

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