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Critical feminist theory, rape, and hooking up

by

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Program of Study Committee:
Teresa Downing-Matibag, Major Professor
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Ames, Iowa

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Abstract

“Hooking up” is a popular way for college students to experience sexual intimacy without investing in relationships. Hooking up has recently been found to be associated with a risk of rape. Based on semistructured interviews with 31 students, the findings of this study will draw from a grounded theory approach and utilize insights from critical feminist theory to determine what barriers to sexual consent exist in hookup relationships, thus placing women at risk for victimization. Also drawing from critical feminist theory, it will discuss the ways that oppressive legal policies related to consent and rape, and the history of these policies, can lend insight into why these barriers to consent exist. Suggestions will be made for improving sexual risk-taking prevention programs on college campuses.

Chapter 1: Overview

In this study, I will examine college students' hookup experiences in order to investigate how gender oppression plays out in hookup situations by creating barriers to consent which place women at risk for sexual victimization. I will use the tools of grounded theory to analyze 31 student interviews. While a "true" grounded theory approach would claim that grounded theory cannot be used if the researcher has existing expectations and assumptions (in this case, that I would find gender oppression revealed within the interviews), some theorists have argued that it is possible to use the tools of grounded theory and open, axial, and selective coding to explore specific themes using a constructivist approach (e.g. Charmaz, 2006; Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2005).

The analysis of this study will focus on determining which hookup and consent activities were experienced by both male and female participants, since both males and females can be victims of rape (Jamel, Bull, & Sheridan, 2008; Stemple, 2008). Furthermore, I will use a critical feminist approach (MacKinnon, 1991) to review historical policies regarding rape and consent in order to determine how history and policy can lend insight into the current barriers to consent that place women at risk for victimization during students' casual sexual relationships. The results of this study will contribute to the current literature on rape by using a qualitative approach to detail the barriers to consent that are experienced by students during a hookup. These results will have broad implications for suggesting changes to campus sexual risk-taking prevention

programs and rape prevention programs, so that students can be given improved suggestions for how they can stay safe in their intimate relationships.

Since I will pay particular attention to critical feminist theory's claim that historical and policy perspectives are important for understanding current situations (Estrich, 1987), the literature review will focus on hooking up and rape, and the history of policies and beliefs surrounding consent and rape. Following that, I will review critical feminist theory and describe, in detail, which portions of critical feminism I will focus on in this study. I will also describe how critical feminism is uniquely suited to lending insight into this study.

Within the methods section, I will discuss participant demographics and describe the how participants were recruited in a way that allowed purposeful selection to be obtained. I will also describe the procedures used, and highlight the interview process. I will discuss how the data were analyzed using a grounded theory approach and the NVivo software program. I will also include a researcher positionality statement and discuss how the reliability and validity of this study was ensured.

The results of the study indicate that four barriers to consent are commonly found during students' hookups. Each of these barriers will be discussed in detail and participant quotations will be provided. In the discussion section, I will review the barriers to consent found in this study and discuss how these findings add to the current literature on hooking up and rape. I will then describe the implications for this study regarding current rape policy and university sexual assault prevention programs. Finally, I will delineate the limitations of this study and suggest directions for future research.

Approval for the study was granted by the institutional review board of the university where the study took place.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Due, in part, to third-wave feminism and the sexual revolution, many college students today are now free to choose to have casual sexual relationships instead of “getting tied down” and investing their time and money in longer term relationships (Crawford, 2007; Gilmartin, 2006; Glen & Marquardt, 2001). These sexual encounters are known as hookups and involve a range of intimate behaviors, including kissing, fondling, or sexual intercourse, between partners who do not have relational commitments (Flack et al., 2007; Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2006). Hookups commonly involve alcohol consumption and binge drinking. As such, they are associated with high levels of sexual risk taking (Downing-Matibag & Geisinger, 2009; Lambert, Kahn, & Apple, 2003; Paul & Hayes, 2002) or involuntary risk exposure (Flack et. al., 2007).

Considering the many dangers that have been associated with hooking up (including exposure to STD’s, unwanted pregnancies, binge drinking, and sexual assault (Downing-Matibag & Geisinger, 2009; Flack et. al., 2007; Lambert, Kahn, & Apple, 2003; Paul & Hayes, 2002)), the vast numbers of students participating in these behaviors is concerning. Research has shown that 84% of male college students and 78% of female college students report hooking up at least once (Lambert, Kahn, & Apple, 2003). Another, more recent, study found that 76% of college seniors had hooked up (England, Shafer, & Fogarty, 2007). Further, the average college student reports having engaged in an average of 10 or 11 hookups, with a range from 0-65 hookups per student (Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000; Paul & Hayes, 2002).

Some researchers have suggested that hooking up can provide a gender egalitarian alternative to dating (Bradshaw, Kahn, & Saville, 2010). However, although hooking up can be dangerous for both men and women, recent findings suggest that, due to the potential for rape during these encounters, women may be at greater risk than their male counterparts (Armstrong, Hamilton, & Sweeney, 2006). Women also report less comfort with sexual activity and hooking up than do males (Cohen & Shotland, 1996; Knox & Wilson, 1981; Lambert, Kahn, & Apple, 2003; Oliver & Hyde, 1993) and studies report that hooking up may have more benefits for men than it does for women (Bradshaw, Kahn, & Saville, 2010). One particular survey asked 832 college students about their hookup experiences and found that women were less likely to agree that hooking up was a positive emotional experience (Owen, Rhoades, Stanley, & Fincham, 2008). Also, interviews with 51 college students and 25 recent graduates have shown that the historical double standards - which cause women to be judged more harshly for sexual encounters than men (Rubin, 1990) - still persist within the hookup culture (Bogle, 2007).

Alarming, many students seem unaware of the dangers associated with hooking up. While the sexual climate on college campuses has experienced rapid change, students' understandings of rape and sexual consent have largely remained unchanged (Buck-Doude, 2008; Byers, 1996; Littleton, Tabernik, Canales, & Backstrom, 2009), which puts women in an especially vulnerable position. To be sure, analyses of rape scripts written by college women indicate that women rarely associate hookups with rape, and instead think of stranger rape as the standard scenario for rape (Buck-Doude, 2008; Littleton, Tabernik, Canales, & Backstrom, 2009). Furthermore, men often overestimate

how socially desirable sexual aggression is among their peers and how attractive such aggression is to women, indicating they are unaware of at least some of the potential implications for their actions (Vandello, Ransom, Hettinger, & Askew, 2009). Pluralistic ignorance has also been found to play a role in hooking up: students often rate their peers as more comfortable hooking up than are they themselves, which can lead to feelings of peer pressure and situations where students are uncomfortable with the level of sexual activity they are engaging in (Lambert, Kahn, & Apple, 2003).

Women, Sex, and Rape

Historically, rape was thought to be a crime against a woman's husband or father, not a crime against the woman herself (Brownmiller, 1975). In early American society, lawyers were warned about the tendency of females to lie (Brownmiller, 1975) and only certain (white, middle class, 'chaste') women could be raped in the eyes of the law (Brownmiller, 1975). Rape was considered to be a crime against a woman's husband or father, not against the woman herself (Brownmiller, 1975; Sanday, 1996), and black women had no legal protection from rape as their virginity was not considered to be financially valuable (Brownmiller, 1975). In fact, rape was thought to be perpetrated by black men, and so while a (white) woman did not have to prove that she had resisted to accuse a black man or otherwise unarmed stranger of rape, she had to prove the "utmost resistance" to a white friend or neighbor (Estrich, 1987). Furthermore, a woman had to say no to sex to uphold her reputation, so when a woman said no to sex, she was perceived as simply acting as she was supposed to, not as acting in line with her true desires (Estrich, 1987). It was thought that women required force to enjoy sex, and

because resisting was the “natural response of a virtuous woman,” the fact that penetration occurred proved that she had, indeed, been willing (McGregor, 2005). Freud, too, wrote about the rape fantasies of women (Buck-Doude, 2008). Many of these policies remained in place until the 1970s and 1980s during early feminist movements – feminist movements to date, however, have been largely ineffective in changing society’s outlook on most aspects of rape (Ford et al, 1998; Ryan, 1988).

Research suggests that ideas of what it meant to be raped throughout history remain prevalent today. Women, for instance, often believe that stranger rape is the only form of rape, not even knowing what the term “acquaintance rape” means (Buck-Doude, 2008), despite the fact that acquaintance rape and party rape are far more common than stranger rape on college campuses (Fisher, Daigle, & Cullen, 2010; Greenfield, 1997; Ward, 1991). Both males and females tend to believe that rape victims are stupid, slutty, or just naïve, and suggest that rape victims have only “gotten what they deserved” (Crawford, O’Dougherty Wright, & Birchmeier, 2008; Buck-Doude, 2008). These types of beliefs clearly are reflective of early policies regarding rape which suggested 1) that women could not be raped by friends or husbands, only strangers and 2) that only a virginal, chaste victim could be raped since her virginity was financially valuable. While these types of policies were often revised to be more egalitarian in the 1970s, they have had clear impacts of the beliefs of college students today (Buck-Doude, 2008).

Rape myths prevail in our society, convincing women that inappropriate sexual acts that were not, and sometimes still are not, deemed inappropriate by certain legal definitions of rape do not constitute rape (Reddington & Kreisel 2005). The fact that rape

myth acceptance – often measured by testing the extent to which participants agree with statements such as “When a woman says no, she really means yes,” and “It is impossible to rape a man” – is so persistent on college campuses (Ford, Liwag-McLamb, & Foley, 1998; Reddington & Kreisel, 2005; Ryan, 1988) and sexual double standards are rampant within the hookup culture (Bogle, 2008; Ronen, 2010) likely explains why less than half of rape victims consider themselves to be victims of rape (Fisher, Daigle, Cullen, & Turner, 2003). Prevailing rape myths may also account for the high rates of rape on college campuses (Fisher, Sloan, Cullen, & Lu, 1998). With low-end estimates suggesting that about 350 rapes occurring annually on campuses with more than 10,000 females students (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000), it is not surprising that college women experience more sexual victimization than any other age group (Brener, McMahan, Warren, & Douglas, 1999). Other researchers estimate that as many as 1 in 4 college women has experienced a rape or attempted rape (Fisher, Daigle, & Cullen, 2010; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987), and that binge drinking, which is common within the hookup culture, increases the risk of being raped by an acquaintance (McCauleya, Ruggieroa, Resnicka, Conoscentib, & Kilpatrick, 2009). Given the prevalence of rape against women on college campuses, it is imperative to engage a theoretical perspective which will help to explain this phenomenon. Using critical feminist theory as a theoretical perspective will allow the exploration of the hookup culture to determine how historical policies and traditional beliefs could shed light on the experiences of women engaging in casual sexual relationships today.

Critical Feminist Theory

Critical feminist theory is one of the many theories that have born out of critical race theory in recognition of the various types of oppression that exist in American society (some of the others include LatCrit, TribalCrit, AsianCrit, and QueerCrit). MacKinnon (1983; 1991) was largely responsible for the development of the critical feminist perspective, though she often received criticism for not paying enough attention to the intersections of women's identities (Wing, 2003). Since then, feminist research which uses facets of critical theory has proliferated, and has explored topics from rape (Buck-Doude, 2008) to employment rates (Becker, Lauf, & Lowrey, 1999) and mathematical ability (Tiedemann, 2000). By drawing from scholarship from critical race theory and critical feminist theory, it is possible to summarize the theory as having the following underlying assumptions (Arrigo, 2002; Frug, 1992; Johnson, 1991; Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993; MacKinnon, 1983; MacKinnon, 1991; Rhode, 1991):

1. Gender oppression is endemic in our society. It is normal, ordinary, and ingrained into society, making it so it is often difficult to recognize.
2. Traditional claims of gender neutrality and objectivity must be contested in order to reveal the self-interests of the dominant (male) groups.
3. Social justice platforms and practices are the only way to eliminate gender discrimination and other forms of oppression and injustice.
4. The experiential knowledge of women or their "unique voice" is valid, legitimate, and critical for understanding the persistence of gender inequality,

and these unique voices are often demonstrated through storytelling and counter-narratives.

5. Women are differentially discriminated against depending on the interests of the dominant group, and depending upon the intersections of their identities.
6. History and historical contexts must be taken into consideration in order to challenge policies and practices that affect women.
7. Critical feminist theory must be interdisciplinary in nature.

Critical feminist theory is particularly useful for this study because it recognizes the importance of the historical context and can help us to discern the current implications of the oppressive policies which have shaped our understanding of rape. Oppressive policies privilege rapists (e.g., by making rape definitions vague and therefore unenforceable), who are largely male, while simultaneously oppressing those who are raped (for example, by forcing rape victims who report their rapes to go through processes that re-traumatize and re-victimize (Greene & Navarro, 1998)), who are mostly female.

For the purposes of this study, I will focus on three of the main tenets of critical feminist theory: 1) That gender oppression is endemic, meaning that it is normal, ordinary, and engrained in our society (and thus would be found in nearly all contexts, including that of hooking up); 2) That claims of objectivity within policy must be contested, meaning that even though policy and policy-makers claim to be neutral and free from bias, policy is associated with oppression and gender discrimination; and 3) That history and historical contexts must be taken into consideration, meaning that, when attempting

to understand and make sense of the world today, researchers cannot just ignore the prejudices of the past – these, too, need to be examined (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993; MacKinnon, 1991). Thus, I will ask this question in order to make sense of the data: How can oppressive rape policy and the history of oppressive rape policy provide insight into current barriers to consent that place women at risk for victimization during hookups?

Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures

In this section, I will detail how participants were recruited for this study and the demographic characteristics of the participants, the procedures used and topics of student interviews, the methods of data analysis, and the tools used to help ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

Participants

Semistructured interviews were conducted with 71 college students at a large Midwestern university. The students interviewed were recruited through introductory sociology class of 249 students. All students in the class had the option of participating in our research or completing an alternate assignment. The requirements for participation in the study were announced during class. To achieve purposeful selection – a form of sampling which requires selecting individuals who have unique knowledge, or experience with, a particular subject (Weiss, 1994; Maxwell, 2005) – students were told that they needed to have participated in at least one hookup, namely a sexual activity (kissing and fondling of the breasts or genitals, or oral, anal, or vaginal sex) with someone to whom they had no relational commitments (Flack et al., 2007; Glen & Marquardt, 2001; Lambert et al., 2003). Interested students were told to send an e-mail to one of the researchers to schedule an interview. On arrival at their interviews, students reestablished their eligibility for participation. Only one of the participants was ineligible and withdrew from the study.

The final sample of 71 respondents reflected the predominately white, Christian, heterosexual demographics of the Midwestern region of the United States, although the

sample was slightly less diverse. The sample included 62 (87%) non-Hispanic whites, 2 (3%) African Americans, 3 (4%) Hispanics, 1 (1%) Asian, and 3 (4%) students of mixed racial and ethnic status. According to the U.S. Census for the year 2000, the racial and ethnic population distribution for all persons age 18 and older for the Midwestern United States was 85 percent non-Hispanic white, 9 percent African American, 4 percent Hispanic or Latino, 1 percent Asian, and less than 1 percent of mixed racial status (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Thirty-nine (55%) of the respondents were women and 32 (45%) were men. Thirty-five students were Protestant Christians, 25 were Catholic Christians, 8 were agnostics, 1 was atheist, and 2 were undeclared. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 24 years, with the average being about 19.5 years. Only 1 participant self-identified as homosexual (gay), and 2 identified as bisexual; all of the others identified as heterosexual. Finally, the respondents included 6 seniors, 9 juniors, 17 sophomores, and 39 freshmen. Of the 69 students who indicated the highest level of sexual intimacy that occurred during their last hookup before the interview, 37 (54%) indicated that they had vaginal intercourse, 21 (30%) that they had either given or received oral sex, and 11 (16%) that they had experienced either sexual touching or masturbation.

Procedure

Four researchers, including one professor and three students, conducted the interviews. Upon contacting the researcher, students were given a choice as to whether they would be more comfortable speaking about hooking up with a professor, a graduate student, or an undergraduate student, and interviews were scheduled accordingly. All of

the interviewers were female. While some researchers have argued (without evidence) that it is “probably” better to have same-sex interviewers (e.g., Imber, 1986; Greif & Pabst, 1988), studies have found only subtle differences between same and opposite sex interviewers (Williams & Heikes, 1993). These studies also suggest that gender differences can be overcome during an in-depth interview (Williams & Heikes, 1993). The fact that the male students interviewed in this study were very open supports this evidence.

The interviews averaged 45 minutes in length, took place in two private rooms on campus, and were tape recorded with the interviewees’ consent. On arrival, participants filled out a questionnaire requesting general demographic information and sexual orientation. The four-part interview began – part one of the interview assessed the students’ perceptions of sex and dating norms on campus, and what they thought their peers and friends believed about the pros, cons, and acceptability of hooking up. Part three assessed students’ evaluations of their hooking-up experiences as a whole, and part four of the interview assessed students’ perceptions of sexual risk taking during hooking up, with respect to STIs.

Part two, which will be focused on for the purposes of this study, assessed the events that occurred during students’ most recent hookup, including how well the student knew his or her hookup partner previously, where they met up, and where the hookup occurred. It assessed how the events led to hooking up, students’ feelings during and after the hookup, their level of comfort with the intimacy that occurred, the consent

processes that took place, and the students' perceptions of their partner's level of comfort. To view the complete interview questionnaire, please refer to the appendix.

Data Analysis

I drew from a grounded theory approach to explore interviews of males and of females using NVivo to complete open, axial, and selective coding to 1) assign codes to meaning units, or particular segments of text, 2) sort the codes into clusters based upon shared meanings, and 3) devise themes or categories based upon the clusters (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008; Rennie, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I analyzed gender oppression by focusing on the consent processes and barriers to consent in the context of the hookups. While a "true" grounded theory approach would argue that grounded theory cannot be used if the researcher has existing expectations and assumptions (in this case, that I would find gender oppression revealed within the interviews), some theorists have argued that it is possible to use the tools of grounded theory to explore specific themes in a more constructivist approach (e.g. Charmaz, 2006; Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2005).

Initially, I analyzed all of the data by highlighting and coding examples of various consent-related behaviors using the NVivo software program, which is designed to facilitate the organization of codes and themes for qualitative researchers. As the primary researcher for this study, I had another researcher review randomly selected coded examples to assure correspondence in the interpretation of the data. Inter-rater reliability was 82%. In cases where disagreement occurred as to how an example should be coded, we discussed the example and were able to achieve consensus. I choose a male to be the

independent coder as I believed that this could help ensure that both males and females would have reached the same conclusions when looking at the data.

I continued to code interviews until saturation (defined as continuing to interview participants or, in this case, code participant interviews until data replicates and no new codes or themes emerge) was reached (Morse, 1991) – 31 interviews were coded in total. The analysis involved a thorough reading of all of the collected and transcribed data and coding of the data related to barriers to consent. This approach demanded that prolonged engagement in the field was obtained, which helped to rule out spurious associations and allowed increased opportunity to find evidence which contradicted my initial findings (Maxwell, 2005).

Researcher Positionality and Validity

I myself was raped as a freshman in what could be considered a hookup gone horribly awry, but, for some reason, none of the researchers (including myself), ever considered just how many of the students we interviewed for the hooking up project would tell us stories that they called a “bad hookup” would be stories that others might call rape. As I realized how many other students had stories that were frighteningly similar to my own, I came to the conclusion that this was a topic that urgently needed more research before college rape prevention programs could ever become more effective.

Having only recently gone through my own battle to accept what had happened to me as rape, I understood how and why my classmates (I was an undergraduate student at the time of data collection) sat in front of me, telling stories of being raped while never

using the word rape. Instead, they drowned themselves in guilt, which I could understand far too well. I understood the resistance to use the word “rape,” to avoid the connotations that that word implies. I even understood why students never, not once, identified to me rape as a potential consequence of hooking up – rape just wasn’t something that happened to you, to people you knew, and it especially wasn’t something that occurred *because of* people you knew.

While my own experiences lent insight into the students’ experiences, I was also aware of the potential problems it could create. I was not the neutral researcher that positivist science has convinced the world that all researchers should be – while critical feminism states that gender oppression is inherent in society, positivist science would likely view this tenet as a bias. In fact, I did expect – and see – more negativity and violence in the sexual experiences described to me by women, and heard more aggression and power issues in the stories of men (This is not uncommon - research suggests that even non-survivors are more likely to label an event as rape when the offender is male and the victim is female (Buck-Doude, 2008), and that females are, in fact, more frequently sexually victimized than are their male counterparts (Flack et al., 2007).

To ensure the reliability and validity of the results of this study (meaning that the same results would be found again if the study were repeated and are credible or correct (Maxwell, 2008)), I have taken numerous measures: I am sharing my own life experiences and potential biases with the reader and have attempted to use rich thick description – in the form of participant quotations – to provide a detailed image of each of the identified barriers to consent, so that readers can judge for themselves the quality

of this study (Becker, 1970). I have also taken steps to ensure that my research meant something; that I was not simply pulling out pieces to replicate my own story in the stories of others. An independent (male) coder coded randomly selected portions of transcripts to ensure that he found the same themes that I found; this was assessed by comparing how often the independent coder and I agreed or disagreed on how to code a particular segment of text. Inter-rater reliability was found to be 82%, and in all cases where we disagreed on a code, we discussed our interpretations and reached consensus on the appropriate code. In my own coding I searched for evidence which would challenge my initial findings to ensure that I could perform a rigorous examination of all relevant data (Maxwell, 2005); for example, I searched for cases where males may have been raped or where females took advantage of their partners. I used peer examination, consulting with my advisor and other qualitative researchers at least once a week throughout the research process to ensure that the ways in which I was thinking about the data made sense to other academics (Merriam, 2002). Triangulation with the literature involved becoming familiar with the academic literature to help ensure that my findings made sense when examining other research findings (Merriam, 2002). In addition, interviewing many of the 71 participants and having all of the interviews transcribed verbatim allowed me to obtain prolonged engagement in the field, which helped to rule out spurious associations and allowed increased opportunity to search for disconfirming evidence (Maxwell, 2005). Finally, I have attempted to create a clear audit trail – ensuring that the study can be authenticated by the reader by describing, in detail, how I arrived at my results (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Merriam, 2002). As part of this, I am

including the interview schedule and have described the participant recruitment procedures in order to ensure that the study could be replicated. Taking these steps has helped to verify that the results were not found simply due to my own biases and are, instead, the stories of my participants.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter will consist of five different sections. In the introduction, I will discuss the laws and policies regarding sexual assault where the study took place, and introduce five scenarios which met these legal definitions of rape. In each of the four sections following that, I will discuss, individually, the barriers to consent which were identified in this study.

Introduction

Analysis of students' hookup experiences revealed four ways in which barriers to consent appeared and the possibility of rape becomes increased during a hookup. The first category, **men's traditional beliefs about hooking up**, reveals that men often hold traditional beliefs and expectations about sex and women which come into play during the hookup. The second category is the **lack of verbal consent** that occurs during hookups – most of the students in this study reported that they never discussed with their partners which sexual activities they were comfortable or uncomfortable with. The third category addresses how the common **use of alcohol** during hookups also plays a role in students' ability to consent to sexual activity. Finally, the fourth category addresses students' **perceptions of the possibility of rape** occurring within the hookup context, and concludes that students have an illusion of safety when hooking up, likely because they think of rape as stranger rape, and do not consider rape a possibility.

Out of the 31 students interviewed for this portion of the study, five women (but no men) reported situations that, based on the information the women provided, would likely be considered rape if considering the National Institute for Justice's definition of

rape as “non-consensual forcible or non-forcible sexual activity” where sexual activity can include a variety of behaviors, including vaginal intercourse, oral intercourse, and fondling (Karjane, Fisher, & Cullen, 2002). These five rapes would also be considered rape by the definition of the state where this study was conducted, which states that a sex act is considered sexual abuse (the state defines the term sexual abuse ; it does not define rape) if: 1) The activity is forcible or against the other persons’ will, noting that if consent is obtained by threats or if the act takes place while the person is unconscious, it is considered to be against their will; 2) The person is suffering from a mental defect or incapacity which renders him or her unable to consent; 3) The person is a child.

The five situations which met the statewide criteria for rape would likely be considered rape by the university at which the study took place as well, since the university policy is only slightly different than the state code. In fact, the university policy refers students directly to the state’s sexual abuse code, using the term “sexual misconduct;” thus, all of the state policy is included as a part of the university policy. The university expands the definition slightly, however, adding a requirement that when students are engaging in sexual behavior, all participants must consent to do so. The policy states, furthermore, that affirmative consent must be present throughout the sexual activity. While the most recent version of the university policy was implemented in 2009, the requirement of consent was present prior to that and the most recent version simply attempted to clarify the policy and added information about resources available to students who have experienced an assault. Differences between the university and state definitions will be discussed in more detail as it becomes relevant within the results. Like

the National Institute for Justice [NIJ], neither the state law nor the university defines specific sexual acts that must have taken place for the event to be considered rape, stating that rape can include a range of behaviors from sexual touching to intercourse.

Note that based upon certain facets of the NIJ, state, and university definitions, many more of the students interviewed could be considered victims of rape than these five women alone. This issue will be further explored in the relevant sections of the analysis. The rape scenarios noted here are unique in that 1) The involved women were unwilling to engage in the level of sexual activity that occurred during the hookups; and 2) Many factors, rather than only one, could independently result in the labeling of the event as rape. As I discuss these five situations and use other quotations throughout the results, I have used pseudonyms in place of students' real names. Kathleen reported one of the five situations that could be considered rape in this study:

He called me because he knew that I was here too, you know, and he was like "Well you can come over and see my room," and so I got there and I think he was probably more drunk than I was, but like it ended up, like I, yeah. I did a lot more than like I would've wanted to with him, and he was very, very, very forceful about things and stuff, which, I don't know.

Ana reported another:

I was like, "We shouldn't do this, you're going to leave; I'm going to school." And I didn't really like him that way. I didn't want that to happen...and I think he knew that I didn't really want that to happen, because I didn't want to hook up in

the first place...I didn't even say, "Well, put a condom on," because I was like, "We shouldn't do this," you know.

Jamie said:

When he kissed me, I was like, "No, we can't do this." I don't think I had very much control [over the situation] because nobody wants to be the girl who says, "Oh, I let you, but now you've got to quit."

Kim stated:

I was already completely drunk and we decided to go out. His truck got stuck in the mud and then he called his friend to come and get us. Then his friend's truck got stuck in the mud. And so while we tried to figure out what to do, we drank some more whiskey. Then, by the time they decided that they were going to walk I was too drunk to move so I wound up staying in his truck. He just started [having sex with me] and I was too scared to say, "No," because I was really scared of the kid.

Isabel also shared her story:

I felt like I was kind of manipulated into it...he wanted to fool around again, and I, I was like, "No." Then he just started freaking out and he just made me feel incredibly guilty. He was like, "Just come over and talk to me." He just laid this huge guilt trip on me...and then I went over there and we ended up fooling around again. I regretted it.

As each of these stories meet the criteria rape for some of the same or different reasons, they will be discussed in the following sections to explain how each of the following factors put women at increased risk for sexual victimization in the context of a hookup.

Men's Traditional Beliefs about Hookups

During the interviews, 11 out of the 16 men interviewed revealed that they held traditional beliefs concerning women and sex. For example, when asked what had happened during his bad hookup, Joel replied with the following, illustrating his frustrations that his expectations about hooking up were not being met.

She kind of led me on a little bit and then stopped short of what you normally... You think you're doing everything right and then you get to a point and then they're kind of like, "Yeah, well..."

Alex expresses his frustration with a seemingly opposite problem, as follows:

[The hookup] wasn't really that appealing to me because I mean, it wasn't really a challenge to me and I kind of, I like a challenge more than just like "Alright, hey let's go," or you know. I like to be the dominant person, saying "Hey, alright, let's go have sex," or "Alright let's go to a movie," or something like that, you know, I don't want somebody else coming up to me and saying "Hey, let's go have sex." I mean, I agree to it like once, maybe twice, but after that, it's like no. It's not appealing.

Mike explains how to pick up women in a bar:

You don't want to hound them...they'll get tired of you or they'll think you're just trying to hook up with them. It's like they don't want to hook up with you, but at the same time, they do. They just don't want to admit it.

Joel, Alex, and Mike all expressed ideas that reflect traditional notions of how a woman should behave – notions that place women at increased risk for rape. Alex points out that men should be the sexual initiators – implying that women should be, or at least act, less willing to engage in sexual activity. Mike expounds on this idea, stating that women will say they do not want to hook up when really, they do. Both of these ideas reflect the traditional notions that a woman should say no to sex to uphold her image, though when she says no, she really means yes. Joel's comment provides multifaceted evidence: it shows that he was willing to stop, and understood that his partner really meant no, but it also reveals an expectation that women will want to have sex with him. The belief that once a woman allows one form of sexual activity, she must allow the activity to progress was particularly salient for Jamie, who felt that once the hookup had begun she had no choice but to let it continue.

(Lack of) Verbal Consent During Hookups

The second category that lent insight into the possibility of rape during a hookup was the lack of verbal consent occurring during hookups. With only two interviewees claiming that consent for sexual activity was obtained, 29 students indicated that neither they nor their partners consented to engage in sexual activity. Instead, the standard protocol seemed to be “feeling it out” or “assuming” that it was okay, and that their partner would stop if she or he became uncomfortable. In fact, when a hookup went

farther than a student liked, some students were able to tell their partner to stop, while other students, like Kim, expressed being too afraid of their partners or the social implications to say no. Mariah was able to say no, and held firm when her partner attempted to persuade her to continue:

I wasn't in control and he was disappointed with how far I would or wouldn't go. I felt like I was being used, so I was like "Alright, bring me home. I'm going home." You know, I don't put up with that...I was kind of, I was sad that he couldn't respect my decision. It's too bad he couldn't respect me.

For Kathleen, Ana, Jamie, and Isabel (above), however, even when they indicated that they did not want to proceed with the sexual acts, their “hookup” partners continued anyway. Other students, like Kim, were too afraid to ask their partners to stop, and kept their discomfort silent in order to avoid the possible physical or social repercussions of saying no.

Most of the students' hookups probably were mutually desired (though it is difficult to discern since we interviewed only one of the partners, not both, from the students' comments it appears that 25 of the hookups were mutually desired), and in those cases where a student indicated that consent was not discussed, the interviewers asked them how they knew whether or not their partners were comfortable with the sexual activity. Most (20) students said they just felt it out, or assumed one of them would have said no or stopped if the sexual activity progressed beyond where they were comfortable. This sentiment becomes particularly problematic when considering cases like Kim's, since she was afraid to ask her partner to stop.

A minority of the men interviewed (4) had different reasons for not discussing consent with their partners. Mark, for example, explained, “It just didn’t progress that far. I didn’t, like, want to spend any time with her. I wasn’t trying to have a relationship,” and Luke responded, “I used to not ask because I’d always be afraid that [asking for consent] might alter our plans to have sex.” Mark, and others like him, seemed to feel that the sexual activity was below the threshold where permission needs to be obtained and appeared to believe asking for permission was something to be done within the context of a relationship, not a hookup. Other men, like Luke, emphasized that talking about having sex might have prevented it from happening, and were not willing to take that risk. These men were reluctant to compromise their personal comfort (by being forced to actually speak to a hookup partner or risking their partner saying no to sexual activity) in order to ensure that they were engaging in consensual intercourse. None of the women reported engaging in this type of thinking.

Alcohol Use During Hookups

Of the 31 students included in this study, 22 reported that both they and their partner had been consuming alcohol prior to the hookup, which becomes problematic when considering that hooking up is often associated with rape (Flack et. al., 2007). In fact, the statewide and university-level definitions of rape both state that a rape has taken place when sexual activity occurs and a person is “incapacitated,” meaning that she or he is temporarily unable to control her or his actions due to drug or alcohol usage. Thus, students under the influence of alcohol may not be able to give legal consent. The law does not state whether there is a threshold amount of alcohol that needs to have been

consumed for the act to be considered rape, or what it means when both partners were under the influence of alcohol at the time that the sexual activity took place (in no cases did students report that only one of the two partners had consumed alcohol prior to the hookup). In fact, then, all 22 of the students who reported that they had been drinking prior to the hookup (and their partners who had been drinking) could be considered as potential victims of rape according to these definitions.

Isabel, Ana, and Kim all reported that both they and their partners had been using alcohol prior to hooking up, and Kim claims to have been intoxicated enough that she could not walk with her friends, which left her vulnerable to being raped. The fact she was intoxicated enough that she could not walk likely means that she was too intoxicated to give legal consent even if she had wanted to. Other participants also reported that they and/or their partner had consumed vast amounts of alcohol. Cameron, for instance, remarked that he and his partner had consumed a large bottle of vodka between the two of them prior to hooking up, stating that:

We were both really, really drunk and we just started [having sex]. After we were done, we were just kind of lying there and then she started getting really, really, really sick. I guess the alcohol was starting to really, really get to her and she was throwing up in the bathroom. I guess it was a good night in the sense that it was awesome sex, but then it kind of sucked because she was throwing up and I had to spend the rest of the night taking care of her.

While Cameron may or may not have been able to give legal consent, it seems apparent that his female partner was probably too intoxicated to do so, meaning that while

Cameron interpreted the situation simply as “awesome sex,” his partner and/or the legal system might have had different interpretations of what, exactly, had taken place.

Students who reported using alcohol prior to hooking up often reported feeling less in control of the situation, 15 out of 20 of the students who reported using alcohol (two of the students who reported asking alcohol were not asked this question) also stated that the hookup would not have occurred if alcohol had not been consumed. This shows just how vulnerable students, particularly female students, become once alcohol has been consumed. In fact, Ana, Kim, and Isabel reported that the hookup would not have occurred if they and their partners had not been drinking. Ana stated that she would have been able “to stand up for herself more,” if she had not been drinking, citing a previous time when her partner had tried to pursue sexual activity when she was not intoxicated and she was successful in resisting his advances. Kim also attributed the hookup to alcohol use, stating that she would not have been in that situation if she had been sober. Isabel felt that her partner attempted to use alcohol to manipulate her into having sex with him, saying he knew she “wasn’t normally like that.”

Perceptions of the Possibility of Rape

When queried about the worst things that could happen during a hookup, no students voiced the possibility that rape could occur due to a hookup. Moreover, when we asked students about their own bad hookups, no students used the words “rape” or “sexual assault” and only students who had been involved in situations that could be construed as rape alluded even slightly to these concepts. In doing so, however, even the women who had these experiences placed blame upon themselves, saying that the worst

possible outcomes of hooking up were “feeling guilty” and “regretting it,” instead of suggesting the possibility that a partner would not stop when asked. Kathleen, for example, said:

It took a while [before I felt better about myself]. This was big, and especially because it was really the first time I'd ever like done anything like that, I mean even close to that. I really did feel guilty and like I went to church the next day and it was terrible. I felt so bad about like what had happened. I mean sometimes I still feel bad about it. It happened a couple of months ago and I do still obviously regret it.

When Ana blamed herself and discussed feeling guilty, I attempted to challenge her belief that she was responsible for what happened. Even then, Ana held firm to her self-blame, revealing that the perception that rape could not occur during a hookup was deeply engrained in her ideas of what rape meant. The conversation follows:

Ana – *From the beginning I never really wanted that to happen. But I should have... I mean, it's my fault that that happened, probably. Because I could have, like, stood up for myself more, you know?*

Me – *Like how?*

Ana – *Like...I don't know. Put my foot down more.*

Me – *But you said no.*

Ana – *Yeah. And I feel like...I don't know. I don't know. I just probably. I just kind of feel like I wasn't very strong, I wasn't very strict. Like I could have like yelled at him. Like, "NO! I said NO!"*

Me – *I feel kind of conflicted here. I mean it just doesn't sound like anything you wanted to happen at all, and he did it anyway.*

Ana – *Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.*

For the students who did not experience rape during their hookups, instead of acknowledging the possibility of rape, they reported the potential for events that, while negative, have minimal consequences when compared to more serious potential outcomes such as rape. Students, for example, reported that the worst possible outcomes of hooking up included the possibility of waking up next to an unattractive partner or one who was not properly cleansed. The biggest concern students had about hooking up was that hooking up could potentially make the relationship with the hookup partner awkward; concerns about STIs were mentioned a few times and pregnancy was mentioned once.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, I will include three distinct sections. The first will outline the findings discussed in the results section and connect these findings to the literature. The second will use the findings, in addition to the current literature, to make recommendations for improving current policy and sexual assault prevention programs. Finally, the third section will discuss the limitations of this study and make recommendations for future research.

Findings and Contributions to the Literature

Critical feminist theory would assume gender oppression and predict that the historical policies that defined rape and womanhood would remain prevalent in the beliefs of students who are engaging in the hookup culture (Wing, 2003). In fact, students who hooked up reported holding traditional beliefs about sex and rape; these beliefs seemed to guide their hookups and inform their expectations of how men and woman should behave during a hookup. Of the males interviewed, 11 out of 16 relayed traditional beliefs for instance, that when a woman says no, she really means yes – as was thought to be the case historically, when successful penetration meant that the woman had been willing (McGregor, 2005). Men's traditional beliefs regarding sexual activity are significant since, if male students believe that women will act in opposition to their actual desires and actually want to have sex with them, they may not be aware that a woman who says no might actually not wish to participate in sexual activity, or that a woman who agrees to one form of sexually activity may not wish to participate in another form of sexual activity. Some authors who have noted the prevalence of rape myth

acceptance have suggested that peer education programs can help to diminish these beliefs on college campuses (e.g., Foubert, 2000; Foubert & Marriott, 1997); such programs could likely help students to understand what is actually acceptable or not within the context of hooking up.

With the exception of 2 participants, students failed to obtain verbal consent from their hookup partners, indicating a lack of knowledge of current rape policies and an unwillingness to talk with their partners and risk them saying no. Students seemed unaware that, according to the policy at the university where the study took place, verbal consent must be present and ongoing throughout sexual activity. In other words, if students do not receive verbal consent from their partners to engage in sexual activities continuously throughout the hookup, they could be charged for sexual misconduct by the university. Considering only the absence of consent taking place during students' hookups, at least 92.9% of the students who participated in this study (and their partners) could be charged with sexual misconduct. Some research suggests that women who have been previous victims of rape may be less able to refuse later unwanted sexual contact, and thus may be at increased risk for victimization (Katz, May, Sorensen, & DelTosta, 2010; Franklin, 2010). Therefore, for Kim, (who may or may not have already been a survivor) and other previous victims of rape, having partners who abide by this portion of the policy and obtain consent may be extremely important.

Twenty-two participants reported using alcohol during their most recent hookup, indicating, again, a lack of awareness of the current rape policies. For Ana, Kim, Isabel, and 75% of the women raped on college campuses today (Koss, Gidyez, & Wisniewski,

1987), alcohol plays a role in their victimization. While Ana, Kim, and Isabel were likely engaging in the self-blame common to rape victims, their perceptions that the “bad hookup” may not have happened without the presence of alcohol likely contain a dose of realism: Research has shown that sexually aggressive men are less likely to desist sexual behavior at their partner’s request when they have consumed alcohol (Bernat, Calhoun, & Stolp, 1998). Men also report more sexual entitlement when inebriated (Franklin, 2010) and are more likely to misinterpret a friendly woman as desiring sexual activity (Abbey & Harnish, 1998). They perceive women, similarly, to be more promiscuous and desiring of sexual behavior, even when resisting the sexual advances, when the women are drinking alcohol (Bernat, Calhoun, & Stolp, 1998; Norris and Cubbins, 1992; George & Norris, 1991). Women, also, may be less able to resist unwanted sexual advances when intoxicated (Harrington & Leitenberg, 1994; Testa & Livingston, 1999).

The final barrier to consent found in this study indicates that students continue to define rape by traditional mores – as stranger rape, which is how rape was historically understood (Buck-Doude, 2008) – and none of the students interviewed thought of acquaintance rape as a possibility, and one that could easily occur within the context of a hookup. The fact that students generally associate rape with stranger rape, not acquaintance rape, has been well documented in the past (Buck-Doude, 2008; Littleton, Tabernik, Canales, & Backstrom, 2009), but the finding that students do not even consider rape a possibility when contemplating the worst potential consequences of hooking up is particularly striking since it demonstrates how deeply engrained traditional rape scripts are. If students do not believe rape is a possibility when hooking up then

they are less likely to be capable of identifying their “bad hookup” as rape, less likely to be prepared to be cautious and avoid situations where a potential rape could occur, and less likely to monitor their behavior in a way that ensures that their partner is comfortable with the hookup (e.g., by obtaining verbal consent or ensuring sobriety).

The fact that students hold traditional beliefs about sex is not a new finding, but the finding that these beliefs create actual barriers to consent during hookups is important. The traditional beliefs found to be held by both men and women in this study, along with the findings that students do not perceive rape as a possibility and often consume large amounts of alcohol during hookups are a large part of the reason why it is so important that students obtain verbal consent throughout their hookups. Some academics have suggested that verbal consent is unnecessary and a cause advanced by women do not want to say no, are weak, or enjoy making men beg (e.g., Subotnik, 2009). In actuality, the historical context of oppressive policy which normalizes aggression and dismisses the potential for rape (Buck-Doude, 2008) – coupled with copious amounts of alcohol and the fact that most hookup partners are not intimately familiar with one another (Flack et al., 2007) – creates situations students are more likely to have difficulty reading and comprehending one another’s thoughts and actions, making rape more likely to occur. The finding that these factors come into play during hookups and hookups turned into rapes is particularly important. These findings can be used to lend insight into how state and university policies, as well as sexual assault prevention programs, can become more effective at reducing the enormous rate of rape on college campuses.

This study revealed an extremely high rate of rape – 33% of the 15 females whose interviews were analyzed – generally speaking, 25% of women is among the higher estimates (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). Most of these women were also only 18 or 19, meaning that even higher rates may have been found if more of the women in our sample were juniors and seniors. This number also considers only reported hookups (not rapes that may have occurred in non-hookup scenarios or rapes that were recognized as rape and not a bad hookup) and did not consider lack of consent or alcohol consumption as individual factors due to the vague, unenforced, and sometimes contradictory nature of these tenets of current rape definitions. The fact that this rate is higher than that found by many other studies, is likely due to at least two different reasons: 1) Due to the oppressive nature of the hookup culture and the barriers to consent during hookups, women who engage in hooking up are likely more vulnerable to being raped than those who do not. 2) The qualitative approach taken in this study allowed the researcher to analyze the scenarios based on detailed descriptions. Such detailed descriptions are lacking in many of the surveys on which rape statistics are based, and this poses difficulties in identifying consensual or nonconsensual sex in quantitative research. The high rate of rape found in this study reveals not only the oppressive nature of the hookup culture, but it also reveals oppression within the society that defines rape through vague policy which allow rapes to continue to occur unimpeded, encourages women who are raped to stay silent, lets men who rape walk free, and even convinces the women that are raped that it is them – not their assailants – who are in the wrong.

Suggestions for Rape Policy and Sexual Assault Prevention Programs

While current policy and legislation has made progress in defining rape in less biased ways, there continue to be challenges and setbacks with the way in which rape is viewed and discussed in society (Greene & Navarro, 1998). Even today, women who report their rapes to authorities often report being raped a second time by the system (Greene & Navarro, 1998). Awareness of the difficulties of reporting rape discourages many women from reporting at all (Greene & Navarro, 1998). Additionally, the current No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act is attempting to redefine rape for federally funded abortions (FoxNews, 2011; Somashekhar, 2011). It would change the law so that federal money for an abortion could be given to only those women who were “forcibly raped,” (and not just “raped”) meaning that federal funding for abortions would not be granted in cases where women were drugged, coerced without physical force, or in statutory rape cases (FoxNews, 2011; Somashekhar, 2011), implying that only some rapes are “forcible” and that acquaintance rapes are much less serious than those rapes. Even if it doesn’t become law, this type of legislation draws into question, for much of the population, how seriously current definitions of rape should be taken when a woman is “just” raped and not “forcibly raped.”

Current rape policy has a tendency to be vague and contradictory. Different states, universities, and organizations from local to national levels all define rape independently and differently (Schiffman, 2010). The fact that few, if any, of these definitions are frequently publicized in ways that students are likely to understand and see them likely explains why the students in this study were unaware of several facets of the university, state, and national level definitions, and why the women in this study who

experienced rape explained what had happened to them as a “bad hookup” instead of rape (Schiffman, 2010).

The students in this study were unaware of many facets of rape policy. This finding implies that in order to reduce rape rates, it would likely be helpful if rape policies were more clear, consistent, well-publicized, and enforced (Schiffman, 2010). This would likely help students to understand what rape means and integrate current rape policies into their understandings of rape. As a society, we need to find ways to enforce these policies in appropriate ways – such as by prosecuting rapists without re-victimizing rape victims (Greene & Navarro, 1998, Patterson, 2010). Police officers and doctors, for example, should be trained how to be sensitive to the unique needs of rape victims and, as much as possible, the legal system should assume from the start that acquaintance rape victims are telling the truth rather than starting with the assumption that if the victim is a woman (especially a woman who has engaged in casual sex), she is probably lying (Bryden, 2000). Furthermore, while it is important that the policies related to verbal consent and incapacitation are maintained in order to protect people like Kim, who are afraid to say no, or who are too intoxicated to consent to sexual activity, these policies need to be very clear and consistent without being overbearing. In other words, it probably does not make sense to try someone for rape if both partners were of age and wanted to have sex but did not obtain verbal consent. Still, it is important to recognize how important verbal consent is (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1999; Wertheimer, 2003). Thus, policy should allow for disciplinary actions to be taken in cases where verbal consent is not obtained, yet discriminate between cases where someone has failed to

obtain consent prior to engaging in sexual activity with a partner who wanted to do and cases where verbal consent was not obtained and one of the partners was unwilling.

Universities and rape assault prevention programs, similarly, must explain to students how rape is defined according to state and local definitions so that students are aware that rape occurs, even – and especially – during hookups. This would help ensure that students are aware of the implications of their actions when they hookup with someone who has declined sexual activity, who has not given their verbal consent engage in any particular sexual activity, or who is intoxicated. Discussions should occur with students explaining the extent to which drinking alcohol before sex is acceptable or not. These programs should not only define rape and attempt to dispense of rape myths, but should also make clear how the university and state will respond if students are found guilty of not abiding by each facet of the university's rape policy (Schiffman, 2010). When possible, universities should attempt to enforce rape policies which discourage drinking prior to sexual activity and require verbal consent. Disciplinary procedures should be implemented for students who do not comply with these policies (Schiffman, 2010). Disciplinary actions should be taken in cases ranging from those where both students were willing to hookup but did not comply with the facets regarding alcohol use and verbal consent, where students may have not known of their partner's discomfort (as Kim's partner may not have), where there was gross neglect (as might have been the case for Mark and Luke), or where there may have been an outright intention to rape.

Universities and sexual assault prevention programs should encourage students to ensure that they receive verbal consent every time they engage in sexual behavior

(Wertheimer, 2003). This is especially important when hooking up since students are unlikely to be able to read and interpret nonverbal behavior as well when they are intoxicated, which is common during hookups (Lambert, Kahn, & Apple, 2003; Paul & Hayes, 2002). Another reason why obtaining verbal consent is especially important during hookups is that students are often largely unfamiliar with their hookup partners (Flack et al., 2007; Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2006), which could further increase the difficulty of reading a partner's nonverbal behavior to assess their level of comfort with the sexual activity.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

One weakness of this study is that the interviewees were primarily white, making it difficult to draw conclusions about how minority women may experience hooking up and rape differently than white women (Wing, 2003). Critical feminist theory suggests that the intersections of women's identities are tremendously important to pay attention to, since intersections often influence the ways in which oppression occurs (Wing, 2003). Also, looking at the historical policy has revealed that historically, only middle and upper class white women could be raped (Brownmiller, 1975). Historical policies still seem to influence the ways in which rape is experienced by white women. As such, it makes sense to think that the different historical policies for women of color may also still affect the ways in which rape affects them today. In fact, some research suggests that African American women are raped as much as three times more often than white women (Karjane, Fisher, & Cullen, 2002; National Victims Center, 1992; Neville & Pugh, 1997; Wyatt, 1992), and that women of color who are raped by men of color are often pressured

to side with their race rather than their gender and keep the rape silent (MacKinnon, 1991; Wing, 2003). Research has also shown that hooking up is classed as well as racialized and gendered (Hamilton & Armstrong, 2009). Future research could add insight into this topic by exploring, more fully, the experiences of women of color, and from different levels of socioeconomic standing, with hooking up and rape.

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Appendix

Hooking Up: Implications for College Students' Wellbeing Survey Schedule

This is study about hooking up. For purposes of this study, we have defined “hooking up” as engaging in sexual activity with someone with whom you had no romantic or emotional attachment.

Have you had a hooking-up experience as we define it?

(If asked, explain that for the purposes of this study sexual activity includes any heavy petting (fondling of breasts or genitals) and any vaginal, oral and/or anal sex.

If they qualify: I'll begin by asking you a series of questions about hooking up, and then at the end I'll ask you a few questions about your background. Do you have any questions before we continue?

Campus culture

What percentage of men and women do you think hook up on campus? (Men & Women separately)?

Do you think that most students on campus approve of hooking up? What percentage of men and women do you think approve of hooking up?

What do your friends think of hooking up?

Would you say that hooking up has replaced dating as the way to do relationships on campus? Why or why not?

How easy do you think it would be to find a serious dating partner on campus? Why do you think that this is the case?

Most recent hook-up

I want to ask you about the last person you hooked up with. How many times did you hook up with him/her?

How did you know the person you hooked up with?

How did you meet? For how long did you know the person prior to the hook-up?

What about this person attracted you to them? In other words, why did you want to hook-up with this particular person?

How did you end up hooking up? Can you describe in detail the events that led up to the hook-up? In other words, where were you and your hook-up partner the day or night of the hook-up? What were you doing? How did things progress to the sexual intimacy? How did you know that you were going to be sexually intimate with this person?

Where did the hook-up actually occur?

How long would you say that the sexual activity lasted?

What kind of sexual activity took place?

How sexually satisfying was the experience for you, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means not at all satisfying and 10 means completely satisfying. Did you have an orgasm? Why or why not?

How sexually satisfying do you believe the experience was for your partner, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means not at all satisfying and 10 means completely satisfying. Why do you think that it was this satisfying for your partner? Did your partner have an orgasm? How do you know? Why do you think that she/he did or didn't have an orgasm?

If one of them had an orgasm and the other didn't, talk with them about whether they thought this was fair, or whether they cared about this discrepancy, and why...

Did you talk about the level of sexual intimacy with which you were both comfortable? If so, what did you say? If not, how did you know what level of intimacy was comfortable for you and your partner?

Can you talk about how comfortable you were with the level of sexual activity that occurred? Ask "WHY" questions to get them to elaborate on the reasons why they experienced a given level of comfort or discomfort...

Ditto for partner...can you talk about how comfortable your partner was..... How do you know?

Do you believe your partner was comfortable? How do you know?

IF IT FITS – DO THIS SECTION; OTHERWISE, SKIP TO NEXT GROUP OF QUESTIONS (ON VALUES)

Do you think that you had complete control over how far the sexual intimacy went? Why or why not?

How about your partner? Do you think that he or she had complete control over how far the sexual intimacy went? Why or why not?

Do you wish that you and your partner had talked more about the level of sexual intimacy with which you were comfortable? Why or why not?

Did you have to resist your own **values** in order to go through with the hook-up? If not, why? If so, how so? AND At what point or points did you feel that you were resisting your own values? How did you deal with this? What did you tell yourself? Why do you think you allowed the hook-up to continue even if you felt it were against your values?

Do you believe that alcohol (or drugs) played a role in the hook-up?
If so: Did this affect your ability or your partner's ability to determine how far to go?

Do you believe you would have hooked up if you were sober?

Did you get drunk/high with the intention of hooking up?

Did you attempt to get your partner drunk/high with the intention of hooking up?

Did you or your partner use any kind of birth control or protection against STDs – such as a condom -- during the hook-up? What did you use? Why didn't you use a condom?

Did you think that your hook-up partner might have an STD? Why or why not?

IF RELEVANT: Did you think that it was safe to have unprotected (vaginal sex, oral sex, or anal sex...whatever they did) with your partner? Why?

Were there other people around during the hook-up, or were you alone with your partner? If there were other people around, what did they do during the hook-up? Did they say anything to you? What? How did you feel about others (or another person) being around?

How did the hook-up end?

What did you do when it was over?

How did you say good-bye to your partner?

Did you talk about getting together again? If so, what did you say

How did you feel about your partner after the hooking up experience? Why? How did you deal with these feelings?

Did you think poorly of him or her for participating in the hook-up? Why or why not? How did you deal with these feelings? Go into depth here to try to get at their underlying values.

How did you feel about yourself after the hooking up experience? Why? How did you deal with these feelings?

Did you think poorly of yourself for participating in the hook-up? Why or why not? How did you deal with these feelings?

Go into depth here to try to get at their underlying values.

If you could go back in time to the day of the hook-up, would you do it again? Why or why not?

Go into depth here to try to get at their underlying values.

Did you tell anyone about your hook-up experience? If so, who? What did you tell them? (Encourage them to elaborate and to use the same words w/ you that they used w/ their friends.) How did they respond? Did you tell anyone the name of your hook-up partner? If so, who? How did they respond? Why do you think that they responded this way?

Did you hook up again with this person? Tell me about that.

What is your current relationship with the person you hooked up with? Why do you think the relationship is this way? Are you satisfied with this relationship? Why or why not?

Would you like to be in a romantic relationship with this person? For example, would you ever date this person or consider having a long-term relationship with them? Why or why not?

Go into depth here to try to get at their underlying values.

IF THEY SAY NO: You say that you wouldn't date your HU partner, because....(fill in). Do you apply that same standard to yourself? If so/if not, please explain why.

Example: They might say that they wouldn't date someone who had sex with them the first time that they met them. Then, ask them why and try to determine whether (and why) they are holding their hook-up partner to different standards than those they hold for themselves.

Hooking up in general

Why do you hook up?

What are the qualities that you look for in a hook-up partner? What's important to you, in terms of choosing a hook-up partner?

How about a dating partner? What are the qualities that you would look for in a dating partner? Why are these things important to you?

IF NECESSARY: Why do you think that you look for different qualities in a hook-up partner than you would in a dating partner? (Encourage elaboration.)

Do you think that you would hold a dating partner to the same standards that you have for yourself, in terms of their sexual histories, or to higher or lower standards? Would it be okay with you if a dating partner had a sexual history that was similar to your own? Why or why not? (Probe.)

Do you think that you would hold a future spouse or long-term partner to the same standards that you have for yourself, in terms of their sexual histories, or to higher standards? In other words, would it be okay with you if a future spouse or long-term partner had a sexual history that were similar to your own? Why? (Probe.)

Is hooking up better than being in a relationship? Why or why not? What is the difference between hooking-up and being in a relationship?

Some people on campus say that they don't want to have a dating relationship right now. Do you ever feel this way? Why? What are some of the aspects of dating that might not work for you right now? (PROBE...Example: What's going on in your life right now that makes dating not a good option for you? What about dating wouldn't work for you right now?)

Do you hope to get married someday? Why or why not? In an ideal situation, how long do you want your marriage to last? Do you think that you'll want to be monogamous (not have other sexual partners) once you are married? Why or why not? Do you think that you'll be able to be monogamous? Why or why not?

How does the sexual activity that occurs during a hook-up compare to sexual activity in a dating relationship? Is it more or less satisfying? Why?

USE AS NECESSARY:

What aspects of more committed relationships make sex more satisfying? Why do you think that (whatever they say) makes sex in committed relationships more satisfying? For example, why do you think that emotional attachment, or trust, or (blank) makes sex more satisfying?

Do you think that you would care as much about a hook-up partner's sexual pleasure as you would about a dating partner's sexual pleasure? In other words, would you try harder to please a dating partner than you would a hook-up partner? Why or why not? (Elaborate.)

In terms of conversation, what kind of things do you talk about w/ a hook-up partner? What kind of information do you share about yourself? How about with a dating partner? What kind of things would you share about yourself w/ a dating

partner? Would you share different things about yourself w/ a HU partner, compared to a dating partner?

Do you think that sex and love go together? If you're in a sexual relationship that's not for love, what does that do for you (or what are you getting out of it)?

What is the best thing about hooking up?

What is the worst thing about hooking up?

Do you think that you'd ever hook up again? Why or why not?

How many times have you hooked over the last year?

With how many different people have you hooked up?

What sexual activities do you do when you hook up?

What do you think about hooking up, from a moral perspective? Do you think it's right or wrong, or somewhere in-between? Why do you think you feel this way?

Would you approve of your own kids hooking up, once they reach your age? Why or why not?

Do you think that your parents would approve of your hooking-up? Why or why not?

STD worries and hooking up

How frequently do you or your partner use a condom when you have sexual intercourse (or anal sex) during hooking up? Why? What determines whether or not you or your partner will use a condom?

How often do you or your partner use a condom or dental dam (a latex sheet that can be placed over the vulva) when you have oral sex during hooking up? Why? What determines whether or not you or your partner will use a condom?

Have you ever been worried about exposure to HIV/AIDS or another sexually transmissible infection after a hook-up? Why or why not? What did you do about your concerns? Did you go to a health clinic to get tested for HIV or any other STI?

Have you ever been tested for HIV or any other sexually transmissible infection? If so, for what were you tested? Where did you go for testing? How easy or difficult was it for you to go for testing? Did you receive the results of your tests in a timely manner?

If you have been tested for HIV or any other STD, how often do you do this? How often do you think that it would be optimal for you to do this? Why?