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Predicting The Likelihood of Verbal Coercion Across Race and Ethnicity Through Routine Activity Theory

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PREDICTING THE LIKELIHOOD OF VERBAL SEXUAL COERCION ACROSS RACE
AND ETHNICITY THROUGH ROUTINE ACTIVITY THEORY

by

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ABSTRACT

Sexual coercion is a widespread issue in the United States. It is estimated that one in six women in the U.S. have been sexually coerced in their lifetime. While studies in the area have increased over the years, a major limitation in the current literature is the lack of racial and ethnic representation among victim samples, as the majority of sexual assault research overwhelmingly focuses on White women. Although there are different types of sexual coercion, this study focuses on verbal sexual coercion (VSC), a tactic less studied but used as often as other forms of intimidation. Studies suggest alcohol, drugs, race/ethnicity, and lifestyle are common predictors of sexual victimization. Yet, there is no indication that these patterns would persist with diverse samples or when examining verbal coercion. The purpose of this study is to predict the likelihood of VSC among a racial and ethnic diverse sample through the lens of Routine Activity Theory (RAT). RAT argues that crime is not random; for crime to occur, three elements must be present: motivated offenders, a suitable target, and the absence of guardianship. In essence, it is one's lifestyle that influences one's risks of being verbally coerced into sex. Logistic regression results indicate RAT can be used to predict VSC; however, the strength of that relationship varies by the race/ethnicity of the victim. It is crucial to consider race and ethnicity when examining the factors contributing to experiencing VSC. Future research should consider cultural norms and values when addressing sexual victimization among women of color.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Sexual assault continues to be a pervasive and widespread issue in the United States. It is estimated that one in three women have been sexually assaulted in their lifetimes (Smith et al., 2017). Moreover, studies suggest women of color (WOC) experience higher levels of sexual assault than White women (Coulter et al., 2017; Conley et al., 2017; Gross et al. 2006; Basile et al., 2016; Basile et al., 2015). Yet, estimates of overall sexual assault remain underreported as many victims, regardless of race and ethnicity, do not disclose or report their assault (Gross et al., 2006; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). Despite the continual increase in the empirical study of sexual assault, the dearth of research on WOC remains unresolved. Much of what we know about sexual assault and victim experiences primarily stems from research on White women. This is problematic as victims may not acquire needed services to cope with their trauma successfully. Additionally, the lack of complete and diverse data may limit researcher and practitioner understanding of sexual assault, the patterns and consequences, and public policies that may better serve this population.

Given the historical inaccuracies regarding the sexuality of WOC and the current state of literature, it is crucial to include and discuss the experiences of WOC as it may not accurately reflect their experiences. WOC have historically been described as promiscuous, viewed as "deserving" victims, and often described as being at higher risk of sexual victimization (Coulter et al., 2017; French & Neville, 2013; Sinozich & Langton, 2014). However, a major limitation in the literature is the lack of racial and ethnic representation among victims (Dworkin et al., 2017). When addressing racial and ethnic differences related to sexual assault, a large gap remains on how these apply at national and local levels. Despite recent research on sexual assault among WOC, there continues to be difficulties in accurately measuring sexual assault due to

methodological issues, such as operationalizing concepts, the terminology used, and accessing respondents. For example, the term sexual assault is commonly used to describe a spectrum of unwanted sexual contact. These contacts can range from unwanted kissing, fondling, touching, to completed oral, vaginal, or anal penetration (Fedina et al., 2016). To introduce further complications, these unwanted actions can be obtained through physical force, threats, alcohol and/or drug use, or through verbal coercion. As noted, sexual assault rates have historically been underreported and is largely underreported by WOC (INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, 2016 as cited in Armstrong et al., 2018; Slatton & Richard, 2020) and some studies even suggest racial/ethnic minority victims may experience more negative social reactions surrounding their sexual assault disclosure (Hakimi et al., 2018; Slatton & Richard, 2020). In addition, research that examines WOC traditionally collapses racial and ethnic groups as *others*, *non-whites,* and more recently as *people of color* (Coulter & Rankin, 2020). Nevertheless, studies find WOC report being sexually assaulted at higher rates than White women (Coulter et al., 2017; Basile et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2017), suggesting race/ethnicity may be important risk factors of sexual assault. This is important when considering the risk factors of sexual assault, as WOC may engage in different behaviors and lifestyles due to structural and institutional inequalities (ex: poverty, discrimination, unhealthy coping mechanisms etc.) that may increase their chances of victimization or force them to cope with their assault in a negative manner.

Due to behavioral and lifestyle activities influencing risks of sexual assault, this study analyzes sexual assault through a Routine Activity Theory (RAT) approach. RAT suggests victimization is not at random. In fact, the likelihood of criminal victimization is associated with the lifestyles and daily routines of individuals, which in turn may be associated with social demographics. According to RAT, for crime to occur, there must be three specific elements

present: one or more motivated offenders, a suitable target for the crime, and absence of guardianship (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

Traditionally, literature looking at sexual assault through a RAT approach has found that lifestyles such as having a more active nightlife, drinking behaviors, drug use, and exposure to strangers in public settings influences the odds of being sexually assaulted (Cass 2007; Franklin et al., 2012; Hayes et al., 2021; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Kavanaugh, 2012; Tanner et al., 2015). More so, studies find that drinking behaviors are highly correlated with sexual victimization (Gross et al., 2006; Hughes et al., 2010). For example, an intoxicated woman drinking at a bar, is more likely to be exposed to potential motivated offenders than a woman who is not drinking at the bar. The possible explanation for this correlation may be that the intoxicated woman may be less aware of their surroundings or situations, therefore, not noticing warning signs. As a result, the potential offender(s) may view the intoxicated woman (suitable target) as more readily sexually available and, therefore, a more suitable target than someone who has not been drinking. One possible interruption in this potential sexual assault is that perhaps the woman is with friends, and these friends could intervene. However, if they are also intoxicated, they may not realize the potential danger either (absence of guardianship).

Another challenge in the literature is that most sexual assault research primarily focuses on rape by physical force leaving other types of sexual assault such as, verbal sexual coercion (VSC), minimally discussed and in many cases, even dismissed as less severe. Although VSC may be perceived as less serious as it is assumed to be less violent, many victims may dismiss it and not acknowledge or label their experience as victimization (Anderson & Kobek Pezzarossi, 2012; Donde et al., 2018).

Research shows VSC has been found to be significantly correlated with risky sexual behaviors (French & Neville, 2013). Victims struggle with negative consequences similar to those who have been physically forced into sex (Basile et al., 2016; Basile et al., 2015; Kern & Peterson, 2019). Studies also find VSC is a tactic more commonly used than physical force by offenders to obtain sex (Brown et al., 2009; French et al., 2014; Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003; Byers & Glenn, 2012; Messman-Moore et al., 2008; Kern & Peterson, 2019). More specifically, one study argues the importance of defining and operationalizing VSC as estimates range from 1.7% to 32% of women are coerced in their lifetime nationwide (Fedina et al., 2015). However, another found that almost 70% of women were coerced into sex after refusing verbal advances (Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003). Thus, the purpose of this study is to better understand VSC using RAT as a theoretical framework. Specifically, this study will examine the likelihood of being verbally coerced into sex among Non-Hispanic (NH) Whites, NH Blacks/African Americans, NH Asians, and Hispanics/Latinx to expand current literature and improve our understanding of sexual violence among diverse populations.

The current study is described via six chapters. The next chapter, chapter 2, highlights related literature. Chapter 3 offers an insightful commentary of Routine Activity Theory. Chapter 4 discusses methods and data, while chapter 5 discusses the results. Finally, chapter 6 provides a discussion of the research and its implications.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

As discussed, sexual assault is a broad term to describe a spectrum of unwanted sexual behaviors. Nonetheless, this paper focuses on sexual coercion. Sexual coercion is a widespread issue in the United States. As defined in the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), sexual coercion is any "unwanted sexual penetration that occurs after a person is pressured in a nonphysical way" (Smith et al., 2017, p.17). This includes unwanted vaginal, oral, or anal sex that occurred after pressuring the victim. National estimates suggest that 1 in 6 women (or 16%) in the United States have been sexually coerced in their lifetime (Smith et al., 2018). Although there are three types of sexual coercion: verbal, substance facilitated, and physical (French & Neville, 2013), this study highlights verbal sexual coercion (VSC), a coercive tactic less studied.

Although studies on VSC are limited, research has increased over the years. Most of the current literature focuses on coercion involving physical force and overwhelmingly focuses on White women (Dwokrin et al., 2017). This suggests a desperate need to study women of color (WOC) who have been sexually assaulted. However, much of what is known about VSC, and its potential risk factors are limited to adolescents, college-aged students, and intimate partners (French & Neville, 2013; Eaton et al., 2019; Livingston et al., 2004; Messing et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2017; Maryn & Dover, 2021; Smith et al., 2017; Brousseau et al., 2011, 2012; Messing et al., 2014); though most studies focus on college-aged samples or between intimate partners, studies find that most sexual assault occurs before the age of 18 (Basile et al., 2016; Basile et al., 2015).This highlights the need for general community-based samples among sexual assault literature.

VSC is a psychological pressure tactic used to have sex (Gilmore et al., 2014). Similar to victims of other types of sexual assault, victims of VSC are predominately women (Stappenbeck et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2017), know their perpetrator (Smith et al., 2017; Byers & Glenn, 2012; Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003; Gross et al., 2006), and may suffer from similar negative consequences as those who have experienced more aggressive forms of sexual assault (Dworkin et al., 2017; French & Neville, 2013; Basile et al., 2015; Basile et al., 2016). Byers and Glenn (2012) found that up to 70% of victims know their assailant in some capacity. Moreover, a more recent survey found that among victims of sexual coercion 74.7% of their offenders were current or former intimate partners, 23.5% were acquaintances (friends, neighbors, friends of the family, etc.), 7% were family members (immediate and extended), 5.6% were persons of authority over the victim (coach, boss/supervisor, etc.), and 1.4% were strangers (Smith et al., 2017). Victims of sexual assault may also suffer long-term mental and behavioral health issues such as suicide ideation or attempts (Dworkin et al., 2017; Byers & Glenn, 2012; Basile et al., 2015; Basile et al., 2016), substance use and abuse (Hughes et al., 2010), including problematic drinking behaviors (Champion et al., 2004; Turchick & Hassija, 2014).

Regarding the mental health of sexual assault victims, studies found that depression, followed by trauma and stress-related conditions, such as PTSD and anxiety, are the most commonly found across studies (Dworkin et al., 2017; Carey et al., 2018; Basile et al., 2015; Basile et al., 2016). Studies also suggest victims may struggle with emotional and physical health issues such as loss of self-esteem (Zweig et al., 1997; Osman & Lane, 2021), disordered eating (Dworkin et al., 2017), higher rates of self-blame, shame/guilt (George et al., 2016; Stoner et al., 2008), sexual dysfunction (Smith & Freyd, 2013), and engage in risky sexual behavior such as not using a condom (therefore at higher risk of STIs or STDs) (Gilmore et al., 2014). Like other

types of sexual assault, understanding VSC is crucial as studies have shown negative emotional and psychological impacts (Broach & Petretic, 2006; French & Neville, 2013; Zweig et al., 1997; Dworkin et al., 2017; Osman & Lane, 2021). Although VSC may be perceived as less serious, it is significantly correlated with risky sexual behaviors (French & Neville, 2013) and believed to have negative effects similar to more aggressive/violent sexual assault (Broach & Petretic, 2006; Smith & Freyd, 2013; Zweig et al., 1997; Osman & Lane, 2021).

Previous studies also find that VSC is more common in incidents of rape (Livingston et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2009; French et al., 2014; Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003; Byers & Glenn, 2012; Conroy et al., 2014; Messman-Moore et al., 2008). For example, an earlier study found that about 70% of women were sexually coerced after verbally refusing advances (Struckman-Johnson et al., 2003). While Conroy et al. (2014) found that most of their sample (64%) reported engaging in unwanted sex. There are multiple reasons why some women may engage in unwanted sexual activities. The most common reasons why victims may acquiesce to sex are to get their partner to stop bothering them for sex, to avoid tension or an argument, to try to save the relationship, or to avoid getting physically injured (Conroy et al., 2014; Livingston et al., 2004; Maryn & Dover, 2021; Smith & Field, 2013). They may also engage in unwanted sex for their partner's pleasure, to create intimacy, or they believe it is their responsibility (Conroy et al., 2014; Maryn & Dover, 2021) to fulfill their "wifely" or "girlfriend duty" (Cowan, 2000; Valdovinos & Mechanic, 2017). The lack of physical aggression or potential danger can easily explain why society may view VSC as less serious and not problematic as it is thought to be less damaging to the victim.

Considering some of the predictive risk factors and general knowledge of sexual violence (i.e., age, race/ethnicity, sex, college student, and domestic violence or IPV), the high number of

victims knowing their perpetrator is not surprising. Although research may have increased during the years, other types of sexual assault tied to VSC, such as date rape, marital rape, and reproduction coercion, remain understudied. Historically, men were legally allowed to rape their wives as women were seen as property. More recently, martial rape in the U.S. was legal in all 50 states until 1993, when all states had made it a crime (Martin et al., 2007). Although marital rape is illegal nationwide, state laws differ in defining and sentencing. Additionally, in the cases of intimate partners, reproductive coercion is problematic (Basile et al., 2021). It is estimated that about 15.3% of women in the United States have experienced reproductive coercion, and percentages vary on race/ethnicity (Basile et al., 2021).

Since most sexual assault occurs between people who know each other, victims may not acknowledge or label their experience as sexual assault (Khan et al., 2018; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2011). While this may be problematic because it causes sexual violence to be underreported, it could also negatively impact victims in accessing resources, mental or medical help, and in turn, cause them to internalize their issues. Another possibility why victims may not disclose or label their experience as sexual assault is due to risking their relationship, regardless of if romantic or platonic (Khan et al., 2018). In sum, acknowledging that a high percentage of victims know their perpetrator, victims may not want or even acknowledge their VSC experience as sexual assault and, therefore, not report the assault. Most importantly, given that such tactics do not meet the legal definition of rape, many cases are never seen in the criminal justice or legal system.

Race and Ethnicity

A major limitation in the current literature is the lack of racial and ethnic representation among victims, as most sexual assault research overwhelmingly looks at White women

(Dworkin et al., 2017). Women of color (WOC) are understudied and misunderstood yet,

struggle with adverse health and life outcomes (Lacey, McPherson, Samuel, Sears & Head,

2013; French & Neville, 2013; Stockman et al., 2015). WOC have historically been described as

promiscuous, are hypersexualized, and are at a higher risk of sexual victimization (Caal et al.,

2013; Jacobs, 2017; Anderson et al., 2018; Cheeseborough et al., 2020; Rivadeneyra, 2011;

McDade-Montez et al., 2017) and therefore, are often considered responsible for their sexual

assault (Jacobs, 2017). National estimates suggest that 50% of multiracial women, 45.6% of

American/Alaskan Native women, 38.9% of non-Hispanic White women, 35.5% of non-

Hispanic Black women, 26.9% of Hispanic women, and 22.9% of Asian/Pacific Islander women

have been sexually assaulted during their lifetime (Smith et al., 2017). Reasons for this may be

due to institutional and societal barriers placed upon communities of color. In addition to limited

access to resources or support such as medical intervention or social support (i.e., friends, clinics,

rape crisis centers), historical racial stereotypes may further alienate victims. However, findings

across the literature are inconclusive, as studies find mixed results across racial and ethnic

groups related to sexual coercion (Mitchel & Raghaven, 2019; Cowan, 2000; Gross et al., 2006;

French & Neville, 2013; Zweig et al., 1997; Cecil & Matson, 2005; Biglan et al., 1995; Adams-

Curtis et al., 2004; Koss et al., 1987; Coulter., 2017).

While responses from victims regarding their assault can range from denial, substance

use/abuse, shame, or anger, responses from WOC undoubtedly will consist within the context of

individual experiences and cultural stigmas surrounding it (Women of Color Network, 2009).

Given the long racist and sexist history WOC have faced in the United States, not only may

WOC have to think of navigating societal pressure or responses, but they may also have to

navigate through cultural issues according to their culture/ethnicity, as we see with

Latinx/Hispanics and Asian women. For example, in Asian communities, family honor and respect are essential. Therefore, Asian victims of sexual assault may never report their experience. Some victims may assume they would not be believed or even be blamed for their assault due to their flirty or sensual behaviors. Others may not realize what they experienced was assault (i.e., verbal coercion; marital rape) due to cultural norms (i.e., machismo; rape myths). Additional barriers may be due to limited access to services that may not be culturally sensitive, lack of bilingual/bicultural resources, or are religiously based; the idea of not being a virgin or "pure" may alienate the victim and bring shame.

Another potential influencing factor that may limit WOC reporting or seeking help is their mistrust of the police, mental health stigmatization, or cultural barriers (Koo et al., 2015; Maier, 2012; Women of Color Network, 2009). One study found that most victims of sexual assault will not look for mental health support to avoid reliving their trauma or experience additional stigmatization (i.e., only crazy people go; something is wrong with me (Koo et al., 2015). Further, Koo et al. (2015) found that victims may also mistrust police in the sense that police officers may stereotype and blame them for their assault (i.e., foreigner; English deficiency; passive and hypersexualized). Other research points out the legal status of the victim may also hinder reporting and help-seeking behavior (Maier, 2012; Zadnik et al., 2016). This is not surprising if dealing with an undocumented victim; the victim may face challenges, fear deportation, or may just simply not be familiar with possible services in their local area.

Another potential area victims may struggle to navigate is the healthcare system. Victims may be concerned with the potential financial burden, fear of being reported or interacting with police, and stigma from healthcare providers. When looking at healthcare professionals' perception of sexual assault victims, one study found that sexual assault nurse examiners

(SANEs) perceive WOC respond to sexual assault differently than White women (Maier, 2012). Researchers found that SANEs believed reporting and seeking help is based may be on cultural influences; they perceived WOC as more secretive, less likely to report, not wanting to interact with law enforcement, and therefore, remain silent. SANEs in this study also believed self-blame influenced WOC from coming forward as victims of color believe they are to blame for their assault. Further, SANEs also reported that race/ethnicity may influence emotional responses, suggesting WOC are more likely to be crying/hysterical or appear more upset. This is problematic as marginalized/vulnerable communities may face biased medical professionals or be misperceived when seeking medical help.

As mentioned, WOC have also been sexually objectified throughout the years. As defined by Frederickson and Roberts (1997), sexual objectification is "the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others" (p. 174). Research suggests sexual objectification often correlates with other sociodemographic characteristics such as social class, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The way WOC are portrayed in the media further perpetuates sexual objectification (Turner, 2011; Anderson et al., 2018). However, most studies on sexual objectification have primarily consisted of White participants (Szymanski et al., 2011).

Studies show that sexualizing and objectifying women negatively impacts one's self-esteem, self-image, is correlated with substance use/ abuse (Szymanski et al., 2011; Carr & Szymanski, 2011), and mental health (Watson et al., 2012; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Furthermore, research suggests that Black and Latina women are objectified or presented in an animalistic/sexual way at higher rates than White women (Turner, 2011; Anderson et al., 2018). Considering the intersectionality of race/ethnicity and social class, it is not surprising that studies

suggest women of lower social class are often looked at as gross, untamed, and deserving of sexual victimization. These varying stereotypes about sexuality may be one of the strongest sources of sexual assault variance among victims of color. One study found that self-objectification and body shame was related to sexual victimization (Lindberg et al., 2007). Also, important to note that research found that being sexually objectified can be a risk factor for depression and substance use/abuse among women, while Carr and Szymanski (2011) found evidence to suggest there is a relationship between sexual objectification and substance use (Szymanski et al., 2011; Carr & Szymanski, 2011).

Black Women

During slavery, Black women were physically and sexually abused, raped, and forced to breed children who would become slaves (Wilson, 2021). As cited in Wilson (2021), enslaved women suffered a wide variety of sexual violence which is argued to have contributed to the existing disparities Black women face today. Historically, Black women have been described as sexual creatures with no self-control or morals since the slave era (Jacobs, 2017; Hill Collins, 2009; Hooks, 1981). This led to the Jezebel stereotype, a promiscuous and sexual woman who cannot control their sexual urges and are, therefore, "un-rapeable" (hooks, 1981).

In a qualitative study looking at the experience of African American women being sexually objectified, researchers found these women often encountered three major themes: body evaluation, unwanted sexual experiences and/or advances, and sexualized imagery (Watson et al., 2012). When discussing body evaluation, participants shared their experiences where others regularly policed their bodies to conclude their worth, whether it was by words (describing or asking about their body or specific body parts) or by making them uncomfortable as the objectifier very visibly stared at body parts or "checked them out." The next common theme was

experiencing unwanted sexual contact or advances; in this sample, childhood sexual abuse, rape, inappropriate touch or groping, attempted rape, domestic abuse, and sexual coercion or being treated as a sexual object in relationships were reported. Finally, the third common theme was sexualized imagery. Many participants discussed how African American women are often depicted in media and how over-sexualized African American women are. Moreover, participants also discussed how they encounter images that idealize African American women as having straight hair, being thin, and light skinned (suggestive of White beauty). Regardless of the theme present when interviewing these women, participants felt they were just used for sexual reasons and were only valued for their bodies

When addressing sexual assault rates among Black women, research finds that Black women report victimization at high rates (Coulter et al., 2017; Basile et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2017). One study found Black women were more likely to report sexual violence than White, Latinas, and Asian women (Coulter et al., 2017). Furthermore, Cecil and Matson (2005) found that forcible rape had more negative outcomes than VSC among young Black women. Gross et al. (2006) found that African American women in their sample were more likely to be physically forced or emotionally pressured into having sex. Self-esteem and psychological distress were significant for Black women (Cecil & Matson, 2005). However, one community study found 53.7% of Black women reported being raped, 44.8% of Black women in their sample reported being sexually coerced, and 42.3% reported being raped and sexually coerced in their lifetime (Basile et al., 2016).

Research finds women with a history of sexual coercion were more likely to have symptoms of PTSD and/or depression. They were also more likely to have lower levels of self-esteem. Women with history of experiencing sexual coercion, who had high levels of accepting

rape myths had lower levels of self-esteem Basile et al., (2016) found that 21% of the sample considered suicide during their lifetime; out of those, roughly 88% had history of sexual assault. Of those who considered suicide, 41% attempted suicide, and among those who considered and attempted, roughly 93% had been raped or sexually coerced. Victims also reported suffering from injuries, contracting HIV or STD, or becoming pregnant due to their assault.

Latinx/Hispanic Women

Latinx/Hispanic women face multiple types of oppression due to their intersecting identities (i.e., sex, racial/ethnic, legal status). Overall, Latinx/Hispanic women have been overwhelmingly hypersexualized (Rivadeneyra, 2011; McDade-Montez et al., 2017). Stereotypes or expectations of Latinx/Hispanic women such as being hot, feisty/spicy, sexually available, and physically attractive are commonly believed. Although the Latinx community can be considered sexual, sexuality is often ignored as it is taboo and challenges the long-standing sexual oppression of women.

Machismo, a cultural construct in the Latinx community, refers to beliefs, expectations, and sets the standard of masculinity and what it means to be "a man." Concepts such as values, attitudes, sexism, sexual dominance and inequality, and aggression are some of the aspects of machismo. Women in the Latinx culture are oppressed and are seen as inferior. Because of machismo, women are essentially expected to engage in traditional gender roles (i.e., housewife, motherly, cooks, cleans, sexually submissive). It is important to note machismo may be influenced by sociodemographic characteristics such as acculturation. Research finds that machismo is higher among families in the United States with lower acculturation (Ojeda et al., 2008). Considering Hispanics are the largest ethnic minority group in the United States (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020), it might very well be that these cultural values will continue to be

present in first-generation Latinx homes, whereas we may start seeing attitudinal and cultural values shift with future generations.

On the contrary, *marianismo*, upholds values and expectations for women, which heavily emphasizes on traditional gender roles. Therefore, an ongoing toxic cycle between gender roles and norms is evident in the community. This concept further perpetuates gender inequality as women are supposed to be nurturing, family/home-centered, respectful of the patriarchal values in the community (Gil & Valazquez, 1996; Niemann, 2004), and in need of a male protector (Nuñez et al., 2016). Further, due to the strong religious affiliations, sex is also a taboo topic for women in the community. Women are expected to not engage in premarital sexual activities and are often shamed for their sexuality; as a matter of fact, women are praised for their "purity". Studies find that aspects of machismo and marianismo are correlated with poorer mental, emotional, and sexual health (Nuñez et al., 2016; Fava et al., 2020). While research may be limited in analyzing the relationship between sexual objectification and sexual assault among Latinas, perhaps it is more a cultural/structural aspect that is needed to deepen the literature.

In one study on sexual coercion among Latinas, researchers found that 63% of the participants were victims of unwanted sexual contact or sex. Of these, 75% were coerced acts and only 47% of participants identified the incident as assault. Of the 38 coercive acts, the majority (66%) reported engaging in coerced sex, and coerced sexual contact, while 11% reported coerced sex alone and 24% reported coerced sexual contact only (Maryn & Dover, 2021). Further, Maryn and Dover (2021) found three common themes regarding sexual coercion throughout their study; the perpetrator was their boyfriend, the perpetrator would not take no for an answer, and a party. Fifteen participants reported the perpetrators were their boyfriends, and four reported it was their date. These participants also reported feeling as it was their job to

engage in sexual activity due to the partner's desire and cultural/social norms. Another common theme was the perpetrator's inability to accept no; in this case, participants reported "giving in" due to the perpetrator's verbal pressure and reported high feelings of shame and self-blame. Lastly, researchers found that the most common setting where VSC occurred was related to a party; among participants was at a party; perpetrators were more likely to be friends or strangers and reported higher levels of alcohol consumption (Maryn & Dover, 2021).

When looking at sexual coercion among Latinas, poor mental health and subethnic differences were found (Maryn & Dover, 2021; Gonzalez et al., 2020) In a systematic review of interpersonal violence among Latinas, researchers found that women who identified as Mexican or Mexican American had higher rates of intimate partner violence than Central and South Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans (Gonzalez et al., 2020). Some research even suggests U.S. born Latinas reported higher interpersonal violence or domestic violence than foreign born Latinas (Gonzalez et al., 2020; Sabina & Cuevas, 2016). This could be a result of acculturation where U.S. born Latinas are assimilating to the U.S. culture, trying to break apart from machismo, and are more open to reporting.

Researchers also finds that most women are coerced into sex after a minor altercation such as pushing, after an intense physical or verbal fight, after death threats, or were forced after rejecting their partner's sexual advances (Valdovinos & Mechanic, 2017). Although Valdovinos & Mechanic (2017) found that most women in their sample believed in being equal to their male partner, many shared their partner is the head of the household. "We are both equal – but in our Mexican culture, a woman will never be able to be more than a man. Women will always be less even if we want to demonstrate that we are equal to men; we are not accepted as equals" (p. 333). Another common theme Valdovinos and Mechanic (2017) found was acceptance of

relationship violence. While the majority of participants shared violence is not acceptable, many shared they tolerate it for reasons such as self-blame, believing being victimized is better than being alone, that it is needed to keep the family together (especially if children are involved), or due to cultural and social values of sexual and marital behaviors. For example, one participant shared, "my mom and sisters told me you have to stay him. You have a baby with him, you know he "de-virginized" [was her first sexual partner] you so you have to stay with him. He is your man, he is the man, and he will be your man for the rest of your life." (p.335). Lastly, another common theme in this study was decision making in sexual activity. Again, women agreed that both partners need to decide in engaging sexual activities. However, many described engaging in sexual activities with their partner out of fear or due to their "wifely duties." However, interestingly researchers here found different responses when asking participants how many times they were forced to have sex with their husband and have they ever been raped by their husband. More participants acknowledged being forced into sexual activities, but very few reported being raped, although they described violent sexual incidents. This goes back to the problematic ties of marital rape or sexual abuse between partners.

One study found that 31.2% of Latinas reported rape, 22.7% reported sexual coercion in their lifetime, and 19% reported being raped and experiencing sexual coercion in their lifetime (Basile et al., 2015). Latinas also report struggling with symptoms of PTSD and/or depression; suicide ideation and attempt also found. As a result of the assault, 22% suffered from injuries, none contracted HIV, but roughly 5% reported STD, 12% reported pregnancy, and all kept the baby.

Asian Women

Sexualization of Asian women may be tied to historical sexual violence, such as the "comfort women," where roughly about 200,000 women were forced, abducted, or coerced into sex slavery during World War II (International Crimes Database [ICD], 2005). During this time, women were repeatedly and violently raped, mutilated, tortured, beaten, and sometimes murdered during the sexual assault or if they refused to engage with the soldiers (ICD, 2005; Woan, 2008). Moreover, it has been well established that Filipinas have been referred to as "little brown fucking machine powered by rice…for the price of a burger" (Woan, 2008 p.283) while American soldiers occupied the Philippines. This increased the prostitution and sex entertainment industry, further exacerbating sexual stereotypes of Asian women; as cited in Woan (2008), sex workers often reported being mistreated and expected to do "three holes" (oral, anal, and vaginal sex) by American soldiers. Due to the culture created between U.S. military overseas and prostitution, it is argued that this perpetuated the sexual stereotypes of Asian women.

Asian women often have low reporting rates of sexual assault compared to other racial and ethnic groups (Coulter et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2017; Gilmore et al., 2016), nonetheless, they are still at high risk due to sexual objectification and may be negatively affected due to cultural norms. While Asian women may have the lowest self-report rate of sexual violence, Koo et al. (2015) argue that analyzing cultural factors related to reporting sexual assault remains understudied in this population. Koo et al. (2015) found that although participants recognized that disclosing/reporting rape can help them access resources and justice, many emphasized that they would not disclose their assault if it involved alcohol and/or was by an acquaintance.

Asian American women may not disclose their assault as it could negatively affect them, their families, and friendships (Koo et al., 2015). More specifically, the primary issue with

disclosing or reporting their sexual assault is the fear of their parents knowing (Koo et al., 2015).

Koo et al. (2015) focused on the context of Asian American women disclosing their assault if alcohol was involved. Researchers found that participants received shame and guilt regarding parents knowing of their assault. Four major themes were found regarding parental knowledge: "Asian parents' expectations of their daughter to be a good girl, avoidance of parental distress, avoidance of personal distress, and nondisclosure to others" (p. 60). One participant stated, "she probably definitely wouldn't tell her parents…she'd feel ashamed of herself cause she let herself get to that point [drinking] where she couldn't make a good judgement and let it happen" (p. 60). Other participants shared that another expectation of Asian parents is that their daughters are "good girls" and "sex is reserved for marriage." This cultural belief is so strong that even when sex is non-consensual, if it occurred prior to marriage, women in Asian families are considered dirty or impure. "If you were hooking up with someone and it went too far, to rape, then it brings up questions of ''Are you sexually active or promiscuous?'' If it was an acquaintance rapist, then it means you probably had some consensual activity at the start, like kissing or whatever, so telling your parents [about a rape] without having drank doesn't matter that much, since you still have to tell them you were messing around with a guy, and you do not tell Korean parents that" (p. 60).

Asian women may engage in color-blind discourse to avoid processing the racialized nature of some of their experiences (Chou et al., 2015). This is problematic as authors argue this allows non-Asians to make racist comments, and due to Asians engaging in color-blind discursive, they will not address or process the racism. In a qualitative study, one participant recalled how she was once told, "Oh little Asian girl I would definitely love to bang you" (p. 307). The authors argue that by using the words "little girl," the participant was infantilized and

objectified/sexualized by the word "banged." The authors further argue that such words suggest

that the perpetrator has internalized the media representation and imagery of Asian women as

those words reflect modern-day porn videos involving Asian women. Another participant in the

study also shared that she has been called sexy Asian. While she took it as a compliment, she

was annoyed because there should not be a difference between being sexy and a sexy Asian.

Another participant shared that it was an issue because she felt that she was only sexy *because*

she is Asian. While another participant shared that she felt violated as men looked at her because

she felt it was from a primitive view. Authors further argue that men who engage in such

behaviors act on the sexualized imagery of Asian women as hypersexualized, exotic and should

be rescued.

Summary

As noted throughout this chapter, WOC are different than White women in many ways

that are relevant to the prevalence and experience of sexual assault. Given the lack of research,

we must include WOC when discussing sexual assault as they may experience and cope with

their assault differently due to cultural, situational, and historical factors. Not only is it essential

to include WOC when discussing sexual assault for critical reasons as suggested above, but by

including WOC in the discussion, researchers and practitioners can better understand the issue

and work towards providing the best services possible to these vulnerable communities. This

study seeks to predict the likelihood of verbal sexual coercion among NH Whites, NH Blacks,

NH Asians, and Latinx/Hispanic women[*] through a RAT approach.

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[*] Due to multicollinearity and/or small sample size, individual analysis of NH Native Americans and Biracial participants was not possible

CHAPTER THREE: ROUTINE ACTIVITIES THEORY

Given that lifestyles, such as the ones identified in chapter two, are associated with sexual assault of women, it is critical to examine how WOC's daily routines or lifestyles are correlated with their risks for sexual assault, particularly those involving verbal sexual coercion. This study provides a Routine Activity Theory (RAT) approach (Cohen & Felson, 1979) to predict the likelihood of experiencing verbal sexual coercion across non-Hispanic (NH) White, NH Black, NH Asian, and Hispanic/Latinx women. Given that sexual assault is a serious public and social issue, RAT is being used to better understand the relationship between victimization and daily actions people engage in. Developed by Cohen and Felson (1979), RAT was used to examine macro-level crime trends during the 1960s and 1970s, suggesting that crime does not occur randomly.

According to RAT, victimization occurs when three factors are present: (1) the presence of motivated offenders, (2) the presence of suitable targets, and (3) the absence of capable guardians (Cohen & Felson, 1979). The original macro-level discussion of crime highlighted the increasing absence of guardians in suburban neighborhoods as more and more women entered the workforce, thereby leaving children with less supervision (than they had been able to provide when they were at home daily), remaining community members may increase or decrease based on the strength of the economy, or their employment status (as well as other reasons), and more homes unsupervised (and suitable as targets for criminal victimization). These conditions manifested more suitable targets (unsupervised children and property) with less available guardianship. Cohen and Felson (1979) posited that plenty of motivated offenders were present, so as guardianship waned and targets became more suitable, crime in neighborhoods increased.

Since then, RAT has also been applied to micro-level trends (Hindelang et al., 1978; Felson, 2016). As such, individuals' risks for criminal victimization are the result of their daily routine and activities (e.g., where they go, who they are with, what are they doing) and how these lifestyles lead to interactions between suitable targets and potential offenders outside the capabilities or purview of willing guardians. As defined by Cohen and Felson (1979), routine activities are "any recurrent and prevalent activities which provide for basic population and individual needs, whatever their biological or cultural origins" (p. 593). Thus, routine activities can be daily tasks such as attending school, work, grocery shopping, participating in social events, and any other extracurricular activities one may engage in regularly. These activities can be considered at either the individual or community level. For example, someone who works from home may be less exposed to potential victimization than someone who has to walk or take a bus to work or someone who spends more time away from home for leisure activities.

Since its inception, RAT has been commonly applied to explain community crime/deviance rate variance and variances in individuals' victimization risks. The crimes considered by researchers include but are not limited to burglary, robbery, substance use, property crime, violent crime, larceny, stalking, sexual victimization, and more recently, cybercrimes (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1998; Cohen & Felson, 1979; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1999; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003). For example, while anyone could be a victim of sexual assault, women are more likely victims than men. Using a RAT lens, women are more vulnerable to victimization during times and in spaces where people congregate as motivated offenders may view them as more suitable targets (physically weaker, more fearful) (Savard, 2018).

Another common RAT finding regarding sexual assault research is the relationship between victimization and age. Young adults are at a higher risk of victimization (Sinozich &

Langton, 2014; Basile et al., 2015; Basile et al., 2016). A limitation in current literature is that most studies primarily focus on college aged students (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Due to this, we often find that individuals, particularly female, between the ages of 18-24 are at higher risk of sexual assault (Sonizich & Langton, 2014). Research also suggests that individuals are at a higher risk of sexual victimization during nighttime activities (e.g., gatherings, clubbing/partying) (Franklin et al., 2012; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002), when they use/abuse substances (Franklin et al., 2012), and when they have a history of childhood sexual abuse (Wood & Stichman, 2018; Siddique, 2016). Other studies consider physical or locational factors (e.g., neighborhood characteristics) where individuals live their daily lives and engage in routine activities. These types of factors may enable or protect one from victimization due to their proximity to motivated offenders.

Motivated Offenders

While motivated offenders are one of the three criminogenic elements of this theory, it is important to highlight that they must also be physically and emotionally capable of engaging in criminal behavior (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Cohen and Felson (1979) asserted that potential motivated offenders were plentiful and ubiquitous. Therefore, any variance associated with this element comes from location and how proximal individuals are to motivated offenders. Individuals with daily routines that take them into locations where there are many motivated offenders have higher risks of being victims due to their heightened exposure. As defined by Cohen et al. (1981), exposure is "the physical visibility and accessibility of persons or objects to potential offenders at any given time or place" (p. 507), whereas proximity can be explained through physical distance/closeness between victims and offenders. Although not surprising, studies find that exposure to motivated offenders (Marcum et al., 2010; Hayes et al., 2021) is

highly significant when observing sexual victimization through a RAT approach as a majority of many sexual assault victims know their perpetrator (Byers & Glenn, 2012; Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019).

For example, living arrangements may potentially expose victims to offenders. Those who live alone may be at lower risk for victimization than those who live with roommates. However, those who live with roommates who are family may be at a lower risk of victimization than those who live with roommates who are acquaintances (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Schreck & Fisher, 2004). Considering that most sexual assault victims know their perpetrator (Sinozich & Langton, 2014; Smith et al., 2017) and most sexual assault occurs in private settings such as homes/apartments (Adams-Curtis & Forbes 2004), it would not be surprising to find that risks for sexual coercion are higher among those where capable guardians are not present. Other places where one might be at higher risk of victimization are places such as bars (Franklin et al., 2013; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002) and more recently, even online/cyberlife can potentially put one at risk (Reyns et al., 2011; Melander & Hughes, 2018; Leukfeld & Yar, 2016).

Research bears out these theoretical relationships. When comparing college student and nonstudent samples, Sinozich and Langton (2014) found that 51% of college students were sexually victimized away from home for leisure activities while 50% of the nonstudent sample were sexually victimized at home. They also found that about 29% of student rape victims occurred at someone else's house (acquaintance, friend, or family), while 50% of nonstudent victims were sexually victimized at their house. Further, there were no significant differences between samples when observing victimization in public places (commercial, school, public transportation). Regardless about 70% of sexual assault cases occurred at the victim's home or at the offender's house.

Suitable Targets

Suitable targets are people or items that hold value to an offender. A target's value can range from the amount of money an item is worth to the amount of satisfaction (or ease) it would bring the offender to victimize a particular individual. Suitable targets can be tangible items, accessible locations, and vulnerable people. However, target suitability can vary depending on size, accessibility, and perceived success of victimization (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Cohen et al., 1981). Because individuals' routine activities can influence the odds of victimization, the varying probabilities of individuals for victimization are primarily due to their locations and how these locations interact with each of the three criminogenic factors: the number of other possible targets who are similarly exposed, the varying vulnerability of individuals in these locations (e.g., being drunk, carrying valuables) the presence of potential or motivated offenders, as well as the presence of other individuals (i.e., guardians) who could prevent or intercede in criminal events (Hayes et al., 2021; Cohen & Felson, 1979). The more attractive or vulnerable the target, the higher risk of victimization (Cohen et al., 1981).

Absence of Guardianship

The final necessary element for criminal occurrence is the absence of guardianship. Guardianship can come in many forms (people, security alarms, guns), and human guardians also vary in their willingness and capability to stop criminal behavior. This also likely varies across gender and racial/ethnic groups. For example, guardianship can be the presence of police officers or in neighborhood watch groups. It can also be authority figures, such as schools/teachers or even parents. Ordinary citizens can also act as guardians or intervening bystanders. Even so, the presence of people in a location does not necessarily mean those people will be guardians against criminal activity (Cohen & Felson, 1979) because some individuals may be unwilling or

incapable of effective intervention. Physical items used for protection, such as cameras, dogs, and carrying weapons, can also be used as guardianship over people or property. Further, remote guardianship (e.g., putting identifying features on an item to deter theft, a motion activated camera in the house) can be utilized from afar to potentially reduce a targets suitability and increase guardianship thereby dissuading offenders from selecting that particular bike to steal, or that particular house to burglarize and lack of capable guardianship were the most significant for both male and female respondents (Marcum et al., 2010). Hayes et al. (2021) found lack of guardianship was not associated with sexual victimization. While research on guardianship remains ambiguous and varies from social to physical guardianship (i.e., bystander, weapon, etc.), current researchers are now suggesting scholars to include electronic methods as forms of guardianship (Hayes et al., 2021).

Guardianship can be formal and informal. However, little is known about self-protection behaviors (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003). Research shows that the most effective types of guardianship are individual level behaviors rather than institutional responses (Wilcox, Madensen, & Tillyer, 2007. Buck et al., 1993; Reynald, 2010; Wright & Decker, 1994). The most common self-protection methods used are guns and mace (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003). While research shows that the use of drugs and alcohol are significant in victimization, one study finds that the use of drugs and alcohol is not associated with the use of guardianship (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003). However, Tewksbury and Mustaine (2003) found an association between those who spent more time with strangers, and those who went out more frequently during the week for leisure time with the use of guardianship.

RAT and Sexual Victimization

When looking at lifestyle characteristics that may influence sexual assault, Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) found that those who identified as a drinker, drug user, frequently went out at night for leisure, who went to clubs, reported higher percentage of drinking at parties, has been drunk in public, frequently used drugs during the week, and reported higher percentage of drug use in public had higher odds of reporting being ever sexually assaulted. While those who reported going out frequently at night for leisure, who frequently went dancing for leisure, reported higher percentage of drinking at parties, has been drunk in public, reported higher percentage of getting drunk, reported higher percentage of drug use at parties and in public reported being sexually assaulted that involved threats or force.

In one study on victimization in urban nightlife, 80% of the participants reported one or more sexual victimizations related to their nightlife engagement, yet no one reported it to the police (Kavanaugh, 2012). While research suggests sexual victimization is often by someone known, this study found that most victims were victimized by strangers and with people who were not very well acquainted. Here, Kavanaugh (2012) describes the victimization as situational, opportunistic, or involuntary incapacitation. Incidents described as situational are those when victims engage with the perpetrator in some capacity; in these instances, the victim may engage in conversation, accept a drink, or dance with the perpetrator. Those incidents described as opportunistic are victimization by strangers. Most participants in this category reported having no prior interaction and were usually busy and unaware of the perpetrator. Many instances involved unwanted sexual touching or groping as the perpetrator would be successful in touching. Kavanaugh (2012) also argues that opportunistic victimizations are shaped by the routine activity concept of absence of guardianship due to unawareness of perpetrator and lack of friends or security. Further, places where these assaults occurred were in crowded places or

poorly lighted venues. Lastly, involuntary incapacitation refers to the involuntary use of drugs or alcohol. This could also include being drugged; some women in this study reported minimal intake of alcohol but had intense or severe intoxication and disorientation. However, the most common theme throughout the study was the use of drugs and/or alcohol.

Alcohol consumption and drug use are significant in predicting sexual assault (Kavanaugh, 2014; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Cass, 2007; Conley et al., 2017; Snyder, 2015; Flack et al., 2016; Hughes et al., 2010). However, few studies have examined alcohol use in coerced sex (Stappenbeck et al., 2020). Women are at a higher risk of sexual coercion if alcohol or drug use are involved (Felson & Burchfield, 2004) and have higher substance use disorders if assaulted (Hughes et al., 2010). In a national representative sample, McCauley et al. (2009) found that those who experienced unwanted sex due to substance facilitated assaults were no different than those who experienced other types of sexual victimization, including rape regarding depression or PTSD. Research also suggests that those under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the assault are less likely to identify their experience as sexual assault (Hammond & Calhoun, 2007; McMullin & White, 2006).

A high percentage of women report substance use prior to their sexual assault (Flack et al., 2016; Gross et al., 2006; Palmer et al., 2009; Stappenbeck et al., 2020; Littleton et al., 2008; Felson & Burchfield, 2004). When comparing substance use problems among rape victims, McCauley et al. (2010) found that those who reported incapacitated rape had higher odds of binge drinking, marijuana use, and illicit drug use. Whereas those who reported forcible rape and drug, or alcohol facilitated rape had higher odds of marijuana and illicit drug use. Paul et al. (2013) found that those who disclosed rape reported monthly binge drinking in the past year (21.4%), using marijuana (15%), or illicit drugs (2.3%) four or more times in the past year.

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Additionally, women who have a history of sexual assault are more likely to engage in alcohol use (Lindergren et al., 2012; Champion et al., 2004), use marijuana (Champion et al., 2004; McCauley et al., 2010; Paul et al., 2013), use illicit drugs (McCauley et al., 2010; Paul et al., 2013), or engage in other risky behaviors to cope with their trauma. However, it is unclear whether victims use this to self-medicate to cope with the trauma (Lindergen et al., 2012) or if these behaviors are consequences of their experience. Because victims may engage in alcohol consumption, substance use, and abuse to cope after the assault, their chances of potentially being sexually assaulted increases (Hannan et al., 2017; Lindergren et al., 2012; Flack et al., 2016).

Given the strength of findings between substance use/abuse and sexual assault, it is important to consider alcohol and drug use rates between racial and ethnic groups. The findings are mixed when analyzing any relationships between race/ethnicity, sexual assault, and substance use. Some literature suggests White women are more likely to have consumed alcohol at the time of their assault (Gross et al., 2006; Lawyer et al., 2010), with victims in almost half of all assaults having drunk alcohol prior to the assault. Though some literature suggests Black women are more likely to be sexually coerced, research suggests they are less likely to be assaulted due to substance use when compared to Whites and Latinas (Littleton et al., 2012). However, one study found that drug use and rape rates significantly varied by race/ethnicity (Thompson et al., 2012). More specifically, African American females once again had the highest prevalence of drug use (44.3%), followed by Hispanics (40.6%) and Whites (36.1%), yet, when controlling for drinking and drug use, race/ethnicity was not significant (Thompson et al., 2012).

More recent RAT literature has focused on the use of cyber technology. Given that cyber technology has dramatically advanced over the years, RAT literature has found a correlation with

victimization, although most focus on cybercrimes related to fraud, cyberbullying, cyberstalking, and online harassment (Reyns et al., 2011; Melander & Hughes, 2018; Leukfeldt & Yar, 2016), and are limited to younger age groups (i.e., adolescents, high schoolers, and college-aged individuals) (Melander & Hughes, 2018). Additionally, social apps, such as Instagram, Facebook, and dating apps, where one might be exposed to offenders or viewed as an easy target, are also now commonly used (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). According to recent research, it is estimated that seven out of ten Americans report using any kind of social media (Auxier & Anderson, 2021), and about 52% of never married adults in the US have used an online dating site or app (Vogels, 2020).

The advancement of technology and cyberspace has made it easier for people to be in contact regardless of location and time. Previous research found that living arrangements are associated with victimization (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1999); however, Melander and Hughes (2018) did not find this mattered when addressing cybervictimization. Nonetheless, when observing the relationship between RAT/motived offenders and online IPV, Melander and Hughes (2018) found that those who spent more time online and the amount they text were positively correlated with experiencing cyber aggression. Interestingly though, dating online was not significant in this case, but it is important to note that a small sample of their participants engaged in online dating. When addressing suitable target, those who experienced childhood physical abuse were more likely to experience being victimized. Further, this study also found that females were more likely to experience cyber aggression.

Previous research regarding guardianship has focused on physical and social types of guardianship (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1998; Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003). However, when addressing cybercrimes, such types of guardianship may not be as reinforcing. To measure

physical guardianship, one study asked participants if their online social network is controlled and if the participants use a tracker to see who has visited their page and where they are from (Reyns et al., 2011). Further, when addressing suitable target, online measures previously used in studies are related to what type of information is shared (i.e., full name, relationship status, username/email, or personal photos/videos) (Reyns et al., 2011). When looking at online behavior, one study finds that the number of pictures posted online was significant and a predictive factor of experiencing online harassment (Reyns et al., 2011). Not surprising, researchers also found that adding strangers as friends was also a predictive factor for unwanted contact/harassment; they also found that using online tracker to monitor who is viewing their profile was significant had increased odds of unwanted contact, threats, and stalking (Reyns et al., 2011). Interestingly, researchers did not have any significant correlation between suitable target variables and victimization. However, they did find that gender and relationship status were significant in the likelihood of online pursuit (Reyns et al., 2011). In sum, this study finds promising results in explaining cyberstalking through a RAT approach.

Current Study

The current study utilizes RAT to predict the likelihood of being verbally coerced across race and ethnicity. RAT argues that a convergence of the three factors (motivated offenders, suitable targets, and absence of guardianship) is needed for victimization to occur. Motivated offenders, suitable targets, and absence of guardianship are measured by various questions discussed in the next chapter. Based on previous literature, the following are hypothesized:

1. **Hypothesis 1**: Females will be significantly more likely to have experienced verbal sexual coercion than males.

2. **Hypothesis 2**: Respondents who live alone, spend more time at bars/nightclubs or parties for leisure time, and are more likely to meet people online than in person will have higher odds of verbal sexual coercion. (The variables measure motivated offenders)

3. **Hypothesis 3**: Respondents who share their location when updating their status online, report using marijuana, and are more times drunk per week will have higher odds of verbal sexual coercion. (These variables measure suitable target).

4. **Hypothesis 4**: Respondents reporting not owning a gun, mace, or do not have their profile private will have higher odds of verbal sexual coercion victimization. (These variables measure absence of guardianship).

Motivated
Offenders

1) Living alone
2) Percentage of the time they spend in bar, nightclub,
party when relaxing or leisure activities
3) How frequently do you meet people online you are
unlikely to meet in person

Verbal Coercion

1) Sharing location when updating
online status
2) Marijuana use
3) Times per week drunk

1) No gun
2) No mace
3) Setting profile to private
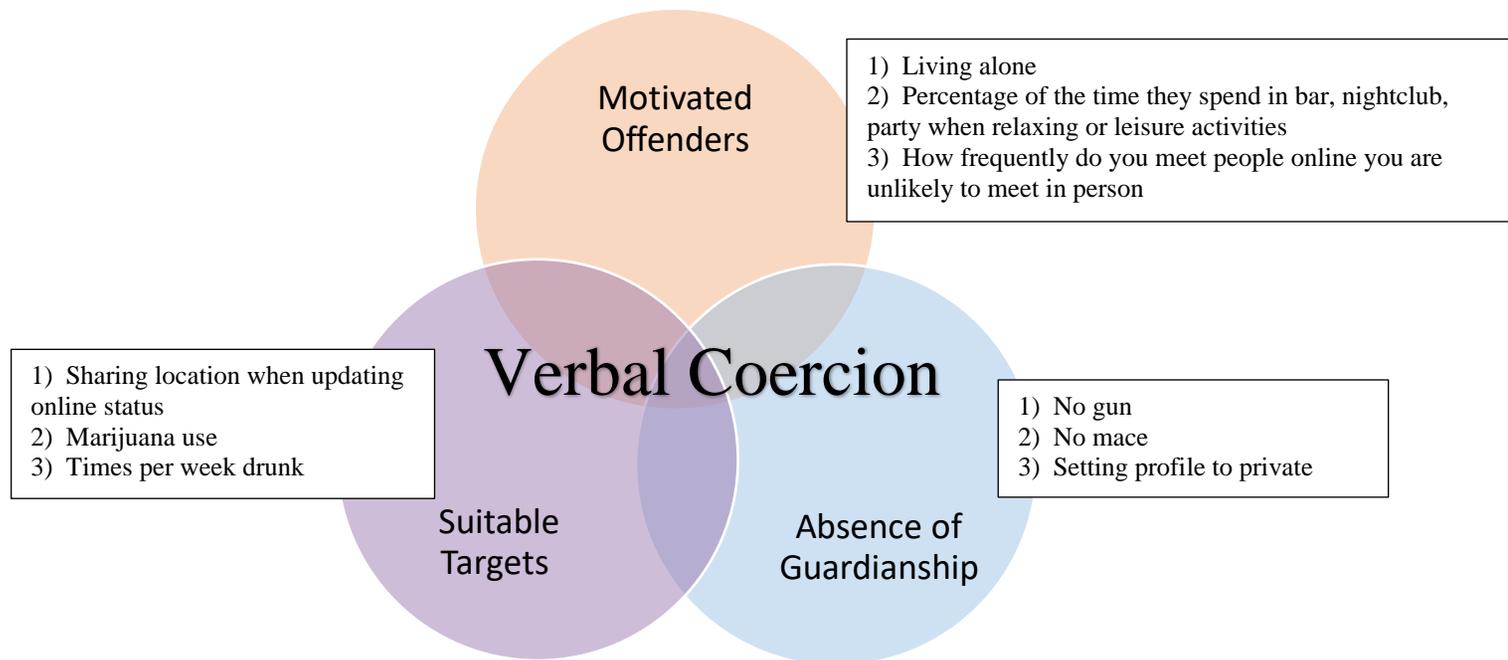
Suitable
Targets

Absence of
Guardianship

Figure 1: Routine Activity Theory Convergence Model

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS AND DATA

Data and Sample

The current study analyzes cross-sectional survey data collected by Dr. Elizabeth E. Mustaine from the University of Central Florida, Department of Sociology. This survey was distributed online to a U.S. based sample and gathered respondents' information regarding their lifestyles and experiences with crime and victimization during Spring 2015 and Spring 2016. The survey consisted of 56 questions derived from three previous studies on social disorganization and routine activity theory (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1999; Reyns et al., 2016; Fisher et al., 2002). Question sections covered respondents' demographic characteristics, neighborhood characteristics, drug use, routine behaviors, social experiences, and self-protection.

Data were collected in two phases. The first phase consisted of snowball sampling via Facebook between February through August of 2015; one of the researchers joined multiple Facebook groups, spoke about the project, its' purpose and importance, and engaged with participants, which resulted in 399 completed surveys. To increase sample size, researchers partnered with Survey Sampling International (SSI) in the fall of 2015, which is when the second phase of data collection began. SSI is an international data collection provider who has access to different participants who can be targeted for eligibility based on their demographics as selected by the researcher. SSI was commissioned to survey a national sample of 3000 from their lists of willing research participants. Respondents were exposed through online banners, solicitations, emails, text messaging, and phone calls. Although SSI obtains identifiable information of the participants, the researcher(s) of the study did not have access to theinformation. Further, SSI did not offer any incentives to respondents for their participation. In the spring of 2016, SSI solicited 3,147 individuals to participate, however, only 3,003 agreed to take the survey and completed

most of the questions, resulting in a 95.4% response rate. Combining the total responses

provided by SSI and the Facebook survey, the total sample for this study consisted of 3,402

respondents living in the United States. Finally, the only sampling criteria applied for both, the

Facebook survey and SSI, were that respondents must be residents of the United States and over

the age of 18.

Measurements

Dependent Variable

To assess the risks of sexual victimization, with foci on racial and ethnic groups, the

current study focuses on verbal sexual coercion (VSC). To measure VSC, respondents were

asked "have you ever, or in recent months, experienced or been a victim of any of the following:

Have been talked into having sex when I was reluctant?" Possible responses were never, in the

past six months, or more than six months ago. Respondents were only able to pick one response;

further, due to respondents not allowed to pick more than one response, knowing if they have

been victimized more than once is not possible (i.e., if they were verbally coerced in the past six

months and more than six months). However, this study focuses on lifetime VSC; those who

responded that they had been talked into having sex when they were reluctant in the past six

months or more than six months ago were coded as = 1 and those who responded never = 0.

Independent Variable(s)

Independent variables in this study are race/ethnicity, sex, and the three concepts needed

for Routine Activity Theory: motivated offenders, suitable targets, and absence of guardianship.

Race/ethnicity: Participants were asked about their race/ethnicity as two separate

questions in this survey. To assess for race, respondents were asked "which of the following best

describes your race?" Responses varied from (1) Black/African American, (2) White/Caucasian, (3) Asian, (4) Native American, and (5) Mixed race/interracial. For ethnicity, respondents were asked "are you of Hispanic/Latino origin?" In which case, responses were coded as (1) yes or (2) no. Due to this study focusing on WOC, the sample was grouped as such: non-Hispanic (NH) White, NH Black/African American, NH Asian, and Hispanic/Latino [Due to small sample size and/or multicollinearity, individual analysis on Native American and Mixed/interracial respondents was not possible]. Respondents in this study were categorized as Hispanic/Latinx regardless of race if they identified as of Hispanic/Latinx origin. While it is important to note that the Hispanic/Latinx community is not a homogeneous group and racial inequalities do exist within the community, previous research regarding criminology/victimology and sexual assault have historically focused on White women vs "other" or "non-whites." The purpose of this coding for this study is to highlight the Hispanic/Latino as a whole rather than racially, moving beyond the typical white/non-white binary comparisons found throughout literature (further explanation will be found in limitations).

Sex: Sex was coded as (1) male and (2) female. It was later recoded to reflect to (0) male, (1) female (1).

Motivated Offenders: Questions used for this study to reflect the presence of *motivated offenders* included those that measured whether/how often respondents are exposed to motivated offenders or public behaviors. Participants were asked: if they lived alone (1=yes, 0=no; categorical), "when you relax/have leisure time, what percentage of the times are you: in a bar/nightclub/party? Responses ranged from 0-100% and were coded as (1) 0%, (2) 10% (3) 20% (4) 30% (5) 40% (6) 50% (7) 60% (8) 70% (9) 80% (10) 90% (11) 100%. Participants were also asked, "how frequently do you meet people online that you are unlikely to meet in person?

Responses were coded (1) everyday, (2) at least once a week, (3) at least once a month, (4) less than once a month, or (5) never (variable is treated as discrete). Responses were recoded as (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) at least once a month, (4) at least once a week, or (5) every day to reflect a least to most sequence.

Suitable Targets: Questions to reflect suitable target were lifestyle characteristics related to online behavior and alcohol and drug use. Participants were asked "when you are updating your status, how often do you include your location?" Possible responses were initially coded as (1) often, (2) sometimes, (3) rarely, or (4) never). Responses were recoded to reflect least to most sequence: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, and (4) often. They were also asked, "on average, during the past six months, how many times per week did you get drunk?" Responses varied from (1) 0 times per week, (2) 1 time, (3), two times, (4) three times, (5) four times, (6) five times, (7) six times, or (8) 7 times per week. To measure lifetime marijuana use, participants were asked if they have ever smoked marijuana (1=yes, 0=no). Participants who affirmatively responded to ever using marijuana were coded as (1) yes, (0) no.

Guardianship: Questions to reflect absence of guardianship were related to potential protective measures participants may own or do to prevent victimization. In this case, participants were asked "which of the following do you have for purposes of protecting yourself?": 1) gun, 2) mace. Based on the assumption one may be at a higher risk of victimization due to lack of guardianship, responses who replied no to any of the options were coded as 1, those who said yes were coded as 0. Additionally, participants were asked, "thinking about when you are online, do you or have you set your profile to private?" Responses were coded as (1) yes, (2) no. Responses were later recoded as (1) no, (0) yes to reflect lack of protective measures related to online behaviors.

Analytic Strategy

Analysis were conducted using the data analysis package, STATA 17. Prior to final analysis, univariate analyses were conducted to check for missing data and potential errors and sample characteristics are provided. Bivariate analyses are provided to check relationships between each variable. STATA automatically checks for multicollinearity when running regressions and removes problematic or missing variables/cases. Finally, because the dependent variable(s) are dichotomous, a binary logistic regression will be used to examine the relationship between the various independent variables and lifetime VSC. A summary of the variables and survey questions used for this study are found below in Table 1.

Table 1: Variables/Survey Questions

Variable	Coding	Type
Individual		
Lifetime verbal sexual coercion	(0) No (1) Yes	Categorical
Sex	(0) Male (1) Female	Categorical
Motivated offenders		
Do you live alone?	(0) No (1) Yes	Categorical
When you relax/have leisure time, what percentage of the times are you: in a bar/nightclub/party	$(0 - 100)\%$	Continuous
How frequently do you meet people online that you are unlikely to meet in person?	(1) Never (2) Less than once a month (3) At least once a month (4) At least once a week (5) Every day	Discrete
Suitable target		
When are you updating your status, how often do you include your location?	(1) Never (2) Rarely (3) Sometimes (4) Often	Discrete
Drug use (marijuana or any other illegal drugs)	(0) No (1) Yes	Categorical
On average, during the past 6 months, how many times per week did you get drunk?	$(0 - 7)$ times per week	Discrete
Absence of guardianship		
Do you have a gun for purposes of protecting yourself?	(0) Yes (1) No	Categorical
Do you have a mace for purposes of protecting yourself?	(0) Yes (1) No	Categorical
Do you set your profile to private?	(0) Yes (1) No	Categorical

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

Descriptive, bivariate, and binary logistic regression analyses are discussed in this chapter. Descriptive analyses were conducted to check for frequencies, potential outliers, missing data, and obtain sample characteristics. Bivariate analyses provided reflect the relationship between each independent variable and the VSC. Binary logistic regression was then conducted to examine the predictive relationship between the independent variables and VSC among race/ethnicity. Due to multicollinearity potentially being an issue, Variance Inflations Factors (VIFs) were checked prior to running the analysis to check the relationship between all independent variables and VSC. It was determined that all VIF ratios in this study ranged from 1.02 to 1.56. Following Fisher and Mason's (1981) example, VIFs less than four suggest that there is not any significant multicollinearity present.

Descriptive Analysis

As shown in Table 2, 14.9% of the sample reported being verbally coerced into sex. Of the sample, 48.8% identified as female. When looking at race/ethnicity, 58.6% of the respondents identified as NH White, 10.1% identified as NH Black/African American, 7.0% identified as NH Asian, 0.7% identified as NH Native American, 2.0% as NH Mixed/Biracial, and 13.4% identified as Hispanic/Latinx. Regarding exposure to *motivated offenders*, 16.7% of respondents reported living alone. When looking at the percentage of time spent at a bar/nightclub, or party, 47.2% reported 0% of their time, 21% reported 10%, 6.7% reported 20%, 3.5% reported 30%, 2.1% reported 40%, 2.3% reported 50%, 1.1% reported 60%, 1.7% reported 70%, 1.9% reported 80%, 1.1% reported 90%, and 1.4% of respondents reported 100%. Lastly, the majority of the sample (39.1%) reported to never meeting people online that they are unlikely to meet in person, 15.2% reported to meeting someone less than once a month, 9.1% reported at

least once a month, 11.3% reported meeting someone at least once a week, and 8.1% reported meeting someone online they are unlikely to meet in person every day.

To measure *suitable target*, the following questions were asked: how often they share their location when updating their statuses, marijuana use, and how many times drunk per week. Much of the sample (36.8%) reported never including their location when updating their online status, followed by rarely (27.7%), sometimes (20.7%), and often (6.7%). When observing lifetime marijuana use, 27% reported smoking. When asked how many times per week were they drunk; the majority (66.1%) reported 0 times per week, 13% reported one time, 5.7% reported two times, 4.3% reported three times, 1.8% reported four times, 1.4% reported five times, 0.6% reported six times, and 0.5% reported seven times per week. Lastly, questions used to measure *absence of guardianship* included: (1) if they own a gun, (2) if they own mace, and (3) if they have their profile private. Of the sample, 59.7% reported not owning a gun, 59.3% reported not owning mace, and 24.2% reported not having their profile private.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Coding	Percentages (N)	Missing Data	VIF
Verbal Sexual Coercion	(1) Yes (0) No	14.9% (553) 76.8% (2840)	8.3% (N=306)	
Sex	(1) Female (0) Male	48.8% (1806) 43.0% (1591)	8.2% (N=302)	1.13
Race/Ethnicity (Non-Hispanic = NH)	NH White	58.6% (2169)		1.02
	NH Black/ African American	10.1% (374)		
	NH Asian	7.0% (258)	8.2% (N=304)	
	NH Native American	0.7% (27)		

Variable	Coding	Percentages (N)	Missing Data	VIF
	NH Mixed/Biracial	2.0% (73)		
	Hispanic/Latinx	13.4% (494)		
Live Alone	(1) Yes (0) No	16.7% (616) 79.1% (2927)	4.2% (N=156)	1.05
Leisure time percentage of the times in a bar/nightclub/party	0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%	47.2% (1745) 21.0% (776) 6.7% (248) 3.5% (129) 2.1% (77) 2.3% (86) 1.1% (42) 1.7% (64) 1.9% (72) 1.1% (40) 1.4% (51)	10% (N=369)	1.56
Meeting People Online	(1) Never (2) Less than once a month (3) At least once a month (4) At least once a week (5) Every day	39.1% (1446) 15.2% (561) 9.1% (335) 11.3% (419) 8.1% (300)	17.2% (N=638)	1.34
Sharing Location on Status	(1) Never (2) Rarely (3) Sometimes (4) Often	36.8% (1362) 27.7% (1025) 20.7% (764) 6.7% (249)	8.1% (N=299)	1.35
Marijuana Use	(1) Yes (0) No	27.0% (997) 65.7% (2430)	7.4% (N=272)	1.14
Times per week drunk	(1) 0 times per week (2) 1 time per week (3) 2 times per week (4) 3 times per week (5) 4 times per week (6) 5 times per week	66.1% (2446) 13.0% (480) 5.7% (211) 4.3% (158) 1.8% (66) 1.4% (50)	6.7% (N=247)	1.44

Variable	Coding	Percentages (N)	Missing Data	VIF
	(7) 6 times per week	0.6% (22)		
	(8) 7 times per week	0.5% (19)		
Own Gun	(1) No	59.7% (2207)	6.3%	1.14
	(0) Yes	34.1% (1260)	(N=232)	
Own Mace	(1) No	59.3% (2192)	7.8%	1.12
	(0) Yes	33.0% (1219)	(N=288)	
Private Profile	(1) No	24.2% (897)	6.8%	1.04
	(0) Yes	69.0% (2552)	(N=250)	

Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analyses are provided in Table 3 and 4. Chi-squares analysis (Table 3) were conducted on nominal variables, while correlations (Table 4) were conducted for ordinal/continuous variables. Table 3 shows a significant relationship between living alone, lifetime marijuana use, not owning a gun, or mace with VSC. Interestingly, there were no significant relationship between being female and VSC. Table 4 shows the likelihood of having experienced VSC was higher among respondents who reported frequently meeting people online (r=.26, p<0.001); who spent more time at a bar/nightclub, or party when relaxing or for leisure (r=.30, p<0.001), who shares their location when updating their statuses(r=0.24, p<0.001), and the more times they got drunk per week (r=.30, p< 0.001).

Table 3: Bivariate Analysis: Chi-Square Relationship between Independent Variables and Verbal Sexual Coercion

Independent Variable	Chi-Square	Significance	Percentages (N) (Total N)
Sex	0.22	0.634	
Female Male			16.56% (297) 15.95% (252) (N= 549)
Live Alone	25.95***	0.000	

Independent Variable	Chi-Square	Significance	Percentages (N) (Total N)
Yes No			23.22% (137) 14.72% (411) (N=578)
Lifetime Marijuana Use	369.57***	0.000	
Yes No			35.25% (344) 8.35% (199) (N=543)
Gun	54.26***	0.000	
No Yes			12.77% (271) 22.56% (275) (N=546)
Mace	61.28***	0.000	
No Yes			12.53% (265) 23.04% (271) (N=536)
Private Profile	3.23	0.07	
No Yes			14.37% (126) 16.97% (425) (N=551)

Note: p<0.5* … p<0.01** … p<0.001***

Table 4: Bivariate Analysis: Correlations Between Independent Variables and Verbal Sexual Coercion

Independent Variable	Correlations	Significance	N
Meeting People Online	0.26***	0.000	507
% Of Time in Bar/Nightclub	0.30***	0.000	530
Sharing Location Online	0.24***	0.000	546
Weekly Drunk Frequency	0.30***	0.000	551

Note: p<0.5* … p<0.01** … p<0.001***

Binary Logistic Findings

Table 5 shows all the Models assessing variables measuring Routine Activity Theory (RAT) and VSC across racial and ethnic groups. As seen below, *Model 1* includes respondents of all races and ethnicity; dummy variables were created for race and ethnicity and then stratified to create the remaining models to assess differences[*]; *Model 2*: NH Whites (1), others (0); *Model 3:* NH Black/African American (1), others (0); *Model 4*: NH Asians (1), others (0) *Model 5:* Hispanics/Latinx (1), others (0). Tables 6, 7, and 8 show the logistic regression results by each assumption of RAT to VSC. Table 6 only analyzes the relationship between the variables measuring motivated offenders and VSC; Table 7 analyzes the relationship between the variables measuring suitable targets and VSC, and lastly, Table 8 analyzes the relationship between variables measuring absence of guardianship and VSC. The purpose of separating in this manner is to see the relationship between the variables measuring RAT and VSC (Table 5) and individually (Tables 6 - 8).

Table 5, Model 1 (All Race/Ethnicity)

Model statistics reveal Model 1 was significant (586.37***) with a p-value of 0.000. The McFadden's pseudo-R^2 of 0.24 indicates that it is a good fit. As expected, results suggest females had 2.15 higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex. All variables measuring exposure to motivated offenders were significant. Those who live alone (OR = 1.36), the more time respondents meet people online that they are unlikely to meet in person (OR = 1.22), and the more time spent at a bar/ nightclub, or party during their leisure time (OR = 1.13) had higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex.

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[*] Due to multicollinearity and/or small sample size, individual analysis of NH Native Americans and Biracial was not possible

When addressing variables measuring suitable targets, all three variables were significant. Those who shares their location when updating their online status more often (OR = 1.33), the more times they were drunk during the week (OR=1.20), and those who smoked marijuana (OR=4.82) had higher odds of being verbally coerced. Lastly, only one variable was significant when looking at variables measuring absence of guardianship. Those who reported not having mace had a decreased odds of 0.72 in being verbally coerced into sex; not owning a gun or having their profile public were not significant.

Table 5, Model 2 (NH Whites)

Model summary statistics for Model 2 suggest the Model is significant (399.68***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R^2 of 0.25 indicates that it is a good fit. Female respondents, as expected, were significant in this Model. NH White females had 2.86 higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex. All variables measuring exposure to motivated offenders were significant for NH Whites. Those who live alone (OR=1.93), the more frequent respondents met people online that they are unlikely to meet in person (OR= 1.27), and the more time they spent at a bar/nightclub/ or party during their leisure time (OR=1.14) had higher odds of verbally coerced into sex.

All variables measuring suitable targets were also significant for NH White respondents. Those who more often shared their location when updating their online status (OR=1.35), the more times they spent drunk during the week (OR=1.17) and used marijuana (OR=5.21) had an increased odds of being verbally coerced into sex. Meanwhile, none of the variables measuring absence of guardianship – not owning a gun, mace, or having a public profile – were significant.

Table 5, Model 3 (NH Blacks/African American)

Model summary statistics for Model 3, show this model was significant (77.59***) with a p-value of 0.000. The McFadden's pseudo-R^2 of 0.29 indicates that it is a good fit. Females were not significant in the NH Black/African American model. When measuring exposure to *motivated offenders*, those who spent more time at a bar/nightclub, or party when relaxing or for leisure had a 1.19 higher odds of being verbally coerced. How often they met people online and living alone were not significant. When measuring *suitable targets*, those who reported getting drunk more often during the week (OR=1.52) and who used marijuana (OR=5.57) had higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex; sharing location when updating status was not significant. Lastly, when measuring *absence of guardianship*, we find that those who do not have their profile on private have 2.67 higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex.

Table 5, Model 4 (NH Asians)

Model summary statistics show this model was significant (54.90***) with a p-value of 0.000. The McFadden's pseudo-R^2 of 0.34 indicates that it is a good fit. Female was not significant in the NH Asian model. When observing exposure to *motivated offenders*, those who meet people online more often have 1.65 higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex. Living alone and percentage of time spent at bar/nightclub or party when relaxing or for leisure were not significant. When measuring *suitable target*, individuals who reported marijuana use also had higher odds (OR=3.70) of being verbally coerced into sex. Times drunk per week and sharing location when updating status were not significant in this model. While looking at *absence of guardianship*, those who do not own mace had a 0.31 decreased odds of reporting VSC. Not owning a gun or not having their profile private were not significant in this model.

Table 5, Model 5 (Hispanic/Latinx)

Model summary statistics show this model was significant (97.82) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R² of 0.26 indicates that it is a good fit. Females were not significant in the Hispanic/Latinx model. When measuring for exposure to *motivated offenders*, those who spent more time at a bar/nightclub, or party for leisure (OR=1.16) reported higher odds of experiencing VSC. Those who shared their location online (OR=1.55) more often and used marijuana (OR=3.73) had higher odds of being coerced while those who did not own mace had a decreased odds of 0.49 of being coerced into sex. Those not owning guns were almost significant at the (p<.052) value.

Table 5: Models Assessing Variables Measuring Routine Activity Theory and Verbal Sexual Coercion across Race and Ethnicity (NH: Non-Hispanic)

	Model 1: All Race/Ethnicity N = 2,750	Model 2: NH Whites N = 1,704	Model 3: NH Blacks N = 314	Model 4: NH Asians N=227	Model 5: Hispanics/ Latinx N = 425
Female	2.15*** (1.65, 2.80) (VIF:1.13)	2.86*** (2.02, 4.06)	2.15 (0.88, 5.20)	2.27 (0.73, 7.07)	0.95 (0.49, 1.83)
Motivated Offenders					
Live Alone	1.36* (1.01, 1.83) (VIF: 1.05)	1.93*** (1.32, 2.81)	0.49 (0.18, 1.31)	0.75 (0.21, 2.62)	0.76 (0.32, 2.83)
Meet people online	1.22*** (1.12, 1.34) (VIF: 1.34)	1.27*** (1.13, 1.44)	1.09 (0.81, 1.46)	1.65** (1.10, 2.46)	1.11 (0.87, 1.42)
Percentage of time in bar/nightclub/party for leisure	1.13*** (1.07, 1.19) (VIF: 1.56)	1.14*** (1.07, 1.22)	1.19* (1.02, 1.38)	1.21 (0.96, 1.52)	1.16** (1.03, 1.31)

	Model 1: All Race/Ethnicity N = 2,750	Model 2: NH Whites N = 1,704	Model 3: NH Blacks N = 314	Model 4: NH Asians N=227	Model 5: Hispanics/ Latinx N = 425
Suitable Target					
Sharing Location Online	1.33*** (1.16, 1.53) (VIF: 1.35)	1.35*** (1.13, 1.61)	1.16 (0.76, 1.77)	0.87 (0.44, 1.73)	1.55** (1.09, 2.20)
Weekly Drunk Frequency	1.20*** (1.10, 1.30) (VIF: 1.44)	1.17** (1.04, 1.32)	1.52** (1.16, 1.97)	1.23 (0.83, 1.83)	1.14 (0.93, 1.40)
Marijuana Use	4.82*** (3.79, 6.13) (VIF: 1.14)	5.20*** (3.83, 7.04)	5.57*** (2.52, 12.29)	3.70* (1.19, 11.49)	3.73*** (1.97, 7.03)
Absence of Guardianship					
Gun	0.81 (0.63, 1.05) (VIF: 1.14)	0.88 (0.64, 1.21)	0.78 (0.32, 1.88)	0.64 (0.19, 2.11)	0.52 (0.27, 1.01)
Mace	0.72** (0.56, 0.92) (VIF: 1.12)	0.74 (0.53, 1.01)	1.15 (0.50, 2.61)	0.31* (0.10, 0.90)	0.49* (0.25, 0.4)
Private Profile	1.10 (0.83, 1.45) (VIF: 1.04)	0.90 (0.62, 1.28)	2.67* (1.21, 5.88)	2.33 (0.70, 7.69)	1.17 (0.55, 2.47)

Table includes odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals ($p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$).

Model Statistics of Table 5

Model 1: All Race/Ethnicity	LC chi2: 586.37 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.24
Model 2: NH Whites	LC chi2: 399.68 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.25
Model 3: NH Blacks	LC chi2: 77.59 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.29
Model 4: NH Asians	LC chi2: 54.90 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.34
Model 5: Hispanics/Latinx	LC chi2: 97.82 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.26

Table 6: Models Assessing Variables Measuring Motivated Offenders and Verbal Sexual Coercion

Table 6, Model 1 (All Race/Ethnicity)

Table 6 looks at the overall association between motivated offenders and VSC. Model summary statistics show this model was significant (339.43***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R^2 of 0.13 indicates that it is a good fit. All variables measuring exposure to motivated offenders were significant in this model. Females (OR=1.71) were significant; females reported higher odds of reporting VSC. Those living alone (OR=1.36), meeting people online (OR= 1.41), and percentage of time spent in a bar/nightclub/ or party for leisure predicted higher odds of being verbally coerced (OR=1.25) were significant in the model; these respondents had higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex.

Table 6: Model 2 (NH Whites)

Table 6 shows Model was significant (247.84***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R^2 of 0.14 indicates that it is a good fit. Females (OR=2.22) had higher odds of being verbally

coerced into sex. All three variables measuring exposure to motivated offenders were significant for NH Whites. Living alone (OR=1.62), meeting people online (OR= 1.40), and percentage of time spent in a bar/nightclub/or party for leisure (OR=1.28) predicted higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex.

Table 6, Model 3 (NH Blacks/African American)

This Model was significant (30.87***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R^2 of 0.10 indicates that it is a good fit. For NH Black/African American respondents, females were not significant in the NH Black/African American model. When observing variables measuring exposure to motivated offenders, respondents who met people online more frequently (OR=1.39) and who spent more time at a bar/party/or nightclub (OR=1.23) were significant in the model. These participants had higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex. Living alone were not significant in this model.

Table 6, Model 4 (NH Asians)

The non-Hispanic Asian Model was significant (97.82***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R^2 of 0.26 indicates that it is a good fit. For NH Asian respondents, females and living alone were not significant in this table. However, when measuring for exposure of motivated offenders, meeting people online (OR=1.87) and time spent at a bar/nightclub for leisure (OR=1.27) were significant. Those who reported meeting online and spent more time at a bar/nightclub had higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex.

Table 6, Model 5 (Hispanics/Latinx)

The model summary statistics show this Model was significant (53.12***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R^2 of 0.26 indicates that it is a good fit. Females were not significant in the

Hispanic/Latinx model. Meeting people online (OR=1.41) and those who spent more time at a

nightclub/bar/ or party (OR=1.23) had higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex. Living

alone was not significant as well.

Table 6: Models Assessing Variables Measuring Motivated Offenders and Verbal Sexual
Coercion across Race and Ethnicity (NH: Non-Hispanic)

	Model 1: All Race/Ethnicity N = 2,903	Model 2: NH Whites N = 1,794	Model 3: NH Blacks N = 333	Model 4: NH Asians N = 239	Model 5: Hispanics/ Latinx N= 452
Female	1.71*** (1.36, 2.14)	2.22*** (1.65, 3.01)	1.20 (0.60, 2.36)	1.54 (0.60, 3.92)	0.99 (0.57, 1.71)
Motivated Offenders					
Live Alone	1.36* (1.05, 1.76)	1.62** (1.16, 2.26)	0.67 (0.30, 1.49)	0.71 (0.23, 2.16)	1.43 (0.73, 2.82)
Meet people online	1.41*** (1.31, 1.52)	1.40*** (1.27, 1.55)	1.39** (1.10, 1.75)	1.87*** (1.36, 2.57)	1.41*** (1.16, 1.71)
Percentage of time in bar/nightclub/party for leisure	1.25*** (1.20, 1.30)	1.28*** (1.22, 1.36)	1.23*** (1.11, 1.38)	1.27** (1.08, 1.49)	1.23*** (1.12, 1.36)

Table includes odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals ($p< .05$, ** $p< .01$, *** $p < .001$).

Model Statistics of Table 6

Model 1: All Race/Ethnicity	LC chi2: 339.43
	P value: 0.000***
	Pseudo R2: 0.13
Model 2: NH Whites	LC chi2: 247.84
	P value: 0.000***
	Pseudo R2: 0.14
Model 3: NH Blacks	LC chi2: 30.87
	P value: 0.000***
	Pseudo R2: 0.10
Model 4: NH Asians	LC chi2: 33.18
	P value: 0.000***
	Pseudo R2: 0.20
Model 5: Hispanics/Latinx	LC chi2: 53.12
	P value: 0.000***
	Pseudo R2: 0.12

Table 7: Models Assessing Variables Measuring Suitable Target and Verbal Sexual Coercion

Table 7, Model 1 (All Race/Ethnicity)

Model summary statistics show Model 1 was significant (540.86***) with a p-value of 0.000 and a pseudo-R² of 0.18 indicates that it is a good fit. When all race/ethnicity are included, all variables measuring suitable target are significant. Females (OR=1.69) were significant; they had higher odds of reporting verbal sexual coercion. Sharing their location online more often (OR=1.63), increased times per week drunk (OR=1.37), and marijuana use (OR=4.57) are significant in the model. Those who reported sharing their location online when updating status, increased frequency of days drunk per week, and marijuana use had higher odds of reporting being verbally coerced into sex.

Table 7, Model 2 (NH Whites)

Model summary statistics show Model 2 was significant (359.36***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R² of 0.18 indicates that it is a good fit. Females (OR=1.94) were significant;

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they had higher odds of reporting VSC. All three variables measuring *suitable targets* were

significant in this model. Those who reported sharing their location online when updating status

(OR=1.77), reported increased frequency of days drunk per week (OR=1.37), and used

marijuana (OR=4.36) had higher odds of reporting being verbally coerced into sex.

Table 7, Model 3 (NH Blacks/African Americans)

Model 3 was significant (67.63***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R^2 of 0.22

indicates that it is a good fit. Females were not significant in the NH Black/African American

model. Two of the three variables measuring suitable target were significant in this model.

Respondents who reported increased frequency of times drunk per week (OR=1.56) and

marijuana use (OR=4.85) had higher odds of reporting being verbally coerced into sex. Sharing

location online was not significant.

Table 7, Model 4 (NH Asians)

Model 4 was significant (38.66***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R^2 of 0.23

indicates that it is a good fit. Females were not significant in the NH Asian model. Out of the

three variables measuring suitable target, only two were significant. Respondents who reported

increased times drunk per week (OR=1.58) and marijuana use (OR=4.74), were significant.

Sharing location online was not significant for NH Asian.

Table 7, Model 5 (Hispanics/Latinx)

Model 5 was significant (84.40) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R^2 of 0.20 indicates

that it is a good fit. Females were not significant in the Hispanic/Latinx. However, all three

variables measuring suitable target, sharing their location online (OR=1.70), times per week

drunk (OR=1.31), and marijuana use (OR=5.18) were significant in the model. Those who

reported sharing their location online when updating status, reported increased frequency of days

and days accomplished drunk per week, and marijuana use had higher odds of reporting being

verbally coerced into sex.

Table 7: Models Assessing Variables Measuring Suitable Target and Verbal Sexual Coercion across Race and Ethnicity (NH: Non-Hispanic)

	Model 1: All Race/Ethnicity N = 3,303	Model 2: NH Whites N = 2,116	Model 3: NH Blacks N = 360	Model 4: NH Asians N = 246	Model 5: Hispanics/ Latinx N = 477
Female	1.69*** (1.36, 2.10)	1.94*** (1.48, 2.55)	1.03 (0.52, 2.06)	2.04 (0.78, 5.29)	1.28 (0.73, 2.23)
Suitable Target					
Sharing Location Online	1.63*** (1.46, 1.82)	1.77*** (1.54, 2.03)	1.32 (0.93, 1.87)	1.39 (0.79, 2.43)	1.70*** (1.28, 2.26)
Weekly Drunk Frequency	1.37*** (1.28, 1.47)	1.37*** (1.24, 1.51)	1.56*** (1.24, 1.95)	1.58** (1.16, 2.15)	1.31*** (1.12, 1.54)
Marijuana Use	4.57*** (3.70, 5.63)	4.36*** (3.37, 5.65)	4.85*** (2.44, 9.61)	4.74** (1.80, 12.45)	5.18*** (2.98, 9.02)

Table includes odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals ($p< .05$, ** $p< .01$, *** $p < .001$).

Model Statistics of Table 7

Model 1: All Race/Ethnicity	LC chi2: 540.86 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.18
Model 2: NH Whites	LC chi2: 359.36 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.18
Model 3: NH Blacks	LC chi2: 67.63 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.22
Model 4: NH Asians	LC chi2: 38.66 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.23
Model 5: Hispanics/Latinx	LC chi2: 84.40 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.20

Table 8: Models Assessing Variables Measuring Absence of Guardianship and Verbal Sexual Coercion

Table 8, Model 1 (All Race/Ethnicity)

Model summary statistics reveals Model 1 was significant (51.58***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R² of 0.02 indicates that it is a good fit. Regarding absence of guardianship, being female and not having their profile set on private were not significant in this model. However, not owning gun (OR=0.58) or mace (OR=0.55) were significant. Those who reported not owning a gun or mace had decreased odds of being verbally coerced into sex.

Table 8, Model 2 (NH Whites)

Model summary statistics show this Model was significant (10.32*) with a p-value of 0.03. The pseudo-R² of 0.03 indicates that it is a good fit. NH White respondents who disclosed not owning a gun (OR=0.69) or mace (OR=0.55), and not having their profile private (OR=0.73) were significant. Those who reported not owning a gun or mace or had their profile private had

decreased odds of being verbally coerced into sex. Females were not significant among in this model.

Table 8, Model 3 (NH Blacks)

Model was significant (21.77***) with a p-value of 0.00. The pseudo-R² of 0.13 indicates that it is a good fit. NH Black respondents who reported not owning a gun were significant in this Model. Those not owning a gun (OR=0.50) had decreased odds of being verbally coerced into sex. Female, not owning mace, and not having their profile private were not significant among NH Black respondents.

Table 8, Model 4 (NH Asian)

Model was significant (54.90***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R² of 0.34 indicates that it is a good fit. NH Asians who reported not owning a gun or mace were significant in this Model. Those not owning a gun (OR=0.35) or mace (OR=0.22) had decreased odds of reporting being verbally coerced into sex. Being female and not having their profile private were not significant here in the NH Asian model.

Table 8, Model 5 (NH Hispanic/Latinx)

Model was significant (30.82***) with a p-value of 0.000. The pseudo-R² of 0.07 indicates that it is a good fit. Among Hispanic/Latinx respondents, not owning a gun (OR=0.32) or mace (OR=0.55) were significant in the Model. Those who reported not owning a gun or mace had decreased odds of being verbally coerced into sex. Females and not having their profile private were not significant.

Table 8: Models Assessing Variables Measuring Absence of Guardianship and Verbal Sexual Coercion across Race and Ethnicity (NH: Non-Hispanic)

	Model 1: All Race/Ethnicity N = 3,249	Model 2: NH Whites N = 2,077	Model 3: NH Blacks N = 353	Model 4: NH Asians N = 248	Model 5: Hispanic/ Latinx N = 470
Female	1.02 (0.84, 1.24)	1.06 (0.83, 1.35)	0.81 (0.43, 1.52)	1.61 (0.65, 4.00)	0.87 (0.51, 1.47)
Absence of Guardianship					
Gun	0.58*** (0.48, 0.71)	0.69** (0.54, 0.89)	0.50* (0.26, 0.97)	0.35* (0.14, 0.87)	0.32*** (0.19, 0.54)
Mace	0.55*** (0.45, 0.67)	0.55*** (0.43, 0.70)	0.67 (0.35, 1.26)	0.22*** (0.09, 0.55)	0.55** (0.32, 0.94)
Private Profile	0.92 (0.73, 1.15)	0.73* (0.54, 0.98)	1.66 (0.89, 3.10)	2.09 (0.77, 5.62)	1.34 (0.73, 2.44)

Table includes odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals (* $p< .05$, ** $p< .01$, *** $p < .001$).

Model Statistics of Table 8

Model 1: All Race/Ethnicity	LC chi2: 51.58 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.02
Model 2: NH Whites	LC chi2: 10.32 P value: 0.03* Pseudo R2: 0.03
Model 3: NH Blacks	LC chi2: 21.77 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.13
Model 4: NH Asians	LC chi2: 54.90 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.34
Model 5: Hispanics/Latinx	LC chi2: 30.82 P value: 0.000*** Pseudo R2: 0.07

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study adds to the current body of literature surrounding sexual assault, more specifically verbal sexual coercion. Results here find unique and important findings. This study's major addition to current literature is the ability to stratify results by race/ethnicity. As previously mentioned, most sexual assault research overwhelmingly focuses on White vs. others/non-whites females. Additionally, this study moved beyond the sex binary (male vs. female) of traditional sexual assault literature by including race/ethnicity, allowing intersecting identities to be examined and solely focused on VSC. By doing so, this study was able to tease out more specific information about groups of people (e.g., NH White vs. NH Black/African women engaging in substance use). Violence against women research must intentionally include intersectional identities in their studies as intersectionality can help better understand how one's identity affects their daily life (e.g., NH White vs. NH Black vs. NH Asian vs. Hispanic/Latinx). Further, this study included more modern variables to measure RAT; for example, cyber behaviors were incorporated in the study as variables measuring aspects of RAT to allow the discovery of a possible new factors associated with VSC.

There were four hypotheses for this study. Hypothesis 1 suggested females would be more likely to be verbally coerced into sex than males. This study found being female was significant across several models; however, the significance did not hold when examining race/ethnicity and some aspects of RAT. While being female may be a predictive factor of being sexual assault this study indicates that race and ethnicity may be influential. Being female was only significant for NH White respondents but not for WOC in the overall association (Table 5). This is an interesting finding as previous research suggests WOC are at higher risk of being sexually assaulted than White women (Coulter et al., 2017; Basile et al., Smith et al., 2017). This

may be due to several reasons; one that comes to mind is the cultural differences. Previous studies suggest some victims of sexual assault may not disclose or acknowledge their assault as such due to taboo. It may be that some WOC in this study may not have understood or recognize it as an issue. Furthermore, same findings were provided regarding the relationship between VSC and motivated offenders (Table 6) and suitable target (Table 7); being female was only significant for NH Whites. However, previous studies have found that White women are more likely to be sexually assaulted if drugs/alcohol are involved. Finally, being female was not significant regardless of race/ethnicity with absence of guardianship (Table 8). Thus, the hypothesis was partially supported.

Hypothesis 2 highlighted variables measuring *motivated offenders*. It was hypothesized that respondents who live alone, spent more time at bars/nightclubs, or parties for leisure time, and were more likely to meet people online than in person had higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex. Results suggest support varied by race/ethnicity. Living alone was only significant for NH White respondents; NH White respondents had an increased risk of being verbally coerced into sex. Past research has found a correlation between living arrangements and victimization (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Schmeck & Risher, 2004). It may be that living alone may increase the likelihood of being sexually assaulted since there are no capable or willing guardianship present. This may also be indirectly related to the victim's socioeconomic status (SES). It is well known that WOC earn less than White women, so perhaps more White women lived alone compared to WOC in this study. As previously mentioned, someone who lives with acquaintances or family members may have lower odds of being victimized. However, it might be beneficial to place it as suitable target variable for future studies.

This study found that respondents who spent more time at bars/nightclubs, or parties had higher odds of reporting being verbally coerced into sex. However, this was only true for NH Whites, NH Blacks, and Hispanic/Latinx respondents. This is not surprising as previous research has found that active nightlife is associated with sexual assault (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Franklin et al., 2012; Sinozich & Langton, 2014). However, these findings are reflective of previous research looking at race/ethnicity, substance use, and sexual assault (Felson & Burchfield, 2004; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Stappenbeck et al., 2010; Paul et al., 2013). Lastly, this study finds that respondents who were more likely to meet people online than in person, reported higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex. However, this also varied by race/ethnicity. Regardless, the association between online exposure and victimization is not surprising. As we know, meeting people online may be dangerous. By connecting with unknown people, the victim is potentially at risk of unwanted contact by strangers. This also supports previous research suggesting that adding strangers as friends were predictive for unwanted contact/harassment (Reyns et al., 2011).

Next, hypothesis 3 highlighted variables measuring *suitable target*. It was hypothesized that respondents who shared their location when updating their status online, reported marijuana use, and reported more times drunk per week will have higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex. There was support throughout the analysis, but it varied by race/ethnicity. Results in the overall assessment indicate that sharing their location online was positively correlated with VSC among NH Whites and Hispanic/Latinx respondents. Though there may not be any explanations why there would be racial/ethnic differences, sharing ones' location online may potentially increase victimization. Depending how much victims share online, potential motivated offenders may view them as easy, suitable targets. Sharing their location online may not directly cause the

assault, but perhaps the offender is able to learn more about the victim or interact with them more often to gain their trust, and ultimately isolate them.

Past research has found a correlation between drug use/abuse and sexual assault (Paul et al., 2013; Stappenbeck et al., 2020; Flack et al., 2016; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Kavanaugh et al., 2014; Tanner et al., 2015; Basile et al., 2016). This study found the more times a respondent was drunk during the week and/or reported marijuana use had reported VSC. Like other variables, this also varied by race/ethnicity. NH White and NH Black respondents who reported being drunk more often during the week had higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex. However, marijuana use was positively significant across all models. In other words, respondents who reported marijuana use had increased odds of VSC, regardless of race/ethnicity This is not surprising as we know that substance use may inhibit awareness, decision making, and bodily function (i.e., may not be able to fight someone off). Out of all the variables, marijuana use had highest odds ratio compared to others. The data was recoded and analysis were conducted several times but similar results were found; it might be an odd finding among the dataset or perhaps there is more going on that was not measurable at this time. It may be worth further investigating the relationship between VSC and marijuana use.

Lastly, hypothesis 4 highlights variables measuring *absence of guardianship*. It was hypothesized respondents who did not own a gun, a mace, or had their profile private would have higher odds of being verbally coerced into sex. Previous RAT research finds that gun and mace are the most popular self-protective weapons owned (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003). Yet, this study found that most of the respondents, in fact, do not own a gun or mace. Nonetheless, this study finds that not owning a gun is insignificant regardless of race/ethnicity. Additionally, not owning mace or having their profile private was negatively correlated with VSC. It was

hypothesized that respondents not owning/having protective factors in place would increase the risk of being verbally coerced, however, this study suggest it is not the case. Respondents not owning mace or having their profile private had decreased odds of VSC regardless of race/ethnicity. These results follow Haynes et al. (2021) finding suggesting that lack of guardianship is not associated with sexual assault. Moreover, Tewksbury and Mustaine (2003) found that those who spent more time with strangers had decreased odds of using self-protection; this may be an area of research that needs to be explored in depth. Similar to marijuana use, I also recoded and ran analysis multiple times to look for any abnormalities in the data. Regardless, this was an interesting finding and one that future research should pay attention to better explain the relationship between the two.

In addition to an overall assessment between variables measuring RAT and VSC, this study also provides individual analysis to see the relationship with each RAT element with VSC independently. Although for RAT to occur, all three elements are needed. These smaller analyses were conducted to see how some variables may change throughout the analysis. When cross comparing tables and models, a few important observations were made. When looking at the three elements independently, it appears that variables measuring motivated offenders and suitable targets may best explain the relationship between being a WOC and VSC. However, when observing the overall association of RAT and VSC, suitable target appears to be the most promising to explain the relationship between VSC and WOC. Though this study may find support to explain VSC among WOC, there are more notable observations when looking at racial/ethnic differences. This may be due to cultural norms/values that do not acknowledge the possibilities of being VSC or the lack of reporting their experience(s) due to shame or guilt (Women of Color Network, 2009; Maier, 2012; Koo et al., 2015).

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Strengths and Limitations

Although this study enhances current literature, it is important to discuss the strengths and limitations. First, this study adds to the literature by analyzing VSC, a sexual tactic less studied, the sample is community-based (unlike most sexual assault literature focusing on IPV and/or college students) and had a high response rate. This study also adds to the literature by using Routine Activity Theory to predict the likelihood of VSC and expanding RAT variables to include cyber behaviors. Most importantly, this study expands current literature by including WOC; this dataset had sufficient racial and ethnic diversity sample. While previous studies have historically used White vs. Others or Non-White, this study was able to group racial and ethnic groups to include NH White, NH Black/African Americans, NH Asian, and Hispanic/Latinx respondents. Although this dataset also had limited responses from individuals who identified as Native American or Biracial, there were not enough cases (i.e., small cell size or multicollinearity) to run an individual analysis, which brings us to the limitations of this study. When discussing race and ethnicity, it is important to note that it may become complex in research to group participants. Though this study was able to separate racial/ethnic groups, I am also aware that there may be differences between groups; for example, Hispanic/Latinx respondents. For this study, I was able to separate Non-Hispanics and Hispanics, however, I was not able to separate Hispanics by racial identity. Therefore, this study analyzed the community as a whole (ethnic group/cultural group) vs. by race (Black Hispanic/Latinx, White Hispanic/Latinx, Mestizo, Afro-Latina, Indigena, etc.).

Other limitations of this study are that it uses cross-sectional data, it is self-reported, and sex is only measured as male and female. Cross-sectional data are collected during a specific time. Therefore, observing behaviors or changes over time is not possible. Given that the data is collected during a specific time, data may also not be representative. Next, self-reported data

may also have some disadvantages. Results can be under or overreported. While there are many

advantages to self-reporting data when studying sexual assault, it is important to note that

victims may also be embarrassed or shameful of their experience. They may not disclose

important information needed for the study and may be bias, which may impact the results.

Lastly, this study measured sex as male and female only. This serves as a limitation since it

limits participants and is not inclusive of everyone beyond the male/female binary.

 Further, there is no offender/victim relationship data. Knowing that VSC is highly correlated

with IPV, it would be important to see the relationship in this study. Next, previous studies

suggest a high correlation between sexual assault, drug use and alcohol consumption. Although

this study supports that finding, it was impossible to know if the victimization was before,

during, or after their drug and alcohol use and whether their substance use was a predictor or

coping mechanism. Lastly, a critique worth highlighting is the theory used. This study added to

the literature by using and expanding the theory to use cyber behavior; however, it is important

to note that this theory can be perceived as victim-blaming. Theoretically speaking, the victim

engaged in certain activities increasing their chances of victimization (Pratt & Turanovic, 2016).

This is another critical aspect to consider in sexual assault studies researchers need to address.

Future Research

Future research should continue looking at different racial and ethnic groups. National

surveys indicate other racial and ethnic groups have higher rates of sexual victimization (i.e.,

Native American/American Indian), yet they are rarely included. This study intended to analyze

Native Americans and Biracial respondents, but it was not possible due to multicollinearity

and/or low cells. Studying other racial and ethnic groups is critical as minorities may face

different barriers and issues dealing with their assault. More specifically, it is also important to

consider differences within groups. For example, most studies I came across with regarding Latinas primarily focused on Mexican/Chicanas while most Asian research focused on Korean women. The Hispanic/Latinx community is not homogenous and although we may have similar values, there are very distinct cultural differences among the community (Caribbean vs. Central America vs. South America; White Latina vs. Afro-Latina vs. Indigena). Similar recommendations should be considered for other marginalized groups, such as the Asian community.

Sex/gender, sexual orientation, religious practices/beliefs, and drug use should also be considered for future research. As previously mentioned, this study was limited to male and female; future studies should expand on gender identity and include the LGBTQ+ community as studies suggest higher rates of sexual victimization. Future studies should also examine the relationship between VSC and religious practices/beliefs. Previous studies have found religious affiliations are positively correlated with rape myths/rape culture (Barnett, Sligar, & Wang, 2018; Brown-Iannuzzi, Golding, Gervais, Wasarhaley, Lunch, & Bainter, 2021). This may also enhance research related to marginalized racial and ethnic groups as religion may be of importance, as see among the Hispanic/Latinx community. Another important area research should expand on is the relationship with drugs and alcohol (used before, during, or after VSC). Research yields mixed findings as to whether drugs and alcohol are a consequence of sexual assault or a risk factor. Although this study found support between marijuana/alcohol use and VSC, it was not possible to see if participants engaged in substance use before, during, or after their assault. If possible, research should also expand on the types of substances used.

Lastly, future studies should consider providing translation and using other theoretical lenses. Translation may help researchers enhance their study and field by translating

surveys/questions to targeted groups. This study found an association between VSC and RAT, but other theories could include social disorganization, minority stress theory, or intersectional theory to move beyond the traditional gender binary of sexual assault literature. It may be beneficial to stratify analysis by race/ethnicity *and* gender to supplement an intersectional framework.

APPENDIX: UCF IRB

IRB Approval

Elizabeth Mustaine <libby@ucf.edu>
To: Ketty Fernandez; Ketty Fernandez <Ketty.Fernandez@ucf.edu>
Wed 7/20/2022 10:49 AM

Hello. To Whom it May Concern:

I received IRB approval for my research project. This approval extended to myself and my research assistants. Ketty Fernandez was a research assistant for this project and the data she used for her dissertation were the data collected for this project. So, the IRB approval extends to Ketty's research.

Let me know if you need any additional information!

Elizabeth Mustaine

Elizabeth E. Mustaine, Ph.D.

Professor and Chair
Department of Sociology
University of Central Florida

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https://sciences.ucf.edu/sociology/

University of
**Central
Florida**

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Elizabeth E. Mustaine**

Date: **November 19, 2015**

Dear Researcher:

On 11/19/2015, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Modification Type:	Protocol revision; recruitment revision and survey revision.
Project Title:	Routine Activities and Lifestyles: In General and Online
Investigator:	Elizabeth E. Mustaine
IRB Number:	SBE-14-10699
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	n/a

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Kanielle Chap

IRB Coordinator

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