

MALE PEER SUPPORT AND A FEMINIST ROUTINE ACTIVITIES THEORY: UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL ASSAULT ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS*

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Routine activities theorists traditionally have assumed offenders' motivation and victims' suitability from demographic correlates, and have done little to study effective guardianship. In this paper we ask questions directly of male date rape offenders to test the proposal that male peer support provides motivation; we ask lifestyle questions directly of both female victims and male offenders; and we discuss the extent to which abusive peers eliminate guardianship. Data from the Canadian National Survey support routine activities theory, and show that men who drink two or more times a week and have male peers who support both emotional violence and physical violence are nearly 10 times as likely to admit to being sexual aggressors as men who have none of these three traits.

Sexual assault on Canadian college campuses received little attention from scholars until the end of the 1980s. Since then, several qualitative and quantitative data sets have shown that Canadian male dating partners sexually abuse an alarmingly high number of female undergraduates.¹ For example, the Canadian National Survey (CNS) (DeKeseredy and Kelly 1993) found that 41 percent of female undergraduate students reported experiencing one of several types of sexual assaults on a date since leaving high school. At the same time, 19.5 percent of the males reported having victimized a female dating partner in this way during the same period. A recent U.S. national survey does not provide equivalent information but reports "comparatively prevalent" Canada/U.S. rape and sexual assault victimization rates of 30 per 1,000 students (presumably mostly against women). To illustrate the prevalence of sexual assault on campus, this is approximately the same as the simple assault rate in the same survey, which presumably reflected victimization of both men and women (Fisher et al. 1998:690).

With both U.S. and Canadian national representative sample studies in hand, as well as numerous local victimization studies, we now have strong basic data on the level of sexual assault on campuses (Koss and Cleveland 1997). The next step is to continue to develop and test theories of such predatory sexual conduct. Unfortunately, however, theoretical developments in this field have not kept pace with the empirical literature.

Schwartz and Pitts's (1995) feminist routine activities theory is an exception to the criticism that research in this field has been hampered by "a consistent lack of theoretical grounding" (Fisher et al. 1998:673). Although these researchers found empirical support for their approach in a local victimization survey, their theory has not been tested systematically on large-scale representative samples of undergraduate students. Furthermore, the relevance of the

¹ See Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1997) for a comprehensive review of the Canadian research on sexual assault on Canadian campuses.

theory to the Canadian campus has not been tested. Thus the primary purpose of the study reported here was to use Canadian survey data generated by the CNS, based on a national representative sample, to test Schwartz and Pitts's theory. A secondary purpose, however, is to improve the theory's explanatory value.

With their feminist routine activities theory, Schwartz and Pitts (1995) attempt to fill a gap in routine activities theory by explaining motivation. They provide data derived from women showing the presence of "likely offenders" on college campuses. As valuable as this information may be, however, a major drawback of the study is that the men themselves were not asked questions about motivation. Here men are studied directly, and questioned about the influences in their lives that support the abuse of women in dating relationships. The essential theoretical argument is that routine activities theories explain motivation through a tautology: if people commit crimes, they must have been motivated. To break free of this tautology, we use male peer support theory in particular: we argue that the men who abuse women do so not only because of the factors outlined in routine activities theory, but also because they have other men's encouragement and support in doing so.

Routine Activities Theory

Since it was developed by Cohen and Felson (1979), routine activities theory has been widely cited, discussed, and tested. It remains one of the most popular mainstream criminological approaches although it has succeeded only partially at one of its original goals, namely deflecting attention away from offenders' motivation. As we shall see, this lack of concern about motivation has been one of the primary criticisms of the theory. Virtually all of those who use the theory have built motivation back in.

The key part of routine activities theory is that the amount and the location of crime are affected, if not caused, by three important factors: the presence of likely offenders, who are presumed to be motivated to commit the crimes; the absence of effective guardians; and the availability of suitable targets (Cohen and Felson 1979). Although this point is rarely discussed, an important element of this theory is that there must be offenders who are likely to commit crimes if they have the opportunity to do so. All commentators refer to this factor as "motivated offenders," but Felson reports that he did not use the word *motivation*; he even avoided discussing how the probability of victimization differed across groups, "since that would bring up the forbidden topic of motivation" (Clarke and Felson 1993:2). Still, Cohen and Felson did not rule out the use of motivation explanations; they felt that these "might in the future be

applied to the analysis of offenders and their inclinations as well" (1979:605).

Nevertheless, traditional routine activities research has paid scant attention to what motivates offenders to approach any particular suitable target. Where motivation of offenders has been studied, it has usually been assumed from variations in demographic correlates of crime. Thus, with motivation presumed from the presence of offenders, researchers have made little attempt to discover what makes offenders different from other persons at the scene (Akers 2000).

Scholars not wedded to the original strictures of the theory have been quick to argue that motivation is a crucial missing link in these theories. Wright and Decker (1997), although considered to be following loosely in the tradition of routine activities theory, discovered in their ethnographic study of armed robbers that "the direct cause of armed robbery is a perceptual process through which the offense comes to be seen as a means of meeting an immediate need, that is, through which a motive for the crime is formed" (p. 32). Similarly, Kennedy and Forde (1999), who have labored long in routine activities vineyards, most recently have grafted this theory to a more interactionist approach. They argue first that one must learn appropriate social definitions which allow criminal acts, but then they explain acts of violence as individual interpersonal conflict and commonly as an individual's desire to coerce others into desired behavior.

Until recently, most empirical examinations of routine activities theory have been macro-level approaches, used mainly to explain the influence of lifestyle on crime (Kennedy and Baron 1993). It is noted particularly that some locations ("hot spots") are more likely than others to become crime scenes (Roncek and Maier 1991). Sometimes these factors are conflated: for example, the notion that because students tend to be victimized by students, female students' proximity to campuses (hot spots) can be viewed as placing them into contact with likely offenders.

In sexual assault research, routine activities theory has been used only rarely despite its overall popularity. When it has been used, it generally is employed to discuss large-scale macro rates of rape (e.g., Fisher et al. 1998; Messner and Blau 1987). Worse, victims' vulnerability and capable guardianship generally have been assumed from demographic correlates rather than from actual measures of lifestyle (Akers 2000). More specifically, its relevance to sexual assault has been criticized sharply by feminist researchers, generally because some routine activities theorists argue that women are less vulnerable to criminal victimization than are men.

The contention is that women have more "capable guardians" because they spend more time at home with family members, and "time spent in family and household settings is less risky than time spent away from those settings" (Felson 1994:39).

Although time spent with family members is no doubt less risky if the crimes in question are armed robbery, burglary, arson, or rape committed by strangers, one of the stronger findings of feminist criminologists over the past 20 years is that the home is not necessarily a safe place for women (Brown and Hendricks 1998; Kaufman-Kantor and Jasinski 1998; Stanko 1998). Indeed, perhaps the strongest conclusion reached by studies of woman abuse and rape in North America is exactly the opposite of what these routine activities theorists predict: the American Psychological Association's report on violence against women concludes that *women's greatest risk of assault is from their intimates, particularly male partners* (Koss et al. 1994:41, authors' emphasis).

Felson (1998:28) maintains that his "marital presence" thesis is still true "despite the widespread attention given to family violence," but he does not specify the sources of his information, except to mention "up-to-date victim surveys." Feminist theorists are more likely to argue that when crime rarely uncovered by official statistics is taken into account, women are most likely to be abused by "capable guardians" (husbands, friends, dating partners, acquaintances) (Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997); when abused, they are more likely to be injured by intimates than by strangers (Kaufman-Kantor and Jasinski 1998). Often, of course, friends and family provide capable guardianship, but feminist theory challenges the presumption that women are automatically safest with male intimates.

The College Campus and Routine Activities Theory

In its original formulation, routine activities theory helps to explain high rates of sexual assault on the college campus. Surely the very factors discussed by Cohen and Felson are present on campuses. If motivation is to be measured by the number of offenses, certainly a large number of sexual assault victimizations occur, although most are not reported to authorities (Koss and Cleveland 1997). "Suitable targets" abound in the number of women who voluntarily ingest large amounts of alcohol or drugs on campus (Norris, Nurius, and Dimeff 1996), and the lack of effective deterrence on most campuses is tantamount to an absence of effective guardians (Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997). Nevertheless, this theory fails to account for numerous factors. One is the presence of so many "likely offenders" in an environment that often contains very

few persons with criminal records, or those who might be considered worrisome to the average citizen. "It simply assumes that such persons exist and that they commit crimes in certain places and times at which the opportunities and potential victims are available" (Akers 2000:35). Fisher et al. (1998) thus argue that because numerous sexual crimes are committed on campus, the requirement of "proximity to crime" is maximized.

Schwartz and Pitts's (1995) version was an attempt to make explicit how a supposedly low-crime environment such as the college campus could also be considered a high-crime arena. They offered a *feminist routine activities theory*, maintaining that a disproportionately large number of sexual assaults occur on North American campuses because a large number of *criminogenic convergences* are most likely to occur in these settings. In this context, *criminogenic convergence* means that there are male students who are motivated to assault women sexually; available ("suitable," in the words of the original theory) female targets are present, and capable guardians willing to intervene are absent.

Schwartz and Pitts contend that feminist theory is strongest exactly where mainstream routine activity theories are weakest: in explaining why motivated offenders are present on college campuses. Of course, problems arise in using feminist theory to fill this gap because there are different feminist theories, which lead to different feminist explanations of this phenomenon. One approach, for example, emphasizes the presence of *male peer groups* that perpetuate and legitimate the sexual exploitation of women, especially intoxicated females (Kanin 1967, 1985; Sanday 1990, 1996; Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997). Men who belong to these all-male, patriarchal, homosocial networks are more likely than nonmembers to be motivated to abuse women sexually. For example, Sanday (1990) shows how campus organizations teach men to objectify women and to legitimate the use of techniques for "working a yes out." Kraska and Kappeler (1995) provide an analogous example of a noncampus group of men (police officers), whom many average citizens would view as trustworthy. They studied examples of rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual intrusion (e.g., body cavity searches). In this regard, they noted that the deeply sexist nature of many police organizational cultures allowed the men who are supposed to be the protectors of citizens to develop deep-rooted patterns of victimizing behavior. Thus the male peer support approach emphasizes that the presence of "motivated" offenders is assured by the continued presence in society of male peer groups that support such individual behavior.

Another important feminist argument for the presence of motivated offenders is the claim that North America is a “rape-supportive culture.” This does not mean that all men will become rapists, nor that the offender can avoid harsh punishment if everyone agrees that the offense is a clear-cut case of rape.² Rather, it means that messages and excuses exist throughout the society, which allow the majority of sexually aggressive men to claim that they are not rapists, or that their actions do not constitute rape (Scully 1990). Further, these messages convince many criminal justice officials, college officials, bystanders, and even victims that rape should be perceived as a dichotomy. In a rape-supportive culture, an event that does not qualify as violent stranger rape may not be perceived as a crime at all.

A second important factor in routine activities theory is the presence of suitable targets. Felson (1997), for example, argues that the amount of cash people carry helps to determine the amount of armed robbery in society; thus armed robbery rates will decrease in the cashless society. Felson’s earlier research had demonstrated that the lighter the weight of the average TV set, the higher the household burglary rates (Felson and Cohen 1980).

Schwartz and Pitts contend that two lifestyle factors increase women’s “suitability” (in the words of routine activity theory) as targets of sexual assault. First, women who are sexually assaulted are statistically likely to go out drinking more often than other women. Further, when they do go out, they are likely to drink more than other women. Second, these women are more likely to report that they have male friends who they knew tried to get women drunk in order to victimize them sexually. Thus a convergence exists between two aspects of routine activity theory: “likely offenders” — men who are sexually aggressive, and who often belong to all-male, pro-abuse subcultures — and “suitable targets” — women who are so chemically incapacitated that they cannot resist these men’s coercive sexual advances.

Schwartz and Pitts’s version of this theory disagrees with the notion that women who become targets deserve their victimization because they engaged in risky behavior. The strength of a routine activities approach is that it emphasizes only one point: motivated male sexual aggressors are searching for situations where they

² As Estrich (1987) points out, for example, a clear-cut case of stranger rape on an innocent victim will generally convince the criminal justice system to take the case seriously. In Estrich’s own case, the fact that the rapist stole her car convinced the police that it was unlikely to be a false report. Adler (1987) reports that multiple offenders, serious injuries, a prompt report by the victim, and other, similar features lead to increased convictions.

have an advantage or the ability to take the upper hand in victimization.

So far we have discussed the convergence of motivated offenders and vulnerable victims. Their joint presence on campuses provides men with opportunities to assault women sexually. A third factor is also present, however. Routine activities theory suggests that the presence or absence of capable guardians will help determine whether these events occur. This is the area of routine activities theory in which the least research has been conducted. Cohen and Felson, for example, established no direct measures of capable guardians; in most subsequent research, guardianship has been assumed from the victims' social characteristics (Akers 2000).

Unfortunately, college campuses too often are "effective-guardian-absent." Many campus administrators do not seriously punish men who abuse women sexually, even if they engage in extremely brutal behavior such as gang rape (Bohmer and Parrot 1993; Sanday 1990; Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997). Even criminal justice personnel often disregard acquaintance and/or date rapes, essentially telling men that their sexually aggressive behavior is acceptable (Bernstein 1996; Harney and Muehlenhard 1991; Sanday 1996; Schwartz 1991; Warshaw 1988). In a book mainly about football players, Benedict and Yaeger (1998:176) point out that "athletes have little to worry about when they are arrested for sex crimes" because they will not be punished.

One of the problems in developing measures to study a lack of guardianship is that social factors often do not divide themselves neatly into the categories set forth by theories. Here, for example, we have discussed how different strands of feminist theory have emphasized the role of male peer support for violence against women, and how North American culture can be seen as rape-supportive. In fact, these constructs are closely related, and each has broad effects. Thus the concept of a rape-supportive culture can be viewed as giving men some of the social support they need (even in the absence of specific male peers) to victimize women. At the same time, women live in the same culture as men, and their internalization of social structures can contribute both to the availability of "suitable targets" and to the lack of deterrence structures to act as effective guardianship.

Schwartz and Leggett (1999), for example, found that 23 percent of women who reported being victims of forcible rape and attempted rape said they were *completely* to blame for the event; another 27 percent said that both they and the men were to blame. A lack of capable guardianship can be presumed in a society that trains women to blame themselves for being forcible rape victims.

It is not surprising, then, that college women seldom report date rape to the police at a rate above 8 percent (Koss and Cleveland 1997). The theoretical problem is that this fact also can explain why so many women on college campuses are "suitable targets." If women are willing to take the blame, and never report sexual assault offenders, the number of motivated male offenders is unlikely to be reduced.

Thus, guardianship can be tested in several ways. A number of authors (including Schwartz and Pitts) have concerned themselves mainly with the lack of response by local officials or university judiciaries (e.g., Benedict 1997; Bernstein 1996; DeKeseredy and Schwartz 1998; Nelson 1994; Sanday 1996). Many campuses have asked campus police forces to take leadership on this issue, although Fisher et al. (1998) could not find a relationship between the size of campus security forces and violent crime (not only rape). The most common American tactic has been target hardening: hotline phones, escort patrols, better locks, parking lot and path lighting, and the removal of trees and bushes behind which a rapist might hide. Unfortunately, all of these efforts address stranger rape; they are unlikely to provide guardianship against rape in intimate and dating relationships, the predominant form of sexual assault on college campuses.

Schwartz and Pitts looked at a lack of effective guardianship by examining factors that might account for motivated offenders on campus. One approach might be to study college men who could provide role models and active support for those who do not abuse women. Thus, a *lack* of male peer support for abuse of women could be regarded as effective guardianship for women who date these men.

Another possible factor, although it has not yet been studied, would be the effect of men's college campus groups that actively and vocally oppose violence against women (DeKeseredy, Schwartz, and Alvi 2000). Felson (1998) believes that informal social control might provide more effective guardianship than formal deterrence. In this connection, on college campuses across North America, men are working in programs such as Man to Man About Rape (Ring and Kilmartin 1992), the Fraternity Violence Education Project (Mahlstedt, Falcone, and Rice-Spring 1993), and the White Ribbon Campaign (Kilmartin 1996) to reduce the amount of sexually and physically violent behavior on campus. Men's groups are adopting a variety of other techniques in an attempt to provide more guardianship (in the words of routine activity theory). These include education initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and group

discussions (Berkowitz 2001; Gidycz, Dowdall, and Marioni forthcoming; Lonsway 1996).

Finally, too little is known about the guardianship that women provide for each other, and the self-guardianship that women provide for themselves. Insofar as public intoxication increases a woman's chances of becoming a "likely victim," avoiding inebriation can be considered a form of self-guardianship. On many campuses, certain sorority members will go to parties at certain fraternity houses only in groups, and they are careful to provide guardianship for each other. Any information on the effectiveness of this method is anecdotal. Most universities, police departments, and "help lines" strongly urge women to provide self-guardianship by staying home at night, never going out alone, avoiding public transportation, and never trusting strangers (Stanko 1998). As Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1997) point out, however, such advice not only asks women to remove themselves voluntarily from the mainstream of public life; it also ignores the fact that none of these measures will be effective for rape by intimates, the overwhelming majority of rapes committed on college campuses.

Study Hypotheses

In sum, on university and community college campuses one is likely to find the co-presence of motivated male offenders, vulnerable or "suitable" victims, and the absence of effective guardianship. In this paper we begin by testing three hypotheses informed by, but expanding on, Schwartz and Pitts's theory. Their first hypothesis was that women who drank more often were more likely to report sexual victimization.³ We repeat this inquiry here using data from a national representative survey. In this survey, however, in contrast to the work of Schwartz and Pitts, men who might admit to sexual offending were asked how often they drank. Further, we add a new set of questions on routine activities in which we examine not only the extent to which people go drinking, but the extent to which they go drinking with their dating partners. Because the other questions specifically concern victimization at the hands of dating partners, the question here is whether more frequent drinking with dating partners leads to increased victimization. Our first hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The more men and women drink, and the more they drink with their dating partners, the more likely

³ Although Fisher et al. (1998) found a relationship between drinking and victimization, they report only a combined number for men and women, and a combined number for all violent crime. Here we separate out women and men, and look only at sexual victimization.

it is that they are to report being sexually abused, or to report being a sexual aggressor in the past 12 months.

Second, in all administrations of the Sexual Expenses Survey dating back to the work of Mary Koss (Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski 1987), both drinking and drug use are addressed in a question that is some variant on whether women have sexual intercourse when they do not want it because they were too drunk or too high to resist. Although alcohol and drug use have not been separated out in other investigations, here we repeat hypothesis 1 in this manner:

Hypothesis 2: The more men and women use recreational drugs (e.g., marijuana, hashish), and the more they use them with dating partners, the more likely they are to report being sexually abused, or to report being a sexual aggressor receiving or giving sexual abuse in the past 12 months.

Although most certainly there are isolated, solitary offenders, the discussion of motivated offenders on the campus usually starts with the claim that college campuses are the home of all-male, pro-abuse groups (e.g., Martin and Hummer 1993; Sanday 1996). Here, in our sample of men, we asked detailed questions about whether the men received specific encouragement to assault women. Schwartz and Pitts asked women whether they had male friends who they knew were sexual predators. Here we ask a somewhat similar question of men themselves. Our third hypothesis follows:

Hypothesis 3: Men who have male peers who explicitly tell them to physically and emotionally assault women under certain conditions are more likely to report being sexually abusive.

METHODS

Sample and Data Collection

The data in this paper are derived from a Canadian national representative sample survey of community college and university students, which we conducted. We developed a multistage sampling strategy to assure that findings were representative.⁴ After selecting schools at random from the Maritimes to British Columbia, with weightings based on the size of the student population, we used a further sampling procedure to choose two fields of study at each institution and two actual classes within each school. Finally, the research team administered two questionnaires, one for men and another for women, in 95 undergraduate classes located in 27 universities and 21 colleges (community colleges and technical

⁴ Further information on the method can be found in DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998).

schools). Both French- and English-language versions of the survey were administered, as needed. Response rates were very high; fewer than 1 percent of the participants refused to answer.

The overall sample consisted of 3,142 persons: 1,835 women and 1,307 men. The sample used in this paper consists of all respondents who said they had ever dated a member of the opposite sex (95.5% of the women; 94.8% of the men). The females' median age was 22; the males' was 22.3. Two-thirds were first- or second-year students. Members of many different ethnic groups participated in the survey, but most of the respondents identified themselves as either English Canadian or French Canadian.

Under the research protocol, students in the selected classes were asked by a research team member to participate in a study on problems in male-female dating relationships. They were also told that participation was completely voluntary and anonymous, and that all information they provided would be kept strictly confidential. In addition, students were told that they did not have to answer any question they did not want to answer, and that they could stop filling out the questionnaire at any time. This information also was printed on the cover of the instrument that respondents were asked to read before starting.

After each administration, debriefings were conducted. In these sessions, researchers discussed the objectives of the survey, the existing information on the frequency and severity of woman abuse in dating, and the role of peers in perpetuating this type of intimate female victimization. All respondents were given a list of local (on- and off-campus) support services for survivors and offenders. Participants also were encouraged to ask the research team questions and to discuss the survey.

Definitions and Measurement

Sexual Assault. We measured the incidence of sexual assault (events that took place in the 12 months before the survey) using a slightly modified version of Koss et al.'s (1987) Sexual Experiences Survey (SES). Respondents were asked about 10 specific "sexual experiences" that men and women may have had "with dating partners and/or girlfriends" in the year before the survey. The experiences range from coercion (unwanted sex play due to a male's pressure, position of authority, or force; unwanted intercourse due to verbal pressure) to rape.

Alcohol and Drug Use. Three questions on alcohol consumption were included in the Canadian National Survey. The first simply asks whether respondents had drunk alcohol in the past 12 months. Those who answered "yes" were then asked to respond to

the second question on alcohol: "If yes, how often on average did you drink alcoholic beverages in the past 12 months?"⁵ Then respondents were asked to report how often they had drunk with their dating partners or boyfriends (girlfriends) in the past 12 months.⁶ Nearly identical questions were asked about recreational drug use.

Male Peer Support. Male peer support is defined here as attachments to male peers who sexually assault women, and the resources they provide that perpetuate and legitimate this type of male-to-female victimization. Like sexual assault, male peer support is multidimensional: male college peers influence men to sexually victimize women by a variety of sociological and social psychological processes (Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997). The process most relevant to routine activities theory, and therefore the one used here, is *informational support*, which refers to the guidance and advice that influences men to abuse their dating partners. The influence of friends can be viewed, to some degree, as a measure of social learning: in the context of routine activities theory, however, such influences are much more important as indices of motivation. Cohen and Felson make it very clear that motivated offenders must be available if crime is to occur. What motivates such offenders? Why do they exist? Male peer support theory suggests that they exist specifically because they have developed attitudes and behaviors as a result of encouragement and support by other males, if not by the broader culture. The goal here is to measure such peer support specifically as a measure of the motivation factor of routine activities theory.

To measure support by male peers, we developed two indices from the following eight items:

Did any of your male friends tell you (items 1 to 7) that:

1. You should respond to your dates' or girlfriends' challenges to your authority by using physical force, such as hitting or slapping?
2. It is all right for a man to hit his date or girlfriend in certain situations?
3. You should respond to your dates' or girlfriends' sexual rejections by employing physical force to have sex?
4. It is all right for a man to physically force a woman to have sex with him under certain conditions?
5. Your dates or girlfriends should have sex with you when you want?

⁵ The response categories are once or twice a month, once a week, two or three times a week, four to six times a week, and every day.

⁶ The response categories are never, very seldom, occasionally, often, and very often.

6. If a man spends money on a date, she should have sex with him in return?
7. You should respond to your dates' or girlfriends' challenges to your authority by insulting them or putting them down?
8. How much pressure did your friends place on you to have sex with your dating partners and/or girlfriends (a great deal, considerable, moderate, little, none)?

We recalibrated the final item to make it an interval-level variable by using alternating least squares. Thus "a great deal" was recalibrated as 1.78, "considerable" as .82, "moderate" as .29, "little" as .03, and "none" as -.27. The remaining seven items are dichotomous. We entered all items into a principal-components analysis, and subjected the solution to varimax rotation.

Two distinct indices emerged. The first related to physical violence (items 1 through 4, accounting for 28 percent of the variance); the second, to verbal or emotional violence (items 5 through 8, accounting for 24 percent of the variance). Given the substantial differences in the two scales, and the similarity of their contributions to variance, we retained both dimensions for subsequent analysis, and standardized them to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. We took this final step to make interpretation easier.

The second male peer support variable included in this analysis is *attachment to abusive peers*. To measure this variable, we asked respondents, "To the best of your knowledge, how many of your male friends have ever made physically forceful attempts at sexual activity with women they were dating which were disagreeable and offensive enough that the woman responded in an offended manner such as crying, fighting, screaming or pleading?" For the contingency table we coded this as a dichotomous variable: a respondent either did or did not have such friends.

FINDINGS

Incidence of Sexual Assault

For this analysis, the dependent variable throughout, called FORCE, consists of a recoding of the 10-question SES questionnaire. Women were asked questions about their experiences in receiving these abusive behaviors; men were asked about their experiences as aggressors. FORCE is a conservative measure because we did not allow respondents to be included in more than one category. Only the most serious event was captured here. This approach certainly fails to capture much victimization: if a woman has experienced a rape and two attempted rapes, she is coded only as a rape victim.

The data make it clear that the true self-reported incidence of sexual assault is significantly higher than used here in the FORCE variable. Nevertheless, we decided to use the more conservative measure for the following reasons. First, it allows comparisons because Koss, as well as Schwartz and Pitts, made similar decisions previously. Second, our decision is determined partially by the research question. When the goal is to study the number of sexual assaults committed in a given location in a given period, this methodology clearly is too conservative. When the goal is to study how many women and men have been actors in sexually abusive situations, and to what extent, this methodology provides significantly more clarity. In studying events, some individuals will be counted many times on the independent variables; while studying people, individuals will be counted only once.

There is no "correct" method of using the SES, and it has been used in a variety of ways. The two most common are to recode it into four categories, as below, and to reduce it to a dichotomy, in which a person either does or does not give or receive sexual abuse. In this study, we used each of these typical models, as appropriate. The use of a broader dependent variable, or a variable with a different dichotomy (e.g., rape versus all other responses), did not change the direction of any of the findings.⁷

The first FORCE category, *rape*, includes all female victims and male offenders in events in which the woman had unwanted sexual intercourse because of physical force or threat of force, or through inability to resist because of intoxication, or because physical force or threat of force was used to make her engage in other sexual acts (anal or oral intercourse, or penetration by objects other than the penis). It also includes those few cases in which the woman engaged in unwanted sexual intercourse because of the offender's use of a position of authority over the woman. All of these acts are serious felonies in Ohio, where the SES was normed.

The second category, *attempted rape*, includes attempted unwanted sexual intercourse due to the man's use or threat of force, or the inability to resist because of intoxication. These are also felony crimes. All respondents in this category said that they had not been victims (or offenders) of rape, as defined above.

Coercion refers to unwanted sex play (fondling, petting, kissing) due to the use of force or threat of force, pressure, or use of authority; or to unwanted sexual intercourse engaged in because of

⁷ In Table 4, for example, we see that rape, attempted rape, and coercion all showed ratios of 2:1 or 3:1 for "no such friends" to "having such friends." In the "victim" category, the ratio was 8:1. One can argue, then, that on this variable the proper dichotomy (if one is to be made) is all sexual abuse measures combined, versus no sexual abuse.

emotional pressure. Persons whom we placed in this category said that they were not victims (or offenders) of rape or attempted rape, as defined above.

No victim is a category for those men and women who answered "no" to all SES questions about sexual victimization. Using the variable FORCE, we found that 19 percent of the females reported having been raped by dating partners since leaving high school, while 5.6 percent of the males stated that they had raped a female dating partner since high school. An additional 8.5 percent of the females reported attempted rape, while 2.8 percent of the males stated that they had engaged in this behavior. Finally, 18.5 percent of the females reported having been victimized by sexual coercion, and 11.2 percent of the males stated that they had engaged in sexually coercive behavior.

Fifty-four percent of the women stated that they had not been sexually victimized in any of the above ways, while 80.4 percent of the men said that they had never engaged in any such behavior.

Alcohol and Drug Use

As explained above, this analysis does not suggest that sexually abused women have engaged in unsafe behavior and thus wish or deserve to be assaulted. Rather, we contend that motivated male offenders are searching for women who might do something that gives the offender an advantage or the ability to take the upper hand in victimization. The data presented in the following tables deal directly with this contention. Table 1, for example, uses the FORCE variable to show how often students drink and use drugs. For ease of presentation, FORCE is presented as a dichotomous variable: any abuse or no abuse.⁸ Here we see a clear, direct relationship for the male offenders: men who admit to engaging in sexually aggressive behavior are likely to drink or use drugs more often than those who do not. These highly significant findings are moderately strong, and the mostly linear relationship is striking: 17.3 percent of the abstainers and 11 percent of the light drinkers, but 35.8 percent of those who drink four or more times a week, admit to being sexual abusers.

The relationship for women is more complex. We find a striking difference between women who use drugs often (83.3% victimized) and those who abstain (41.2%). With alcohol, however, the victimization rates seem to plateau among women who drink once a week, and do not rise further with increased drinking. Here, 36.1

⁸ Use of the full four values of FORCE, except as noted in the text, does not change the findings nor the table statistics.

Table 1. FORCE by Levels of Drinking and Levels of Drug Use (Percentages in Parentheses)

	Abuse (Rape, Att. Rape, Coercion)	No Abuse
Levels of Drinking		
Women ¹		
None	53 (36.1)	94 (63.9)
1-2 Month	317 (41.3)	415 (56.7)
Once a Week	185 (52.4)	168 (47.6)
2-3 Week	145 (58.7)	102 (41.3)
4-7 Week	16 (55.2)	13 (44.8)
Total	716 (47.5)	792 (52.5)
Men ²		
None	13 (17.3)	62 (82.7)
1-2 Month	36 (11.0)	290 (81.6)
Once a Week	48 (18.4)	213 (81.6)
2-3 Week	84 (25.1)	250 (74.9)
4-7 Week	29 (35.8)	52 (64.2)
Total	195 (19.7)	796 (80.3)
Frequency of Drug Use		
Women ³		
Never	515 (41.2)	735 (58.8)
Very Seldom	130 (56.3)	101 (43.7)
Occasionally	80 (67.2)	39 (32.8)
Often	20 (83.3)	4 (16.7)
Very Often	11 (68.8)	5 (31.3)
Total	756 (46.1)	884 (53.9)
Men ⁴		
Never	119 (16.2)	617 (83.8)
Very Seldom	41 (24.6)	126 (75.4)
Occasionally	29 (24.6)	89 (75.4)
Often	13 (33.3)	26 (66.7)
Very Often	15 (50.0)	15 (50.0)
Total	217 (19.9)	873 (80.1)

¹ Chi-Square = 29.42; df = 4; *s* = .000; *g* = -.220

² Chi-Square = 35.79; df = 4; *s* = .000; *g* = -.307

³ Chi-Square = 89.58; df = 4; *s* = .000; *g* = -.338

⁴ Chi-Square = 68.73; df = 4; *s* = .000; *g* = -.308

percent of the abstainers and 41.3 percent of the light drinkers reported sexual victimization, compared with 55.2 percent of heavier drinkers. Although not shown in the table, these relationships are not strong for attempted rape or coercion for women—an important point. However, 11.5 percent of the abstainers and 15.7 percent of the light drinkers reported being rape victims, as compared with 36 percent of the heavier drinkers. All of these relationships are statistically significant.

Similar results emerge from the question "how often do you drink or use drugs with your girlfriends (boyfriends) or dating partners?" (See Table 2.) The more alcohol and drugs are taken, and

the more often they are taken with a dating partner, the more sexual assault is admitted by the men and the more victimization is claimed by women, although the findings are not so linear as in Table 1.

Table 2. FORCE by Taking Alcohol or Drugs with Partner (Percentages in Parentheses)

	Abuse (Rape, Att. Rape, Coercion)	No Abuse
How Often Drink With Partner		
Women ⁵		
Never	55 (43.7)	71 (56.3)
Very Seldom	166 (41.6)	233 (58.4)
Occasionally	272 (45.0)	333 (55.0)
Often	149 (57.8)	109 (42.2)
Very Often	61 (52.6)	55 (47.4)
Total	703 (46.7)	801 (53.3)
Men ⁶		
Never	16 (12.2)	115 (87.8)
Very Seldom	36 (14.3)	216 (85.7)
Occasionally	83 (20.8)	317 (79.3)
Often	46 (25.1)	137 (74.9)
Very Often	26 (33.3)	52 (66.7)
Total	207 (19.8)	837 (80.2)
How Often Use Drugs With Partner		
Women ⁷		
Never	551 (41.7)	771 (58.3)
Very Seldom	102 (60.0)	68 (40.0)
Occasionally	64 (75.3)	21 (24.7)
Often	20 (65.5)	12 (34.5)
Very Often	12 (57.1)	9 (42.9)
Total	749 (46.0)	881 (54.0)
Men ⁸		
Never	159 (17.6)	746 (82.4)
Very Seldom	21 (23.6)	68 (76.4)
Occasionally	18 (25.7)	52 (74.3)
Often	13 (54.2)	11 (45.8)
Very Often	6 (40.0)	9 (60.0)
Total	217 (19.7)	883 (80.3)

⁵ Chi-Square = 19.64; df = 4; *s* = .001; *g* = -.145

⁶ Chi-Square = 22.06; df = 4; *s* = .001; *g* = .262

⁷ Chi-Square = 57.28; df = 4; *s* = .000; *g* = -.413

⁸ Chi-Square = 27.01; df = 4; *s* = .000; *g* = .318

Although we cannot draw conclusions about the exact causal nature of the relationship between alcohol and drug use (on one hand) and female students' sexually abusive experiences (on the other), these data show that a relationship exists: where one occurs, the other is more likely. Of course, it is always possible that the

sequence of events is reversed. For example, if sexual assault victims are more likely to develop alcohol or drug problems (Koss and Harvey 1991), perhaps they drink or use drugs more because of their victimization, rather than the reverse: that is, they are more likely to be victimized because they are intoxicated more often. This interpretation, however, would hardly explain the data for the men.

Male Peer Support

As mentioned above, an important element of Cohen and Felson's (1979) theory is that there must be (motivated) offenders likely to commit crimes if they have the opportunity. Routine activity theorists, however, have rarely given close attention to the factors that would motivate an offender. Some of this knowledge can be obtained only from men. Although earlier researchers such as Schwartz and Pitts (1995) asked women about the number of motivated men they know, here we ask the men themselves about male peer support for victimization of women.

The data presented in Table 3 strongly suggest that sexually abusive male undergraduates' peers encourage them to assault their girlfriends or dating partners. In the column percentages for the "informational support index" for physical violence discussed above, one can see that among those with a minimum score (no friends had ever encouraged the man to abuse women), only 2.7 percent admitted to committing rape. Of those with a score of 2 or more, 17.3 percent made such an admission. Similar findings appear for attempted rape and sexual coercion. The full relationship is statistically significant and moderately strong. These findings are similar to those obtained by Kanin (1967, 1985).

Although the ease of reading Table 3 makes it intuitive, we checked the information there by a more reliable method to quantify the relationship between the level of force and the information received from peers. We compared the means of the two full information indices reported above across the four categories of FORCE. In both, the mean differences between categories were significant at the .0001 level. Among those who admitted committing rape, the average "physical violence information" score was .79 and the "verbal and emotional violence information" score was .65. Those who had attempted rape registered violence information scores of .47 and .41. Among those who had used coercion, information scores were .13 and .20. For those who had not used violence at all, the scores were -.11 and .007.

Schwartz and Pitts asked women whether they had male friends who were sexual predators. Here, however, we argue that although this information is important, it is more meaningful to ask

**Table 3. FORCE by Male Peer Support
(Percentages in Parentheses)**

	Physical Violence Information Index Score			Total
	None	1	2 or More	
Rape	22 (2.7)	13 (10.2)	27 (17.3)	62 (5.6)
Attempted Rape	15 (1.8)	6 (4.7)	10 (6.4)	31 (2.8)
Coercion	78 (9.5)	21 (16.4)	23 (14.7)	122 (11.1)
Not Victim	705 (86)	88 (68.8)	96 (61.5)	889 (80.5)
Total	820 (100.0)	128 (100.0)	156 (100.0)	1104 (100.0)

NOTES: Chi-Square = 86.065; df = 6; $s = .000$; $g = -.496$

the men themselves about sexually aggressive friends. The findings are reported in Table 4 as a simple dichotomy, and the men who report having such friends clearly report more sexually aggressive behavior. In a survey methodology, of course, it is impossible to discover whether the man's friends actually act in this manner, or whether the man simply perceives that they do so (Matza 1964; Messerschmidt 2000).

**Table 4. FORCE by Whether Have Friends Who Force Sex
(Percentages in Parentheses)**

	No Such Friends	Have Such Friends	Total
Rape	38 (4.2)	16 (10.8)	54 (5.1)
Attempted Rape	22 (2.4)	10 (6.8)	32 (3.0)
Coercion	92 (10.1)	23 (15.5)	115 (10.9)
No Victimized	757 (83.3)	99 (66.9)	856 (81.0)
Total	909 (100.0)	148 (100.0)	1057 (100.0)

NOTES: Chi-Square = 26.51; df = 3; $s = .000$ $g = -.407$

Multivariate Analysis

Although the analysis thus far has addressed directly the hypotheses of this study, the actual relationship between the variables may be more complex. One explanation may be more powerful than another, or a multiple, simultaneous relationship

may exist between several of the variables. One function of multivariate statistics has been to control statistically for rival causal factors. Another, related purpose is parsimony, the development of a model that includes the smallest necessary number of variables, possibly by disentangling the various effects of the different variables.

Our bivariate analysis showed a covariate relationship between FORCE and both women's and men's levels of drinking and levels of drug use. These relationships also held for drug and alcohol use with a dating partner. We also found strong relationships between FORCE and the men's peer support variables. In a multivariate analysis, we ask whether a parsimonious model would reduce the number of potential causal factors for theoretical development.

As a first step, we performed a dichotomous logistic regression (DLR) analysis on the men; we used the FORCE dichotomy because our theoretical focus is on offender motivation. We recalibrated the frequency of drinking, using alternating least squares. Although we found no statistically significant difference between nondrinkers and light drinkers, we retained both categories in the model in order to obtain correct estimates.

We constructed four scales for use in the model to measure the various aspects of peer pressure and peer influence. These related to information provided by friends, attitudes of friends, and reported practices of friends (attachment). Two scales measuring friends' information are described above: one relates to physical violence, and the other to emotional and verbal violence. For the attitude scale, eight items about whether "your male friend would approve" of certain acts of violence were recorded on a four-point scale (yes, depends, no, and don't know). We recalibrated these into interval scales, using alternating least squares analysis, and entered them into a principal components analysis. Similarly, we rescaled three items related to "how many" friends reported practices of sexual assault, hitting and beating, or verbal violence in dating situations, and then used these to construct a single index of "friends' practices."⁹

As mentioned above, an important purpose of multivariate analysis is to discover the relative contribution of different variables when they are entered into the same model. In our analysis,

⁹ In addition to the question used in Table 4, we employed two other questions about friends: how many have used physical force such as hitting or beating their partners, and how many insult their partners, swear at them, or withhold affection. The rescaling was necessary because the data were collected in six categories (none, one or two, three to five, six to 10, more than 10, and don't know).

the indices measuring friends' reported attitudes and their practices, as well as the variables measuring drug use, did not contribute significantly to the model once the other variables were entered. Therefore we dropped them from the analysis. However, the two indices on information provided by friends, concerning physical and emotional violence, were associated with higher levels of reported violence against partners, as was the amount of drinking by the men.

We entered into a logit model these variables to calculate odds ratios of "yes" to "no" on the dichotomous FORCE variable. Table 5 shows that each of the three variables approximately doubles the odds that a person will commit an act of sexual aggression. Drinking two or more times a week increases the odds by 2.01; male peer support for emotional violence increases the odds by 1.99; and male peer support for physical and sexual violence increases the odds most, by 2.4. When we multiply these three results together, we reach the conclusion that men with all three of these characteristics are almost 10 times as likely (9.6) to report forcing a sexual activity on a dating partner as men reporting none of the three. One can easily check for an interaction effect by looking at the "actual" observations. A nondrinker with no advice favoring verbal or physical violence shows a ratio of .09; for a drinker with advice conducive to both verbal and physical violence, the ratio is .83. Thus the man with all three characteristics is about 9.1 times more likely to report aggression than the man with none.

Table 5. Logit Model: Men's Use of Sexual Aggression Against Dating Partner (Yes/No)

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (<i>B</i>)
Drink 2 or more times a week	.6999	.1755	15.9033	1	.0000	2.014
Have a friend who supports emotional violence	.6866	.1644	17.4229	1	.0000	1.987
Have a friend who supports physical violence	.8739	.2123	16.9463	1	.0000	2.396
Constant	-2.314	.1633	200.674	1	0	.099

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

It is tempting to draw the inference that Canadian college campuses and their immediate surroundings are criminogenic places. Unfortunately, without a measure of the place where each assault

occurred, it is impossible to draw the routine activities theory conclusion that these campuses are "hot spots" of sexual victimization. Further, for several reasons (e.g., fear of reprisal, reluctance to recall traumatic memories) offending and victimization data reported in surveys must be considered as less than complete. For example, special problems arise in working with male offenders, who "consistently have been found to report their own use of violence as less frequent and less severe than their female partners report it to be" (National Research Council 1996:32). Thus an important next step for investigators is to develop new, innovative methods of gathering data, which minimize underreporting (Schwartz 2000).

Our first hypothesis was that the more men and women drink, and the more they drink with their dating partners, the more likely it is that they will report receiving or giving sexual abuse in the past 12 months. The bivariate relationships generally support all elements of this hypothesis; the multivariate model shows that for the men, only the level of drinking remains a powerful predictor. Even in the bivariate relationship, of course, one can argue that the true causal direction may be the reverse of that stated in the theory: that women who are sexually victimized drink more as a result. That argument, however, does not explain the identical finding for the men, nor the similar findings reached in other studies (e.g., Fisher et al. 1998). The data fit, however, with the argument that men who drink more heavily are more likely to be motivated offenders, and that women who drink more heavily are more likely to be suitable targets.

Second, we set out to test whether the more men and women use recreational drugs (e.g., marijuana, hashish), and the more they use them with dating partners, the more likely they are to report receiving or giving sexual abuse in the past 12 months. This hypothesis received minimal support. Although we found some support in the bivariate relationships, these variables are no longer significant for men in the multivariate analysis when entered at the same time as the alcohol variables.

Finally, according to the third hypothesis, men with male peers who tell them explicitly to abuse women under certain conditions are more likely to self-report being sexually abusive. This hypothesis was also supported, and gained particularly strong support in the multivariate analysis. Receiving such advice on physical violence was the most powerful variable predicting self-reported sexually abusive behavior by men in this study.

The most important finding, however, was the combined effect of three of these variables. Undergraduate men who drank two or

more times a week and who had friends who gave them peer support for both emotional and physical partner abuse were more than nine times as likely to report committing sexual abuse as men reporting none of these three characteristics.

In this paper we report a more complete test of Schwartz and Pitts's (1995) feminist routine activities theory of campus sexual assault than the original test and most tests of routine activities theory. As part of this effort we used a nationally representative data set in an attempt to replicate the findings of the original local victimization survey.

Few routine activities studies have examined the actual behavior of victims or offenders or have studied the offenders' specific motivations. In this study we measured victims' vulnerability (suitability) by asking lifestyle questions directly of potential victims. We similarly measured offenders' motivation by asking lifestyle questions directly of potential offenders.

Questions about male peer support address two different aspects of routine activities theory. First, male peer support sometimes can be seen as social learning, but it is also an important index of motivation. If a central thesis of routine activities theory is that motivated offenders must be available if crime is to occur, the next step for the advancement of this theory is to discuss what motivates these offenders. The theory must be moved beyond the tautology whereby we know that offenders are motivated because there are people out there committing crimes, to a discussion of why such offenders exist. Male peer support theory provides this theoretical addition to routine activities by suggesting that motivated offenders exist because they have developed certain attitudes and behaviors as a result of encouragement and support by other males.

Second, male peer support can be regarded as a component of effective guardianship. When offenders receive either encouragement or no punishment from peers, administrators, faculty, and law enforcement officials, then effective guardianship is lacking (Schwartz 1991). On the other hand, insofar as a man's friends give no support for abuse, this absence of support may well be the beginning of effective guardianship. Nobody has studied this factor yet,¹⁰ but we find a provocative starting point here: the men who claim to have no friends advocating abuse of women admit to relatively little abuse themselves (see Table 3). Does the absence of such friends act as guardianship for the women who date these

¹⁰ Fisher et al. (1998) may have discovered an effective "self-guardian" factor in their finding that self-protection classes seemed to reduce violent victimization on campus. Yet, they were studying men and women together, and all crimes together. Given that most sexual victimizations are acquaintance crimes, such findings would need to be repeated directly rather than simply assumed to apply here.

men? Or would guardianship require that male peers actively discourage abuse of women? In this study we did not ask questions about the number a man's friends who actively discourage violence against women, but such questions would be a starting point for studying the nature of effective guardianship (DeKeseredy et al. 2000).

Few theorists have examined what constitutes effective guardianship. Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1997) believe that because most campus sexual assaults take place in apartments, dorm rooms, and fraternity houses, various popular tactics such as increased policing, escort patrols, blue emergency lights, hotline telephones, locked doors, the removal of shrubbery, special door keys, and other tactics may be more popular than effective. It would be interesting to learn whether campuses that have taken these steps report different rates of sexual assault than campuses that have not done so.

Overall, the feminist routine activities theory first proposed by Schwartz and Pitts certainly is supported by the data gathered in the Canadian National Survey. Our findings suggest that motivated male offenders view women who drink and/or consume drugs as "suitable targets"; further, these views are largely a function of ties and social exchanges with male peers who perpetuate and legitimize sexual assault in college dating relationships, in combination with the use of alcohol by the men themselves.

In regard to public policy, our conclusions indicate that faculty, campus administrators, students, and campus security personnel must develop prevention and control strategies targeting the broader social, social psychological, and psychological forces that motivate men to sexually abuse female intimates and strangers. In this paper we show that efforts based solely on self-defense and awareness campaigns for women are insufficient. The male peer support network that legitimizes rape must be attacked and dismantled before women will be truly safer on campus.

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