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HOOKING UP ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

by

ELENA WEISS

Under the Direction of Jennifer Patico

ABSTRACT

A 2001 national study of college women's sexual attitudes and behaviors revealed that students have stopped dating and started "hooking up." Previous studies focused on fraternities and their relation to the rape culture but neglected to connect rape culture to hook up culture. This study evaluated the culture surrounding rape by interviewing seventeen college aged men about masculinity, behavior in male homosocial groups, "hooking up" and rape. It addresses the following questions: 1-How do college men understand "hooking up" and sexual consent? 2-In what ways might men's understanding of "hooking up" and sexual consent be related to the ongoing incidence of rape on college campuses? 3- How do men understand and adhere to rape myths? In-depth interviews with college men in this study point to their dependence on nonverbal communication when negotiating "hookups," with implications for their understandings of consent and perpetuation of myths concerning women's sexuality.

INDEX WORDS: Masculinity, Hooking up, Sexual consent

HOOKING UP ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

by

ELENA WEISS

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Arts

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Georgia State University

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2011

NEW INSIGHTS INTO HOOKING UP ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

by

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May 2011

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Marian and Arthur Weiss who supported me throughout college and Graduate School. Every time that I wanted to give up and not finish this project they reminded me of how close I was to finishing it and how it needed to get done. Things were not always easy, but they were there to support me and push me.

This is also dedicated to my friend Stacey Chavis who inspires me and was always asking me when I was going to hurry up and finish. Thank you Stacey, for always pushing me to the next level in my life and challenges me to strive for more.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

It is estimated that 1 out of 3 women will be a survivor of attempted rape or completed rape while in college (Boeringer 1999). College officials are aware that rape is a problem and, even with the attention that events such as “Take Back the Night” bring to the issue, rates of rape on college campuses have not changed over the past 50 years (Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004; Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeny 2006; Wantland 2005).

Meanwhile, studies indicate that sexual behavior and dating practices amongst college aged students are changing. Students are now engaging in what are known as “hook ups” (Boswell and Spade 2000; Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004; Sessions- Stepp 2007; Bogle 2008). Hook ups may or may not include sexual intercourse (Paul, McManus, and Hayes 2000, Bogle 2008), but they refer to an intimate interaction between individuals who may or may not know each other (Bogle 2008). Hooking up is considered by students to be the primary way to initiate sexual contact and romantic relationships on college campuses (ibid.). Another study reported that 44% of hook ups took place at Greek Parties or events on college campuses (Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004). So it appears that fraternities play an important role, but many hook ups are also occurring outside of the fraternity structure.

Fraternity men have been one of the main groups linked to rapes on college campuses (Bleecker and Murnen 2005; Boeringer 1996; Boswell and Spade 1996; Koss and Cleveland 1996; Martin and Hummer 1989; Sanday 1990; Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997; Stompler 1994). Furthermore, given the increase of hooking up on college campuses (Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004) and its noted parallels to coercive sexual behavior (Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004;

Bogle 2008), this study evaluated the culture surrounding rape and examined the issues of masculinity that are involved in campus "hook up" culture. This study is an attempt at clarifying the relationship that exists between increased participation in the "hook up" culture rape rates on college campuses.

Originally the intention of this project was to look at sexual assault by fraternity men on the college campus. This idea was inspired by a situation that happened to one of my sorority sisters when I was in college. It was fraternity bid day and usually on fraternity bid day on my campus everyone drinks a lot, to the point where many would pass out for a few hours, wake up and then start drinking to the point of passing out again. On fraternity bid day my freshman year, a girl in my sorority was barely conscious on a swing located in the back of the fraternity house and a well respected member of the fraternity assaulted her. Apparently some of the guys saw what happened from the upstairs bedroom, but did not go downstairs to stop it. The girl woke up and realized what was going on. At that point it was too late because she had already been assaulted. Because this girl had a reputation no one at first believed her. However, the girl went on to report the act. Fortunately, some of the fraternity brothers stepped up and were witnesses for this girl. The man who assaulted her was disciplined and eventually left the University. It was not until my sophomore year in college when I first started studying sexual assault that I found out that such incidences were common on a college campus, even a small one like I attended.

During the initial research process, I noticed that the research on sexual assault on college campuses was rather exhaustive and not much had really changed since in the past 20 years or more. The sexual assault rates have remained relatively steady for about 50 years. When I was an undergraduate student, I recall students going to parties and "hooking up." We would periodically see two people "hook up" at the party one night and "hook up" with different people at the

next party. Students at these parties for the most part carried an alcoholic beverage in their hand or had been drinking prior to attending the party. Ultimately, female students were placing themselves in a vulnerable position prior to attending the party by pre-partying in dorm rooms and often drinking large amounts of alcohol.

My personal experience in the Greek system and as an observer in the “hook up” culture framed the initial plans for this study. I wanted to compare fraternity and non fraternity men since numerous studies have stated that fraternity men are more likely to be involved campus rapes (Bleecker and Murnen 2005; Boeringer 1996; Boeringer 1999; Boswell and Spade 1996; Koss and Cleveland 1996; Martin and Hummer 1989; Sanday, 1990; Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997; Stomblor 1994) and because other research has stated that many hook ups occur at Greek Parties or social events (Boswell and Spade 1996; Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004), while non-fraternity men are less studied. The Greek social setting is what I had experience with in college because it dominated most of the social scene on my undergraduate campus. However, due to the nature of the campus where this study took place, making such a distinction between fraternity men and non-fraternity men was not possible, and the study evolved to focus on non-fraternity men – the more understudied group – and their perceptions of masculinity and the “hook up” culture. Thus in a departure from previous studies, this project investigated aspects of masculinity that occur in the hook up culture outside of the fraternity structure, which may nonetheless foster an environment and beliefs that are conducive to rape and the sexual exploitation of women.

1.2 Literature

Theories of Rape and Masculinity

There are numerous theories to explain why rape is prevalent in society and why 1 in 3 women will be a survivor of attempted or completed rape while in college (Boeringer 1999). Two theories that can be used to explain the prevalence of rape in society are feminist theory and social learning theory (Ellis 1989).

Some feminist theorists focus on patriarchy as the context in which all oppressions of women take place; they assert that rape is a tool that men use to maintain their dominance and control over women (ibid.). In this view, rape by men is “an expression of a patriarchal (male dominant) social system” (Baron & Straus 1989:5). Brownmiller (1975) states that “all rape is an exercise in power” (p.283). This indicates that rape is a way for men to show women that they are in control at all times. Furthermore, it emphasizes that men are constantly trying to keep women in a state of fear as a means of controlling the actions of all women (Baron and Straus 1989).

A concept that arose from feminist theory on rape and second wave feminism is the idea of “rape culture” (Armstrong, Hamilton and Sweeny 2006). According to Buchwald, Fletcher, and Roth. (2005), a rape culture is:

A complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent...A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women and presents it as the norm. In a rape culture, both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life (xi).

This idea of rape culture is important because it emphasizes how violence against women is normalized and can serve as an explanation for why individuals who participate in the hook up culture might not recognize acts of rape when they occur.

The social learning perspective on rape stems from social learning theory first theorized by Alfred Bandura. This perspective suggests that aggressive behavior can be learned through imitation (Ellis 1989:12). This perspective is similar to feminist theory in two ways: 1) both theories state that the messages taught by society and culture are responsible for rape and 2) both theories recognize features of Western culture that encourage men to exploit women through sex (ibid.:13). These messages are learned through associations with family and peers, society as a whole and messages delivered by the mass media (ibid.:12). The individual picks up the messages delivered by the family, society or mass media and then imitates the acts (ibid.). According to these theories individuals will carry out acts of violence if they learn that violence is acceptable.

Rape can also be understood as a problem of how young men are socialized. Both RW Connell and Jackson Katz examine how the problem of masculinity is related to the idea of rape. Katz (2006) believes that the reason that men rape lies in the way that they are socialized. Young boys are raised in an environment that glorifies men who are sexually aggressive and normalizes the degradation and objectification of women through mainstream pornography and misogynistic music videos (Katz 2006). For white men, being a man means being in control of others, including women (ibid.). For Katz, true manhood in the West is about being verbally, physically and sexually aggressive; all forms of aggression make a man a “real man” (2006).

Similarly to Katz, Connell’s (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity focuses on the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of other groups. Connell (2005) defines hegemonic masculinity as “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (77). Applying this

idea is important because it ties in well with feminist theory on rape and because it centers on the notion that men hold a superior status to women in society; this status might cause men to think that they can abuse women purely because men are in the dominant group and women are part of the subordinated group. This makes violence a fulfillment of their masculine identity. This ideology is important because it explains why some men constantly feel that they need to prove their manhood and continue to maintain power over women.

The aforementioned concepts of rape culture, feminist theory on rape, the social learning perspective and hegemonic masculinity are all important to this project because they all provide explanations of why rape occurs. These concepts are interrelated due to their focus on men feeling that they need a way to exert power over women and constantly show their peers who is the 'manliest man.' These concepts will play an important role in the final analysis of this project because they suggest rape is not just fraternity problem, but a society wide problem.

In addition, there are other theories of rape that focus on context specific places and individual factors. Context specific approaches focus on stating that particular contexts (places) are sexually dangerous places for women. These contexts can be fraternities, bars, etc (Armstrong, Hamilton and Sweeny 2006). Boswell and Spade (1996) believe that specific settings can influence the way that men and women interact with another and therefore some settings might be more likely to foster an environment that is sexually dangerous for women. Context specific approaches are important in regards to hooking up and rape because they focus on places where sexual acts can occur, along with places where individuals might go when they are looking specifically to hook up. These approaches also suggest that there might be something about the hook up scene that is conducive to rape.

Studies also suggest that the use of drugs and alcohol only exaggerate these dynamics. The use of alcohol and drugs by men and women to coerce them into sexual acts is problematic because most of the time when the individual is under the influence, she does not interpret the act as coercive and this makes the act difficult to interpret by others either during the act or after the act is completed (Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004).

Overall amongst all of the articles read, none of them with the exception of Adams-Curtis and Forbes (2004) made a possible connection between rape and the broader context of hooking up on campus. Furthermore many of the articles seemed to express the overall opinion that fraternities are unsafe places for women and women should stay away from fraternity men because they will not treat them with respect. While fraternities might be homosocial settings conducive to rape, by focusing attention on fraternities, researchers may have overlooked how other social pressures such as hegemonic masculinity and alcohol characterize social settings on college campuses more broadly. Therefore, when attempting to make a connection between the broader hookup culture and rape, it is important to analyze the overall social setting and pressures which might cause an individual to engage in such behaviors.

Hook Up Culture: A new and broader context for hegemonic masculinity and rape:

Recent research suggests that college aged students are no longer choosing to go on traditional dates; instead, they are engaging in a practice called hooking up (Sessions-Stepp 2007; Grello, Welsh and Harper. 2006; Lambert, Kahn and Apple 2003; Paul, McManus and Hayes. 2000; Bogle 2008). A 2001 national study on college women's sexual attitudes and behaviors defined a hook up as "when a girl and a guy get together for a physical encounter and don't necessarily expect anything further" (Bogle 2008:2). These encounters are usually sexual in nature

and normally occur once between individuals who are either brief acquaintances or are complete strangers. Hook ups do not always lead to sexual intercourse (Paul, McManus and Hayes. 2000), but they may involve any variety of sexual behaviors, including intercourse. Hook ups can be classified as the new form of casual sex amongst college aged students. Previously, college aged students engaged in dating as a means to form intimate relationships; now college students rarely date (Bogle 2008). Bogle found out that hooking up has in many ways replaced traditional dating on college campuses when she interviewed 76 people (51 undergraduate college students and 25 alumni) about sex and relationships (2008). The interviews that make up her conclusions took place at large public university and a smaller faith based university (ibid.:6).

Many “hook ups” occur at Greek social events and parties where alcohol is prevalent (Paul, McManus and Hayes 2000) or at a more secluded location depending upon what acts the two individuals are planning on doing (Bogle 2008). Most of the time alcohol, which is consumed at the parties that both fraternity and non-fraternity members attend to meet new people, is a precursor to “hook ups” (ibid.). Individuals might also feel pressure by their peers to engage in hookups at parties. Social pressure is likely to cause individuals to have more casual sex partners (Paul, McManus and Hayes 2000). According to social norms theory, which states “in the absence of the accurate knowledge [of peers attitudes and behaviors], they [people] are more likely to be influenced by what they *think* people think and do, rather than what they *actually* think and do” (Katz 2007:11). Thus, students might participate in hooking up more frequently than they normally would because they perceive their peers to be hooking up more frequently than what is actually occurring (Bogle 2008).

“Hook ups” and rape share several similarities in terms of the conditions in which they occur, where they occur and, who is most likely to be involved in the acts. Like many party

rapes, individuals who have sexual intercourse in the context of hooking up might be under the influence of high amounts of alcohol (Grello, Welsh and Harper. 2006; Paul, McManus and Hayes 2000). Adams-Curtis and Forbes (2004) note that 44% of all campus “hook ups” occurred at Greek parties or events. Furthermore, the use of alcohol particularly by women might lead a man to believe that the woman is sexually available (Paul, McManus and Hayes 2000). Individuals who go to parties with the intent of hooking up might use alcohol a social lubricant, especially if the individual is “sexually inhibited or nervous” (ibid:77). The individuals involved in “hook ups” usually exhibit a higher level of intoxication in comparison to those not involved in hooking up. (Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004). The lack of a clear standard of permissible intimate behaviors in the hook up culture can lead to excessive drinking and sexual assault (Bogle 2008). Students often use alcohol as an explanation of how the hook up happens (ibid.). Because there are no set rules or standards involved in hooking up, individuals engaging in hooking up might have trouble identifying sexual acts as inappropriate, even if they meet the legal definition of rape¹.

According to Grello, Welsh and Harper (2006), many women feel that it is their responsibility as women to sexually satisfy a man. Therefore, women are less likely to resist a male’s advances, especially if they believe the sexual act might lead to more than a one night stand (ib-

¹ § 16-6-1 in Georgia: **Rape**

(a) A person commits the offense of **rape** when he has carnal knowledge of:

(1) A female forcibly and against her will; or

(2) A female who is less than ten years of age.

Carnal knowledge in **rape** occurs when there is any penetration of the female sex organ by the male sex organ. The fact that the person allegedly raped is the wife of the defendant shall not be a defense to a charge of **rape**.

(b) A person convicted of the offense of **rape** shall be punished by death, by imprisonment for life without parole, by imprisonment for life, or by a split sentence that is a term of imprisonment for not less than 25 years and not exceeding life imprisonment, followed by probation for life. Any person convicted under this Code section shall, in addition, be subject to the sentencing and punishment provisions of Code Sections 17-10-6.1 and 17-10-7.

(c) When evidence relating to an allegation of **rape** is collected in the course of a medical examination of the person who is the victim of the alleged crime, the law enforcement agency investigating the alleged crime shall be responsible for the cost of the medical examination to the extent that expense is incurred for the limited purpose of collecting evidence (<http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/gacode/Default.asp>, 1-10-11)

id.) because in the hook up script, men ultimately decide whether or not the hookup turns into something beyond a one night stand (Bogle 2008). Part of the reason that this power dynamic exists is because women are constantly aware their 'biological clocks are ticking,' while men are aware that they have a longer reproductive time frame and are therefore in no rush to get married (ibid.). Meanwhile, women are constantly aware that their years for reproduction are limited and are wanting to pursue a relationship with a greater marriage potential (ibid.). This power dynamic still exists even though the age of marriage is increasing. According to Bogle's 2008 publication, the average age of women getting married is 25 and the average age of men getting married is 27.

Furthermore, Bogle (2008) argues that this power dynamic that exists between men and women in the hookup era has led to an increased possibility of women being exploited by men. In this new era where women are more freely engaging in sexual activity, they are more likely to be used for just sex because hooking up usually occurs before dating has started. Now, women need to make sure that they are not being used only for sex and still maintain a good reputation on campus. According to Bogle, many men take for granted that ultimately a woman has control over how far the sexual encounter will go; their forgetfulness could lead to a situation that is considered coercive or be legally defined as rape because the man engaging in the act might want to go further intimately than his female partner (ibid.).

Only after research is done that examines the subjective experience and social dynamics of contexts in which hooking up occurs will we have a more logical explanation as to why rates of rape on the college campus have not decreased over the past 50 years and a better understanding of why such acts while they seem to be particularly encouraged by fraternities are not limited to them.

Therefore this study answered the following research questions:

- How do college men understand “hooking up” and sexual consent?
- In what ways might men’s understanding of hooking up and sexual consent be related to the ongoing incidence of rape on college campuses?
- How do men understand and adhere to rape myths?

1.3 Methods

Study Design:

For this study, I interviewed 17 men who attended a large urban university in the Southeastern United States. The majority of students do not reside on campus and only a small percentage of students participate in fraternities or sororities. One of the men interviewed was involved in a fraternity. The other sixteen interviews were of men who were not involved in a fraternity. Originally I attempted to conduct a comparative study because prior research indicated that hook ups are more likely to occur at Greek events and that fraternity men are more likely to be involved in rape on the college campus (Adams-Curtis and Forbes 2004; Bleecker and Murnen 2005; Boeringer 1996; Boeringer 1999; Boswell and Spade 1996; Koss and Cleveland 1996; Martin and Hummer 1989; Sanday 1990; Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997; Stombler 1994). By interviewing non-fraternity men, along with fraternity men, I was hoping to provide a new perspective on this issue and examine the hookup culture and its relation to the rape culture more broadly, an aspect that has been little investigated. However, since the campus that this study took place at had a very small Greek population, I was only able to recruit 1 participant that was involved in a fraternity, so the focus shifted to understanding the broader “hook up” culture itself in a more in depth way. Each participant was asked a series of questions pertaining to their atti-

tudes towards hooking up, masculinity and to explain how they negotiate the consent process while engaging in the hook up culture. The interviews were transcribed by me and analyzed through narrative analysis (Riessman 1993; Creswell 2003).

Participants:

The sample was recruited through classes during the end of the Spring 2008 semester and during the Summer session 2008. Participants were recruited through classes that were University mandated for graduation. Each male student was asked to fill out a sheet of paper stating his name, age, race, major and whether or not they are active in a fraternity. Individuals willing to participate in the study were not asked to be in the sample if they were below the age of 18 or older than the age of 24. The age limit of 24 was set because my goal was to interview men who were of or close to traditional college age. I had a total of 50 men state that they were willing to participate in the study. I contacted every man who was between the ages of 18-24 who said they were willing to participate in the study via their preferred form of contact (email or phone). Out of the 50 men who were willing to participate, 10 of the men were eliminated due to being older than the age limit of 24. Out of the 40 men who met the age requirements, I was able to interview 17. A total of 74 men stated that they were unwilling to participate in the study.

The sample in this study was different from previous studies similar to this one. The majority of other samples contained a large majority of white men. Bogle's (2008) sample which implied that there might be a connection between hooking up and rape was 95% white (6). My sample contained 10 white males and 7 non-white males, which means that 41% of my sample was nonwhite. Although this study did have a small sample size, this was more diverse than previous similar studies. Because this study used a small qualitative sample, it should be unders-

tood that this study does not yield statistically dependable data, but does raise questions and identify new patterns for future study.

Participant Table:

PSEUDONYM	AGE	RACE (As provided by participant)	MAJOR
Ben	19	African	Psychology/ Nursing
Mike	19	White	Psychology/ Religious Studies
Roberto	20	Hindu/ Indian	Biology
Nathanial	20	White	English Education
Steven	20	Bi-Racial	Pre-Law/Philosophy
George	23	White	Marketing
Chuck	20	White	Biology
McFluff	18	White	Biology
David	23	White	International Econom- ics and Modern Lan- guages
Jake	20	White	International Econom- ics/Modern Languag- es
Jason	23	White	Journalism
GT (only Fraternity Man)	22	White	Journalism

Paul	19	Multi-Racial	Philosophy
Bob	18	Black	Pre-Med
Jim	19	Black	Unknown
John	22	White	Business/ CIS
Jeff	20	Black	Biology

Instruments:

The main instruments that were used in this project were two semi-structured interview protocols (Appendix A); one for those who are involved in fraternities and a separate protocol for the men who are not involved in a fraternity. Each interview lasted between 30-45 minutes. The participants were asked to elaborate upon their answers if they provided a response to a question I felt needed more elaboration. During the interview the participants were asked about why they decided to join or not join a fraternity, what their definition of masculinity was, to define “hooking up,” to define consent and to delineate the similarities and differences between hooking up and rape. The men were also asked about the social settings of “hooking up” and the pressures that they might feel from their peers to engage in “hooking up”.

Procedures:

This project was approved through the university’s IRB and protocol was followed. All interviews were audio recorded. Participants were asked to sign a consent form. Each participant was also asked to give verbal consent which was tape recorded at the beginning of the interview. Participants were only referred to on the tape by the pseudonym they chose. All interviews were conducted in a private room in the University’s library.

Interviewees had the right to withdraw at any time and skip questions that they feel uncomfortable answering. None of the interviewees withdrew from the interview, nor did any of them skip any of the questions. The interviews were tape recorded because I wanted to get direct quotations and I was afraid that important verbal cues and phrases might be missed if I was constantly trying to jot down everything the interviewee stated and that I might miss important cues in body language that might indicate psychological distress or frustration with the questions. I took notes during the interviews to remind myself of important ideas they brought up and to note body language. These notes were helpful in the hand coding of the interviews.

All participants were made aware of the anticipated risks, including the possibility of psychological distress, the potential fear that an act that the participant thought was hooking up was indeed an act of rape. Because of the possibility of psychological distress, all participants were given a list of community resources that are available and can help them and answer any questions they might have (See Appendix B). I am unaware of any signs of psychological distress arising.

Analysis:

Data was analyzed using a form of narrative analysis. Narrative analysis involves collecting narratives from individuals and making meaning from how these stories are told by the participants (Riessman 1993). The goal in narrative analysis is ultimately to find consistencies in how individuals tell their stories (Bernard 2002). Narrative analysis was the best method for this project because the process focuses on making meaning out of what the men are stating.

The first step in my analysis was to transcribe all my data. All data was hand transcribed by me. After my data was transcribed I began reading the transcripts and started coding for possible emergent themes throughout the interviews. I conducted all of the coding by hand. Initial

coding will be an attempt to gain a general sense of what the men are saying (Creswell 2003). I made little margin notes to record my initial thoughts on what the men are saying and how they are responding to the general questions being asked of them. This initial coding looked for commonalities in their responses which might create initial themes.

After I finished with initial coding, I began more in depth coding of the data. During this step I located some of the more common themes that existed amongst the interviews. I attempted to organize the data into thematic chunks (Creswell 2003) that can paint a bigger picture of exactly the interviewees are stating and the stories they are telling. This second step done was a more thorough line by line coding process that specifically focused on the initial themes developed in the initial coding process. This process is what Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2005) calls analytical coding. This coding process was an ongoing process that will occur until categorization of the transcripts is complete (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2005).

Once the initial and secondary coding was completed, I read the transcripts a third time in a more detailed manner. On this third read, I conducted a more focused read which was done on a line by line basis and looked specifically towards connecting the previously constructed categories to my research questions (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2005). During this coding process, my goal was to make sure all my major themes and categories were developed enough and make sure that they answer all of the research questions that will be addressed in my final project.

Human Subjects Considerations

Two of the biggest human subjects considerations that were faced during this project were confidentiality and not causing harm to the participants. One of the ways that I will ensure confidentiality to those that I recruited through a classroom was that the individuals were

unaware of whom I contacted to participate; they only saw individuals placing a sheet of paper into a folder that I provided for them to place the participant information sheet in. Every male in the classroom filled out the participant information sheet.

In order to prevent psychological distress to the participants, the questions asked in the interviews focused on individual attitudes and general perceptions of the hook up culture; I did not ask about specific acts that they might have participated in. Each participant was provided with a list of resources that could help them if they were experiencing any sort of psychological distress (Appendix B). As far as I am aware none of the participants experienced signs of psychological distress.

1.4 Significance

This study was the first study known that focuses on the connection between hooking up and rape on the college campus. By asking college men about their opinions on sex and masculinity, this study provides new insights as to why the rape rate has not decreased over the past 50 years and on college campuses, and will place men's practices and perceptions within the broader context of the new "hook up" culture. This study also provides information as to how men understand hooking up and connect or do not connect it to rape. Both fraternity and non-fraternity men engage in both hooking up and rape on college campuses; broadening the focus to all men on a college campus allows for a deeper understanding of the connections between hegemonic masculinity and sexual practices on college campuses in the United States.

2 DISCUSSIONS OF MASCULINITY

One of the common themes that arose out of the interviews was the way in which the men communicated to me how they understood what it means to be a man and how they define manhood. When I asked the men to define manhood, they commonly talked about it in relation to penis size and the number of sexual partners that an individual has. These two concepts are important because they explain the pressure that men feel to be the most formidable in size. It also indicates how a lot of what it means to be a man is wrapped up in a combination of performance during sex and overall physical size (Connell 2005). Furthermore, the men often communicated the importance of how others perceived their sexual activity. Often times their status in a group of men would be based upon how often and how many sexual partners they were perceived to have. These two ideas both have sexual undertones that can be related to the hook up culture, and the broader culture of sexuality that is engrained in the hook up culture.

According to masculinity theorists, maintaining a masculine image is important for men because it shows that one is “a real man,” and a real man is a man who acts in opposite to what is feminine (Kimmel 1996). The verbalization about having sex with multiple females tells one’s peers that there is no need to worry because the individual is not gay and likes women. According to Connell (2005), traditional American society is wrapped up in the idea of placing homosexual men in a subordinate group. Thus, boasting about one’s sexual encounters with females ensures that a man will not be placed in a subordinate group vis-à-vis their own friends, as well as society at large.

In terms of reputations, even if having sex with many women leads to a bad reputation for a man (ie, being known as a ladies man or man whore), the reputation reinforces the manliness of the individual to the world. Being known as a “ladies man” would show others that he is

acting in complete opposition to what is feminine by engaging in sexual acts with lots of women; no one has to fear that the individual is gay. Being gay would indicate that an individual is not “real man” and would be emasculating (Kimmel 2006).

McFluff, an 18 year old white biology major, connected the idea of bragging rights to proving masculinity and moving up the social ladder in some groups:

Elena: Do your friends ever discuss the hook ups they’ve had with females with each other?

McFluff: Yeah

Elena: Why do they do that?

McFluff: To brag

Elena: What purpose does the bragging serve?

McFluff: Well most people are under the illusion that the amount of sex you have makes you who you are. Like who has the bigger muscles, who has the larger penis.

Elena: So is it a way to prove who is the manliest man maybe?

McFluff: Yeah, and I think it’s total BS to be on honest.

Elena: Explain more

McFluff: Well I mean going out and getting a girl is not one of those things that guys always talk about. It’s getting off; it’s scoring. It’s usually a feat of some sort....

Elena: What sort of purpose would this bragging serve?

McFluff: I honestly don’t know other than to try to make yourself look bigger than you really are....

Elena: If social status wasn't important in groups, do you think that guys would do the same bragging?

McFluff: Not the same bragging, but definitely the same hook ups.

Here, McFluff clearly articulates that men discuss their hook ups with their friends. He feels that no matter what "hook ups" are going to occur. However, men brag about their "hook ups" because they feel that it increases their status in their social group. McFluff has a negative opinion of those who brag about their "hook ups" and feels that it is unnecessary. Still he believes discussing "hook ups" occurs because it is a way for men to gain social status within their social circle and is thus a part of male socialization.

Like McFluff, David, a 23 year old white International Economics major, also connects the bragging that men do about their hook ups to men showing off their male dominance:

Elena: You mentioned the kind of locker room talk. Why do guys discuss that? Why do they have the locker room talk? What purpose does it serve?

David: I have no idea. Maybe guys just naturally want to show off their male dominance. I don't know and they do that through sexual conquest and brag about it.

Elena: Do you think it plays a role in men's friendships or reputations?

David: Definitely the reputations, yeah.... As far as friendships between guys, I don't know how much of a role it plays.

Elena: You are saying all this locker room talk happens and we don't know why. I mean it's gotta happen for a reason.

David: I think it's just a way for men to show off their masculinity and male dominance...If you have a group of them [men] together, whether it is a fraternity or

just a group of friends, a lot of time it seems like whoever is the most sexually experienced or whoever has the reputation at least of being the most sexually experienced usually is kind of the leader in the group.

Elena: So sex equals greater masculinity.

David: Yeah, I would say for most guys.

David is aware that locker room talk happens, but still is not quite sure as to why it occurs. David speculates that it occurs because it is some sort of innate way that men use to show their peers who is biggest and best in the group. Bragging about sexual conquests helps men negotiate their space within their group of friends. David, like many of the other participants believes that men's social status increases when they have slept with many women. However, none of the men stated that they were engaging in such behaviors to further prove their masculinity within their own social group; the extent to which they use these standards as guides for their own behavior is difficult to discern.

George seemed to sum up the connection between masculinity and external physical qualities better than any of the other participants that I interviewed. When asked to respond to the overall concept of masculinity George responded:

Well that's a good question because what does it mean to be a man? There's no real definition for it because it will change from culture to culture and it will change from guy to guy. I think that's a bad thing. I think there needs to be a solid concept, or a precedent at least for what being a guy actually means. Because even within the realm of guys, going back to penis size, that's a big thing. You know penis size plays a huge role because your penis and your testicles and your muscles and chest and everything. Everything on the outside most men think de-

fines them as man. It's necessarily that- you know because they have a bigger penis, they're more masculine.

George brought up the idea of masculinity shifting from culture to culture. This concept is important because it indicates that masculinity and appropriate gendered behavior is an idea that is constantly shifting and varies across nationalities and cultures. Therefore, an individual who is new to the United States might not understand what behaviors are appropriate when trying to initiate the courtship process or understand why men are constantly concerned with things such as getting bigger muscles. For men in the U.S context, it is not only important to fit in the dominant group, but there is constantly the competition to prove who is the best (Bird 1996).

David expressed sentiments similar to George's when asked about the connection between masculinity and penis size, David stated:

Yes, as far as the physical side of masculinity goes, one of the single biggest factors that makes guys feel like I'm more of a man or less of a man than so and so- it's like who has the bigger cock. It's like 'well that guy's hung and I bet he's never hooked up with anyone who wasn't satisfied.' As far as your sex life goes, you've got to assume that if somebody's packing then not only do they get laid a lot, but they probably have really awesome sex. I think a lot of the ideals of masculinity is tied to how much sex you have. If your penis size affects how much sex you have, then it would also affect how masculine you perceive yourself to be or how others perceive you to be.

For David, a lot of masculinity is tied to physical acts such as sex. They may understand it as a natural part of being a man. He believes that if a guy has a large penis that he is automatically good at pleasuring women; notably, none of the men interviewed ever stated whether or not

they found out from the women the women they hooked up with whether they were truly being pleased.

Jake understands how the idea of masculinity is tied to sex, but he connects it to fear. Jake states “let’s say you hook up with this girl and that girl so people don’t find out that maybe you’re gay. Sex equals manhood and masculinity.” Because society is driven by sex and fear of homosexuality, it appears that men might engage in sex with multiple partners because they want to retain their status in society. Kimmel (1996) states:

The great secret of American manhood: *we are afraid of other men*. Homophobia is a central organizing principle of our cultural definition of manhood. Homophobia is more than the irrational fear of gay men, more than the fear we might be perceived as gay (127).

Jake’s statement of why some men might engage in multiple sexual acts with men and then talk about them fits into what Kimmel stated - it is because society fears homosexuality. If a man is having sex with women or is perceived as having sex with multiple women, there is nothing for men or for society to fear. Sex with multiple women reasserts their place in society and shows their peers there is nothing to be afraid of.

Maintaining a masculine image is important because it shows that you are a real man and a real man is a man who acts in opposite to what is feminine (Kimmel 1996). The verbalization about having sex with multiple females tells one’s peers that there is no need to worry because the individual is not gay and likes women. It also prevents men from questioning any actions that might lower his status amongst one’s friends. In terms of reputations, even if it leads to a bad reputation for a man (ie: being known as a ladies man or man whore), the reputation reinforces the manliness of the individual to the world. Being known as a “ladies man” would show

others that he is acting in complete opposition to what is feminine by engaging in sexual acts with lots of females; no one has to fear that the individual is gay. Being gay would ultimately lower the individual in the realm of gender hierarchy which exists in society (Connell 2005).

Going beyond the idea of penis size, a general lack of emotions is associated with general ideas of masculinity. Paul, a 19 year old self identified multi-racial, philosophy major acknowledges this idea in a unique way:

It seems to be that you get more respect in the male community if you can please a woman a certain way and get a certain reaction and you can do it to different women, so you know it's not just one person.

Here, Paul states that respect in the male community is based upon pleasing a woman and not just one woman, but multiple women. He neglects to mention any idea of emotions being involved when pleasing a woman.

Other participants verbalized this idea of men being non-emotional more directly. Mike Jones, a 19 year old Religious Studies major describes the guy that is in complete opposition to what is traditionally associated with being a female. This guy would fit right into Kimmel's definition of masculinity that was described earlier. Mike believes that the stereotypical guy is "the tough guy. The guy that goes and isn't necessarily affected by emotions and some things that I consider reasoning." When probed more, Mike responded:

Some of the people I know seem to have pressure. However, they wouldn't call it pressure. They would just consider it who they are. I mean I think they kind of look at it differently as opposed to pressure. It's just the norm. It's how it's supposed to be....A bunch of it is being able to get what you want, when you want

and not necessarily feeling the emotional attachment; being able to live your life without being overly emotional because that is traditionally a female trait.

Mike focuses on a new concept that was not brought up previously: reason. Throughout the interview, Mike never stated what he meant by “reason.” However, he connects it to men feeling an overall of lack emotion and how some men do not understand how their actions affect those around them. To Mike a man is someone tough, macho and does not get affected by much. They do not think of having to be emotionless as anything out of the norm. It is simply the way the men learn how to be men. Mike feels that men are unemotional because they are taught that having emotions is a female trait, not a male trait.

Mike’s definition of masculinity as he believes many other men view it is completely different from how he defines masculinity in his personal life.

For me, masculinity is a person who is sturdy and stable. They can support themselves. They have a good outlook of the world in which it’s not about going from here to there as quick as you can. It’s about finding a place that you fit in and being stable; being committed by proving that you are a person that can be depended upon.

Mike’s personal viewpoint about being a man focuses on being dependable. It is about being comfortable with who you are as a person and just going with it. His personal definition does not focus on sexual conquest or emotions. This definition is quite different from how he believes that masculinity is defined by others which focuses on behaviors that are the opposite of what is feminine.

Jason Jones, a gay, white 23 year old Journalism major has an interesting viewpoint on what it means to be a man. Jason understands how most people define the idea, but for him it is more important to live one's life differently. Jason states:

I think that [sex and bragging] validated their masculinity to them. I think that it makes them [men] feel like they are more masculine if they have had more sexual encounters or that they are somehow more desirable to the opposite or same sex and therefore it makes them better.... To me, masculinity is tied hand in hand with integrity. I guess society's view of masculinity is a little bit different than mine. Most of society thinks masculinity is sports, drinking, sexual conquests, feats of physical strength or feats of physical prowess. For me, masculinity is more of a standard to which you adhere- it's basically a code by which you want to live your life that makes a man to me.

Jason believes that masculinity needs to be more of a moral standard and a code of personal ethics. None of the other men interviewed brought up these ideas. This perspective indicates that there are many ways to understand masculinity and no one male perspective exists. Jason also brought up idea of validating one's manhood. He feels this is connected to the idea of increasing one's self esteem. If a man feels more desirable to the opposite sex, chances are that he will feel happier and have a higher self esteem because he will be more popular in his social group.

However, Jason believes too much of what men value is tied into sex. Men are way too often valued for their sexual prowess and not the internal qualities that they possess. Men are not judged by their integrity or how well they treat others. They are valued for their stature and those things that reassert the fact that they have testosterone, which is not the most important part of an individual according to Jason.

Masculinity is often defined in relation to fear that is embedded in the idea of homophobia (Connell 2005). While one man specifically pointed to homophobia, the other men spoke of physical attributes such as penis size and sexual prowess as a way to perform masculinity. If masculinity is indeed, for some men, wrapped up with proving oneself to other men through sexual exploits, we see how the performance of masculinity in the hookup culture might be related to the incidence of rape in U.S. society.

2.1 Role of the Media

A third common theme which emerged from the interviews is the role that the media plays in creating ideas of sexuality, manhood, and hooking up. Earlier in this chapter we discussed how men define masculinity. However, it was not discussed where the men learn these ideas from and how these norms are established. When asked about how his generation is learning about masculinity and sex, Mike responded:

This generation is having more exposure to TV. They are spending more hours watching TV. A lot of the influence they (people) get is from the media. You hear about things a lot more than you used. I mean I hear elementary school kids talk about sex.... Things have changed a lot from even when I was in elementary school. I hear elementary school kids cussing and using language and phrases that I would consider inappropriate and totally derogatory. It's the amount of hours that parents tell their kids that they don't want to deal with them and tell them to go watch TV. Parents even buy their kids CD's and they don't know what the lyrics are. A lot of it has to do with inadequate parenting as well as what

is being let out there. Even if the parents are the strictest parents in the world, the kids are still going to have access to things.

Mike clearly delineates that the media is having a greater influence on this generation and on younger generations. He partially blames this problem on parents not wanting to parent and placing their child in front of the TV in order to not have to deal with them. However, he states that you can not use a lack of parenting as an excuse as to why children are learning things at a younger and younger age. He believes that no matter how good a parent is, the child is going to have exposure to the media and the media will ultimately influence the child's opinion on sex, gender roles and society.

Roberto expresses similar sentiments to Mike. However, Roberto notes that the problem is not strictly a problem in the United States; it is a cross cultural problem.

In the 90's Indian movies weren't exactly 100% clean, but they were clean for the most part. There weren't any sexual allusions or anything. Now there are a lot of sexual allusions in Indian movies. Growing up, I was watching a lot of Indian movies that were very much just the plot and not as sexualized. But in the American media we have a bunch of music artists like Britney Spears, Lindsey Lohan and now Miley Cyrus. You can see it in the American media that is really directed toward the American audience this message of it's ok to hook up- a sex positive message. But in India, it's not as positive. It's more taboo. Like they don't talk about it or I don't think they about I met so and so and I "hooked up."

Here Roberto discussed the difference between India and the United States. Clearly he feels that things are more sexualized here in the United States. However, he noted that the media in India is overall becoming more sexualized. In the United States, sex is depicted as a good thing and

people openly talk about who they've hooked up with. Although movies in India are becoming more sexualized, they are not changing society to the point where it is telling society to discuss such acts with their peers. Unlike when he was growing up, Indian movies are now focusing on things other than just the plot. They are adding other scenes that depict sexualized beings.

Not only does the media influence one's ideas on sex, it also influences their perceptions of manhood and help guides what it means to be a man. George stated the following when asked about to where the pressure to "hook up" with lots of women stems from:

I think that's what most guys expect other guys to think. It's perpetuated by image- whether it be in the media or just close-mindedness and everything...The media perpetuates stereotypes. The media plays on men's insecurities.

According to George, the media influences men's opinions about what it takes to be man. It will play on the average man's insecurities. The media tells men what other guys are thinking. It helps dictate opinions on what a man should be.

Bob feels that the media places pressure on men to "hook up" with lots of women. Earlier in his interview he stated that he felt that men feel a lot of pressure to "hook up" with many women. When asked where this pressure comes from, he responded:

Society. How society views things- the media. The media shows a lot of things that has a tendency of being very derogatory. Some things have an influence like different television shows like *Flava of Love* or the hip hop videos. It's all about cash, money, and cars. The videos have half naked females rolling around or whatever in them. The media can pretty much have a huge influence on them (men).

Bob states that reality TV shows such as *Flava of Love* can have an influence on individual's opinions on sex and love. Other things such as rap videos depict an unrealistic expectation of how life should be. The unrealistic depictions of love in reality TV shows and in rap videos place additional pressure on men to act a certain way. It teaches men that they need to be surrounded by women in order to be a real man.

Similarly to Bob, John feels that most of the pressure that men feel to “hook up” with a lot of women comes from the media and how it influences people's opinions. When asked if men feel a pressure to “hook up” with women and where this pressure comes from, he responded:

It shows that in movies a lot. I am not sure if it happens like that in real life situations... I guess with movies it makes them look like a set up. I think it's a place where young men are learning how to be a man. People watch a lot of TV shows. They watch a lot of movies and they kind of learn from that. If some have issues that they are trying to hide, they can learn from TV- like I can do this and I can get past that. Then I can brag about it and feel better and have tons of self esteem.

John brings up the idea of learning and fiction versus reality. Because people watch a lot of TV, they might have problems separating what is a fictional situation depicted in a TV show from what is a real issue with a real solution. Some people might take the advice provided in movies and TV use that to come up with a solution to a problem or think that if they were to act in the same way then a positive outcome will occur and boost their self-esteem. John suggests that people are using a fictional model to solve their problems in real life so the line between fiction and reality is blurred.

The idea of fiction versus reality was discussed by Ben too. He stated:

I read an article about individuals and what they see on Reality TV and they think about it as being true and they try to implement that in their lives. I thought it was really interesting because reality TV is like a little show; it's like a little soap opera. Things are made in a certain way to give off a certain image and people are watching a lot of reality TV shows. They are watching a lot of TV and movies and then it starts to shape their lives. They think that is how life will play out. There is a lot of behind the scenes stuff that you don't see and individuals don't know to take it as hindsight and just run with it.

Ben believes that individuals understand Reality TV as something which has a truth value and having the ability to enact what they see in their own lives. People understand the scenarios as acts which can have similar outcomes, whether it be positive or negative in their own lives. Because of the amount of exposure individuals now have to TV and movies, what is seen begins to shape their lives and actions that they make.

Jackson Katz (2006) argues that this blurry line between reality and fiction described by both John and Ben is ultimately harmful and can lead to violence against women. During the interviews, none of the men discussed the idea of violence. Katz (2006) calls the media "the great pedagogical- or teaching- force of our time" (251). What this means is that media is changing people's perceptions and is the greatest carrier of knowledge and ideas to society, and thus influencing ideas on sex and manhood. To some extent, my interviewees were aware of and even critical of this influence; but this does not minimize its importance for them or others. Ultimately, I do not feel that these men are just absorbing violent messages from the media and acting out on them. However, the men are aware the messages exist and to some extent are critical of the influence they have on them and their peers.

3 COMMUNICATING THE DESIRE TO HOOK UP

While reading the interviews a common theme started arising. The issue of communication, or lack thereof, became consistent throughout the interviews. The men interviewed had problems articulating how exactly they determined that a woman shared a desire to “hook up” with them. The men communicated various signs that they felt women use to communicate their desire to “hook up.” The participants discussed verbal and nonverbal signs that they interpreted as signaling a desire to “hook up.” The men stated that often alcohol was being consumed at the locations where men and women would meet and possibly engage in a hook up.

Many of the men interviewed cited nonverbal cues as the primary method which they determined that a female wanted to hook up with them. Wood (2001) states “men and women construct their gender identities through differences in their nonverbal communication” (137). This idea became important in this project as the men discussed how they interpreted how women communicated the desire to hook up with them. There is a culturally learned or understood gender script that is occurring amongst the individuals. How this script occurs and is interpreted plays into how individuals participate and act in the hook up culture.

The majority of men focused on the importance of interpreting nonverbal cues. Nonverbal communication can be defined as:

All elements of communication other than words themselves. It includes not only visual cues (gestures, appearances) but also vocal features (inflection, volume, pitch) and environmental factors (use of space, position) that affect meanings...Nonverbal communication is learned through interaction with others (Wood 2001:137).

Nonverbal communication is therefore any action in which a specific word is not vocalized. This form of communication can range from the clothes that a person wears to standing in a certain position to even a grunt. Nonverbal communication has the habit of reinforcing gender norms and stereotypes. This idea of reinforcing gender norms and stereotypes has become an important part of this project. These ideas and norms were articulated by the men when they discussed how they interpret that a woman wants to “hook up.”

Ben, a 19 year old psychology major stated the following when asked how he determines if a woman wants to “hook up:”

It’s usually eye contact, body gestures, you know they’ll walk in, the girl will look at them (the guy), they’ll look at the girl, they’ll make eye contact and usually after they’ve looked a certain amount of time, he can probably tell that she’s interested and things like that.... You can usually tell within the first 15-20 seconds if the individual is interested in you or not.

Ben clearly believes that the majority of communication occurs nonverbally between men and women. Men determine if women are interested by focusing on how often women are looking at men. Ben believes that an individual can determine if an individual might be interested in hooking up within the first 15-20 seconds of meeting the individual. Although Ben did not explicitly state this, it seems that a lot of the initial interaction is based off of physical attraction to one another (Bogle 2008).

Similar to Ben, Nathaniel stresses the importance of eye contact when determining whether or not a female might want to “hook up.”

The number one thing for me is eye contact. If she’s constantly looking over at me and I’m constantly looking at her. It’s obvious. But I mean, I guess some of

the other things would be just the typical things like body language and being able to read somebody and read the individual.

Nathanial asserts that some of the ways that individuals communicate their desire to “hook up” is through abilities such as reading people’s body language and individuals. Being able to read someone is a learned behavior that is developed over time through previous interactions with other individuals. There is no guarantee that the individual will be able to read the other person correctly since every individual displays behaviors unique to them. Other than being able to read individuals, he believes that eye contact is the main factor. However, eye contact can be subtle and hard to read.

Mike suggested that a lot of attention is placed on whether or not two individuals are physically attracted to each other (Bogle 2008). He stated, “people have a tendency to think that if I’m attracted to a person, then we might have something in common.” According to Mike, people try to force an interaction and commonalities based upon their attraction to one another. Because two people are attracted to one another, there is no guarantee that things will work out. In Mike’s opinion, it is not unusual for two people to base getting to know each other off of physical attraction.

Roberto acknowledged another nonverbal form of communication which might lead to a “hook up.” He stated “if you are at a club and you are dancing really intimately, you start making out, there will probably be intentions of hooking up.” Through Roberto’s interpretation of the acts, one might conclude that the act of dancing close opens a door to intimacy which is assumed to lead to “hooking up.” In the case of dancing there is no verbal communication occurring. The simple non verbal act of dancing is interpreted as a sign that there might desire to take the act further. Overall, Roberto says that it is hard to tell how far the “hook up” will go because

the act is facilitated through nonverbal communication. This is important because two individuals need to interpret the nonverbal cues being presented. Because individuals learn to interpret nonverbal cues through various means such as modeling other behaviors they've seen, hearing interpretations from friends and quite possibly the media, attempting to understand these cues could be a difficult balancing act in which the two individuals might want different things.

Dancing and grinding is a common theme is determining that an individual would like to hook up. McFluff asserts the same idea that if two individuals are dancing very closely and intimately, eventually they will hook up. To McFluff, this appears to be a progression from the initial act of dancing to going over to corner and eventually leaving. McFluff stated that the woman might initiate the potential "hook up," "depending upon the woman, she will grab the guy's hand and they won't talk, they will just leave." According to the statement by McFluff, he believes the woman will show that she is interested in hooking up by taking the guy away from the party or club to a place where they can be alone and "hook up." Unlike, the other interviewees, McFluff states that there is possibility of the woman being the initiator. According to him, when a woman is interested in hooking up she will take the guy's hand and lead him out of the current room. Because women were not interviewed for this project, it is unknown whether or not this interpretation is correct. However, it is one man's interpretation of nonverbal behavior in showing the desire to "hook up."

A third nonverbal way men interpret that women's desire to hook up was expressed by George. George stated the following:

You know I think a lot of it comes to down to body language, especially with women. A flip of the hair, the neck. I think with women a lot of the times tend to

be submissive, so the hints aren't always there on a conscious level.... It's more like 'this turns me on.' I think that seems right.

Men determine that a woman wants to hook up with them through a sign that women provide which ultimately turns them on. George believes that women might not necessarily realize that certain signs such as a flip of the hair turns men on. According to him, a woman does not necessarily go out and decide that she wants to flip her hair to turn a guy on; he implies that women may not acknowledge what they are doing even to themselves – or be aware of how men will read it due to their “submissive” nature.

Chuck puts a very interesting spin on how men can tell that a woman is going to a party just to “hook up.” In Chuck's opinion, a woman does not have to say anything; the determining factor is based upon how she looks and what she is wearing.

I mean to be honest with you, there are signs. It can be ambiguous for some girls. But it is blatant when girls wear really ridiculous clothing. It could be a costume party or something at a fraternity house or even at a bar and they are wearing these really skanky outfits or wear a costume and it's riding up their ass and stuff like that. It's as if they left the house without looking in the mirror. If they dress this way, they are asking for it. That's a sure sign that a girl is like 'give me some alcohol; I want to hook up with somebody.'

To Chuck, a guy can determine that a woman could potentially want to hook up solely by what she is or is not wearing. There really does not need to be much communicating involved. If a woman dresses a certain way then she is showing that she is willing and available to engage in a “hook up.” Over time some men have learned that a woman's appearance can show her intentions for the evening. Chuck also brought up the idea of a woman's dress in relation to desiring

alcohol and wanting to “hook up.” To Chuck, these three things are interrelated- alcohol, dressing sexy and hooking up. One might interpret this as Chuck stating that very little to no communication has to occur to determine that a woman would like to “hook up.” All that is needed is alcohol and “skanky dress” and a woman will “hook up” at a party. He believes that women preplan out what they will do at the party, who they might want to do things with and dress in a manner which will help them achieve this preplanned out end goal. Chuck appears to be buying into long-existing rape myths (Burt 1980; Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994; Schaefer- Hinck and Thomas 1999) by stating a girl wants sex by dressing a certain way and desiring alcohol.

David states that a combination of factors, including verbal communication, determine if a person wants to “hook up:”

If I am at a bar or party or whatever and I meet a random guy or girl and we’re talking and the conversation’s on the same page... it’s the eye contact or close physical proximity and they’re not real standoffish, you know sitting across from you at the bar. Sometimes when I go out with friends and you know people will just outright tell each other that their friend is really into you or whatever.

Throughout the interview David never mentioned his sexuality. It is implied that he is bisexual, and is talking about how to determine if a person (man or woman) would like to “hook up” acknowledges that there are different factors that might lead to a “hook up.” If David is describing both men and women, then he appears to be stating that there are universal signs that both men and women use to communicate the desire to hook up. The key to deciding whether or not there is desire is determined through verbal communication. If there is no connection through conversation, then the “hook up” might not occur. Physical attraction, alcohol and other attributes do not necessarily lead to a potential “hook up” in David’s opinion. Unlike the other interviewees,

he believes that verbal communication is critical in determining whether or not a “hook up” will occur. One of the things that he feels is necessary for a “hook up” to occur is that the conversation needs to be on the same page. According to David, a “hook up” will not occur just because two people are attracted to each other. If there is nothing in common and the conversation does not progress, then the “hook up” will not occur. This perspective was very unique in comparison to the other interviewees.

Similarly to the other interviewees, Jason believes that there are different levels to non-verbal communication which determine if a hook up will occur and how far it will go.

I think body language is what tells how far it’s going to go. Let’s say that you are just making eye contact and you might grab their hand or if you are sitting really close, you start putting your hands on the person’s knees. You know, what they call in middle school, heavy petting that would be an indication of it probably going all the way. If you met the person five minutes ago and you went to get them a drink and then all of a sudden you are standing or sitting within centimeters of each other and start giving them a massage or something, you are probably going to go all the way. You are probably going to have intercourse. But if it’s like a casual flirt glance and maybe holding hands or whatever, then more likely it’s going to be a makeout session.

To Jason, there are different levels of nonverbal behaviors that might lead to different acts. Playing shy and not engaging in much touching will only lead to making out. However, the more touching there is initially between the two individuals, the further the “hook up” will go. Similar to determining whether or not a female wants to “hook up,” determining how far a potential “hook up” is going to go is determined by interpreting what might be vague nonverbal cues dis-

played through some interaction between two individuals. Being shy and coy does not always indicate that minimal acts will occur. However, there is the interpretation that a girl being shy means that it will be harder to attain sex from her and that her behavior is interpreted as not being sexually available. Women who are more outgoing with their behaviors and that are not shy about engaging in touching are seen as being more sexually available and that men might expect to go further with these women. Men once again are left with the task of interpreting these subtle cues to determine how far a “hook up” might go and which woman will ultimately provide the act that the man is seeking.

Many of the men stated that alcohol was present in the interactions which determined whether or not two individuals wanted to hook up. GT, the only fraternity man interviewed stated that sometimes girls will not get flirty until they have consumed a lot of alcohol. Once a female starts drinking, their overall behavior around men and at parties will change. GT states that when women are not drinking, they “will play a little hard to get, or coy.” However, once they start drinking, “they’ll get really flirty and make contact with you. Mostly they won’t leave you alone. They follow you around and keep talking to you.” GT further goes on to say that when girls are drinking “they make it really obvious.” Simple logic might cause one to conclude that the intoxication causes women to be more obvious, whereas if this was a simple interaction between a man and a woman meeting in a different setting, then the men might be interpreting the women’s actions differently. GT does not acknowledge this as a shift of consciousness which might be due to the alcohol consumed by women. Instead he appears to be of the belief that women are more honest when they are drunk and will only show their true desires under the influence of alcohol. The progression of behavior is construed as natural and as the only way

that a woman can truly express her desire without having to worry about how it might defy expected behavior for women.

Based upon these interviews with these men, one can surmise that the desire to “hook up” is for the most part communicated through nonverbal cues which are open for interpretation. However, due to the location of where these cues occur and the other substances that might be involved, it can often times be hard to interpret. Reading the signals given by women that they are interested in hooking up with a man might also be based upon prior behaviors that men have seen from women, and have learned from outside sources such as friends and the media. The signals therefore might not be interpreted correctly. The men interviewed felt that women were more vocal with expressing their desires once alcohol was consumed and the men did not find this problematic. Those interviewed felt that alcohol allowed women to express their true desires with worrying that they were breaking the traditional feminine role. The men did not seem to understand that perhaps their interpretation of women’s shift in behavior was not due to women expressing their true desires, but instead a shift in the women’s consciousness that was caused by the alcohol. Further implications on the potential impact on women and the overall campus hookup culture will be further discussed in the conclusion.

3.1 Social Networking Sites and Hooking Up

One of the other common themes that was brought up by the men was the role of social networking sites and how they are now a great tool to facilitate a hook up. At the time these interviews were conducted, sites such as Facebook and MySpace were just starting to gain in popularity and use. However, the men still discussed how they can be used as a tool to meet people and eventually “hook up.” Bogle (2008) asserts that social networking sites allow individuals to

talk to each other more secretly about hooking up. The men I interviewed expressed a similar view.

Because some of the participants would briefly bring up Facebook and MySpace, during some of the interviews I would throw in a question about the role of these social networking sites in relation to facilitating in a “hook up.” During the interview with Jason, this question was asked. He responded:

More and more recently, a huge role. Especially since a lot of people meet somebody on Facebook and MySpace and have a lot of conversations with them and probably sexual in nature be like ‘Oh, I am going to this party. Are you going to be there?’ Then they meet them at the party and already know so much about them and they’ve already had so many conversations with them, some elicit, that it takes less time to get past the awkward ‘So, how are you? What’s going on?’ to getting to what’s really the main purpose and that is sex. It kind of helps you skip a step when trying to hook up.

Facebook and MySpace create an environment where individuals can start interacting and becoming comfortable with one another prior to really meeting each other in person. Jason understands communication that occurs on Facebook as ultimately a stepping stone to hooking up.

Paul brought up the idea of Facebook without being asked. He mentioned it when answering the question of why hooking up is more prevalent now. Paul stated “because sex is accessible and excessive- it’s everywhere. We can hop on Facebook, hit on a few chicks and within a week you can find 3 or 4 that you can do what you need to with. You can find one for a different day.” Sites such as Facebook are allowing people to skip over any awkwardness that might occur when interacting face to face. It allows people to flirt and become comfortable with

one another and essentially schedule a convenient time to meet and hook up. It prevents potential awkwardness which might occur because the individuals have already discussed their desire to “hook up.”

Bob was one of the few that was asked about the role of Facebook. He responded:

Facebook has somewhat of a role. People put a lot of personal information on Facebook. You can tell how a person is going to be by reading their profile. You can see a slight profile of what the person might be like. She’s done this or she’s into this or kind of get the question of she’s done this or ooh this is something serious. Maybe I need to get to know her on a more personal basis. For example she’s really into Christ or she’s really into movies or that’s something that I like as well. It kind of gives a little push. It’s a way for people to notice commonalities and decide to talk to each other and determine if something is there.

Facebook provides information about individuals and allows people to form an opinion of a person by reading their profile. It allows people to know if there are commonalities prior to meeting in person and might prevent a potential uncomfortable situation which could occur by randomly meeting the person outside of the internet sphere and having to converse.

Clearly the media and social networking sites play a role in how people learn about masculinity and hooking up. Social networking sites provide an arena where people can learn about each other and create an interest prior to meeting each other in person. Social networking sites build up the interest, while television and movies teach men how to act once they finally meet the women they’ve been talking to on the internet. Both help cultivate the “hook up” culture because they are teaching men how to engage in a “hook up” and providing a group of people that men can hook up with.

The ways in which individuals communicate the desire to “hook up” varies through verbal and non verbal communication and via social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. Men appear to be reading signs as to whether a “hook up” is possible with particular women based on indirect and technologically mediated communication. Sometimes, according to my interviews, men use their “instincts” to determine that a woman would like to engage in a sexual act with them. Rarely, if ever, is the desire to “hook up” communicated directly by asking a woman if she would like to engage in such an act with a man.

4 CONCLUSION

Throughout this project I discussed how individuals go about finding a partner to “hook up” with, along with how individuals communicate that they have interest in hooking up with others. Many of the individuals interviewed noted that the majority of the “hook ups” that they’ve encountered or have engaged in have occurred at a party or while under the influence of alcohol. This is problematic because it greatly complicates and throws into question the ability of both participants to consent to sex.

The interviewees responded to my questions in ways that were rather general at times – not necessarily providing examples from their own personal experience – and this was especially true when they were asked how to describe masculinity. Thus it was difficult at times to interpret whether the behaviors and norms they described were much like their own or if they were just describing general stereotypes of “guy culture.” However, the descriptions of masculinity articulated by the interviewees are similar to those given by masculinity theorists RW Connell (2005) and Michael Kimmel (1996). The definitions of masculinity provided by the men focused on size, performance, and fear of homophobia. McFluff mentioned in his interview that his friends will brag about their sexual encounters. However, when asked why, he responded with a generalized answer: that men assume the amount of sex one has makes him more of a man. The interviewees appeared to buy into these ideas of hegemonic masculinity for men in general, but never stated if these were active ideas in their own lives. The interviewees had an idea of what men were supposed to be like in general and the ideas that men are supposed to hold in order to gain status in their own social group. In rare instances, an interviewee might specifically oppose his own preferences to the norms he believed to be operative for many other men (for example, see Jason and Mike’s responses).

As discussed in Chapter 3, when the interviewees discussed how men and women communicate their desire to hook up, the participants echoed the rape myths that have been discussed in previous literature (Burt 1980; Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994; Shaefer- Hinck and Thomas 1999). For example, Chuck stated that a girl is asking to “hook up” with a guy if she dresses a certain way at a party and desires alcohol. The interviewees appear to have an understanding that women are more likely to engage in a “hook up” if they are provided with alcohol. Something about alcohol turns on a switch in women which will cause them to be more likely to participate in a “hook up.” None of the men acknowledge that a potential shift in consciousness is occurring and that this can throw a person’s ability to consent into question.

The goal of this project was not to attack men or state that all “hook ups” are necessarily sexual assaults. The goal was to provide a better understanding of the broader hook up culture and how college students are participating in it. In the end, I found several issues which might put women at risk when engaging in some behaviors. This study confirms existing studies which state that attitudes about masculinity can affect the way in which men behave towards women. Many of the men felt that their standing within their group was based on being manliest man, as defined by penis size or sexual prowess. Men seem to care about their status within their social group and how their peers perceive them, and having a greater number of sexual experiences with women to contribute to that sense of status.

A new contribution that this study adds to the literature is that communication is the key to engaging in a “hook up.” Often it occurs in subtle ways nonverbally. Sometimes it occurs on the internet through sites such as Facebook and Myspace. If communication occurs at a party, it is often occurring when alcohol is present. Sometimes, the interviews suggest, almost no direct communication occurs because men enter parties with preconceived notions about women and

women do not have to say or do anything to indicate their interest in a sexual encounter. Remember Chuck who felt that some women go into the evening wanting to hook up and that men can identify these women readily because they will be the ones dressed provocatively. Women were never interviewed for this project, so the question of to what extent women are aware of how men read their choices of dress is a topic of future research. However, what we do know is that men might enter such a party with the same opinions as Chuck about women who dress in this manner and make the environment a dangerous place for women.

Indeed, the issue of communicating the desire to “hook up” is biggest finding of the project because whether or not the interviewees were simply speaking in terms of general observations or describing their personal observations, their statements suggest that explicit communication about hooking up is not expected. None of the men interviewed mentioned that any direct communication that explicitly states that two individuals are interested in “hooking up” occurs. Rather, interviewees reported that men and women often communicate nonverbally. Men depend upon implicit cues and instincts to reads signs that women want to hook up at parties. Many times when both parties are using these instincts to communicate, they have been drinking alcohol. Therefore the interpretations might always not be correct. Most importantly, the men interviewed indicate that a high degree of implicitness is considered normal and inevitable in certain situations- at least from men’s perspectives. *They do not expect women to give them any direct consent to sexual contact*, even in cases where sex is mutually desired and consensual.

Ultimately, I am not saying that all hook ups are sexual assaults. However, in light of men’s attitudes towards masculinity, the constant presence of alcohol and the lack of communication that occurs between the two parties involved, there might some frequent similarities between the two acts. The biggest issue is determining whether or not an individual or even two

individuals can consent when under the influence of alcohol. Future research appears to be needed with those who engage in such behaviors – to explore their communicative practices more deeply and to investigate how they define consent.

4.1 Recommendations for Future Studies and Interventions:

Although this study is a start at providing insight into the college “hook up” scene, more long term, in-depth research is needed to fully understand it. A future study might want to include more in-depth interviews in conjunction with doing some participant observation. The participant observation component is important because it will allow an unbiased researcher to watch individuals engaging in settings where “hook ups” are likely to take place. The interviews could allow for the researcher to get some clarification on their observations. A second study should focus on interviewing women who participate in the “hook up” culture. This study could provide insight into how women understand the idea of “hooking up.” The female perspective will be a critical contribution because few researchers have done this as yet. Interviewing women will also provide insight into how women understand the overall culture of “hooking up.”

From the information that we have learned about the connection between masculinity and the general hook up scene, further education is needed. College campuses can implement programs which teach responsible drinking habits on campus. These programs can teach students how alcohol can affect their behavior in social situations and explain how alcohol prevents one from legally being able to consent. Furthermore, these programs can show students that binge drinking is not a smart behavior that should be practiced. These programs might help students to not feel as pressured by their peers to drink before parties or engage in behaviors that make them uncomfortable. Some campuses offer programs on binge drinking and having safe sex as part of

their freshman orientation. However, these programs should be mandatory for all students each year.

A second program that campuses should implement is one that focuses on the variations of sexual assault. Both men and women should participate in such a program. This program will work on providing an understanding of how sexual assault is not always the violent act done by a stranger, but can be a subtle act that occurs between two individuals that are both under the influence of alcohol; sexual assault is not only the act that occurs where a woman is passed out. Similar to the first program, this program should be a requirement for all students each year, not just freshmen or members of the Greek community.

A third program that should be implemented in all schools prior to entering college is one that focuses on teaching men healthier ways to show their masculinity. There are organizations such as *Men Can Stop Rape* in Washington, DC which teaches men better ways to define masculinity; however, such programs are not available in most states and cost money. These programs are not mandatory for all men. Most of the interviewees stated that they felt pressure to “hook up” with lots of women and that their viewpoints stemmed from trying to fit into male homosocial groups. Programs that make young men aware of better ways to show their masculine side need to be implemented at young age to prevent men from having stereotypes about gendered behavior engrained in them which can lead to sexual assault. Programs need to focus on teaching men that violence against women and sexual conquest does not increase their overall status in society. Furthermore, programs need to focus on how to combat the pressure that men might feel from their peers to behave in a certain way which hurts others. By teaching men healthier ways to understand what it means to be a man, men will be less likely to engage in violence against women.

A final program that can be implemented should focus on general communication skills between men and women. Many of the interviewees stated communication was often subtle or nonexistent when trying to engage in a “hook up.” This program can focus on teaching men and women how to communicate their desires, especially at places such as bars and parties. Further studies can be done which ask individuals how they communicate their interest in another individual, and how they expect their potential partners to express such desire. Complementing the current study, such research should ask women about how they tend to communicate in these situations, and it should use the findings to inform programs that aim to further mutual understanding between men and women in their sexual encounters or potential encounters. Programs which focus on communicating one’s interest and desire can work towards eliminating gendered stereotypes of what a certain action means. Such programs would also involve confronting gender stereotypes about sexual communication.

In sum, this study provides new insight into “hooking up,” a popular phenomena on college campuses. We have learned that men and women confront challenges in communicating their desires to “hook up.” We have also learned that ideas about masculinity contribute to men’s expectations about sex and influence their behavior in homosocial groups. Finally, this study provides a different prospective on “hooking up” by focusing on the issue of consent. Future studies should continue to focus on this connection and to work on reducing rates of sexual assault on college campuses.

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6 APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix A: Interview Questions- Fraternity Men

1. How long have you been involved in the fraternity? Approximately how many hours per week do you spend with the fraternity or working on their events?
2. What other campus groups are you involved with?
3. Why or why not did you decide to join to join a fraternity?
4. How do you define the word masculinity? (question might be interrogated more in interview)
5. In what ways do men prove their manhood?
6. When individuals say they “hook up,” what do they mean?
7. Do men ever discuss their “hook ups” or intimate acts they have had with females with each other? If so, why do you think men discuss these private acts?
8. Do you ever attend parties or frequent bars that are not fraternity focused? If so, how do these places differ from fraternity parties?
9. Where do individuals go to meet new people to “hook up” with? Do you feel that men feel a certain amount of pressure to “hook up” with many women? If so, where does this pressure come from? Why does such pressure occur?
10. Do you feel that certain groups on college campuses have greater access to a pool of people that they can “hook up” with? If so, which groups and why?
11. How often do you think alcohol or drugs are used in the process of “hooking up” or in sexual encounters? What purpose would such a substance serve in “hooking up?”

12. Please define consent. How do you think consent can be negotiated amongst individuals when “hooking up”?

13. What is rape?

14. Several studies have stated that most campus rapes are perpetrated by fraternity men or at fraternity events. How do you feel about this? Why do you think this occurs?

15. What are the similarities and differences between a “hook up” and an act of rape/sexual assault?

16. Studies have stated that between 1 in 3 and 1 in 4 women will experience rape while in college, what do you think causes men to rape?

Interview Questions: Non-Fraternity Men

1. Why did you decide to not join a fraternity?
2. Are you involved in any organizations on campus? If so, which ones?
3. How do you define the word masculinity? (question might be interrogated more in interview)
4. In what ways do men prove their manhood?
5. When individuals say they “hook up,” what do they mean?
6. Do men ever discuss their “hook ups” or intimate acts they have had with females with each other? If so, why do you think men discuss these private acts?
7. Where do individuals go to meet new people to hook up with? Do you feel that men feel a certain amount of pressure to “hook up” with many women? If so, where does this pressure come from? Why does such pressure occur?
8. Do you ever attend fraternity parties? If so, do you notice a difference between the fraternity parties and the regular “hook up” scene?
9. Do you feel that certain groups on college campuses have greater access to a pool of people that they can “hook up” with? If so, which groups and why?
10. How often do you think alcohol or drugs are used in the process of “hooking up” or in sexual encounters? What purpose would such a substance serve in “hooking up”?
11. Please define consent. How do you think consent can be negotiated amongst individuals when “hooking up”?
12. What is rape?
13. Several studies have stated that most campus rapes are perpetrated by fraternity men or at fraternity events. Why do you think this occurs?

14. What are the similarities and differences between a hook up and an act of rape/sexual assault?

15. Studies have stated that between 1 in 3 and 1 in 4 women will experience rape while in college, what do you think causes men to rape?

Appendix B

Community Resources Distributed to Participants

Dekalb Rape Crisis Center

(All services are free)

24 Hour Crisis Line with trained volunteers

404-377-1428

To make an appointment with a professional counselor

404-377-1429

Georgia State University Counseling Center

(Services are free)

Emergency appointments are available M-F 9-5 and 5-8pm on Tuesday. No appointment is necessary in an Emergency.

106 Courtland St

404-413-1640

24 Hour Mental Health Crisis Line

404-730-1600

Grady Walk-In Clinic

404- 616-4762

Grady Rape Crisis Center

24 Hour Hotline

404-616-4861