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College Women and The Occurrence of Unwanted Sexual Advances in Public Drinking Settings: A Feminist Routine Activities Approach

Abby McColl Johnson

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COLLEGE WOMEN AND THE OCCURRENCE OF UNWANTED SEXUAL ADVANCES IN PUBLIC DRINKING SETTINGS: A FEMINIST ROUTINE ACTIVITIES APPROACH

by

ABBY MCCOLL JOHNSON

(Under the Direction of Nathan W. Pino)

ABSTRACT

Using existing data from the 1999 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, this thesis analyzes the social predictors of unwanted sexual advances experienced by college women and where this type of victimization occurs. Hypotheses were derived from routine activities theory and feminist theory. Findings show that attendance at bars has a more significant effect on experiences of unwanted sexual advances than attendance at parties, attendance at drink promotions, and participation in drinking games. Increased alcohol consumption at bars has a significant effect on unwanted sexual advances. The analysis also reveals that alcohol abstention at parties has a significant effect on unwanted sexual advances. Implications of the findings are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: Unwanted sexual advances, Female college students, Sexual victimization, Alcohol
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the social predictors of unwanted sexual advances experienced by college women and where this type of victimization occurs. This type of sexual victimization has not been studied to the same extent as more serious sexual offenses. Studies of unwanted sexual advances by college men towards college women in public drinking settings are few (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Sawyer, 1997). Although unwanted sexual advances are a less severe form of sexual victimization (compared to attempted rape, sexual coercion, and unwanted sexual contact) they often lead to more severe forms of sexual victimization. An unwanted sexual advance may be defined as groping, grabbing, or fondling of the breast or buttocks, or moving the hand up the skirt of the target to her crotch area (Fox & Sobol, 2000). Parks, Miller, Collins, and Zetes-Zanatta (1998) describe an unwanted sexual advance as a man refusing to take his hand off the target’s shoulder.

A number of studies have suggested that college women are at higher risk for sexual victimization than women in the general population (Fisher et al., 2000; Nurius, 1996; The Women’s Center, 2000). Results from a national survey of female college students found that about half of the respondents were subjected to some kind of unwanted sexual advance (Fisher et al., 2000).

This study analyzes existing data from the 1999 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study to determine the social predictors of unwanted sexual advances experienced by college women. A national sample of undergraduate college and
university students were surveyed about alcohol use and alcohol problems. The current study only looks at women from the 1999 data. Findings from a previous study that compared results from the 1999 data set to results from the 1993 and 1997 College Alcohol Studies found an important difference between the 1999 study and the previous ones. While most other secondhand effects of alcohol consumption experienced by students, such as being pushed, hit, or assaulted, or being the victim of sexual assault or date rape, decreased significantly, unwanted sexual advances increased significantly (Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, & Lee, 2000).

What theory might explain patterns in unwanted sexual advances? By combining feminist theory with routine activities theory, this study seeks to explain why the college campus provides an opportunistic environment for potential assailants. Few attempts have been made to examine sexual victimization risks either outside the context of a feminist approach or by linking a feminist approach with a lifestyle approach such as routine activities theory (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002).

The literature review below is organized based on the three core concepts of the routine activities approach: motivated offenders, attractive targets, and lack of capable guardianship. First, feminist theory is presented to enhance the understanding of motivated offenders on college campuses: the presence of male peer groups that perpetuate and legitimate the sexual exploitation of women and a “rape-support” culture that works to normalize and downplay violence against women (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). Second, the literature review discusses the concept of attractive targets, and some of the contrasting research findings found in this literature. Finally, the concept of lack of guardianship is discussed using the feminist perspective to explain the lack of
deterrence on college campuses. The feminist perspective explains that environments such as bars and parties where men congregate and drink or do drugs are dangerous for women (Dietz, 2003).

Hypotheses derived from a literature review of both routine activities theory and feminist theory will be tested with a quantitative analysis of the 1999 data. Results from this study will provide information on whether women who attend and women who do not attend public drinking settings have similar risk for unwanted sexual advances. It will also provide information on whether women who drink and women who do not drink in public drinking settings have similar risk for unwanted sexual advances.

**Literature Review**

This study uses the routine activities theory and feminist theory to explain unwanted sexual advances on college campuses. Routine activities theory is a criminological theory of victimization. This theory argues that risk for victimization depends on the situation, the setting, and the characteristics of one’s lifestyle (Akers & Sellers, 2004). Three crucial components are necessary for a predatory act to take place: motivated offenders (persons likely to commit crime), attractive targets (a vulnerable target or victim is present), and the lack of capable guardianship (formal or informal guardianship to prevent abuse by a motivated offender are absent). If one of the components is missing then a crime is less likely to occur. If all three elements are present, then the chances for crime increase. The strength of the routine activities approach is that it emphasizes that motivated male sexual aggressors are searching for situations where they have an advantage or the ability to take the upper hand in victimization (Schwartz, Dekeseredy, Tait, & Alvi, 2001). Routine activities theory
researchers typically take the concept of motivated offender for granted by assuming that there are plenty of such individuals “out there.” Feminist theory contributes to routine activities theory by explaining the presence of motivated offenders on college campuses, an environment that often contains few persons with criminal records (Schwartz et al., 2001). Feminist theory argues that women are seen as suitable targets of men because of patriarchy, where men have opportunity and cultural support to victimize women to maintain their power and control over them (Dietz, 2003). In this study, the feminist perspective is not tested, rather it is used to facilitate in the application of the routine activities approach. Routine activities theory is useful for explaining stranger-perpetrated crimes, but fails to ask how and why men learn violent behavior towards women (Dietz, 2003).

**Motivated Offenders**

Schwartz et al. (2001) contend that feminist theory is strongest exactly where mainstream routine activities theory is weakest: in explaining why motivated offenders are present on college campuses. One approach of the feminist perspective emphasizes the presence of male peer groups that perpetuate and legitimate the sexual exploitation of women, especially intoxicated females. Men belong to these all-male, patriarchal, networks such as fraternities and athletic teams (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002).

Feminist researchers identify fraternity life as a primary setting for the creation, socialization, and perpetuation of attitudes supportive of violence against women, alcohol consumption, and/or abuse (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). Research shows that many fraternities create a social environment in which sexual coercion is normalized because women are perceived as commodities available to meet men’s sexual needs (Abbey,
Nurius (1996) claims that in sorority and fraternity culture, members’ emphasis on these social groups as valued and protected networks may hinder women’s abilities to screen for early stage warning signals of sexual coercion or aggression and hinder men’s likelihood of detecting early stage resistance cues. The connection between heavy and frequent alcohol consumption and Greek life is clearly tied to the exposure of highly vulnerable targets to motivated and disinhibited potential offenders (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002).

Male college athletes have also been found to hold negative views about women, and they have been tied to a large number of sexual assaults of females, both on and off campus (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). Sporting events are seen as a practice field where the actors learn how to use force to ensure a dominant position relative to women and effeminate men (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). The presence of “motivated” offenders on college campuses is guaranteed by the continued presence in society of male peer groups that support this type of behavior (Schwartz et al., 2001).

Another approach of the feminist argument for the presence of motivated offenders is the claim that the United States is a “rape-supportive” culture that works to normalize and downplay violence against women (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). Messages and excuses which allow the majority of sexually aggressive men to claim that they are not rapists, or that their actions do not constitute rape exist throughout society. These messages convince many criminal justice officials, college officials, bystanders, and even victims that rape should be perceived only when it involves violence and a stranger assailant (Schwartz et al., 2001).
Alcohol is another important factor in explaining motivated offenders. Alcohol can be seen as both a means of control that men use with women and as a means for establishing individual women as attractive targets. The feminist perspective explains the use of alcohol by motivated offenders on college campuses by stating that men who drink alcohol typically do so in groups, and when drinking with others an individual tends to consume a greater amount of alcohol (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). These groups of drinking men may encourage each other to use alcohol to gain sexual access to nearby women.

Alcohol is widely believed to increase sexual desire and capacity and to increase aggressive behavior, especially in men (Finney, 2004). Abbey (2002) states that men’s expectations that they will feel more powerful, sexual and aggressive after drinking alcohol affects their interpretation of their female companion’s friendly behavior as being a sign of sexual interest. Intoxicated perpetrators may disinhibit sexual, and physical aggression and decrease the ability to understand the victim’s signals as non-consensual (Finney, 2004).

Bernat, Calhoun, and Stolp (1998) studied the judgments of sexually aggressive and nonaggressive college men about when to terminate unwanted advances depicted in an audio tape date rape analogue. This study also investigated the relationship of these judgments to alcohol consumption by the characters in the audio tape. Results indicate that sexually aggressive men were six times more likely than nonaggressive men to allow the date rape encounter to continue to the point of verbal threats. When the couple was portrayed as drinking alcohol, sexually aggressive men were over eight times more likely to allow the date rape encounter to continue. This study shows that when sexually
aggressive men were provided with a disinhibiting and more ambiguous situational context in which the characters consumed alcohol, these men were more likely to rely on their coercive belief systems and interpret the woman’s resistance as false.

**Attractive Targets**

Another important factor in routine activities theory is the presence of attractive targets. Lifestyle factors (such as drinking in public places, a high level of sexual activity, and frequent socializing on college campuses) increase women’s “suitability” as targets of sexual victimization (Schwartz et al., 2001). Feminist routine activities theory suggests that suitable targets for sexual assault are the women who voluntarily ingest large amounts of alcohol or drugs on campus and are so chemically incapacitated that they cannot resist coercive sexual advances (Schwartz et al., 2001).

Schwartz et al. (2001) found that female college students who drink more heavily are more likely to be attractive targets than those who do not drink heavily. Findings from their study suggest that motivated male offenders view women who drink and/or consume drugs as “suitable targets.” Further results indicate that these views are largely a function of ties and social exchanges with male peers who perpetuate and legitimate assault in college dating relationships and combine this with the use of alcohol by the men themselves.

Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) also used feminist routine activities theory to explain sexual assault on college campuses, but found that measures of target attractiveness, such as alcohol intake, were less influential. They found that variables in the categories of proximity to potential offenders and exposure to risky situations had more influence on victimization risks than measures of target attractiveness. For
example, they propose that women’s risks of sexual assault in a “hot spot” for such victimization are primarily influenced by exposure to male peer groups and other potential offenders. On college campuses, men are more likely to be members of social peer groups that promote violence against women. And, it is the women most often in close proximity to these male social groups, who increase their vulnerability and suitability as targets (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). College women who went to the movies frequently were less likely to be victims of sexual assault than women who did not go to the movies frequently. Women who were more likely to be victims of sexual assault were those highly involved in campus life through club membership, who went out at night frequently for leisure, and who were around many others when under the influence of drugs. These activities increase a woman’s visibility to men who may be of the mind to sexually assault women. Going to the movies is clearly not an activity that would increase a woman’s exposure, especially to male peer groups that may encourage members to sexually abuse women.

According to feminist theory, women and men enjoy different rights, privileges, and opportunities in a patriarchal society. When men and women use alcohol and drugs, a woman’s participation in these behaviors is seen as increasing her likelihood of becoming a victim. It implies that women are not to participate in “deviant” behaviors, but men can (Dietz, 2003). Motivated offenders see those college women who drink as participating in “deviant” behavior and, therefore, assume those women are inviting sexual advances. This suggests that it is important to look beyond simply whether and how much one drinks to the routines of drinking, including how frequently one drinks, where one drinks, and with whom one drinks (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002).
“Women violating traditional norms against heavier drinking have been perceived as being likely to violate traditional norms restricting women’s sexual expression. This has resulted in a stereotype of the drinking woman as sexually promiscuous or, at least, more sexually responsive or vulnerable” (Wilsnack, 1991, p.1). Wilsnack (1991) states that many studies have shown the opposite to be true. Alcoholic women in treatment have reported elevated rates of sexual adjustment problems, including low sexual interest, lack of sexual arousal, and infrequent orgasm. Findings show that female drinkers are considerably more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances by others who are drinking than to initiate sexually assertive or indiscriminate activity themselves (Wilsnack, 1991).

Much evidence suggests that women who drink alcohol are at greater risk for sexual victimization because men are likely to believe that a woman drinking alcohol is more sexually available and sexually promiscuous, and forcing sex on a woman is more acceptable when she is drinking (Abbey, 2002; Finney, 2004; George et al., 1995; Gravitt & Krueger, 1998; Testa & Parks, 1996). Studies suggest that a man may initiate unwanted sexual advances if he believes that a woman is demonstrating her sexual availability by drinking, and this perception may spark a string of misperceptions that result in sexual assault (George et al., 1995). Studies have shown that assailants seem to target individuals who show outward signs of intoxication (Finney, 2004; Fox & Sobol, 2000; Johnson & Stahl, 2004; Parks & Miller, 1997; Parks & Zetes-Zanatta, 1999; Testa & Parks, 1996). Alcohol use results in cognitive and motor impairment that may affect a woman’s ability to recognize behaviors signaling potential sexual assault and to resist unwanted sexual advances (Testa & Parks, 1996).
Fisher et al. (2000) surveyed a national sample of college women to investigate which factors potentially placed women at risk of being sexually victimized. They suggest that four main factors consistently increased the risk of sexual victimization of any kind: frequently drinking enough to get drunk, being unmarried, having been a victim of a sexual assault before the start of the current school year, and living on campus (for on-campus victimization only) (Fisher et al., 2000). Studies of sorority women and sexual victimization found that sorority women were no more likely to have experienced sexual victimization than the general female college population (Nurius, 1996; Sawyer & Schulken, 1997). Abbey (2002) states that many college men perceive women who drink in bars as being sexually promiscuous, and therefore appropriate targets for sexual aggression. More than 20 percent of college students in a 1998 study thought that verbal pressure to have sexual intercourse was acceptable if either of them was drinking alcohol or if they met at a bar (Abbey 2002).

Parks and Zetes-Zanatta’s (1999) study of women who drink in bars reveals several antecedent factors through which victimization of women may occur in bars. Women in this study reported drinking an average of twice each week and consuming 13 drinks per week in a bar. More than three-quarters of these women had experienced some form of aggression associated with drinking in a bar, and of these 154 women, 46.8 percent, had experienced simple assault, which is defined as being pushed or grabbed, and unwanted sexual contact. Results showed that victimization is not dependent on level of intoxication. This shows that regardless of alcohol consumption, greater frequency of drinking in bars increases the amount of victimization a woman experiences.
Lack of Capable Guardianship

The third factor present in routine activities theory is the absence of capable guardianship. Feminist theory contributes to the interpretation of routine activities theory by emphasizing the role of male peer support for violence against women, and the concept of a rape-supportive culture as giving men some of the social support they need to victimize women. When offenders receive either encouragement or no punishment from peers, administrators, faculty, or law enforcement officials, then effective guardianship is lacking (Schwartz et al., 2001). The feminist perspective suggests that society encourages lifestyles that bring women and men together in numerous social settings (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002). Social settings that facilitate rather than hinder victimization, such as bars, also provide a lack of guardianship. The probability of criminal victimization is high when people engage in activities that increase the likelihood of physical contact between motivated offenders and attractive targets and where levels of supervision are low (Fox & Sobol, 2000). Bars (as public drinking settings) are places that expose women to potential perpetrators (especially males), and some research indicates that the primary public drinking location for college women and non-college women is in bars (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Parks & Miller, 1997; Parks et al., 1998).

Fox and Sobol (2000) observed drinking and social behavior in two urban bars to determine how routine drinking patterns, social behavior, and formal guardianship, such as controls and management practices, were related to patron alcohol consumption and behavioral responses within and outside the bar. They found that there are numerous physical and social features that attract potential offenders and offending activities. For
example, bar settings which provided drink specials and discounts intending to attract female patrons encourage heavy drinking patterns and increase risks for personal victimization. Additional findings show that during peak hours, most frequently on ladies’ night, small groups of moderately intoxicated males would gather along a heavily traveled pathway between the main bar area and the restroom or a smaller bar area. When young women walked by, typically those who were exceptionally attractive, the males would block the pathway, then freely grope, grab, or fondle selected females usually on the buttocks or breast. This would produce minor conflict with the victims, who most frequently attempted to extricate themselves without escalating the level of unwanted sexual aggression. Women entering the bar with extremely revealing clothing, or men using loud and boisterous language, or either gender exhibiting apparent intoxication and out-of-control behavior, were more likely to attract predatory responses. Males seeking an “easy lay” frequently approached female patrons to draw the target into conversation, maneuver themselves into a seat at the bar, and present her with drinks (Fox & Sobol, 2000, p. 444). The male would begin moving his hand up the skirt of the target to her crotch area, and in most cases the targets were intoxicated to the extent that little resistance was offered, although at least two women were observed quickly leaving after becoming disturbed by these unwanted sexual advances. On two instances, a pair of well-dressed male patrons were observed approaching nearly all of the women who entered or who were at the bar alone with explicit verbal sexual advances. This study concludes that those who attended the bars unaccompanied during peak hours and discount drinking promotions were at greater risk for physical confrontation or predatory sexual aggression.
Parks and Miller (1997) state that the bar environment can act as a mediator for directing alcohol’s arousal effects by pairing male intoxication with expectations of finding a female companion and may put women bar drinkers at greater risk for victimization. Parks and Miller (1997) state that among women who are heavy drinkers as well as among those who do not drink heavily, frequency of going to bars increases the probability of victimization. Parks and Miller (1997) found that nearly one half of women in one study reported some form of sexual victimization after drinking in a bar, with more than one quarter experiencing unwanted sexual contact while physically inside the bar (Parks & Miller, 1997). Unwanted sexual contact, such as fondling, kissing, or petting, was the only type of sexual aggression described as occurring inside the bars (attempted rape, coercion, and rape took place outside the bar). Unwanted sexual contacts experienced inside the bars were described as frequent and annoying. Women viewed this “mild sexual aggression” as a form of harassment rather than victimization (Parks & Miller, 1997, p. 517). Many women claimed that more severe forms of sexual aggression, such as attempted or completed rape, occurred after leaving the bar and being “nice” by giving a man a ride home.

Parks et al. (1998) found that nearly one-third of women who reported drinking in bars one or more times a week reported seven or more victimization experiences during the preceding twelve months. These victimizations include obnoxious behavior, property damage, and violence. Most women in the focus groups said they went to bars for reasons related to validating positive self-images. They indicated that this validation was provided by attention received from others in the bar, who were mostly men, and from the “good feeling” generated by “dressing up” to go out (Parks et al., 1998, p. 3). The
reason women in this study drink in bars is because they perceive substantial benefits associated with drinking in the bar setting. The women suggested that stereotypes of women bar drinkers as loose or easily taken advantage of are to blame for the negative social encounters they frequently had with men.

Parks and Miller (1997) state that bars may not be the only risky drinking context. Some of the environmental factors, such as the heavy alcohol consumption, intoxication, and crowding found in bars also occur in other social-drinking settings, such as parties. Ullman, Karabatsos, and Koss (1999), in their national sample of college men who admitted committing some degree of sexual aggression, report that drinking by offenders and victims was associated with assaults occurring in riskier social situations (e.g., bars, parties) in which the victim did not know the offender well prior to the assault. The results of this study suggest that drinking women risk being targeted by assailants, especially in spontaneous, unplanned social situations such as bars and parties (Ullman et al., 1999).

Abbey (2002) states that it is harder for women to resist sexual advances when intoxicated, and women drink more than usual when playing drinking games, which take place most often in parties. Johnson and Stahl (2004, p. 304) state that “drinking games are a popular context for college students’ drinking and appear to be strongly associated with incidents of sexual victimization.” Johnson and Stahl’s (2004) study of specific types of sexual behaviors that occur in the drinking game context found that men sometimes intentionally use drinking games as a means of targeting women for victimization. Results show that men who have a clear intent to use the drinking game situation as a prelude to sex are more likely to be perpetrators than are other men.
Findings show that women’s consumption while playing drinking games was the best predictor for frequency of occurrence of sexual activity. Johnson and Stahl (2004) conclude that men may use drinking as an excuse for various misbehaviors. Given the sexual content of some games, the drinking game context may contribute to further misperceptions of intent. The cognitive demands involved in some games, such as remembering the rules, can further impair attention and communication. The competitive context of drinking games may reinforce myths about male dominance and the objectification of women.

On many campuses, women will go to parties in groups and are careful to provide guardianship for each other (Schwartz et al., 2001). Gravitt and Krueger’s (1998) study of college students and the relationship between sex and drinking found that there was a behavior among college women called the “buddy system.” College women who frequent environments that include alcohol will often have a sober girlfriend or “buddy” who agrees to take care of them throughout the night when they get drunk, like a babysitter. This “buddy” is supposed to make sure nothing happens to the drunken friend, such as leaving with a guy who has been feeding her alcohol. Also, the sober “buddy” is supposed to make sure that the drunken friend gets home safely. College men in this study had a system of distracting the sober “buddy” so that one of their friends could get a targeted female intoxicated and have sex with her. This counter-strategy to women’s “buddy system” consisted of three or more men: one or two to distract the sober “buddy,” another to offer the targeted female alcohol, and a final man (the one who wants to have sex with the woman) who attempts to have sex with the targeted female after she is intoxicated. Since the women’s main rule is not to leave the party/have sex with a man
who offers her alcohol, these strategies of the men may not raise her suspicions (Gravitt & Krueger, 1998).

Based on the literature review the following questions will be answered using the 1999 Harvard Alcohol Study data set. What social factors contribute to unwanted sexual advances? Are college women who attend public drinking settings, such as bars and parties, more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not attend? Are college women who attend discount drink promotions, which encourage heavy drinking, more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not attend? Are college women who participate in drinking games more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not participate? Do college women who drink in public drinking settings experience unwanted sexual advances more than those who do not drink in public drinking settings? Do college women who drink heavily experience more unwanted sexual advances than those who drink less or not at all?

**Hypotheses**

A number of hypotheses derived from the literature can be tested using the 1999 Harvard Alcohol Study data set. Public drinking settings are environments where alcohol consumption takes place and intoxicated patrons may be present. Exposure to these settings may be an influential factor in experiences of unwanted sexual advances. Women who drink in these settings may be at risk because women drinkers are perceived as sexually promiscuous and, therefore, are seen by potential assailants as inviting sexual advances. Women who drink heavily in these settings may be seen as an attractive target
for unwanted sexual advances because motivated offenders are looking for situations in which they have the upper hand. The following hypotheses are based on these points:

Hypothesis 1: College women who attend off-campus bars are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not attend.

Hypothesis 2: College women who attend drink promotions that discount drinking costs are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not attend.

Hypothesis 3: College women who attend off-campus parties are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not attend.

Hypothesis 4: College women who participate in drinking games are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not participate.

Hypothesis 5: College women who drink more at off-campus bars are likely to experience more unwanted sexual advances than those who drink less or not at all at off-campus bars.

Hypothesis 6: College women who drink more at off-campus parties are likely to experience more unwanted sexual advances than those who drink less or not at all at off-campus parties.
CHAPTER 2

METHODS

This study uses The 1999 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study data set (Henry Wechsler as principle investigator) to show if public drinking settings pose a risk for unwanted sexual advances. This study also tests whether or not the amount of alcohol consumed in public drinking settings increases the risk for unwanted sexual advances. Routine activities theory and feminist theory are used to examine social factors that contribute to this form of sexual victimization and to explain why this type of crime occurs on college campuses.

Data and Sampling

The Harvard survey collected information on undergraduate students’ use of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs, views on campus alcohol policies and student alcohol use, reasons for drinking alcohol and reasons for not drinking or limiting drinking, and personal difficulties caused by drinking problems. Overall health status, daily activities, satisfaction with education being received, grade-point average, living arrangements, social life, sexual activity, use of condoms during sexual intercourse, date rape, drunk driving, and attendance at meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, were additional topics covered by the survey. Background variables from the original survey include age, height, weight, sex, marital status, race, religion, mother’s and father’s education, and mother’s and father’s drinking habits. A probability proportionate to size sampling strategy of colleges and universities was used to create a random sample. The sample includes 14071 full-time students enrolled in 120 four-year colleges or universities in the United States.
Operationalization of Variables

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is unwanted sexual advances. This study examines answers to the following question from the Harvard survey: “Since the beginning of the school year, how often have you experienced any of the following because of other students’ drinking?” One of the response categories states, “Experienced an unwanted sexual advance.” Response options include: “Not at all, once, 2-3 times, or 4 or more times.” Other response categories include: “Been insulted or humiliated,” “Had a serious argument or quarrel,” “Been pushed, hit, or assaulted,” “Had your property damaged,” “Had to ‘baby-sit’ or take care of another student who drank too much,” “Found vomit in the halls or bathroom of your residence,” “Had your studying or sleep interrupted,” “Been a victim of sexual assault or ‘date rape’,” “Been a victim of another crime on campus,” and “Been a victim of another crime off campus.” Since an unwanted sexual advance is not defined, respondents must interpret what an unwanted sexual advance means. Another potential problem is the students’ perception of other students’ drinking. This assumes that the students knew that the offenders were students and were drinking.

This study is based on self-reported responses to a mail survey and is subject to sources of error associated with this approach. Respondents may intentionally or unintentionally distort their answers. However, a number of studies support the validity of self-reports of alcohol use (Wechsler et al., 2000). The sample includes 14017 students, 5451 males and 8620 females. In this study, data on alcohol-related unwanted sexual advances, a problem that most frequently affects women (Wechsler et al., 2000), is
analyzed for women only. Future research should attempt to describe men and their experiences of unwanted sexual advances. This study measures victim’s vulnerability (target attractiveness) by examining lifestyle characteristics of potential victims. These lifestyle characteristics are frequenting public drinking settings, personal alcohol use, drinking situations, and association with others who use alcohol. This study does not measure an offender’s motivation, nor does it measure effective guardianship, but it draws from routine activities theory and feminist theory to explain why motivated offenders exist and why effective guardianship is lacking. It is assumed that motivated offenders exist because they have developed certain attitudes and behaviors as a result of encouragement and support by other males. When offenders receive either encouragement or no punishment from peers, administrators, faculty, and law enforcement officials, then effective guardianship is lacking.

*Independent Variables*

This study focuses on the social predictors of unwanted sexual advances among college women. The public drinking settings that are examined are off-campus parties and off-campus bars. The drinking situations examined are drinking games, which usually take place at parties, and drink promotions, which take place at bars and parties. Personal alcohol use is determined by the description of current alcohol use, the personal problems that alcohol use has caused, the importance of drinking to get drunk, and the accessibility of alcohol. The association with others who use alcohol is determined by the percentage of friends that binge drink, the disruptiveness of the respondent’s group of friends, and the amount of times the respondent has asked someone to stop drinking.
Data Analysis

Bivariate correlations were used to determine, separately, each independent variable’s effect on the dependent variable, unwanted sexual advances. Linear regression was used to measure the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable when taking into account other theoretically important variables. T-tests were used to determine the variable of sexual preference’s effect on unwanted sexual advances. Cross-tabulations were used to test whether attendance at public drinking settings (off-campus bars and off-campus parties) and how much alcohol one drinks in these settings affects experiences of unwanted sexual advances.
CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS

Out of 8620 female students, 2254 (26.1 %) responded to the question corresponding to the dependent variable. Out of 2254 female students who responded to the question, 1071 (47.5 %) replied that they had not experienced an unwanted sexual advance since the beginning of the school year, 802 (35.6 %) replied that they had experienced one unwanted sexual advance, and 381 (16.9 %) replied that they had experienced an unwanted sexual advance two or three times. No one replied that they had experienced an unwanted sexual advance four or more times. Table 1 displays the means and standard deviations of the variables used in the study, and the Appendix contains a description of the variables in this study.
Means and Standard Deviations

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variable Unwanted Sexual Advances and Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>unwanted sexual advance</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pareduc</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nevmarried</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liveoff-camp</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greekmem</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educsatisfn</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gpa</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#sexpartner</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#closfriend</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendbars</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendparties</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkgame</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkpromo</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alcuse</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obtnalc</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkdrunk</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkprob</td>
<td>18.61</td>
<td>6.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%friendbinge</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>askstopdrk</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bivariate Correlations

Bivariate correlations with the dependent variable, unwanted sexual advances, were tested to determine which variables individually affect the dependent variable.

Table 2 displays the results.
Table 2
Bivariate Correlations with the Dependent Variable Unwanted Sexual Advances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>white</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pareduc</td>
<td>.059**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nevmarried</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>-.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liveoff-camp</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greekmem</td>
<td>.053**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educsatisfn</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gpa</td>
<td>-.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#sexpartner</td>
<td>.076**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#closfriend</td>
<td>.071**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendbars</td>
<td>.054**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendparties</td>
<td>.047*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkgame</td>
<td>.069**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkpromo</td>
<td>.116**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alcuse</td>
<td>.093**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtálnalc</td>
<td>.049**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkdunk</td>
<td>.073**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkprob</td>
<td>.207**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group</td>
<td>.145**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%friendsbinge</td>
<td>.134**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>askstopdrk</td>
<td>.147**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01

Based on findings from Table 2, race, age, marital status, residence off-campus, satisfaction with education, and grade point average are not significantly related to experiences of unwanted sexual advances. The following factors increase the likelihood of experiencing unwanted sexual advances: higher education of the parents, being a member of a sorority, more sexual partners, more close friends, attendance at bars and parties, participation in drinking games and drinking promotions, higher alcohol intake, ease in obtaining alcohol, drinking to get drunk, more alcohol-related problems, more times one’s group is asked to be quiet or less disruptive, a higher percentage of friends
that binge drink, and the respondent has asked another student to stop drinking more frequently.

**Strongest Reduced Model**

For a more rigorous analysis, a linear regression model was tested to determine which variables affect the dependent variable while taking into account all of the other independent variables. Table 3 displays the results.

### Table 3

**Strongest Reduced Model with Unwanted Sexual Advances as the Dependent Variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ind. Var</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>VIF</th>
<th>Model F</th>
<th>R-Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>white</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>1.529</td>
<td>1.065</td>
<td>10.862***</td>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pareduc</td>
<td>.058**</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>2.836</td>
<td>1.063</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nevmarried</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>1.120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.181</td>
<td>1.622</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liveoff-camp</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>1.293</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greekmem</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>-.247</td>
<td>1.084</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educsatisfn</td>
<td>.046*</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>2.216</td>
<td>1.063</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gpa</td>
<td>-.088***</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-4.212</td>
<td>1.087</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#sexpartner</td>
<td>.044*</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>2.129</td>
<td>1.052</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#closfriend</td>
<td>.044*</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>2.054</td>
<td>1.135</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendbars</td>
<td>.043*</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>1.954</td>
<td>1.226</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendparties</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>1.140</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkgame</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>-1.714</td>
<td>1.506</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkpromo</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.886</td>
<td>1.600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alcuse</td>
<td>-.060*</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>-2.343</td>
<td>1.640</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obtnalc</td>
<td>.049*</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>2.277</td>
<td>1.156</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkdrank</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>-1.220</td>
<td>1.353</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drkprob</td>
<td>.193***</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>7.228</td>
<td>1.790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group</td>
<td>.046*</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>1.992</td>
<td>1.360</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%friendsbinge</td>
<td>.059*</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>2.585</td>
<td>1.289</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>askstopdrk</td>
<td>.118***</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>5.618</td>
<td>1.100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05  
** p < .01  
*** p < .001
Table 3 displays the linear regression model with a strong F ratio of 10.862, and an R-squared of .091. The variance inflation factor scores for the independent variables are low, indicating that there are no multi-collinearity problems in the model. When taking into account all of the independent variables: higher education of the parents, less satisfaction with education, higher grade point average, more sexual partners, more close friends, bar attendance, lower alcohol intake, the easier it is to obtain alcohol, more alcohol-related problems, more times one’s group is asked to be quiet or less disruptive, a higher percentage of friends that binge drink, and the respondent has asked another student to stop drinking more frequently significantly predict unwanted sexual advances.

When multiple independent variables are considered together in terms of their influence on the dependent variable in the multiple regression model, some of the results differ from what was found in the bivariate tests. Greek membership, party attendance, drinking game participation, drink promotion attendance, and drinking to get drunk no longer had a significant effect on the dependent variable after controlling for other independent variables. At the same time, satisfaction with education and grade point average had a significant effect on the dependent variable after controlling for other independent variables even though they were not significantly related to the dependent variable in bivariate tests. Finally, while increased alcohol use was associated with an increase in perceived unwanted sexual advances in the bivariate test, women who described themselves as drinking less were more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances when controlling for other independent variables.

Results from the multiple regression model in Table 3 are used for testing hypotheses because multiple regression is a more rigorous test than the bivariate tests.
Bivariate tests were used to show which variables individually affect the dependent variable and then multiple regression was used to show a variable’s effect when taking into account other variables. Results from the multiple regression model show that there is a relationship between bar attendance and experiences of unwanted sexual advances, which supports hypothesis one: in this sample, college women who attend off-campus bars are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not attend. Other results from the multiple regression model show that there is no relationship between drink promotion attendance and experiences of unwanted sexual advances, which does not support hypothesis two (college women who attend drink promotions that discount drinking costs are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not attend). Results show that there is no relationship between party attendance and experiences of unwanted sexual advances, which does not support hypothesis three (college women who attend off-campus parties are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not attend). Results show that there is no relationship between drinking game participation and experiences of unwanted sexual advances, which does not support hypothesis four (college women who participate in drinking games are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not participate).

**Significant t Test Results**

T-tests were conducted to determine if sexual preference (opposite sex and both sexes) is significantly related to experiencing unwanted sexual advances. Table 4 displays the significant result.
Table 4
Significant $t$ Test Result with Comparison Groups by Sexual Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>opposite sex partners M</th>
<th>both opposite &amp; same sex partners M</th>
<th>$t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>unwanted sexual advances</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>-3.15**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**$p < .01$.**

The students in this survey were asked the following question, “If you have ever been sexually active, has it been with…?” Response options included: “I have not been sexually active,” “opposite sex partner(s),” “same sex partner(s),” and “both opposite and same sex partners.” The finding in table 4 shows that college women who engage in sex with both sexes are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who engage in sex with men.

**Significant Chi-Square Results**

Chi-square tests were conducted to test if alcohol consumption in the public drinking settings of off-campus parties and off-campus bars or clubs influences experiences of unwanted sexual advances. Table 5 displays the results.
Table 5
Significant Chi-Square Results with Unwanted Sexual Advances by Public Drinking Setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unwanted sexual advance:</th>
<th>not at all</th>
<th>once</th>
<th>2-3 times</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-campus Bars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not attend</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No drinks</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 drinks</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 drinks</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 + drinks</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-campus Parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not attend</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No drinks</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 drinks</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 drinks</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 + drinks</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .001.

Chi-square tests reveal that more college women reported experiences of one unwanted sexual advance than experiences of two to three unwanted sexual advances at both bars and parties. For those who attend bars, 341 out of 845 consumed five or more drinks and experienced one unwanted sexual advance (40.4 %), and 178 out of 845 consumed five or more drinks and experienced unwanted sexual advances two to three times (21.1 %) (chi-square = 42.76). Based on the percentage of college women who attend bars, the more alcohol they consumed, the more likely they were to experience one or more unwanted sexual advances. The result supports hypothesis five: college women who drink more at off-campus bars are likely to experience more unwanted sexual advances than those who drink less or not at all at off-campus bars.
For those who attend parties, 408 out of 1005 who consumed five or more drinks experienced one unwanted sexual advance (40.6%) (chi-square = 32.99). Based on the percentage of college women who attend parties, the more alcohol they consumed, the more likely they were to experience one unwanted sexual advance. For those who attend parties, 26 out of 127 who had no drinks experienced unwanted sexual advances two to three times (20.5%), indicating that those who attend parties and do not drink are more likely to experience more unwanted sexual advances than those who do drink. This result does not support hypothesis six (college women who drink more at off-campus parties are likely to experience more unwanted sexual advances than those who drink less or not at all at off-campus parties).
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

This study used routine activities theory and feminist theory to examine unwanted sexual advances against women on college campuses. Results from the multiple regression model indicate that the first hypothesis is supported. Attending off-campus bars significantly affects experiences of unwanted sexual advances among women in this sample. College women who attend off-campus bars are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who do not attend. However, results from the multiple regression model indicate that the second, third, and fourth hypotheses are not supported. In this sample, there is no relationship between college women who attend drink promotions and experiences of unwanted sexual advances, there is no relationship between college women who attend parties and experiences of unwanted sexual advances, and there is no relationship between college women who participate in drinking games and experiences of unwanted sexual advances.

College women who attend bars are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who attend parties, drinking games, and drink promotions. These results concur with the current literature on bar victimization that suggests bars are environments in which mild sexual victimization, such as unwanted sexual advances, take place (Fisher et al., 2000; Fox & Sobol, 2000; Parks & Miller, 1997; Parks et al., 1998; Parks & Zetes-Zanatta, 1999). Results suggest that unwanted sexual advances take place in bars. More severe forms of sexual victimization may take place at parties, which sometimes contain drinking games. Drink promotions typically take place at bars, but
attendance at drink promotions is not a significant factor contributing to experiences of unwanted sexual advances. This may be because bars influence the likelihood of unwanted sexual advances whether or not drink promotions take place there. If drink promotions occur at parties, they do not affect the probability of experiencing unwanted sexual advances. These results also concur with a study that used routine activities theory and feminist theory to explain sexual assault on college campuses that found proximity and exposure to potential offenders to be influential (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002).

Chi-square tests were used to examine attendance at off-campus bars and off-campus parties and how much one drank at these public drinking settings. This tests proximity or exposure to potential assailants by examining environments in which men congregate and drink alcohol, and this also tests target attractiveness by the amount of alcohol consumed by potential victims in these settings. The fifth hypothesis is supported: results from chi-square tests show that those women who drink more at bars experience more unwanted sexual advances than women who drink less or not at all at bars. These findings could be related to the research that shows women bar drinkers are at risk for unwanted sexual advances because they are perceived as sexually promiscuous (Abbey, 2002). These results are similar to previous studies that have used routine activities theory and feminist theory to explain sexual assault on college campuses. Those studies found proximity and exposure to potential offenders to be influential and found that motivated male offenders view women who drink more heavily as “suitable targets” (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Schwartz et al., 2001).
Similar results from the linear regression model show that college women who encounter more problems because of their alcohol use are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who have fewer problems or none at all. This indicates that women who drink enough or often enough to suffer from problems because of their alcohol use are at higher risk for unwanted sexual advances. These results concur with those of Schwartz et al. (2001) who found that women who drink more heavily are more likely to be attractive targets for sexual assault. Routine activities theory and feminist theory suggests that these college women who drink experience unwanted sexual advances because they are participating in “deviant” behavior, and are therefore perceived as more sexual and sexually responsive after consuming alcohol. When men and women use alcohol, a woman’s participation in these behaviors is seen as increasing her likelihood of becoming a victim (Dietz, 2003). Motivated offenders see those college women who drink as participating in “deviant” behavior and therefore assume those women are inviting sexual advances. These women are drinking heavily but are still able to recognize the sexual advances as unwanted and may have resisted sexual assault. Another explanation may be that the unwanted sexual advance was a precursor for severe sexual victimization.

Another interesting finding from the linear regression model shows that college women who describe themselves as drinking less in general are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who describe themselves as drinking more. This is a different group of women from those who experience more problems because of their alcohol use. These results may be explained using routine activities theory and feminist theory because college women who drink, but drink less, are still participating in
“deviant” behaviors. This increases their likelihood of becoming victims because motivated offenders see their “deviant” behavior as inviting sexual advances. However, these results challenge those of Schwartz et al. (2001) who found that women who drink more heavily are more likely to be attractive targets for sexual assault. These different results could be due to the fact that different dependent variables are tested by the researchers in these studies. Most all of them are examining sexual assault rather than unwanted sexual advances. Since the women are drinking less, they may be more likely to see these sexual advances as unwanted, as compared to women who are too incapacitated to recognize these sexual advances and then resist completed sexual assault.

The final hypothesis, college women who drink more at off-campus parties are likely to experience more unwanted sexual advances than those who drink less or not at all at off-campus parties, is not supported. Results from chi-square tests show that women who do not drink at all at parties were more likely to experience more unwanted sexual advances than those who have five or more drinks at parties. This is an interesting finding because these results do not support the current literature that suggests women who drink are more at risk for unwanted sexual advances because they are seen as sexually promiscuous (Abbey, 2002; Finney, 2004; Fisher et al., 2000; George, Cue, Lopez, Crowe, & Norris, 1995; Testa & Parks, 1996; Wilsnack, 1991). These results also contradict findings from the Schwartz et al. (2001) study that found women who drink more heavily are more likely to be attractive targets for sexual assault. However, these findings do concur with Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002), who found that the theoretical categories of proximity to potential offenders and exposure to risky situations had more influence on victimization risks than variables measuring target attractiveness, such as
alcohol intake. These results do not show women who are so chemically incapacitated that they cannot resist coercive sexual advances as attractive targets.

Attractive targets for unwanted sexual advances may be women in an environment where there is greater exposure to potential assailants and where people commonly expect other people within these drinking settings to be receptive to sexual advances. Since the women are not drinking at all, they may be more likely to see these sexual advances as unwanted, as compared to women who are too incapacitated to recognize these sexual advances and then resist completed sexual assault. Other explanations for these results may be that sober women were more likely to remember the incidents of unwanted sexual advances, or that these women may be willing to admit to the incidents because they were not drunk and did not see it as their fault due to being drunk. These results comply with Gravitt and Krueger’s (1998) findings on the “buddy system” among female college students who attend parties. This consisted of a sober friend who would make sure the drunken friend gets home safely. If sober friends are attending the parties, this could explain the greater number of unwanted sexual advances experienced by those who attend parties but do not drink.

The linear regression model shows that problems because of alcohol use, grade point average, and the number of times one has asked someone to stop drinking have the strongest relationship to experiences of unwanted sexual advances. College women with higher grade point averages said that they are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances. This could be related to the results that show women who drink less are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances. Students who binge drink less have higher grade point averages (Smith & Pino, 2005). Asking someone to stop drinking is
highly significant, indicating that college women who have asked someone to stop drinking more times are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who have not done so or have done so fewer times. It is likely that these two variables are related because the students who experienced an unwanted sexual advance because of other students’ drinking may have asked those students to stop drinking. Also, college women whose parents have higher educations are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances. This could also be related to women who drink less as well. Parents are a primary influence on college students drinking habits, and parents with higher education influence their children to drink less (Wechsler et al., 2002). Another variable that is significantly related to unwanted sexual advances is satisfaction with education. College women who say that they are less satisfied with their education are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances.

Variables used to describe the relationship between alcohol and unwanted sexual advances are how easy it is to obtain alcohol and drinking to get drunk. College women who can obtain alcohol easily are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who claim they cannot obtain alcohol easily. Fisher et al. (2000) found drinking to get drunk as a significant factor in contributing to sexual victimization. This study found no relationship between the importance of drinking to get drunk and unwanted sexual advances. More research should be done on this topic.

Socializing variables that indicate alcohol use by friends and group disruptiveness are influential on the experience of unwanted sexual advances. The variables used in this study to describe with whom one drinks are: how many times, if any, were you part of a group that was asked to be quiet or less disruptive, and the percentage of friends that
binge drink. College women who have been part of a group that was asked to be quiet or less disruptive are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who have not or have been part of such a group fewer times. College women who have more friends that binge drink are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who have fewer friends who binge drink. The routine activities approach and feminist theory suggests that lifestyle characteristics may expose college women to potential assailants on college campuses. Results indicate that the more exposure to those who drink, the more likely one is to experience unwanted sexual advances.

Lifestyle characteristics that emphasize socializing on college campuses, such as number of friends and number of sex partners, are also influential on the experience of unwanted sexual advances. The routine activities approach and feminist theory suggests that women who socialize more on college campuses increase their risk for sexual victimization because of the presence of male peer groups that perpetuate and legitimate the sexual exploitation of women and the “rape-supportive” culture in the United States. Number of close friends represents socializing, and according to Nuruis (1996), typical socializing at college is associated with increased risk for sexual aggression, such as alcohol consumption, opportunities for physical isolation, and high-level exposure to risk through frequent socializing. Results show that college women who have more close friends are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who have fewer close friends. Number of sexual partners represents a lifestyle characteristic, such as high level of sexual activity, which Testa and Parks (1996) found explains association between alcohol use and sexual victimization. Similarly, results from this study of unwanted sexual advances shows that those college women who have a higher number of
sexual partners are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances. Another lifestyle characteristic variable that represents sexual activity is sexual preference (opposite sex, same sex, and both sexes). T-tests show that college women who engage in sex with both sexes are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those college women who engage in sex with only men or only women.

Unlike the Fisher et al. (2000) study which shows that unmarried college women have an increased risk of sexual victimization of any kind compared to married college women, the results from this study show no relationship between marital status and the experience of unwanted sexual advances. Similar to findings from previous studies of college women and sexual victimization (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Nurius, 1996; Sawyer & Schulken, 1997) these results show that sorority members were no more likely than non-Greek members to encounter unwanted sexual advances. This may be because it is not membership in a Greek organization that is risky but, rather associating with fraternity men, whether one is in a sorority or not. Going to a fraternity house for a party or after-hours socializing does not require membership in a sorority (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002).

**Conclusion**

One type of public drinking setting is a significant contributing factor to experiences of unwanted sexual advances. College women who attend bars are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances than those who attend parties. These results reflect the current literature on bar victimization that suggests less severe forms of sexual victimization are more likely to take place in bars. These results indicate that proximity and exposure to potential assailants are influential factors contributing to
college women’s experiences of unwanted sexual advances. This study also found that college women who drink more than other college women at bars are more likely to experience unwanted sexual advances. This indicates that both exposure and proximity to potential assailants and target attractiveness, such as alcohol intake, are still influential factors in the experience of unwanted sexual advances at bars. However, different results are found for alcohol use at off-campus parties. An important finding from this study is the suggestion that increased alcohol use at off-campus parties is not a predictor of more unwanted sexual advances. In fact, the opposite is suggested. Those college women who do not drink at off-campus parties are likely to experience more unwanted sexual advances than those who do drink. This implies that alcohol abstention is a factor in more experiences of unwanted sexual advances at parties. This finding contradicts literature that suggests women drinkers are seen as more sexually promiscuous than women who do not drink and therefore at more risk for unwanted sexual advances. These results suggest that proximity to potential offenders and exposure to risky situations are more influential in determining victimization risks than variables measuring target attractiveness, such as alcohol intake, at parties.

Future research should examine the variables that were not tested in the hypotheses, but were found to be significant predictors of unwanted sexual advances, such as higher grade point average, higher education of the parents, more problems because of alcohol use, lower satisfaction with education, lower alcohol intake, and higher number of close friends and sex partners. More problems because of alcohol use is more significant than lower alcohol intake and is congruent with the studies of sexual assault on college campuses, which suggests that women who drink more heavily are
attractive targets (Schwartz et al., 2001). However, the significance of the variable lower alcohol intake (women who describe themselves as drinking less in general) is not congruent with the studies of sexual assault on college campuses. The significance of this variable may be due to the use of the dependent variable, unwanted sexual advances, as opposed to sexual assault. Unwanted sexual advances and the difference between unwanted sexual advances and sexual assault should be studied more by collecting qualitative data and by using quantitative data with more specific questions.

The present study provides an examination of the risk factors influencing unwanted sexual advances towards women by men in a sexual assault hot spot (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002), the college campus. Lifestyle behaviors were analyzed by using routine activities theory to enhance the understanding of which females had higher victimization risk than others. The feminist perspective aided the interpretation of these findings about lifestyles by accounting for the cultural context of subgroups in this location. The combination of the two perspectives strengthens the interpretation of the findings and increases the understanding of why the college campus is a hot spot, and why certain women have higher risks than others for unwanted sexual advances.

While previous studies have shown how the routine activities approach and feminist theory explains incidences of sexual assault on college campuses, this study introduces the idea that the routine activities approach and feminist theory provides a clearer explanation for why some women have relatively higher risks for unwanted sexual advances. Researchers should continue to examine lifestyle characteristics that may influence college women’s risk for sexual victimization, with special attention on
those that measure proximity to male social peer groups that hold pro-rape attitudes and target attractiveness measured by alcohol intake.
ABBREVIATIONS

REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

VARIABLES USED IN THE STUDY

_unwanted sexual advances:_

Unwanted sexual advances are defined by the sexual harassment facts website (http://sexualharrass.com/sexual-harrassment/facts.htm) as a type of sexual harassment and include unwanted visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. An unwanted sexual advance is not defined for the students participating in the survey; they interpret the question to mean whatever they consider to be an unwanted sexual advance. The survey question asked, "since the beginning of the school year, how often have you experienced any of the following because of other students’ drinking?"

Experienced an unwanted sexual advance.

1. not at all
2. once
3. 2-3 times
4. 4 or more times

_white_ other = 0, white = 1

_pareduc_
The coded answers to the following two questions were added together:

How far did your father (or person that served as your father) go in school?
How far did you mother (or person that served as your mother) go in school?

1. Less than a high school diploma
2. High school diploma
3. Some college or technical schooling beyond high school
4. Four year college degree or more

_nevmarried_ other = 0, never married = 1

_age:_

1 = less than 21, 2 = 21 to 23, 3 = more than 23

_liveoff-camp_
This variable was recoded from the following question:
Where do you live while you are at college?

Off-campus house or apartment 0 = no, 1 = yes

_greekmem:_
Are you a member of a fraternity or sorority? no = 0, yes = 1
educsatisfn
In general, how satisfied are you with the education that you are receiving?

1 very satisfied
2 somewhat satisfied
3 somewhat dissatisfied
4 very dissatisfied

gpa
Which of the following best describes your grade point average this year?

1 A
2 A-
3 B+
4 B
5 B-
6 C+
7 C
8 C-
9 D
10 No grade or don’t know

#sexpartner
How many people have you had sexual intercourse with within the past 30 days?

0 zero
1 one person
2 two people
3 three or more people

#closfriend
How many close student friends do you have?

0 none
1 one
2 two
3 three
4 four
5 five or more

attendbars
These variables were recoded from the following question:
In the past 30 days, how many drinks did you have the last time you attended any of the following events?

Off-campus bar or club 0 = did not attend, 1 = did attend
attendparites

Off-campus party  0 = did not attend, 1 = did attend

drkgame

In the past 30 days did you participate in any type of drinking game? 0 = no, 1 = yes

drkpromo

This variable was recoded and combined from the following question:
In the past 30 days, have you taken advantage of the following:

happy hours
low-priced promotions at off-campus bars (ladies nights, two for one, etc.)
special promotions by beer companies
cover charge for unlimited drinks at an off-campus bar
small admission fee for unlimited drinks at a private party
small admission fee for unlimited drinks at a fraternity or sorority party
free unlimited drinks at a fraternity or sorority party
free unlimited drinks at a private party

0 = did not attend, 1 = did attend

alcuse

How would you best describe yourself in terms of your current use of alcohol?

1 abstainer
2 abstainer-former problem drinker in recovery
3 infrequent drinker
4 light drinker
5 moderate drinker
6 problem drinker

obtnalc

How easy is it for you to obtain alcohol?

1 very difficult
2 difficult
3 easy
4 very easy
5 don’t know. I don’t drink

drkdrunk

How important is the following reason for you to drink alcohol?
To get drunk 0 = not important, 1 = very important

*drkprob*

This variable was recoded and combined from the following question:
Since the beginning of the school year, how often has your drinking caused you to…?

- have a hangover
- miss class
- get behind in school work
- do something you later regretted
- forget where you were or what you did
- argue with friends
- engage in unplanned sexual activity
- not use protection when you had sex
- damage property
- get into trouble with campus or local police
- get hurt or injured
- require medical treatment for an alcohol overdose
- be the victim of a crime on campus
- be the victim of a crime off campus

1 not at all
2 once
3 twice
4 3 times
5 4 or more times

*group*
Since the beginning of the school year, how frequently have each of the following happened to you?

I was part of a group that was drinking and we were asked to be more quiet or less disruptive

1 not at all
2 once
3 2 or 3 times
4 4 or more times

%friendsbinge
Based on what you heard or experienced, approximately what proportion of your friends do you think are binge drinkers at your school?
Since the beginning of the school year, how often have you asked someone who has had too much alcohol to stop drinking?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>once</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2-3 times</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4 or more times</td>
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**Sexual Preference**

If you have ever been sexually active, has it been with…?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have not been sexually active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Opposite sex partner(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Same sex partner(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Both opposite and same sex partners</td>
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**Off-campus parties**

In the past 30 days, how many drinks did you have the last time you attended any of the following events?

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<td>1</td>
<td>didn’t attend</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>no drinks</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 or 2 drinks</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 or 4 drinks</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 or more drinks</td>
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</tbody>
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**Off-campus bars**

In the past 30 days, how many drinks did you have the last time you attended any of the following events?

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