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STORYLINES OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT IN URBAN

NIGHTLIFE: THE IMPACT OF INDIVIDUAL DISPOSITION AND SOCIAL

CONTEXT

by:

Philip R. Kavanaugh

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

Winter 2010

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ABSTRACT

The primary purposes of the current research are: (1) to examine how individual disposition and social context in criminal offending and victimization, and (2) examine this relationship in understudied crime locations – in this study, urban nightlife venues (i.e., bars and nightclubs). These social contexts provide a major source of leisure activity for numerous young adults today but remain an understudied hot-spot in mainstream criminology, despite the fact that levels of crime and victimization associated with these scenes is regarded as widespread and increasing. Examining crime and victimization in this increasingly popular socio-cultural context has the potential to expand the scope of criminology by accounting for settings and populations not sufficiently addressed in prior work. Theoretically I draw on the recently proposed storyline approach outlined by Robert Agnew.

Using storylines as an analytical framework, I posit that as an individual enters certain social contexts, situations will arise that lead to opportunities for crime, deviance, and victimization. Whether outcomes such as physical and sexual assault occur depend on the three factors: (1) a certain individual disposition – which includes more static characteristics influenced by one's background, as well as more ephemeral characteristics such emotional state and role identity, (2) a social context or spatial location that is either conducive to or prohibitive of criminal outcomes, and (3) a confrontation or situation that arises where an individual makes certain behavioral choices. Depending on the

confluence of these three factors, some individuals will engage in crime, some will become victims, and others will either experience non-criminal outcomes or walk away from potentially dangerous situations.

In order to provide empirical support for this thesis I use multi-method ethnographic data to construct: (1) storylines about respondent experiences with physical and sexual assault, (2) identity profiles to identify key dispositional or "background" factors, and (3) contextual profiles detailing the organization and atmosphere of the social spaces in which their criminal and victimization experiences occurred. The analysis then pairs 1-3 into what kind of combinations resulted in physical and sexual assault, and reveals the contribution of each of the three factors specified: situation, disposition, and context. This dissertation is a secondary analysis of a previous ethnographic study on which this author served as the primary research assistant/co-investigator. All analyses are based on information collected in this 2005-2006 ethnographic study

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The purposes of this research are: (1) to examine the relationship between individual disposition and social context in criminal offending and victimization, and (2) to examine this relationship in understudied crime locations – in this study, leisure establishments (i.e., bars and nightclubs). Night-time entertainment spaces such as bars, lounges, and nightclubs in the downtown sections U.S. in cities such as Washington DC, Philadelphia, and New York have become premier destinations for young people looking for to interact in the pursuit of leisure and sexual courtship (Grazian 2007). These newly emerging leisure economies (Chatterton and Hollands 2003) are in part the result of post-Fordist effort to re-brand cities as sleek and exciting sites of cultural consumption (Tepper 2009) catering to youth and young adults. They are also associated with a modern wave of urban economic renewal, providing new opportunities for business, tourism, and service sector employment. However, in addition to tangible cultural and socio-economic benefits, the growth of a nightlife-centered leisure industry has also resulted in a number of serious social problems.

A voluminous and growing literature has consistently revealed that bars nightclubs, lounges, and other public spaces of commercialized entertainment are important social locations in which to examine a number of different criminal offending

and victimization outcomes (Bellis et al. 2007; Cohen, Gorr, and Singh 2003). Urban bars and other nightlife venues have come under increased scrutiny by local, state, and federal authorities for being noisy, socially disruptive breeding grounds for drug use and sales (Owen 2003), as well as being conducive to interpersonal crimes such as physical and sexual assault (Johnson 2001; Mosler 2001). Roughly 22% of the violent victimizations reported in 2005 took place while the victim was participating in nightlife activities such as clubbing or bar-hopping (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006). Research has found that bars, taverns, and nightclubs are significantly more prone to physical assault (Graham and Wells 2001; Graham et al. 2006; Graham, Wells, and Jelley 2002; Hopkins 2004; Lipton and Gruenewald 2002), sexual assault and harassment (Buddie and Parks 2003; Parks et al. 1998), as well as drug use and sale (Anderson et al. 2007; Cohen, Gorr, and Singh 2003) than other social locations, either public or private.

Although bars nightclubs, and lounges are important social locations that provide a major source of leisure and entertainment activity for numerous young adults today, they remain an understudied hot-spot in mainstream criminology; this despite the fact that the level of crime and victimization associated with these scenes is generally regarded as widespread and increasing (Anderson, Hughes, and Bellis 2007; Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006; Cohen, Gorr, and Singh 2003). Examining the dynamics of criminal offending and victimization in these increasingly popular socio-cultural spaces has the potential to expand the scope of criminology by accounting for settings and populations not sufficiently addressed in prior theory and research.

This study is a secondary analysis of a previously funded National Institute of Justice (NIJ) research project (NIJ grant # 2004-IJ-CX-0040) on which the author of this proposal worked as the primary research assistant to Principal Investigator Dr. Tammy L. Anderson. The goal of the funded project was to explore the alcohol-drugs-crime (ADC) relationship in the urban nightlife scene in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In brief, the study found that causal models developed in prior ADC research were not applicable to contemporary user populations, that the ADC relationship was far more contingent on social context than previous models had suggested, and that the nature and extent of the relationship varied substantially by the type of scene one was a part of. What the previous study did not address, however, was how individual-level, or "dispositional" factors may place persons at differential risk for criminal offending and victimization, and how contextual factors may exacerbate or attenuate such risk. Simply put, the objectives of the previously funded study did not target issues related to how individual disposition and social context shape criminal and victimization outcomes. However, during the course of the original analysis, we found ample evidence on the impact of each of these two broad factors in shaping such outcomes. As such, the current study provides a unique opportunity to answer an entirely new set of research questions that have major implications for criminological theory, policy-makers, law-enforcement officials, as well as crime prevention programming and education.

The main research questions I seek to answer are: (1) what are the specific storylines of physical and sexual assault in urban nightlife? (2) What are the specific individual-level "dispositional" factors that shape storylines of physical and sexual

assault? (3) What are the specific contextual influences that shape storylines of physical and sexual assault? (4) Do the dispositional or contextual factors that shape storylines of physical and sexual assault vary for either of these outcomes? If so, how? (5) How do individuals manage physical and sexual assault victimization risk in these social locations?

In the remainder of this chapter I review the research literature on physical and sexual assault, paying specific attention to how these kinds of criminal outcomes occur in public spaces, in particular, nightlife venues such as bars and nightclubs. I also review literature on how individual-level factors and social context shape offending and victimization outcomes. Finally, I detail the theoretical and analytic framework used to guide the current study, as well as the background literature that this framework is derived from.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT RESEARCH

Physical Assault. Most of the research on physical assault has addressed instances occurring primarily among males, where strong negative emotions linked to interpersonal disputes provide the necessary justification for violent behavior (Hughes and Short 2005; Luckenbill 1977; Wilkinson 2002). Such outcomes are also strongly correlated with substance use, particularly alcohol consumption (Hobbs et al. 2003; Leonard, Collins, and Quigley 2003; Graham and Wells 2001; Graham, West, and Wells 2000). Nationally, between 33 and 40 percent of violent crime in a given year is somehow related to alcohol consumption (Bureau of Justice Statistics 1998, 2006) and a substantial portion of alcohol-related violence has been found to occur in nightlife settings (Walker et al. 2006).

Research has found that higher alcohol sales at bars and clubs are associated with an increased likelihood that attendees will commit a number of alcohol-related offenses (Graves et al. 1982; Stockwell 2001), with physical and sexual assault among the most likely (Buddie and Parks 2003; Hobbs et al. 2003; Leonard, Collins, and Quigley 2003). The ability of policy makers and law enforcement officials to effectively deal with these problems is hampered by the fact that the majority of incidents are not reported to the police (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2003).

Research indicates that gender role norms such as male honor and masculine status reinforce both criminal behavior and substance use, particularly with respect to alcohol use and aggressive behavior at bars and nightclubs (Graham and Wells 2001; Graham and Wells 2003; Graham, Wells, and Jelley 2002; Graham et al. 2006; Norstrom 1998). That is, young males view both violence and excessive substance use as proof of masculinity, and engaging in such acts constitutes "normal" or "expected" behavior (Gorman and White 1995; White and Gorman 2000) and in some cases, even functions as a form of status attainment or face-saving behavior (Deibert and Meithe 2003; Graham and Wells 2003; Polk 1999). This proclivity toward violence is further normalized by involvement with deviant peers (Akers 1998; Warr 2002). In some cases, violent and aggressive behavior can become, for all intents and purposes, a social obligation. Such exaggerated performances of masculinity are particularly salient among younger men, when other, more conventional avenues for expressing masculinity are not readily available.

Sexual Assault. In addition to physical assault, there is a growing literature indicating that bars and nightclubs are leading locations for sexual assault outcomes such as rape, attempted rape, stalking, and other forms of sexual assault and harassment (Anderson et al. 2007; Buddie and Parks 2003; Fox and Sobol 2000; Graham and Wells 2001; Graham, West, and Wells 2000; Parks et al. 1998; Parks 2000). Research has identified numerous individual-level factors that help explain sexual assault, including drug and alcohol use (Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall and Koss 2004; Felson and Burchfield 2004; Sherley 2005), criminal propensity and personality variables (Leonard, Collins, and Quigley 2003; Lussier, Proulx, and LeBlanc 2005; Sherley 2005), attitudes and perceptions regarding sexual assault myths, and the victims history of interpersonal relationships (Mohler-Kuo, Dowdall, and Koss 2004; Sherley 2005). Females wearing extremely revealing clothing or behaving provocatively are also more likely to attract predatory responses by males looking for an "easy lay" (Fox and Sobol 2000:444). Research has also found that rates of victimization vary by race and ethnicity and social class (Abbey 2005; Abbey et al. 2004; Bachman and Saltzman 1995; Tadjen and Thoennes 1998), with minorities and low income individuals at higher risk for victimization.

Researchers studying gender specific drinking behaviors have found that intoxicated female patrons may experience a higher likelihood of predatory sexual and coercive actions (Herd and Grube 1993), particularly if they do not have a visible companion or capable guardian such as a significant other or sizeable group of friends. Likewise, drink specials and discounts intending to attract female patrons also function to

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encourage heavy drinking and subsequently, increase the risks for interpersonal victimization, as well as other form of victimization such as petty theft (Anderson et al. 2007). Research indicated that most instances of sexual assault and harassment in these social settings tend to occur during "peak hours" (between 12:00-2:00 am), when levels of intoxication among all patrons, men and women, tend to be the highest (Fox and Sobol 2000).

GENDER, CRIME, AND VICTIMIZATION

The fact that men and women tend to be victims of very different types of interpersonal crimes (physical versus sexual assault) has important conceptual significance for the current work. Previous research has suggested that some variants of masculinity are related to criminal propensity, and that this at least partially explains the higher rate of crime committed by men versus that of women. Much of this research has suggested that the reason for this relationship is that the traditional masculine gender role inherently encourages the attitude of proving one's manhood by engaging in criminal activities. As noted earlier, engaging in crime or violence as a form of gender accomplishment is particularly likely by young men, who, as "emerging adults" (Arnett 1994, 2000) often lack other outlets in which to accomplish masculinity (such as career prestige or ambition), and who adhere to amplified versions of traditional gender roles (termed hypermasculinity) (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Messerschmidt 2004; Mullins 2006).

Sociologists of gender have long noted that gender is not simply a static internal trait but rather that it is created or performed within specific contexts and situations

(Butler 1990; West and Zimmerman 1987). Criminologists have begun to incorporate the concept of gender as fluid and situationally determined, thus offering a somewhat different take on masculinity and crime, suggesting that men who engage in violence may do so not necessarily because crime is regarded as a way to express masculinity, but rather because they are reacting to perceived threats, or challenges, to their masculinity in certain situations (Deibert and Meithe 2003). Such threats operate as a motivation for men to situationally assert their masculinity, through violence and other forms of crime, in a variety of social contexts (Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009; Copes and Hochstetler 2003; Deibert and Meithe 2003).

In addition to playing a role in shaping physical assault, the notion of masculine performance also has implications for understanding the processes contributing to sexual assault victimization. In addition to positive attitudes toward violence, one of the key characteristics attributed to hypermasculine men is having unsympathetic sexual attitudes toward women and the approval of sexual aggression. Prior research on sexual assault and harassment has described how young men engage in semi-private rituals and behaviors designed to reinforce a collective sexism, boost confidence in hypermasculine performance, and reinforce notions of heterosexual power (Grazian 2007; Martin 2001; Martin and Hummer 1989), and moreover, that this kind of camaraderie tends to reinforce intensely misogynistic attitudes conducive to hostile forms of sexism and sexual assault. While one of the most salient contexts for this kind of gender construction and performance is urban nightlife venues (Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009; Grazian 2007),

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there are other contextual factors that have been theorized to shape interpersonal crime events such as physical and sexual assault. These will be discussed below.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Routine Activities. One of the most prominent and enduring frameworks guiding research on criminal offending and victimization in social environments, or contexts, is routine activity theory (RAT) (Cohen and Felson 1979; Felson 1994). RAT posits that crime and victimization result from the confluence of three factors: (1) a suitable target is available (person, object, or place), (2) the lack of a suitable guardian to prevent the crime from occurring (police, security, or parents), and (3) a motivated offender who is either tempted or provoked. If a target is not sufficiently protected, and if the reward is worth it, crime will happen. Crime does not need to be perpetrated by chronic offenders or convicted felons. Rather, crime will occur if there is an opportunity available. The theory is related to Matza's (1964) notion of "drift," wherein individuals are theorized to drift from conventional activities to illegal ones, and back again

RAT has been used to explain crime related to drug and other illegal marketing in urban neighborhoods as well as with alcohol-related physical and sexual assault in nightlife spaces. Prior research by Roncek and Meier (1991) found that bars, clubs, and taverns are particularly attractive situational locations for crime because they bring together motivated offenders (ex: drug dealers), suitable targets (ex: persons under the influence of alcohol and drugs), and lack of effective guardians (ex: insufficient social control in and around such venues). As Fox and Sobol (2000:433) note, "place characteristics, such as the desirability and accessibility of targets found within the

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facility, are especially important when viewed in conjunction with the guardian notion... This assumption rests on the postulate that a setting may tolerate or encourage certain behavior insofar that the offender may not necessarily be the most important actor in the activity, since it is those who interact with offenders who may play a larger and more immediate crime prevention function." This research suggests that the atmosphere of bars and nightclubs often normalize the commission of interpersonal crimes such as physical and sexual assault. As Cohen and Felson (1979:591) note, "by their very nature, these social spaces enhance target suitability, by either attracting offenders or rendering people significantly more prone to victimization." Alcohol plays a key role in shaping these outcomes (Anderson et al. 2007; Fox and Sobol 2000), as intoxicated patrons are regarded as easy targets both inside and immediately outside of these venues. Moreover, urban nightlife venues are typically housed in city centers, often in neighborhoods where crime rates tend to be higher than other city locales.

Crime Hot-Spots. As with routine activity theory, our understanding of crime contexts have been advanced by the examination of "hot spots" – that is, social locations that are particularly prone to instances of crime and victimization (Sherman 1995; Weisburd 2002). Most place-specific studies on crime suggest certain proximal features of areas can be used to explain the spatial and temporal distribution of crime. However, this research fails to illuminate the specific reasons as to why social locations such as nightclubs and bars are more criminogenic than others. Beyond observing that one area has a greater rate of criminal activity compared to another, little insight is offered. Consistent with the routine activities literature, the likelihood of criminal offending and

victimization is far higher when people engage in activities that increase the likelihood of actual proximate contact between potential offenders and victims, and where levels of supervision are low (Cohen and Felson 1979; Felson 1994; Lasley 1989). Some of the social contexts that share these characteristics are urban nightlife venues. Such places create more opportunities for contact among members of traditional heavy drinking groups, such as young, single men and women who view these scenes as opportunities to meet and interact with others sharing similar interests and lifestyles.

The Uniqueness of Nightlife Contexts. There are a number of physical and social features of particular public spaces or other social locations that could either deter or attract potential offenders and offending activities. So, what are the particular physical and social features of urban nightlife venues that might give rise to physical and sexual assault incidents? Generally, these places tend to be poorly or dimly lit, poorly policed (in terms of quality and quantity of security staff) crowded with patrons, and filled with young single people with a propensity toward either casual or more severe alcohol or drug use.

Research on nightlife spaces in both the U.S. and internationally has found that violence is more likely to occur in an environment that is crowded, untidy, noisy and smoky (Graham et al. 1998), has poor ventilation (Quigley et al. 2003), employs poorly trained staff and security personnel (Graham et al. 2004), aggressive door supervisors (Homel and Clark 1994), and has an overall attitude of social licentiousness or permissibility (Homel et al. 2004), especially with regard to the encouragement of binge-level alcohol consumption (Anderson et al. 2007). An atmosphere of sexual competition

can further increase the likelihood of physical aggression among men in these settings (Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009; Graham et al. 2006), while intoxication also renders women more susceptible to the risk of sexual violence and harassment (Mustaine and Tewksbury 1998, 2002; Parks and Miller 1997; Testa and Parks 2006). Additionally, densely clustered alcohol outlets such as bars and nightclubs, poor availability of public transportation, and loitering near venues after closing time have also been identified as factors that increase the likelihood of violent encounters (Donnelly et al. 2006; Homel et al. 2004; Weitzman et al. 2003).

While research on crime and specific social contexts has identified several general factors increasing the likelihood of aggression, as Felson (1997) notes, the bulk of the research in both the U.S. and the U.K. fail to consider an important conceptual point. That is, perhaps the individuals who regularly frequent such venues are different in some manner from those who are more likely to stay home or frequent less risky social locations. Perhaps, as Felson states, "those who like to take risks, who seek excitement, who are present oriented, or who use more alcohol may have more active night lives. Such people are also likely to be less inhibited in their social behavior. They may be more likely to engage in aggression, deviance, and other [such] behaviors" (Felson 1997:209). It is important to remember that criminology has long made the argument that individual behavior is important in shaping both offending and victimization outcomes (Deibert and Meithe 2003; Felson 1997; Hentig 1948; Luckenbill 1977; Wolfgang 1958).

INDIVIDUAL DISPOSITION

Social locations such as bars and nightclubs are not strictly determinants of ones' individual behavior (LaFree 2007). Rather, they simply provide the social settings and contexts wherein individuals make behavioral choices. This is a significant point, because it introduces notions of individual motivation, personality, and background variables, as well as the notion of individual choice and decision-making (Nagin 2007), into understanding offending and victimization. When examining crime and victimization in specific social locations, it is necessary to examine why individuals make the choice to engage in crime, how they become victims, and more generally, what factors influence them to choose activities where greater risk of criminal involvement exists. This entails the examination of literature on the "lifestyles" of criminal offenders and victims, as well as a number of key individual-level and "background" factors.

Demographic and Lifestyle Factors. First, there are several key social and demographic characteristics that have been consistently linked to involvement in criminal offending and victimization. Briefly, they are gender, age, social status, and race. Research indicates that males are 50 percent more likely than women to experience physical assault, whereas females; particularly college-aged females; are far more likely to be victims of sexual assault (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006). With regard to age, young people are at a far greater risk for involvement in both offending and victimization than older people. The likelihood of either diminishes steadily after the age of 18, and drops off rapidly after the age of 25 due in large part to the individual developing increasing stakes in social conformity, such as marriage, childbirth, or highly desirable

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employment opportunities. Those who are at or below the poverty level are also more likely to be involved in crime and experience victimization than those who are from the middle or upper-middle classes. With respect to race-ethnicity, blacks and Hispanics tend to experience higher levels of victimization than do whites, although most studies contend that this relationship is spurious, and is more a function of racial inequality, and the attendant socioeconomic stratification, and further shaped by neighborhood conditions. Moreover, the race differential has moved close to convergence in more recent years (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006).

Simply, certain types of individuals are engaged in certain lifestyles that are conducive to involvement in crime and victimization. For example, teenage males have a much higher likelihood of involvement in criminal behavior because of their lifestyles. They spend a great deal of time hanging out with peers pursuing recreational fun, experimenting with drugs and alcohol, and so forth (Jensen and Brownfield 1986). These types of lifestyle risks often continue well into young adulthood. The linkage between victimization and delinquent behavior during adolescence and adulthood and the fact that victims and offenders share similar demographic profiles and lifestyle characteristics have been well documented (Chen 2009; Gottfredson 1984; Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo 1978; Jensen and Brownfield 1986; Lauritsen, Sampson, and Laub 1991; Osgood et al. 1996; Sampson and Lauritsen 1990; Stewart, Elifson, and Sterk 2004). For example, college students who spend several nights a week attending parties or going out to bars and clubs to drink alcohol and socialize are far more likely to experience physical

and sexual assault incidents (Fisher et al. 1998), both as victims and as offenders than others their age who make different lifestyle choices.

One of the primary individual-level/lifestyle factors associated with involvement in interpersonal offending or victimization such as physical or sexual assault is the abuse of alcohol. Data on the rates of alcohol use by offenders at the time of an offense provide strong support for the alcohol-violence relationship (Collins and Messerschmidt 1993; Roizen 1993). In a study of incarcerated offenders, Collins and Schlenger (1988) found that acute episodes of alcohol abuse (binge drinking) better predict violent offending than sustained, chronic use. Additionally, laboratory studies have found that acute intoxication from alcohol is related to aggression, especially when an individual is provoked (Bushman 1997; Lipsey et al. 1997). This increased aggression from alcohol intoxication in the laboratory is explained in terms of alcohol's psychopharmacological properties that increase one's propensity for aggression. Abuse of alcohol tends to result in reduced intellectual functioning, reduced self-awareness, disinhibition, and the inability to accurately perceive, and appropriately react to, environmental risks (Chermack and Giancola 1997; Ito et al. 1996; Parker and Auerhahn 1998).

Research also indicates that victims of physical and sexual violence are highly likely to have used alcohol to the point of intoxication (Auerhahn and Parker 1999; Collins and Messerschmidt 1993; Dansky et al. 1997; Lasley 1989; Miczek et al. 1994; Mustaine and Tewksbury 1998; Slade et al. 1997; Testa and Parks 1996). Indeed, both statistical and experimental research has found that when people consume alcohol they become more aggressive, more likely to violate social norms, less aware of risks, and less

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likely to take precautions to avoid those risks (Graham et al. 2000; Steele and Josephs 1990). Some have argued that drinking may actually play a causal role in victimization because it leads to provocative or risky behavior (McClelland and Teplin 2001).

With respect to gender, research suggests that men are far more likely to become both victims and offenders of physical assault by engaging in provocative behaviors as a result of alcohol intoxication than women (Felson and Burchfield 2004; McClelland and Teplin 2001). Other work has found the women are equally likely to become aggressive and violent as a result of alcohol use (Deibert and Meithe 2003), and moreover, that they are at a higher risk for sexual victimization as a result of their alcohol intoxication. The reasoning is that others view women who drink alcohol excessively as violating traditional gender role expectations, and that a violent or aggressive response to this kind of disregard for traditional gender norms can be regarded as a form of social sanctioning and control on the part of the man (Blume 1991; Brownmiller 1975; Dobash and Dobash 1979; Koss et al. 1994).

In a review of the literature, Graham and colleagues (1997) identified a number of proposed explanations that can account for the link between alcohol and aggression. Generally speaking, these explanations are related to: (1) the psychopharmacological effects of alcohol; (2) the atmosphere of the drinking environment; (3) personality, attitudes or other expectations of the drinker; and (4) the expectations and attitudes of others present in the establishment (related to point (2)). So, while research indicates that alcohol use increases aggression in a direct manner (related to the effects of the substance), it is important to stress that these effects are further influenced by the

characteristics of both the drinker and the environment in which alcohol is consumed (Graham et al. 2000; Parker and Auerhahn 1998).

Background Factors and Disposition. The role of basic demographic factors and the use of alcohol provide a solid foundation for understanding why certain segments of the population whose lifestyle and associated behaviors increase ones' chance of being involved in physical or sexual assault, either as an offender or a victim. However, there are three additional factors that also shape the likelihood of involvement in crime and victimization. They are: (1) the influence of deviant peer networks (Akers 1998; Haynie and Osgood 2005; Sutherland 1947; Warr 2002), (2) family factors such as poor parenting or strained relationships with one's caregivers (Hay 2001, 2003), and (3) the role of social psychological strain (Agnew 1992, 2001), that can be related to both peer and familial relationships. The confluence of these factors is believed to create an individual disposition that increase one's propensity to engage in criminal behavior. Two of these factors – family management and peer associations – represent key aspects of the socialization process in childhood, adolescence, and even into young adulthood key to shaping one's individual disposition. This occurs largely through the development of conventional or unconventional social bonds, as well as by shaping one's self concept, or their social identities.

Peer Influence. Criminologists have long suggested that association with delinquent peers is one of the most important predictors of criminal behavior (Burgess and Akers 1966; Sutherland 1947). Warr (2002) has called peer influence "the principal proximate cause of criminal conduct" (p. 136). Although peer associations have been

consistently specified as one of the primary factors leading to criminal outcomes, traditional or "pure" theories of peer influence (see Akers 1998; Sutherland 1947; Warr 1993, 2002) are problematic. Temporal ordering is a key limitation, with critics asserting that the relationship between crime and peer association is spurious rather than causal (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). The point of contention concerns whether peers make a unique contribution to participation in criminal behavior (Burgess and Akers 1966; Sutherland 1947; Warr 2002) or if the underlying cause is simply due to homophily – that is, individuals selecting deviant others to associate with because they engage in deviance in the first place. Rather than asserting the primacy of either peer influence or more "stable propensity" characteristics (ex: impulsivity, low self-control) in the development of criminal behavior, research suggests that these factors influence each other reciprocally over the period of criminal involvement (Elliott, Huizinga, and Ageton 1985; Elliott and Menard 1996; Hayine and Osgood 2005; Matsueda and Anderson 1998; Thornberry 1987).

Research also suggests that the relationship between peer association and behavior varies across groups and settings as a function of age. Peer influence is more important to those individuals who do not initiate criminal behavior until mid-to-late adolescence (referred to as "late starters", or "adolescence limited" offenders; see Coie and Miller-Johnson 2001; Moffitt 1993; Simons et al. 1994); Other studies also suggest that peer influence plays a more central role in both the initiation and exacerbation of late-onset offending (Elliott and Menard 1996), whereas early onset offending is more closely related to family management factors. For example, lack of effective parenting

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may afford one the opportunity to interact more liberally with peers, who then encourage or reward deviance. Two other factors shaping the relationship between peer influence and behavior are biological sex (Warr 2002); with males being more susceptible to the influence of deviant or criminally involved peers; and the social structure of the particular peer group – that is, whether the group is a gang, informal peer network, or dyadic friendship (Thornberry 1998). The stronger the relationship between peers, the more likely they are to influence one another.

Family Management. Family management refers primarily to the socialization processes and practices of parents, including the degree of warmth and attachment between parents and children (see Sampson 1992 and Furstenburg et al. 1999). This research has been guided by a wide array of theories – most notably social control theory (Hirschi 1969; Sampson and Laub 1993), self-control theory (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990), symbolic interactionism (Matsueda 1992; Heimer and Matsueda 1994), differential association/social learning (Akers 1998), and social psychological strain theory (Agnew 1992, 2001). Although these theories differ in terms of their domain assumptions and the causal factors that they emphasize, they generally agree about which family management factors should be most predictive of delinquency. This research notes that individuals commit fewer delinquent acts when (1) they have a strong emotional bond with their parents (Cernkovich and Giordano 1987; Sampson and Laub 1993; Wright and Cullen 2001), (2) they are exposed to consistent supervision and discipline from their parents (Baumrind 1966, 1967; Hay 2001, 2003; Hirschi 1969; Lazerere and Patterson 1990), (3) are reinforced when they engage in pro-social behavior (Catalano

and Hawkins 1996; Huang et al. 2001), and (4) are exposed to consistent, fair, and nonphysical parental discipline (Cohen and Brook 1995; Kandel and Wu 1995; Laub and Sampson 1988). These factors reduce the likelihood of criminal behavior primarily by facilitating the internalization of conventional norms. Each of these factors relates to what Sampson (1992) has termed "under the roof" childrearing. That is, they deal with the processes that take place principally within individual families.

Identity and Strain. The discussion of identity-related strain and its application to crime necessitates an examination of Agnew's (1992) social psychological or general strain theory (GST), as well as several other theories of identity related strain and deviant coping responses. The premise of GST is straightforward. Individuals experience strains – defined as disliked events or social conditions (Agnew 2006) – and these strains increase negative emotions (anger, frustration, depression, etc.), which increases the likelihood that individuals will engage in crime or deviance in an attempt to reduce negative feelings. Agnew also posits that individuals vary in the extent to which they are likely to engage in criminal behavior as a result of strain. He notes that the likelihood of invoking crime as a coping response is contingent on a variety of social factors, including access to particular social resources. For example, access to conventional social supports, such as responsible parents or other influential adults (school teachers, extended family members), will decrease the likelihood of a criminal response (Mazerolle and Maahs 2000), whereas access to delinquent or drug-involved peers will increase it (Elliot et al. 1985; Kaplan 1975).

Key to understanding the way strain can negatively impact identity and result in a criminal response is the reflected appraisal process – a key component in the development of the self concept (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934). In the reflected appraisal process, significant others communicate their perceptions of us, and this in turn impacts the way we view ourselves. When there is a discrepancy between one's self-appraisal and a reflected appraisal, the result is an interruption in the "identity control," or self-verification process (Burke 1991). When such a discrepancy occurs, it results in an identity disruption, which signals incompatibility between ones view of themselves and their perception, drawn from the reflected appraisals. An identity disruption can be conceptualized as a form of strain, and can lead to negative emotions such as distress (Burke 1991), or anger and hostility (Cast and Burke 1999), which then influence behavior.

Other scholars have argued that these kinds of identity disruptions can influence criminal and deviant behavior as the result of more complex and dynamic processes that can potentially be more serious and promote long-term involvement in crime and deviance. As identity disruptions inevitably lead to personal and social marginalization as a result of ego identity discomfort and one's loss of control in defining or managing their identity (Anderson 1994, 1998) in accordance with socially proscribed or acceptable norms. The specific types of stressful experiences that can result in identity discomfort and personal/social marginalization include parental divorce (Anderson 1994, 1998; Anderson and Mott 1998), the death of a close friend of family member, frequent geographic relocation, and physical abuse or punishment by caregivers (Baumrind 1966,

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1967; Hay 2001, 2003), among others. As paradigms such as general strain (Agnew 1992) and cultural identity theory (Anderson 1994, 1998) suggest, criminal or other deviant behaviors such as drug abuse then function as "coping responses," enacted to reduce the feelings of strain associated with identity discomfort.

Choice and Emotion. As mentioned earlier, situations and social contexts, by themselves, do not *cause* behavior (LaFree 2007). They may simply provide attractive locations and suitable opportunities for motivated individuals to act. Individuals will actively select certain social contexts, and whether these contexts are conducive to crime is often linked to individual-level "background factors" such as personality, peer networks, and social identity. This is a particularly important point, because it introduces the notion of human agency (the decision-making process) and choice into notions of criminal and deviant behavior (Nagin 2007). Choice involves two things: first, a "rational" calculation of the costs or benefits of making a certain behavioral decision. Before choosing to commit a crime, the reasoning individual evaluates the risk of apprehension, the seriousness of the expected punishment, the value of the behavior, and their immediate need to engage in the behavior. A "rational" calculation of this type is considered with regard to the routine activities variables articulated by Cohen and Felson (1979).

The second factor in making behaviorally-oriented choices is emotion, and the role of emotion in crime causation has been addressed extensively in criminological theory. Emotions such as frustration, anger, and depression are key factors in strain theory, both the classic and general variants (Agnew 1992; Cloward and Ohlin 1960). In

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these theories, however, "emotion only explains the disposition of the individual for crime… emotion in these theories describes a long-term state of being…not a momentary state of arousal" (Nagin 2007:265). By and large, criminologists have not focused on the decisions individuals make while in particular states of emotional arousal. Such emotional states can be triggered by a number of different factors, such as alcohol and drug use or heightened states of sexual arousal (Ariely and Loewenstein 2006; Nagin 2007) and can exert a strong effect on decision-making processes. Emotional arousal may also alter perceptions of risk or sanctions, effectively nullifying any kind of rational calculation the individual would otherwise engage in. This also suggests that long-standing "stable propensity" characteristics that criminologists often measure e.g., (low-self control) fail to capture the "aroused emotional states that often accompany criminal behavior" (Nagin 2007:266).

RECONCILING DIVERSE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

For roughly the last half-century, criminology has theorized about the influence of dispositional factors such as one's level of self-control (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990), strain (Merton 1938; Agnew 1992), their family background (Cernkovich and Giordano 1987; Hirschi 1969) involvement with deviant peers (Sutherland 1947; Warr 2002), as well as the role of substance use and abuse (Becker 1963; Goldstein 1985) as relevant to explaining criminality. In more recent decades, many criminologists have turned their attention to the impact of environmental factors such as crime "hot-spots" (Sherman 1995), capable guardianship (or lack thereof) (Cohen and Felson 1979), the unique aspects of certain social environs (particularly alcohol outlets) (Fox and Sobol 2000), as

well as the dynamic performance of gender (in particular masculinity) in various social contexts (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Martin and Hummer 1989) as central to understanding crime and victimization.

While all of these theories and perspectives have certainly advanced knowledge with respect to our understanding of criminal involvement and victimization, it is clearly apparent, at least to me, that each of these theories has only a piece of the puzzle. In particular, the emphasis on the importance of one variable (for example, deviant peer involvement) over another (for example, the experience of strain), has ensured that much criminological research has failed to adequately address the dynamic, processual dimensions of offending and victimization. I argue that such events are the result of both dispositional AND contextual factors, and that it is important to consider the way in which the factors articulated by the various theoretical perspectives discussed earlier work in unison to shape interpersonal crime events. The notion of the storyline (Agnew 2006) would prove useful in this regard.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Agnew's (2006) recently proposed storyline approach provides a new and timely way to better understand the impact of individual disposition and social context in shaping physical and sexual assault incidents. According to Agnew (2006), "storylines" refer to key events or conditions that increase the likelihood that certain individuals will engage in crime. The crux of the theory is straightforward: an event occurs that negatively impacts the individual; for example, in terms of increasing strain or reducing self-control. The individual then attempts to resolve the issue, often through the

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commission of crime. Whether crime or deviance is invoked as a response is dependent on a number of interrelated factors, such as interaction with an aggressor or potential victim, the emotional state of the offender, or contextual-level factors such as lack of effective guardianship and other variables that shape opportunity such as time of day (or night), the physical location of the potential target, and the characteristics of the physical and social space where the crime will occur.

The storyline approach builds on the criminal event perspective, which posits that a comprehensive explanation of crime must address all of the aforementioned factors: interaction, offender's disposition, and the environment in which the crime occurred (Meier, Kennedy, and Sacco 2001; Sacco and Kennedy 2002). The storyline approach also draws on Short's (1998) work on individual interactions leading up to crime, as well as notions of "accounts" or "neutralizations" of criminal behaviors (Sykes and Matza 1957). However, storylines are broader in scope as they encompass interactions with others, the settings for interaction, particular accounts or neutralizations, as well as individual (dispositional) characteristics of the offender. Storylines appear in qualitative accounts, and several studies have described more common storylines leading up to certain types of crime, particularly interpersonal violence (Hughes and Short 2005; Luckenbill 1977; Miethe and McCorkle 2001; Tedeschi and Felson 1994; Wilkinson 2002).

Agnew (2006) identified five different types of storylines, each conducive to specific kinds of criminal or deviant outcomes. Given the fact that this study is examining interpersonal crimes such as physical and sexual assault, only four of these storylines are

potentially applicable to this research. They are (1) an unresolved dispute or status threat, in which the individual faces some pressure to respond with violence or aggression, (2) brief, but close involvement with criminal others, in which the individual is particularly compelled to "go along" with these criminal others, (3) a brief, but tempting opportunity for crime, in which the opportunity for crime is fleeting, and the individual feels particularly compelled to take advantage of it, and (4) a temporary break with conventional others and/or institutions, in which these conventional others or institutions lose their ability to function effectively (ex: corrupt police, lax parenting, etc.). It is important to mention that individuals may experience more than one storyline at a time, that one storyline may contribute to another, or that storylines may interact with one another. For example, temporary breaks with conventional norms may be more likely to lead to crime when other storylines come into play, like unresolved disputes or status threats. Agnew also notes that storylines may be useful in explaining desistance from crime.

While Agnew's storyline approach is an important part of this study, two points should be emphasized. First, Agnew's five storylines function simply as generic typologies, and were based on a meta-analysis of qualitative criminological research. Second, much of the work Agnew drew upon was research conducted with gang members or other, more chronic offenders that were incarcerated for serious, violent felonies, including homicide (e.g. Short 1998; Hughes and Short 2005). Generally speaking, the physical and sexual assault incidents I am examining in this study are of the misdemeanor variety (with several notable exceptions), and the offenders and victims are

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not chronically involved recidivists. Most resemble the types of offenders that Matza (1964) described, who drift between conventional and deviant behavior. Finally, and most importantly, this study is not an empirical test of any of Agnew's storylines, or of the utility of his general theory. Rather, I am using storylines as an approach, or a narrative tool, to examine how dispositional and contextual factors shape storylines of physical and sexual assault.

The storyline approach is advantageous as it offers the potential to link background and contextual factors due to reliance on narrative data (the stories and accounts of offenders), rather than forcing pre-existing analytic frameworks onto those involved in crime. Both individual and contextual explanations of crime and victimization identify important variables that shape criminal events, but what I seek to understand is the convergence between these two levels of explanation; how does one level of explanation shape the other, and how can they be integrated to better understand criminal offending and victimization events.

Moreover, this dissertation expands upon Agnew's storyline framework in several important ways. First, Agnew notes that storylines can last anywhere from several minutes to several weeks, eventually becoming a part of one's individual background. If the storylines leading to crime can last for weeks or even longer, it would logically follow that a more rigorous and thorough exploration of one's individual background, beyond the events of the past few days or weeks, would shed additional light on their criminal propensity. As such, this study elaborates on the role of "background factors" in greater detail, by examining the impact of several key individual-level factors related to familial

experiences, peer group experiences, involvement with alcohol and drugs, and amount of time spent engaged in the pursuit of leisure. Second, while Agnew indeed lays some promising groundwork for using storylines in understanding criminal offending, he does not extend his insights to the notion of victimization. If offenders have storylines, it logically follows that the victims of crime would as well. Accordingly, an important contribution of this work is the exploration of victims' storylines. Ultimately this provides a better understanding of how the social processes contributing to victimization may be similar to, or different from, those of offenders.

With these ideas in mind, I use a modified version of Agnew's (2006) storyline approach to examine the link between individual disposition and social context in developing a better understanding of criminal offending and victimization. I address how background factors such as family structure, peer networks, and identity formation result in certain dispositions conducive to crime and deviance, thereby placing individuals at differential risk for involvement in physical and sexual assault, both as offenders and as victims. Central to this analysis is a focus on social context, and the situational factors that contribute to these outcomes. The reasoning is as follows: As an individual enters certain social contexts, situations will arise that lead to opportunities for crime and victimization. Whether such outcomes occur depend on the confluence of three factors: (1) a certain individual disposition – which includes more static characteristics influenced by one's background, as well as more ephemeral characteristics such as ones emotional state, (2) a social context or location that is either conducive to or prohibitive of these kinds of criminal and victimization outcomes, and (3) a confrontation or situation that

arises wherein individuals make certain behavioral choices, or are subject to the behavioral choices of others. Depending on any or all of these three factors, some individuals will engage in crime, some will become victims, and others will either experience non-criminal outcomes or walk away from potentially dangerous situations.

Organization of the Dissertation

In the following chapter, I describe the data and methods used in this research. I draw on interviews with 51 individuals active in the two major nightlife scenes in the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I also draw on direct observations of 33 nightlife events in this same city, in order to better understand the unique contextual and situational influences that shape physical and sexual assault offending and victimization. I discuss my findings in chapters three, four, five, six, and seven. In Chapter three I discuss the patterns of criminal offending and victimization found among the respondents in the sample, and furthermore, how these patterns relate to basic demographic factors such as age and gender. I also discuss respondent patterns of alcohol and drug use. In Chapter four, I use the interview data to identify storylines of physical and sexual assault, in terms of both offending and victimization. In Chapter five I use interview data to establish profiles for those respondents that reported physical and sexual assault storylines. These profiles specify the role of the dispositional, or, background factors that contribute to physical and sexual assault outcomes. In Chapter six I use interview and direct observation data to specify the contextual factors that shape the physical and sexual assault storylines of those in the sample. In Chapter seven I discuss the tactics individuals use to manage physical and sexual assault risk when frequenting nightlife venues. I

conclude in Chapter eight by summarizing the findings, the implications for

criminological theory, and end with some suggestions for crime prevention policy and

directions for future research.

Chapter 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The data for this study were drawn from a multi-method ethnographic study of the alcohol-drugs-crime (ADC) connection in two separate but overlapping urban nightlife scenes in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The original ethnographic study drew primarily on (1) 51 interviews with respondents with active night lives, and (2) direct observation of 33 diverse nightlife events in the city of Philadelphia. I served as the primary research assistant on this project, interviewing roughly half of the respondents and performing roughly half of the direct observations, as well as data analysis and writing/dissemination of the initial research findings (see Anderson et al. 2007). The current study is a secondary analysis of the original ethnography. In this chapter I will provide information on the research site (the city of Philadelphia), the interview and direct observation processes, and demographic information on the respondents and the venues where direct observation took place. I conclude by describing the approach to data analysis, and how concepts were generated.

For the current study, I used the interview data to construct: (1) storylines of respondent's experiences with physical and sexual assault (both offending and victimization), and (2) identity profiles of 51 respondents to operationalize key individual-level or "dispositional" variables that contributed to offending or victimization

outcomes. Both the interview and direct observation data were then used to create

contextual profiles of the organization and atmosphere of the social spaces in which

physical and sexual assault outcomes occurred. I amassed storylines, identity profiles,

and contextual profiles from the same data used in NIJ grant # 2004-IJ-CX-0040

(approved by University of Delaware IRB). These data were further analyzed for this

study in order to create storylines of physical and sexual assault, and to determine the

contribution of each of the factors specified in Chapter one; disposition, context, and

situation; and the extent to which they contributed to offending and victimization

outcomes.

The Research Site

Philadelphia is the largest city in Pennsylvania and the fifth largest in the United

States (U.S. Census Bureau 2007). It has been referred to as a "black and white" city,

comprised mostly of U.S.-born African and European Americans, although the city's

Latino and Asian populations have increased substantially over the past 20 years and are

continuing to grow. The most recent U.S. Census data substantiates this characterization.

At the 2007 U.S. Census estimates, of the city's roughly 1.4 million residents, 42.7%

were White, 43.8% Black or African American, 5.4% Asian, roughly 6.2% from other

races and 1.6% from two or more races. 14.7% were Latino or Hispanic of any race, most

hailing from Puerto Rico and increasingly, Mexico.

In the city of Philadelphia, four neighborhoods host the vast majority of nightlife

events and are generally regarded by residents as the city's night time entertainment

hotspots. The first neighborhood is *Old City*, which is situated on the east side of center

city/downtown, near the historic district and a key destination for general tourism.

Located here are smaller clubs, bars, and lounges geared mostly toward over 21-year-old

clubbers from inside the city or surrounding suburban areas in southeastern Pennsylvania

(e.g., Ardmore; Conshohocken; West Chester), as well as southern/central New Jersey

and northern Delaware. A second major nightlife area is *Rittenhouse Square*, which is

located on the west side of center city/downtown. It boasts the city's major private

employers and retail shops. Nightlife venues here are also small, but cater to a somewhat

wealthier and local crowd than many of the venues in Old City. Rittenhouse Square clubs

are almost exclusively 21+ venues with few exceptions. A third major neighborhood for

nightlife was in *Northern Liberties*, which houses some of the city's largest nightlife

venues and is located on the northeast side of the city. This area features diverse types of

events and a variety of club goers. Many venues allow 18-20 year olds entry, employing

different alcohol rules for adults and minors. The majority of the nightlife venues in the

Northern Liberties area commercially oriented. The fourth major nightlife area is housed

on Philadelphia's riverfront area and is simply referred to as *Riverfront*. It lies just east of

the Northern Liberties area and is less residential than any of the other three

neighborhoods, while spanning a larger geographic area. Like Northern Liberties,

Riverfront's nightlife venues are large and commercially-oriented. They also feature a

large number of out of town attendees, mostly from southern/central New Jersey,

including Camden, Cherry Hill, and Trenton.

A key point of distinction between the nightlife venues in the Riverfront/Northern

Liberties areas vs. the Old City/Rittenhouse Square areas related to the venue's hours of

operation. The majority of the city's after-hour events take place in the large-scale

commercial venues in Northern Liberties and Riverfront areas. This generally means at

2:00am, when most bars and nightclubs in the city close, many people in Old City and

Rittenhouse Square venues spill over into Riverfront and Northern Liberties area in order

to consume more alcohol and continue to "party" (Anderson 2009; Kavanaugh and

Anderson 2008).

Recruitment and Interviews

Subject recruitment involved two methodological strategies: (1) ethnographic

mapping and (2) maximum variation sampling (Morse 1998; Strauss and Corbin 1990).

The first step involved mapping or identifying certain areas or locations where numerous

potential subjects could be located. The second step used a maximum variation sampling

strategy, which included a process of purposely selecting a heterogeneous demographic

group (race/ethnicity and gender) of respondents and observing their similarities and

differences (Morse 1998). Initial recruitment was performed by two staff members of an

independent record store in Philadelphia who were well-established in the Philadelphia

nightlife, and had ready access to a vast network of scene participants. The store served

as something of a hub for nightlife culture, and numerous events were advertised in-store

through the use of flyers. These particular store staff members had served as key

informants for a prior ethnographic project examining the decline of the rave scene in

Philadelphia (see Anderson 2009). For this reason, gaining entre' into the Philadelphia

nightlife scene was relatively uncomplicated.

Recruiting subjects in this manner closely resembled a snowball sampling technique, and featured a heavy reliance on subjects recruited from these two staff members' extensive friendship networks, which, while diverse in terms of personal background and social class standing, were somewhat racially homogenous. To help protect against this kind of recruitment bias, and in order to secure more variation in types of participants recruited, the research staff also recruited subjects "live" during direct observation of nightlife events. When recruiting respondents live at events, the researchers engaged potential respondents with pleasant small-talk, and after rapport had been established, a brief discussion about the research project, followed by an invitation to participate.

Interviews were subsequently arranged at private locations in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. The majority of the interviews were conducted in a private office of the store where recruitment was initially based. Live recruitment at nightlife events yielded some respondents, but fewer than anticipated. The researchers had a particularly difficult time recruiting Asian and Hispanic females. To address this problem, two more project staff members were hired. Another at the music store where recruitment initially began, and another employee working at a nearby record store specializing in rap and hip-hop. Doing this helped ensure a reasonable representation of participants active across a broad range of nightlife events.

Table 2.1. Sample Characteristics.

(N=51)	Number	%
Gender		
Men	26	51
Women	25	49
Age		
18-21	9	17.6
22-25	17	33.3
26-29	19	37.2
30-33	6	11.7
Primary race[1]		
White	16	31.4
Black	21	41.1
Asian	10	19.6
Hispanic	4	7.8
Education level		
High school diploma or equivalency	15	29.4
Some college (1-2 yrs., 2-yr. degree, current student)	22	43.1
Bachelor's or master's degree	14	27.5
Primary employment		
Professional, business, and clerical	18	35.3
Retail and personal service	8	15.7
Skilled or unskilled labor	8	15.7
Other	4	7.8
Unemployed and/or current student	9	17.6
Income level[2]		
$60-80K	3	5.9
$45-59K	3	5.9
$30-44K	8	15.7
$20-29K	14	27.4
$19K or below[3]	11	21.6

1 Eleven of the respondents were of mixed racial or ethnic background (as determined by the race of
   their parents), and were assigned a primary race category based on how they self-identified.
2 Income data is annual, and was provided for 45 of the 51 respondents. Six respondents were
   unemployed (3 in college) and not earning an income at the time of the interview. The income
   level counts do not include data for those six.
3 Five of those earning less than 19K annually were students finishing college degrees, working
   unskilled part-time jobs, or part-time internships. These individuals can therefore be characterized
   as upwardly mobile, and their income bracket does not necessarily reflect their social class
   standing.

Table 2.1 provides a detailed demographic breakdown of the respondents. While the respondent pool ($N = 51$) was roughly equal in terms of gender (26 men, 25 women), it was comprised of a larger number of blacks ($N = 21$) compared to whites ($N = 16$). Other major racial groups were fairly well-represented as well (Hispanics $N = 4$; Asians $N = 10$). Overall, the sample closely represents the racial and ethnic composition of the city of Philadelphia, despite an underrepresentation of Hispanics. The mean age was roughly 25 years, with an age range of 18 to 33 years. The mean income was $33,470 annually, with an annual income range of $14,650 to $80,000 for those who were employed full-time, or approaching full-time (35 or more hours per week). Respondents were situated in the lower- to upper-middle classes. Level of employment spanned from low to mid-level service positions (ex: waitress, bartender, retail, and file clerk), to white collar positions (ex: advertising/marketing, finance, IT support, engineer, research, and middle management).

The majority of respondents in both scenes have had some education at the college level ($N = 36$). Additionally, roughly one-fifth of the total sample was in the process of completing a 4-year or advanced degree. Of those who reported their living situations, 76% were renting their residences, most sharing an apartment or house with one or more roommates, and many had changed residences numerous times in the past several years. Most respondents were native to Philadelphia or the surrounding metropolitan area, although some relocated to the area to attend college, or for other reasons. Nearly all of the respondents were heterosexual ($N = 50$), and 48 were

unmarried. Although roughly half of the sample had significant others, very few lived with them.

Face to face, in-depth interviews lasted an average of two hours each, with a range of 1.5 – 3.5 hours. All respondents were paid a $25 honorarium for the interview, and signed a consent form. The interview guide included structured, open-ended questions about the respondent's background, living situation, involvement in and commitment to nightlife, and experiences with drugs, criminal activity, and victimization. Questions on criminal behavior were specific, and asked about experiences across a broad range of offense categories, including theft, vandalism, and drug use. The open-ended nature of the interview allowed participants to frame their responses according to their own thoughts and beliefs about relevant concepts and relationships. Research staff probed for clarification and elaboration, and occasionally followed up with questions not included in the interview guide in order to address other relevant issues as they emerged, particularly issues related to criminal or deviant behavior that occurred earlier in life, or more general drug use and offending/victimization trends in Philadelphia nightlife more generally.

Direct Observation

Attendance at nightlife venues largely defined respondent experiences with offending and victimization in these social contexts, and further reveals how they react to and deal with either engaging in crime, or becoming victims. The purpose of the direct observation component of the study was to obtain information on the organizational (social and physical) structure of these social spaces and to further document how social

context can impact individual behaviors, in terms of encouraging or discouraging criminal outcomes.

A total of 33 events were attended. The time period of observation was between 11:00 pm and 2:00 am; when most nightlife occurs. Some venues had extended hours alcohol licensing, so certain events did not end until between 3:00 and 6:00 am. These events were observed for a longer period of time. Events were selected for direct observation based on a comprehensive listing in the "DJ Nights" nightlife entertainment section of the *Philadelphia City Paper*, which routinely listed over 200 nightlife events in a given week in the city of Philadelphia (O'Neil 2004). Events were also nominated by respondents, or the staff members/key informants affiliated with the project. All direct observations were documented in pocket-sized field journals at the event, and a second, more interpretive version of those notes was recorded the following day on a computer. This allowed for additional elaboration and reflection on direct observation experiences shortly after they took place. When writing field notes, members of the research team included descriptive as well as inferential information. Any researcher-attendee interactions were also documented, including interview recruitment attempts. Most of the inferential information was recorded when the second iteration of field notes was generated. Recording inferential information was important in describing the setting and observed situations in as much detail as possible (Wolfinger 2002).

Table 2.2 provides a breakdown of direct observation of nightlife events. One of the major goals of the initial ethnography was to perform a comparison of the hip-hop (HH) and electronic dance music (EDM) scenes in terms of deviant outcomes, but for the

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purposes of this research, the primary distinction is that of commercial vs. underground

(which will be discussed in detail later in this dissertation), rather than a comparison of

the EDM and HH music genres. The term *commercial* refers to large events at nightlife

venues that appeal to popular mainstream music interests and styles and are heavily

marketed and promoted. These types of events feature music played on commercial radio

or that which is otherwise widely recognized (hits of the 80s and 90s, etc.). *Underground*

nightlife events refer to smaller events held at smaller venues. These kinds of events

appeal to those with either a strong interest in local artists, or other small-scale, more

independent/experimental music not available in more conventional outlets, or for those

who have a strong connection to performers at these venues, or an organizational interest

or stake in hosting these kinds of events. Many of the attendees at underground events

were also amateur musicians or performers.

Table 2.2. Direct Observation of Nightlife Events.

Event Type	# Attended	Mean Hrs. Observed
Commercial EDM	10	4.5
Commercial HH	5	3
Underground EDM	9	3.5
Underground HH	5	3
Commercial (undefined genre)	4	3.5
Total/Mean	33	3.5

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study was the offending or victimization event. Researchers advocating similar approaches to study interpersonal crimes such as physical and sexual assault (see Fagan and Wilkinson 1998; Felson and Steadman 1983; Hepburn1973; Katz 1988; Kennedy and Sacco 1996; Lofland 1969; Luckenbill 1977; Miethe and Meier 1994; Short 1998; Short and Strodbeck 1965) all take the criminal event, or, the interactive exchange that occurs between offender and victim, as the unit of analysis. As such, the current research is part of the literature extending the focus beyond offenders and their motivations to include a multitude of other factors that may play a large role in the occurrence of criminal and victimization events (Kennedy and Sacco 1996).

Although the theoretical foundation for this study is on attaining a better, more holistic understanding of the processes by which physical and sexual assault events occur, previous studies have rarely used data that provide clear temporal sequencing of actions during the event. Instead, most researchers (see Luckenbill1977; Polk 1999; and Felson and Tedeschi 1993) have relied on cross-sectional data that contain correlates of various criminal situations and ultimately infer the underlying temporal processes. A similar approach is used in this study: offending and victimization events and their correlates were attained using ethnographic data, relying heavily on individual accounts of these events (given during the interviews), and further piecing together contextual information using direct observation data.

Dependent Variables

I examined two outcomes, or, dependent variables: (a) instances of physical and sexual assault *offending* behavior in the last 5 years, and (b) instances of physical and sexual assault *victimization* experiences in the last 5 years. The "last 5 years" was designated as a time frame that respondents could be reasonably expected to recall. Respondents were asked to report their experiences with physical and sexual assault both in the context of urban nightlife, as well as in other social contexts. For both the offending and victimization outcomes, self-reported, retrospective accounts were the two primary measures used. The physical assault variable refers to instances of simple assault, commonly described by respondents as "fighting." In some instances, these incidents escalated to aggravated assault, but such cases were uncommon. In terms of sexual assault, it should be stressed that I am not referring to forcible rape. Rather, I am referring to all instances of unwanted sexual contact, forcible and otherwise. In most instances, this entails groping and fondling of the breasts and buttocks, or other forcible sexual behavior other than penetration with the penis.

Data on whether respondents had witnessed physical and/or sexual assault in urban nightlife or other places was also used for this study. Respondent data on witnessing criminal or deviant acts was used to provide additional information on the influence of social context and other structural/situational factors in shaping physical and sexual assault events. Data on witnessing violence has been used in prior work on routine activities/lifestyle factors and opportunities for crime (see Felson 1997), so its use here is not unprecedented. This section of the interview on crime and victimization was

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completed after rapport was established to ensure a greater likelihood of disclosure (Lee and Renzetti 1990).

Analysis

A grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin 1990) was used to generate the key concepts (variables) that contributed to offending and victimization outcomes. Once general causal mechanisms were identified, they were carefully operationalized. All interview transcripts and direct observation notes were coded using the qualitative software program *ATLAS.ti*. Additional coding and sorting was done by hand. The analysis plan consisted of four (4) phases. First, the respondent interview transcripts were coded for physical and sexual assault offending and victimization outcomes, as well as other kinds of offending and victimization experiences (e.g., robbery; theft; drug sale), and finally, for alcohol and drug use behavior throughout the life course (from middle or high school to present). Coding for these additional types of criminal and/or victimization experiences was done in order to better establish possible patterns of more generalized deviance, which, if observed, would constitute an important part of ones' individual disposition or personal background. This entailed coding the last third of the interview transcripts, where respondents were asked about their experiences with drug use, crime, and victimization (note: most of this material had been coded and analyzed during the preparation of the final grant report to NIJ; see Anderson et al. 2007. However, the data were further analyzed for this project).

Second, storylines of physical and sexual assault offending and victimization were created. Storylines were defined as any incident of physical or sexual assault that

was discussed in detail sufficient enough to provide data related to individual level behavior, as well as the context in which the incident occurred (i.e., a first-person *account* of offending or victimization). As respondents were asked about their experiences with offending and victimization in the last five years, the most detailed accounts typically referred to events that had happened the most recently; generally in the past year or two. Respondents were often able to recall incidents that occurred between three and five years ago, but generally speaking, not in a sufficient amount of detail. However, there were occasions among the respondents where a particular incident that had occurred three or more years ago was regarded as significant or traumatic enough to be recounted in enough detail to qualify as a storyline. In other cases, when individual respondents had engaged in a substantial amount of offending, or experienced a relatively large number of victimization incidents within the 5-year window, the researchers asked respondents to limit their accounts to their most recent one or two experiences, in order to keep the interview at a manageable length, in hopes of avoiding interviewee fatigue. As such, storylines, or detailed accounts, do not exist for each reported incident.

Third, identity profiles were constructed for each respondent who recounted an offending or victimization experience that met the criteria for a storyline. Identity profiles were created by coding the background portion of each interview transcript. This resulted in the creation of an "individual disposition" for each respondent who reported a storyline. The respondents were then sorted into two categories for each of the dependent variables: (1) victims, (2) offenders. A third category, non-offenders/non-victims, was created in order to compare with the first two, in order to assess how individual- and

contextual-level factors may differ for offenders/victims versus non-offenders/non-victims, as well as for falsifiability purposes. The identity profile was comprised of three main concepts, all of which are central to the development of the self both in adolescence and throughout the life-course: (1) the family, (2) the peer group and friendship experiences (including more generalized high school experiences and activities), and (3) the individuals' personal-social identity. Personal-social identity was operationalized by drawing on the "background" portion of the interview, where the respondent was asked to complete a truncated and modified version of the identity test (Kuhn and McPartland 1954; Spitzer et al. 1966). Here the respondent asks themselves "who am I?", and is asked for five answers to this question. The respondents were subsequently asking to identify their five most important values. This is to get a sense of how the respondents see themselves, and how they view the various identity-roles that comprise their sense of self. Commitment to a given identity depends upon both the number and quality of relationships formed by the individual through interaction in that role (Stryker and Burke 2000). The salience of and commitment to a given role-identity then provides the impetus for making behaviorally-oriented decisions (Burke 1991).

The peer group portion of the identity profile was also operationalized by using the background section of the interview. Here, respondents were asked to simply "tell me about your friends in high school." As the respondent would elaborate, they would often enthusiastically discuss various behaviors and activities they were involved in during this time, which often times involved engaging in acts of crime and deviance. Respondents were then asked to "tell me about your friends now", where respondents would elaborate

similarly, as well as discuss changes or similarities in the composition of their friendship network and how it presently impacted their life. Respondents often spoke of important shared experiences they had during early and/or late adolescence that had shaped their sense of self during this section of the interview. They also discussed school experiences that impacted them (disciplinary, student-teacher interaction, etc.) during this section.

The family life portion of the identity profile was also operationalized by drawing on the background portion of the interview, where the respondents were asked to speak at length about their family lives: this encompassed everything from their parents' marital status and occupation, to what it was like growing up, to the quality of relationships with their parents (and also siblings and other extended family members) – both while growing up and currently. During this section of the interview, respondents often spoke at length about certain familial experiences that had shaped them. Identity profiles will be developed in large part by combining these two "background" variables (the family and the peer group), as well as the current roles they occupy and how they view themselves (personal-social identity). These factors will determine each respondent's individual disposition.

Fourth, contextual profiles were created for each of the respondents who reported storylines of offending or victimization. The social context variable was operationalized by drawing on the direct observation data, as well as from data drawn from the middle portion of the interview, where respondents were asked to discuss at length their experience in Philadelphia nightlife. Here they discussed which venues they attended, how often they attended, their motivations for attending, how venues differ in terms of

social organization, the cultural atmosphere of particular venues, which are perceived as dangerous and which are not, level of alcohol and drug use, as well as the role and attitude of security and/or police. Additionally, data on respondent accounts of witnessing physical and sexual assault events contributed to the creation of contextual profiles of the spaces where offending and victimization took place. Finally, information on social context was taken from respondent storylines of physical and sexual assault. That is, when respondents recounted their crime or victimization experiences, they often addressed contextual factors as part of their storylines. Respondent storylines also provide information on the influence of other situational variables, such as emotional state, drug or alcohol consumption (by offender, victim, or offender-victim), and in some cases, the role of the neighborhood or surrounding geographic area.

Limitations of the Current Research

While no research study or design is flawless, there are three major limitations of this work that should be noted. The first pertains to the reliability and validity of testimonial information obtained from the interview data. This problem is typically encountered in most research studies, whether using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Most commonly, respondents are susceptible to recall error when recounting past experiences, and this problem may be exacerbated when respondents are recounting incidents where they may have been (or clearly were) intoxicated. Misrepresentation of the truth due to social desirability effects is a cause for concern as well. While some research has shown that people are usually truthful when interviewed about illicit activities if provided with confidentiality (Stephens 1991), reporting victimization

experiences or other sensitive information can sometimes be more problematic.

Research staff encountered some of these obstacles during the study and securing

reliable information about illegal activities and drug use was sometimes challenging.

Some respondents were reluctant to disclose the extent of their use patterns, due in part to

being tape recorded or other related concerns about confidentiality. Fortunately, such

occurrences were rare. The researchers attempted to establish shared identity with

respondents, and, when appropriate, engaged in personal disclosure in an effort to ensure

that respondents were comfortable sharing sensitive information, as well as to minimize

the power differential between interviewers and respondents. When possible,

interviewers and respondents were also matched on demographic characteristics (age,

sex, and race/ethnicity) to further increase the likelihood of disclosure of potentially

sensitive information. Prior studies on research methodology have found that this kind of

demographic matching is useful in terms of assuring interviewee comfort and in

establishing rapport (Daily and Claus 2001; Wilson et al. 2001). However, researcher-

interviewee demographic matching was not possible in all instances.

The second limitation pertains to generalizability. As with all qualitative research,

generalizing these findings to other populations or geographic areas should be done with

extreme caution. As is typical of other ethnographic work, this study utilized a relatively

small sample from a localized area. Generally speaking, a large number interviews and

observations of a representative sample need to take place in order to generalize the

findings. However, given that the initial study employed a broad conceptual design using

multiple methods, diverse (with respect to both race and an eclectic recruitment strategy)

respondent pool, I am confident these findings are reasonably generalizable to urban nightlife scenes in other large cities, particularly those racially and ethnically diverse cities in the northeast or mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. (e.g., Washington D.C., Baltimore, New York City).

The third limitation in this study is somewhat less common, as it tends to be more common in quantitative research projects. This pertains to performing secondary analyses of data. While using secondary data to answer new sets of research questions is (arguably) a commonly accepted practice in quantitative research, it is far rarer in qualitative studies. Although the idea for the current study grew out of the initial analysis of these data, it is important to remember that the research questions I am attempting to answer in this study, while certainly related, were not part of the scope of the initial ethnography. For this reason, there are a greater number of physical and sexual assault incidents, than there are storylines for these incidents. If one were designing a study to examine storylines of physical and sexual assault, and how dispositional and contextual factors contribute to these storylines, as I am, it is obvious that the interview guide would look substantially different from the one used in the initial ethnography, and so the number of total cases (storylines) I am examining in this study is smaller than would be ideal. However, it is worth reiterating that it was during the initial analysis that the relationship between disposition and context began to emerge. In this respect, the general analytic approach did conform to the key tenants of grounded theory (Glaser 1998; but also see Strauss and Corbin 1990), where concepts and theory emerge from the data, during either data collection or analysis (or both)

Chapter 3

PATTERNS OF OFFENDING, VICTIMIZATION, AND DRUG USE

In this chapter I discuss findings on the prevalence of physical and sexual assault among the respondents, as well as the prevalence of other forms of criminal behavior, and their patterns of alcohol and illicit drug use. I begin by discussing the total number of physical and sexual assault incidents reported among the respondents. The total number of incidents reported serve as the "universe" of incidents from which physical and sexual assault storylines are generated in Chapter four. Following this, I provide a detailed descriptive account of these incidents, and address the patterns (and notable exceptions) with regard to demographic factors such as gender and race. Next I discuss other major forms of criminal acts reported by the respondents, of which there were four: illegal drug sale (primarily ecstasy, marijuana, cocaine, prescription narcotics), property crime (theft of personal effects), vandalism (major and minor forms, both inside and outside of nightlife venues), robbery (victimization only), and fraud (offending only).

I conclude with a breakdown of alcohol and drug use patterns among the respondents. When describing these patterns I draw on both interview and fieldwork data in order to provide additional contextual details. While substantial elaboration of criminal or victimization behaviors and drug use patterns would indeed have been possible (see Anderson et al. 2007 for more on this), I constrain my report only to information that

directly bears on establishing the individual- and contextual-level influences on physical and sexual assault storylines, described in the following three chapters.

Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of physical and sexual assault incidents across the three types of reported crime data. It also indicates the total number of respondents who reported experiencing these outcomes, as offenders, victims, and witnesses. It is not only important to establish the total number of incidents reported for both physical and sexual assault, but also, the total number of respondents that experienced incidents. Later in the dissertation, respondents who reported physical and sexual assault will be compared with those who did not experience these kinds of outcomes, or those who managed to diffuse potentially risky situations before offending or victimization occurred.

Table 3.1. Physical and Sexual Assault Incidents (offended, victimized, witnessed).

Crime	Offended		Victimized		Witnessed	
	Incidents	Resp.[1]	Incidents	Resp.	Incidents	Resp.
Physical assault	36	16[2]	24[3]	13[4]	72	41
Sexual assault	.	.	42	23[5]	50	25

1   The "incidents" column represents the total number of physical or sexual assaults reported by the respondents across each of the three types of crime data. The "Resp." column represents the total number of respondents that experienced physical assault incidents across each of the three types of crime data.
2   Of the 16 respondents who were physical assault offenders, 15 were men, 1 was a women.
3   All of those involved in physical assault incidents as victims were also offenders, because, although they did not initiate physical assault incidents, they retaliated to incidents with assaultive violence. As such, victimization and offending incidents are often times addressing the same cases.
4   Of the 13 respondents who were physical assault victims, 12 were men, 1 was a woman.
5   Of the 23 respondents who were sexual assault victims, 20 were women, 3 were men.

Physical Assault

With regard to physical assault, the overwhelming majority of offenders were men, as were 12 of the 13 victims. This gendered effect was predictable and is supported by well-established epidemiological trends of criminal victimization, indicating that men and women are, for the most part, victims of different types of interpersonal crimes, and for very different reasons (see, for example, Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006; Catalano 2005). So, although only approximately 35% of the total sample had experienced physical assault, either as an offender or a victim, roughly 60% of men in the sample reported experiencing some kind of physical assault, either as an offender, victim, or both. With the exception of the one woman, all of those who were victims also reported offending, and most physical assault incidents can be regarded as mutual transactions (Luckenbill 1977).

It may be worth noting here that in Table 3.1, offending and victimization incidents are not referring to entirely separate cases. Some of the offenders were classified as victims due to the fact that there was a mutual agreement among two parties to engage in violence in order to resolve the problem (see Luckenbill 1977; Polk 1994, 1999), but in many of these cases the offenders did not self-identify as victims. This was because they either considered themselves as having "won" the contest or fight, or perhaps in some cases, because the respondents were downplaying the extent to which they incurred harm, in order to maintain social face during the interview, or to avoid confessing affronts to their masculinity. As such, the 24 incidents of physical assault victimization cited are incidents where the respondents described either being assaulted

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without some kind of (perceived) provocation on their part, when they were "jumped" by two or more aggressors, or where they clearly and undeniably "lost" a fight. In brief, there was considerable overlap between offenders and victims.

There were a few notable exceptions to the demographic patterns described. In one case, Laura, a 31 year-old white woman, reported having committed a physical assault. In this case, Laura was reacting to a situation where she was sexually assaulted at a commercial nightlife event when an unknown man reached his hand under her skirt without consent. In this particular case, venue security was able to intervene and separate the two protagonists and escort the man who sexually assaulted Laura from the venue. The woman who committed the physical assault was allowed to stay, presumably because she was acting in self-defense. With respect to physical assault victimization, Donna, a 28 year-old Asian woman, described an incident as the culmination of long-term involvement in an emotionally and physically abusive romantic relationship. As Donna recounted, one evening while in attendance at a nightlife event she encountered her partner, who punched her and threw her down the stairs outside the venue, as the result of a prior unresolved dispute. Donna also reported several other, comparably minor, incidents of physical and verbal assault leading up to this incident. After this incident she terminated the relationship.

Reports of having witnessed a physical assault incident at a nightlife venue were more common among the respondents than their actual offending or victimization patterns were. The fights witnessed by respondents took place both inside and outside nightlife venues, both during the event, when it was winding down, or well after its

conclusion. Physical assault incidents were witnessed more often at commercial events. Some respondents, however, reported witnessing their occurrence far more often than others. Generally speaking, women appeared more troubled than men by the physical assaults they witnessed in the context of urban nightlife. The following narrative illustrates this point:

> One time, I saw all these black guys on 16th and Kennedy, in middle of the street in front of a club. I mean, there are these four guys being completely bloodied in this brawl. It was to the point that they were right in front of our car and we couldn't even drive around them. It was just the most horrible thing and my fiancé just like "no let's just check it out." And I'm like "no, get the fuck out, please." I don't want to be around it, I don't like to see that kind of stuff. I just can't handle it. (Laura, white female, aged 31)

Sexual Assault

With regard to sexual assault, predictably, the overwhelming majority of victimization incidents were reported among the women in the sample. Notably, although perhaps also predictably, none of the respondents in the sample reported committing sexual assault, although many reported witnessing it. It is possible that there was a social desirability effect at work here. While research has found that subjects are usually truthful in interviews about illicit activities when they are assured confidentiality (Stephens 1991), self-reporting commission of sexual assault in a face-to-face interview

may have been regarded as more stigmatizing than reporting crimes such as physical assault and vandalism, or drug use.

Regardless of the fact that none of the sample reported sexual assault offending, the fact that some 80% of the women in the sample had experienced one or more incidents of sexual assault is quite striking. Such a high prevalence suggests that particular forms of sexual assault or are both a norm and an expectation at certain nightlife venues. Also notable is the fact that none of these women reported incidents to the police or other authorities (other than venue security, on certain occasions). Scholarship on sexual assault reporting has found that women tend to be reluctant to report such incidents due to (1) the embarrassment and stigma associated with having been a victim of such an act (Bachman and Saltzman 1995); (2) perceptions by victims that they will not be believed or that the justice system will be ineffective in apprehending and punishing the offender (Feldman-Summers and Ashworth 1981; Fisher et al. 2003; LaFree 1980); (3) perceptions that some incidents are not serious enough (Fisher et al. 2003); (4) ambiguity about what constitutes illicit sexual conduct (DeKeseredy and Schwartz 2001; Gavey 1999; Russell 1982); and (5) decreased fear of future victimization since sexual assaults are generally not repeated (at least not by the same offender).

All of these forms of reasoning (particularly points 3 and 4) seem to have had an impact on the lack of formal reporting found in the current research. Indeed, in some cases, these women either took responsibility for their victimization, or at the very least, took responsibility for choosing to enter a social context where this kind of outcome was

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more likely to occur. The following narrative describes how sexual assault tends to be normalized in commercial nightlife environs:

> You know how guys are. They'll touch your boobs, or grab your butt or something like that. They'll be like "damn you got a big ass or a fat ass" and grab your butt. That always happens to me at the club; but at the mainstream clubs not at these [underground] clubs. (Catherine, BF 24)

While National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) data indicate that while roughly 1-2 of every 1,000 women have experienced a rape or sexual assault in a given year, this figure varies significantly by race/ethnicity, age, as well as geography. Research indicates that young women, aged 16-24, of black or Hispanic descent living in urban areas experience far higher rates of victimization (Abbey 2005; Abbey et al. 2004; Catalano 2005). The women in this sample fit these basic demographic criteria. Research further indicates that the majority sexual assault victimization of women is perpetrated by men with whom they are well acquainted (Bachman and Saltzman 1995; Catalano 2005; Fisher, Cullen, and Turner 2000; Fisher et al. 1998; Tjaden and Thoennes 1998). While prior research suggests that sexual assault incidents involving non-strangers, or those with whom the victim is well acquainted are particularly unlikely to be reported (Lizotte 1985; Williams 1984), this explanation is somewhat irrelevant to the current research. Indeed, the sexual assault victims in this sample are rather unique in this respect, as the clear majority of sexual assault incidents reported by the respondents were committed by complete strangers, often in the form of a brief, fleeting encounter.

Whether or not the cases where men reported sexual assault victimization can truly be classified as sexual assault incidents is somewhat debatable. One incident occurred when a man experienced unsolicited, unwanted sexual contact by his female roommate (with whom he had a previous sexual relationship), when he had fallen asleep after a late night of clubbing. He awoke, prevented the encounter from progressing further, and subsequently moved out and filed for a restraining order against the protagonist, who he reported as stalking him on several occasions after this incident. In the two remaining cases, the men both reported that they were perceived as having homosexual leanings by another man, and subsequently experienced unwanted sexual contact as the protagonist attempted to initiate a romantic or sexual encounter. These situations were regarded by both respondents as simple cases of mistaken identity, of sorts, and the incidents were resolved without major incident. However, one of these respondents did report having to exit a nightlife venue at the behest of his friend, in order to avoid a physical confrontation with a protagonist, whom the respondent did not regard as suitably contrite for his unsolicited and unwanted sexual advances.

Table 3.2 provides a breakdown of a number of other selected incidents of crime and victimization across the three types of reported crime data. It also indicates the total number of respondents who reported experiencing these outcomes, as offenders, victims, and witnesses. Providing a breakdown of offending and victimization across a wider range of criminal incidents is useful in assessing whether the outcomes of interest (physical and sexual assault) are more common in nightlife than other forms of crime or deviance such as drug selling and theft. A cursory examination of Table 3.2 indicates that

other forms of criminal offending and victimization tend to occur far less frequently than

physical and sexual assault, and across a comparably smaller portion of the sample. A

notable exception is drug selling, which was performed extensively by those few who

self-reported it. The following sections provide a more detailed description of the

offending and victimization behavior among the respondents for each of the crime types

listed.

Table 3.2. Other Forms of Crime and Deviance (offended, victimized, and witnessed).

Crime	Offended		Victimized		Witnessed	
	Incidents[1]	Resp.	Incidents	Resp.	Incidents	Resp
Drug selling	55	8	N/A	N/A	47	28
Vandalism	67	8	1	1	24	13
Theft	14	7	16	11	19	11
Robbery	.	.	7	4	1	1
Breaking and entering	4	1	.	.	.	.
Fraud	3	1	.	.	.	.

1 The "incidents" column represents the total number of physical or sexual assaults reported by the respondents across each of the three types of crime data. The "Resp." column represents the total number of respondents that experienced physical assault incidents across each of the three types of crime data.

Drug Selling

A significant number of respondents reported witnessing drug selling at nightlife

events. Moreover, many respondents reported having purchased drugs like ecstasy,

cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana at nightlife events for specific use in that

social context. It is important to note, however, respondents reported that live drug selling

in actual nightlife venues was far less prevalent today than in the late 1990s/early 2000s,

or at the very least, that people tended to be far more discrete about it today than in years

prior. Generally speaking, men sold drugs far more often than women. The method of

sale was similar to that found in Murphy et al.'s (2005; see also Jacinto et al. 2008) study

of ecstasy selling in the electronic dance music scene; that is, extensive reliance on

informal networks (friends supplying friends, or friends of friends). Most respondents

reported securing drugs from well-known, safe and reliable contacts, and then often

shared, often for no cost, with other peers. This informal method of drug sales is

significant for two reasons; (1) in terms of effectively policing and deterring drug use in

nightlife scenes, it made targeting high-level dealers very difficult; (2), it provided the

respondents with a relatively safe and easy way to secure drugs, insulating against

negative consequences such as robbery or violence more common in street sales. Related

to point two, this method of sale and acquisition also had the effect of insulating

respondents from social stigma, thereby normalizing both drug sale and use. The

following narrative is illustrative:

> I have sold drugs in a club. Basically I've "gotten" weed for people so to
>
> speak, or gotten E [ecstasy] for people and passed it off. It was never like
>
> "my drugs," so to speak; more like "yo can you pick me up this and I'll
>
> give you the money when you get here." Like middle man type shit, but
>
> never me directly, like I was never into straight-up selling. I would say it's
>
> once in a blue moon man, once in a very blue moon. Now, how often do I

see people copping drugs in the cub? Every time I go, man. Every time I

go. (Ben, BM 23)

There were some evidence of drug dealing more closely resembling a street-sale

model, but such reports were rare. For example, several respondents talked about

participating in or knowing about regular and large-scale drug operations at certain clubs.

They discussed drug selling hierarchies and motives that were business oriented and

consequences (arrests, danger, violence, etc.). However, even these more traditional

dealers bore little resemblance to those described in earlier models of illicit drug selling

(Goldstein 1985). As such, much of the drug selling activity in nightlife venues often

flew under the radar of law enforcement. Also, as this kind of selling also takes place in

private venue businesses, it placed the burden on venue staff or ownership to identify it,

and ownership and staff was often tolerant of both use and sale.

Theft and Vandalism

The analysis revealed three major patterns regarding property crime and

victimization at nightlife events. First, respondents reported being the victims of property

crime more often than perpetrators of it and the most frequently reported type of property

crime victimization was minor theft. Respondents reported that their jackets and other

personal affects such as knapsacks, purses, wallets, and clothing had been stolen at

nightlife venues. While not reported with an alarming frequency or regularity, petty theft

was often acknowledged as an expected part of the nightlife experience. Roughly half of

the respondents had some experience with theft, either as an offender, victim, or witness.

The following testimony illustrates the way in which petty theft is normalized in nightlife culture:

> Someone stole my $1100 Calvin Klein coat from Club Blamba on a
> Monday night, motherfuckers. There're some shady bitches up in there. If
> they took the jacket that was on top of mine they woulda had a $500 cell
> phone, a wad of money; probably a quarter ounce of weed; so much more
> than just my jacket. But shit gets grabbed all the time. Usually I'm smart
> enough not to bring anything coz I know I can get so wasted, like, I just
> can't remember. (Donna, BF 28)

Respondents often stressed a level of personal responsibility when recounting their victimization experiences, noting that they were partially to blame for not carefully guarding or securing their belongings. Occasionally, some theft victims became jaded and turned into offenders themselves. It was not necessarily the case that victims would turn into habitual offenders, but rather, that stealing someone else's property was subsequently viewed as less deviant or problematic than it was prior to their victimization experience. Often times their subsequent theft behavior was rationalized with an "eye for an eye" kind of attitude. That is, if ones' property was anonymously stolen, stealing from someone else became justifiable. In all instances, theft was more common at larger, commercial nightlife venues.

Second, when the respondents reported committing property crime, it was typically minor acts of vandalism, with graffiti (commonly referred to as tagging) being the most common. Men reported engaging in graffiti-based vandalism far more often than

women. Regarding graffiti, respondents indicated that it was a normative part of nightlife culture, or urban culture more broadly. Most respondents did not regard tagging as a form of property crime, but rather as form of urban art and personal expression. Many reported involvement in graffiti culture in their early to mid teens, before they began regularly attending nightlife venues. They also reported engaging in tagging behavior both inside nightlife venues, and in other commercial or residential areas around Philadelphia.

A third pattern observed was reports of committing or witnessing other major acts of vandalism. For example, respondents recounted stories regarding vehicle windows being smashed, or cars that were broken into with personal affects stolen. Unfortunately, major acts of vandalism such as these were also regarded as a routine hazard of urban nightlife. While some of the respondents assigned blame to dangerous neighborhoods and to their own carelessness (for not engaging in proper target hardening behaviors, such as locking doors, or hiding personal items in the trunk or otherwise out of sight). None of the respondents assigned any responsibility to the venue or its staff.

Robbery and Fraud

Reports of robbery and fraud were exceedingly rare among the respondents. Only one of the respondents reported committing robbery, and the remaining four identified as victims. Three of the four respondents who reported robbery victimization were men, and six of the seven total incidents were somehow related to drug use. The most commonly reported scenario was when respondents were attempting to purchase drugs from street dealers they did not know, often in unfamiliar locations, and were subsequently robbed, occasionally at gunpoint, for their money. In two other cases, the respondents, both of

whom were prominent and large-scale street-level drug dealers, was robbed for their stashes of ecstasy pills. The following narrative illustrates the drug-centered nature of robbery in urban nightlife:

> I've robbed people over drug deals and I've been robbed over drug deals.
> It's the game you play when you deal with this sort of stuff. Let me give
> you a breakdown, when I say I was selling ecstasy, we were selling 30,000
> pills every 3-4 days or so, I mean it wasn't going in a club and passing out
> shit to my friends, or friends of friends; I mean we were distributing.
> When I used to sell E [ecstasy], I was robbed multiple times, and my
> house was robbed multiple times. (James, AM 28)

Only one respondent reported committing fraud, and as with the robbery incidents, this incident was also related to drugs. The respondent reported forging blank checks, stolen from his father, and later from the father of one of his peers, to help finance his addiction to a number of illegal drugs, including ecstasy, LSD, cocaine, and methamphetamine. These incidents occurred when the respondent was aged 17-19. He later was arrested and voluntarily checked into a substance abuse rehabilitation facility. This respondent also reported breaking into veterinary laboratories to steal animal tranquilizer (ketamine), as well as breaking into local business to steal computer equipment during this same time period, in order to finance his drug abuse habit.

Table 3.3 provides information on the prevalence of alcohol and drug use for selected substance, among the 51 respondents. Establishing patterns of substance abuse among the respondents is important, as both alcohol and drug use were often prominent

elements of storylines of physical and sexual assault (see Chapter four). Although the

vast majority of the sample used alcohol and marijuana fairly frequently, the majority of

respondents were rather limited in their use of other drugs. A number of respondents had

reported heavy use earlier in their life, but many of the older respondents regarded this

simply as a time of illicit drug experimentation, and as they grew into adulthood,

restricted their use to only occasionally, substituting their drug use with use of alcohol,

and to a lesser extent, marijuana. The median age of first use for these drugs is between

ages 15-20. Whereas 15-16 was the mean age for first use of alcohol and marijuana, 17-

18 was the mean age for first use of ecstasy, LSD, cocaine, mushrooms and

methamphetamine. The following sections provide a more detailed descriptive

breakdown of use patterns across the substances listed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. Alcohol and Drug Use (lifetime, past 6 months, and past month use).

Total (N=51)	Lifetime prevalence		Past 6 mo. prevalence		Past mo. prevalence	
Drug	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Alcohol	51	100	49	96.1	45	88.2
Marijuana	40	78.4	35	68.6	27	52.3
Ecstasy	24	47.1	21	41.2	2	3.9
Cocaine	12	23.5	9	17.6	4	7.8
LSD/Acid	12	23.5	5	9.8	1	2
Prescription narcotics	9	17.6	7	13.7	1	2
Methamphetamine	7	13.7	2	3.9	1	2
Psilocybin/Shrooms	13	25.5	6	11.8	.	.
Heroin	2	3.9	1	2	.	.
PCP	4	7.8	.	.	.	.
GHB	2	3.9	.	.	.	.

Alcohol Use

Of the entire sample, roughly 96% reported current use of alcohol. Among those currently drinking, 47% reported drinking between three and seven days a week. This percentage was skewed toward white, Asian, and Hispanic men, followed by black women. Black men reported the least amount of alcohol use. Twenty-one percent of respondents reported casual alcohol use (1-2 days a week), and roughly 32% consumed alcohol between 1-3 times a month. Again, there were no notable race or sex differences. Of those who reported less frequent alcohol use (1-2 times a week or several times a month), the majority reported alcohol use strictly as part of their attending a nightlife event. All respondents reported drinking more alcohol at nightlife venues than in other social contexts. While nightlife-based alcohol use was often self-reported as moderate or light, when further queried on the number and type of drinks consumed, it became evident in the majority of cases that alcohol use at night-clubs often approached or exceeded binge-level use. Direct observation of consumption patterns confirmed this. The following field journal entries illustrate this point, at weekly commercial nightlife events, and how this pattern occurs across diverse nightlife scenes:

Weekly EDM Event: I really want to stress how much alcohol consumption was occurring. Bottles of beer, glasses of beer, mixed drinks, shots. Everyone was drinking, and drinking rather quickly.

Weekly HH Event: I noticed a fair amount of alcohol abuse - The one woman whom I recruited for an interview mentioned she was already "fucked up" as she put it, by the time I engaged her in conversation around

11:45 pm -12:00 midnight. Her friend was drinking all evening - not

particularly quickly, but I saw her consume at least 4 drinks from the time

I engaged their group. (Field journal entry, PK)

While moderate to heavy alcohol use was indeed a behavioral expectation at

nightlife events, the level of consumption was also contingent on the event type. In

general, binge-level alcohol abuse was far more common at commercial venues than at

independent events. There were noticeable gender differences in consumption. Binge

drinking in these kinds of venues was most common among college-aged white men.

Regardless of race, however, the men in both scenes reported consuming far greater

amounts of alcohol than women. This gendered pattern of alcohol consumption was also

confirmed during direct observation. Occasionally, routine alcohol consumption at events

resulted in negative experiences for respondents. These typically included blackouts,

hangovers, vomiting and nausea, employment difficulties such as missing work or

decreased productivity (e.g., showing up late, poor performance), and occasionally, legal

consequences, such as arrest for drunk driving, public intoxication, and indecent

exposure.

Marijuana Use

A fairly large number of respondents identified as current marijuana users (used

in the past 6 months: roughly 68% of the entire sample), and extensive use was common.

Of those who were current users, 72% reported semi-weekly (3 or more times a week)

use, with roughly 76% of this group self-reporting daily use. Some reported using

marijuana use multiple times a day. Daily use was somewhat more common among men

than women, with white and blacks more likely to use with this amount of regularity. Most reported using marijuana outside of nightlife events, and use patterns tended to be established before involvement in nightlife (mean age of onset = 16). Regardless of the context or onset of use, it was clear from talking to the respondents that, in many cases, daily or weekly marijuana use was a common part of their lives. The following quote illustrates this point:

> I smoke daily. It is just part of the habitual cycle. I just live with bunch of guys who, ya know, they don't go to school, they're just working their daily shifts, they come home and they want to drink, smoke weed, and hang out. And that's what we all do. (Gordon, WM 26)

Many respondents reported consuming marijuana before attending nightlife events, due to its illegality and the potential consequences for public use (Golub, Johnson, and Dunlap 2007). Others reported leaving the venue several times during an event to consume marijuana with peers, re-entering the club again after use. On various occasions we witnessed respondents leave and re-enter nightlife venues during direct observation, presumably to smoke marijuana. Respondent testimony confirmed that this was somewhat commonplace. While it is common to smoke marijuana before attending nightlife events, or to leave the venue during the course of the evening to consume marijuana, several respondents indicated that use in club venues is typical, even tolerated by certain nightclub owners and staff. This was also apparent during direct observations, in both the EDM and HH scenes, where field researchers witnessed marijuana smoking at certain events.

In sum, the use of marijuana in both the context of nightlife scenes and in the everyday lives of the participants was normalized. Use of marijuana was not stigmatized or viewed as harmful. Rather, it was portrayed as a way to relax and manage stress. Marijuana use was often discouraged but tolerated in nightlife venues, as long as patron use was somewhat discrete. Certain nightlife events even allowed marijuana consumption outright, with some venues providing hookahs to enable use. While excessive marijuana use was a normal part of nightlife culture, such use was not regarded as problematic or dangerous. Rather marijuana use was associated with "mellowing out" and enjoying the music (Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008). Some reported that it actually increased their ability to cope with stressful situations encountered during the course of an evening out clubbing, and actually functioned to prevent them from getting into interpersonal altercations.

Ecstasy, Cocaine, and Other Drug Use

Respondents reported use of a wide range of illicit substances, although extensive or current use of these kinds of drugs was uncommon. The most commonly reported drugs used were ecstasy and cocaine, followed by other psychedelics such as LSD and psilocybin mushrooms, as well as prescription narcotics. With regard to ecstasy, roughly 41% of the respondents were current users, and the clear majority was affiliated with the EDM scene. Current use was reported as infrequent, however, most often bi-monthly or annually. Use was generally reserved for self-described "special occasions" such as nightlife events occurring on New Years eve, or during nightlife events that were held yearly, or in cities other than Philadehphia, and respondents reported being cautious

about overuse and abuse. Only two respondents reported weekly or bi-weekly ecstasy use. In most instances, the use of ecstasy was associated with commercial EDM nightlife events, with users looking to re-create the experience of the ecstasy-laden raves that were prominent in the late 1990s and early 2000s. There was, however, some evidence that its use had become increasingly popular at commercial HH events as well.

Cocaine use was also reasonably prominent at nightlife events, particularly at commercial venues in both the EDM and HH scenes. Twenty four percent of the respondents reported lifetime cocaine use, with roughly 18% having reported current use. Use was more commonly reported among men. While the total number of users in this sample was not by any means overwhelming, respondents reported that it was somewhat of a new and growing trend in Philadelphia, and that excessive use was still stigmatized. Recently, other research on drug scenes has also found a shift from ecstasy to cocaine as an emerging trend in the EDM scene in other U.S. cities (Murphy et al. 2005). As with ecstasy, cocaine use was more common in commercial nightlife.

Where ecstasy use was reported as annual or semi-yearly, cocaine use was often reported as monthly or a few times a month. Often times, cocaine use was casually normalized with respondents reporting that they indulged only by virtue of circumstance. Most made it a point to stress that they had never purchased the drug – rather, friends would have it, and they would partake. Such rationalizations served to minimize the potential seriousness of use, and neutralize the stigma associated with it. A respondent noted:

> Coke, yeah I messed with that. It's not a habit, but if someone were to
>
> have it, I might partake in it. I have only done coke at a club like once or
>
> twice. It's usually like before the club, but not like inside. Like it's in the
>
> car and then we go into the club after that. (Dale, BM 21)

In addition to cocaine and ecstasy, the use of various prescription narcotics (e.g., Oxycontin, Vicodin, and Percoset) and other pills (e.g., Xanax) were used at both commercial and underground venues. The prevalence of prescription narcotics use in Philadelphia nightlife corresponds with recent research suggesting this is an emerging trend in cities such as Miami (Kurtz et al. 2005), and again, suggests that this may be more of a scene based trend, rather than something unique to Philadelphia. With regard to prescription narcotics, however, use was not reported as frequent, but more occasional. Use tended to be regarded merely as a function of circumstance, or being in the right place at the right time. That is, prescription narcotics such as Vicodin were not actively sought out for use in nightlife contexts, but when they were available, were often used with little hesitation.

> I like downers like Vicodin and Percoset and things like that. I'll usually
>
> just be offered from a friend or something, like it's really innocent. Like
>
> I'll never go to a dealer, like my friend while go to the dentist and be
>
> prescribed some hydrocodone and I'll get some that way. They get
>
> Vicodin from their dentist, and they'll be like "I have Vicodin" and then
>
> I'll be like "sure, ok, I'll take one or two." (Eileen, WF 21)

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The use of psilocybin mushrooms was also reported, with roughly 12 % of the sample reporting current use. Much like ecstasy, the use of mushrooms was reported as occasional (bi-monthly, annually), typically reserved for special nightlife events (ones that occurs only annually, for example) or during multi-day music festival events, or outside of the urban nightlife scene altogether. Two of the respondents reported current use of methamphetamine, both women who were affiliated with the EDM scene. While present use of methamphetamine was reported by a very small percentage of the respondents, a greater number ($N = 5$) reported extensive past abuse.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I described the patterns of physical and sexual assault incidents reported by the respondents, as well as their patterns of involvement in other crimes, and finally, their patterns of drug and alcohol use. While the patterns of physical and sexual assault tended to mirror national trends with respect to the demographic profile of offenders/victims, it is worth noting that incidences of both physical and sexual assault among the respondents, and their reports of witnessing such occurrences, indicate that these happenings are far more commonplace that national-level data suggest. Notably, very few of the incidents discussed here were reported to the police, both for physical and sexual assault. Reasons for non-reporting were varied. For physical assault, incidents were often regarded as "personal," whereas in other cases, an offender could not be reliably identified by a victim. In most cases, the distinction between offender and victim was nebulous at best, making it difficult to clearly identify a perpetrator. Non-reporting of sexual assault incidents often centered on perceived culpability on the part of the

victim, perceived lack of seriousness of the incident, and the inability of the victim to identify the perpetrator.

With respect to other forms of crime and deviance, respondent testimony indicates that general deviance is not particularly widespread or frequent, and that serious incidents such as robbery are very much the exception rather than the norm. The most commonly reported acts of crime and deviance beyond physical and sexual assault were drug use and sale. The most significant finding here is the discovery of informal networks and well-integrated friendship associations relied upon to both sell and acquire drugs. This is important because it provided the respondents with a relatively safe and easy way to secure drugs, safeguarding them from consequences such as robbery or theft, which were reported as exceedingly rare. Moreover, this method of sale and acquisition also had the effect of insulating respondents from stigma, thereby further normalizing drug use. Excessive drug and alcohol use also provided the situational opportunities for other crimes, such as minor theft, to occur. Opportunistic theft shaped by drug and alcohol use was mostly related to target suitability or attractiveness, in terms of target inertia (or incapacitation) and accessibility (see Felson 2002).

With regard to substance use, notably, regular use of alcohol and marijuana was fairly common among the respondents, whereas the use of designer drugs or narcotics often associated with club culture, such as ecstasy and cocaine, tended to occur relatively infrequently. This finding runs counter to other research on patterns of drug use in club culture (for example see Hunt et al. 2007; Perrone 2006). This can perhaps partially be explained by the demographic makeup of the sample. With a mean age of over 25, many

of the respondents had already ceased using more exotic drugs typically associated with club culture by the time of interview, generally having aged out of habitual use in their late teens/early 20's. As such, alcohol and marijuana tended to became acceptable substitutes for more serious drug use among many of the respondents. Indeed, regular alcohol and marijuana use was generally regard as a normal part of the lives of most of those in the sample, and moreover, did not have the same social stigma associated with regular cocaine or ecstasy use.

In closing, a bit of framing may be useful. As Chapter one argued, Agnew's (2006) storyline concept functions as a useful tool for understanding crime by clearly articulating the impact of background and dispositional factors, as well as contextual and situational factors in shaping such outcomes. Accordingly, a description of the broader patterns of crime and deviance in the sample is intended primarily to frame the findings of the following four chapters, and is important for two reasons. First, criminological research has long noted that, with regard to criminal behavior and drug use, past behaviors tend to be the best predictors of present and future ones (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Matsueda 1992; Matsueda and Anderson 1998). As such, understanding whether outcomes such as physical and sexual assault can be regarded as extensions of some of the respondents' natural proclivities for involvement in criminal or deviant lifestyles more broadly – or rather, whether physical and sexual assault involvement can be attributed to one's disposition. Second, as both the count data and narrative accounts reported here demonstrate, drug use, as well as other forms of crime are somewhat normalized among those with active night lives. At the very least, these occurrences are

not regarded as extraordinarily uncommon or unexpected. This suggests the possibility that the occurrence of physical and sexual assault may not be entirely unique here; or rather, that these outcomes may be a function of particular social environments that are conducive to a wide range of criminal and deviant acts. The following chapters explore these issues in more depth. Chapter four begins this exploration with an examination of respondents' situational accounts of physical and sexual assault storylines.

Chapter 4

STORYLINES OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

In this chapter I discuss the different types of storylines of physical and sexual assault that were uncovered during the analysis. This chapter is divided into two primary sections. First, I identify and define the different types of storylines that emerged for each of the two outcomes: I do this first for physical assault storylines (offending and victimization), then for sexual assault storylines (victimization only). For each storyline "type," a representative sample case is provided. These sample cases, and the respondents who described them, will serve as the bases for further analysis of individual and contextual-level factors (see Chapters five and six) that contributed to their offending and victimization outcomes. This chapter also describes how the storylines of offending and victimization generated here share similarities with the typologies generated in prior scholarship, as well as how those uncovered in this analysis move beyond this earlier work. Prior to discussing these findings, I provide a brief review of the storyline concept, as defined by Agnew (2006).

According to Agnew (2006), "storylines" refer to key events or conditions that increase the likelihood that certain individuals will engage in crime. The crux of the theory is fairly straightforward: an event occurs that negatively impacts the individual in some manner; for example, increasing strain or reducing self-control. The individual then

attempts to resolve the issue, often through the commission of crime. Whether crime or deviance is invoked as a response is dependent on a number of interrelated factors, such as interaction with an aggressor or potential victim, the emotional state of the offender, or contextual-level factors such as lack of effective guardianship and other variables that shape opportunity such as time of day (or night), the physical location of the potential target, and the characteristics of the physical and social space where the crime will occur. The storyline approach builds on the criminal event perspective, which posits that a comprehensive explanation of crime must address all of the aforementioned factors: interaction, disposition, and the social context in which the crime occurred (Meier, Kennedy, and Sacco 2001; Sacco and Kennedy 2002). The storyline approach also draws on Short's (1998; Hughes and Short 2005) work on individual interactions leading up to crime, as well as notions of "accounts" or "neutralizations" of criminal behaviors (Sykes and Matza 1957).

To review; all storylines begin with the occurrence of some tangible event; that is, "something happens" to an individual (Agnew 2006). The event is typically novel or unexpected, representing a deviation from typical or routine aspects of the one's everyday life. For example, an individual may be physically or verbally abused in an interpersonal encounter. Such an event then *temporarily* alters the individual's disposition, the individual's interactions with others, and/or the settings encountered by the individual in ways that increase the likelihood of either crime, or, as I contest, victimization. As Agnew (2006:121) notes, "the event is associated with or leads to a *temporary* increase in strain, reduction in social control… increase in opportunities for

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crime [or victimization], and/or increase in particular dispositional characteristics that are conducive to crime [or victimization] (e.g., anger, low self-control)."

By definition, storylines encompass all of the events and conditions that increase the likelihood of crime or victimization (e.g., antagonistic behavior; a physical assault by another), the individual's perception of and reaction to these events and conditions (e.g., increased anger), interactions with others (including direct interactions with either the victim or the offender, as well as criminally complicit others), the social contexts in which these interactions occur, as well as the offender or victim's emotional state and level of self-control (Agnew 2006). Importantly, Agnew also notes that individuals may experience more than one storyline at a time, or that one storyline may contribute to the development of another. The sections below detail the storylines uncovered in this analysis.

Storylines of Physical Assault

Of the 60 physical assault incidents reported (see Chapter three), there were 18 total storylines dispersed across 12 different respondents. Eleven of the physical assault storylines were recounted by men, and one was recounted by a woman. Based on the substantive content of their accounts and descriptions, three broad storyline typologies were generated; (1) *the general affront*, (2) *the racial affront*, and (3) *defensive-retaliatory action*. Each of these three typologies is explained in depth in the following sections, followed by a sample vignette illustrating how the storyline would typically play out.

Table 4.1. Storylines of Physical Assault (offending and victimization).

Total (N=13)

Alias*	Race	Age	# Incidents *	# Storylines	Type of Storyline
Dale	Black	21	1	1	Rac.
Harry	Hispanic	23	1	1	Def.
Bobby	Asian	27	3	1	Rac.
Ben	Black	23	1	1	Gen.
James	Asian	28	7	2	Gen., Def.
Leo	White	24	3	2	Gen., Def.
Mike	White	27	2	1	Gen.
Pete	White	28	3	1	Gen.
Hank	Hispanic	31	5	3	Gen., Rac., Def.
Ed	White	31	1	1	Gen.
Andy	Hispanic	27	3	2	Gen. (x2)
Laura (F)	White	31	1	1	Def.

ABBREVIATIONS: Rac.: The racial affront; Def.: Defensive/retaliatory action; Gen.: The general affront.
* Three of the respondents who reported physical assault incidents in Chapter three did not report enough narrative data about their incidents to classify them as storylines.

Table 4.1 provides a demographic breakdown of those respondents reporting storylines of physical assault, the type of storyline(s) they reported, as well as the total number of physical assault incidents they reported during the interview. Generally speaking, physical assault storylines were dispersed across a broad age range (21-31), with older respondents reporting both more incidents and storylines. This is notable, as prior work has argued that physical assault and other kinds of violent transactions (such as homicide) tend to be far more common among younger males (Hagedorn 1997; Messerschmidt 1993), where physical violence functions as an important way for these young men to "do" masculinity and defend their manhood in potentially compromising social situations (Polk 1999; West and Zimmerman 1987).

There was substantial racial dispersion of physical assault storylines as well, with black men reporting fewer incidents and storylines compared to white, Asian, and Hispanic men. However, the small sample size precludes the ability to generalize with confidence regarding any kind of possible racial patterning of physical assault in Philadelphia nightlife more broadly. The general affront storyline occurred the most frequently (a total of 10 times), followed by defensive/retaliatory action (a total of 5 times). Racial affronts were reported the least frequently (a total of 3 times). Several of the respondents reported more than one type of storyline for separate incidents, and one respondent reported all three storyline types for three separate incidents.

The General Affront

Although there are different variations, the general affront storyline has several key components: first, someone engages in a behavior that the individual finds offensive in some regard. This offensive behavior provides the situational spark for physical assault to occur. As Agnew (2006:129) notes, this behavior generally "interferes or threatens to interfere with valued activities, removes or threatens to remove valued possessions, and/or poses a risk to one's physical well-being [or the well-being of one's friends or significant other]. The individual blames the other for this negative treatment and experiences one or more negative emotions, such as anger and humiliation." The offending party is unwilling to apologize or display the appropriate amount of contrition, or in some instances, may further aggravate the individual. Occasionally the offending party is not aware of their affront and, upon being told they are behaving in a problematic manner, they become angered or enraged, thereby escalating the dispute.

Nonviolent responses to the dispute are either unavailable or unwilling to be considered by either the individual, or the offending party. Indeed, both parties may face a substantial amount of real or imagined pressure to resolve the situation with violence due to the public nature of the incident (see Deibert and Meithe 2003; Luckenbill 1977; Polk 1994, 1999). General affronts tended to be broad in scope, and were often the result of relatively petty slights, or perceived acts of disrespect. The specific kinds of general affronts reported among the respondents that were most likely to lead to physical can be further separated into three main types: (1) subtly hostile behaviors, (2) sexual disputes, and (3) prior conflicts; although there was sometimes overlap between them.

Subtly Hostile Behaviors were comprised mainly of relatively minor, nonphysical offenses, and included verbal insults or harassment, ridicule, "hard" stares or glaring, personal threats, spilling a drink on someone (either accidentally or purposely), or bumping into another (accidentally or purposely) were all subtly hostile behaviors that respondents reported as inciting instances physical assault. These kinds of behaviors were generally directed toward the individual but in some cases, were also directed toward someone with whom the individual had a connection; for example, a family member, close friend, acquaintance, or a significant other. Typically, one individual exhibited subtly hostile behavior and a dispute would develop, then escalate or peak, and at that point, could only be resolved through the use of physical violence. Although such treatment may involve the more tangible forms of abuse described above, it may also involve more subtle things, such as becoming angry with another's (perceived or actual) higher social standing, or frustration with one's own lower social standing. Whether the

behavior the sparks the violent exchange is in fact truly hostile, or merely the result of carelessness, is irrelevant. The individual perceives the behavior as hostile and seeks to correct the person responsible for the affront.

Sexual Disputes occurred when a physical assault incident was the end result of an attempt (or a failed attempt) at engaging in some form of courtship behavior, or to disrupt another from engaging in courtship behavior. The sexual dispute could take a number of forms; among the respondents, such disputes generally consisted of (a) an outsider trying to disrupt a partnership, typically by making romantic or sexual advances on the individual's partner; (b) a sexual partner (or potential sexual partner) being, or perceived as being, unfaithful in public, thereby disrespecting the individual; and (c) competition with others over a potential sexual partner (Agnew 2006; Miller and White 2003; Wilkinson 2002), and generally occurred in regard to spontaneous courtship activities; that is, the dispute was not in regard to someone involved in an established, long-term relationship (see Agnew 2006 for a description of "romantic disputes"). There was often overlap between the variations of sexual disputes. For example, a man who had engaged in conversation and some form of mild sexual contact with a woman whom he met a nightlife event regarded her as his "partner," whereas the woman did not consider the exchange to be anything more than flirting. Another man begins flirting behavior with this woman, who is receptive to his advances, and a violent exchange between the two men ensues. This blurs the boundaries between competition over a woman and the perception of a partner's promiscuity. Similar types of conflicts have been identified as recurring themes in homicide incidents (Wilson and Daly 1998). The following vignette

from Leo illustrates how the subtly hostile behavior and sexual dispute elements of *the general affront* storyline often play out:

> I was at a club, at a party with a bunch of people from [a local university]. I think it happened last November or October of 2004. It was Halloween time. We were all drunk. It was like 2 am and it was my friends, and uh, his girlfriend was getting harassed by some guy in the bathroom. And I ended up beating up the kid. It was a pimps and hoes party, where guys dress up as pimps and girls dress up as hoes. And this guy was being disrespectful to my friends' girl. And we just went up there and told him to leave. He was being a dick and wouldn't leave. So we gave him his $5 back, and told him to leave. He was by himself, and I was with 8 of my friends. We told him we didn't want any trouble and that he should just leave. Then he whispered in my ear that he would like to leave, but he would also like to fight. So I hit him right there coz that comment really pissed me off. Then we went outside and finished it off. I ended up hitting him a couple more times before he finally left. It wasn't much of a fight, the dude was really drunk. (Leo, WM 24)

Prior Conflicts occurred when two individuals who have wronged one another in a previous situation; either days, weeks, or months (in rare cases, years) earlier; accidentally run into one another in a public space. Upon seeing one another, the negative feelings stemming from the prior event which defined their last encounter again surface and define their current interaction, resulting in hostile behavior toward one another. In

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all instances, unresolved conflicts among the respondents centered on two themes: drugs or sexual disputes. Prior conflicts related to drugs were either the result of someone owing money to someone else for drugs, someone taking money for drugs but not providing them, or for selling drugs that were impure or fake. There tended to be some overlap between subtly hostile behavior, sexual disputes, and prior conflicts. For example, subtly hostile behavior would be directed toward an individual with whom one had an unresolved sexual or romantic dispute (ex: he stole my girlfriend). The subtly hostile behavior would then turn openly hostile over the course of a prolonged encounter, or prolonged period of time in the same social space; and eventually result in physical assault. So, while subtly hostile behavior may have provided the initial situational spark immediately responsible for the violent exchange, the underlying storyline was an unresolved conflict. The following vignette from Hank illustrates how the sexual dispute and prior conflict elements of the general affront storyline can play out:

Recently, I got in a fucking fight, ya know what I mean, and it wasn't my fucking fault. I was leaving the bar and somebody I had a previous problem with decided to start talking. And I said "I don't have time for this." And I was dead drunk, just drunk as fuck. Music is blaring, college kids all over the place, and I just want to go home. He came out and kept talking shit so I ended up punching him in the mouth. I mean if you're dead drunk, you're going to end up on the floor, there is no balance. You know what I mean, you have just got to be good on the floor,

which I, rolling around on the ground, ya know, I can do some work, do some damage. That was a like a month ago.

It was woman related and I don't fucking fight over a bitch, I mean that's harsh to say it like that but it's a harsh reality, you know what I mean, I'm not gonna fight over a chick. And that dude, I know him, he's a bad drunk and I was being a happy drunk and I just wanted to go home and I - fucking - he came out and I was like "look man, I don't have anything to say to you I'm just trying to go home." And he kept blabbing and blabbing and he told me "hey, you want to hit me, hit me." So I fucking hit him. And then we started up. But nothing else ever came out of it; it was like we'll just leave it at that. I haven't seen him since, but I have no animosity, I'm done. But, but, the disclaimer there is if he fucking talks shit to me in some type of way again, I have no problems slugging him without warning. (Hank, HM 31)

While general affronts often stemmed from a wide variety of situations, behaviors, and encounters, they all shared one key commonality; that is, they were all related to the assertion of masculinity in a social space. Such behavior can be regarded as a dramaturgical performance, of sorts (Goffman 1959), with gender functioning as a performative activity wherein masculinity is culturally constructed through tangible acts in a given social space (Butler 1990). In short, each of the general affronts experienced by the respondents during the course of interaction in urban nightlife were situational moments marked by masculinity challenges in which each actor was defined as a rival to

the other, resulting in socially hostile actions among them (Connell 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). So in this sense, gendered displays involving physical assault were socially necessitated, essentially functioning as "regulative discourses" (Butler 1990). That is, the goal for these men was the establishment of hegemonic masculinity, and the regulatory mechanism used to establish it was assaultive violence (Messerschmidt 1993, 2004).

An important aspect of the general affront is also captured by Agnew's (1992) general strain theory, where he discusses the magnitude, duration, and clustering of stressful events. Agnew also suggests that the cumulative impact of negative relations must be considered. That is, the fact that strain can build over time (one strain upon another; prior strains on present ones) influences the likelihood that strain will lead to a criminal reaction such as physical assault. Earlier theoretical formulations have also stressed the additive impact of multiple problematic situations, or sequences of stressful events (Athens 1992; Linsky and Straus 1986; Smelser 1962) in leading to criminal and violent outcomes.

The Racial Affront

This storyline was less common than the general affront, due primarily to two factors: specificity and motivation. The key component of this storyline is discriminatory treatment of an openly hostile nature based on one's ascribed racial or ethnic status (see Felson and Steadman 1983; Kennedy and Forde 1999; Wilkinson 2002 for examples). This mainly included verbal harassment and taunting. Such inflammatory behavior was sometimes persistent, occurring repeatedly over a prolonged period of time (several

hours); other times, however, a single inflammatory comment was sufficient to escalate the challenge to a physical assault. While there is some overlap between the general affront and the racial affront (the presence of a perceived threat, hostile behavior), the key difference here is a status threat; that is, a racial affront openly challenges or disrespects one of the individual's core identity or status markers: an individual's race or ethnic group.

As with the general affront, both parties may face a substantial amount of real or imagined pressure to resolve the situation with violence due to the public nature of the exchange. However, in the case of a racial affront this pressure is often magnified, as the nature of the affront is of a more personally offensive and antagonistic nature. Whereas generalized affronts can (and in most cases, did) occur accidentally, as the result of perceived slights or misunderstandings, and escalated from there, racial affronts constituted a more of a direct challenge; indeed, they were almost an invitation to engage in violence. Racial affronts not only implied that an individual's ascribed racial/ethnic status was inferior to that of their own group (reinforcing and maintaining lower status), it could simultaneously threaten the individual's status in their own racial group, if they did not take action to correct the affront (see also Deibert and Miethe 2003). So, it was not only a direct challenge, but also a kind of honor test, where the aggrieved individual was both personally and socially obligated to defend their race or ethnic group. The following vignette from Dale illustrates the racial affront storyline:

At a bar on my 21st birthday, I got jumped by some white kids. It
was in January, and we were leaving the bar and we got out, it was my 21st

birthday and the guy that I was with, one of my friends that I was with, he was getting into it with this one guy and I was like trying to be peacemaker and I'm like you know, "lets go, lets go back home," or whatever. And I always have a song playin' in my head, so I was like, "back to the lab, without a mike to grab and I add all the rhymes I had" and it started to die down. It was like over some girl. My friend and this other guy they were with, like I guess the other guy tried to come onto my friend's girlfriend and so like they were mouthing off. And then I did that little rhyme or whatever, and the dude that had the beef with my friends, he's like "just like a nigger, always rapping." And I was like "what?" And before I knew it, there was a guy behind me and he just came and knocked me right in my eye and knocked my ass down. I got up and I didn't know who the hell hit me because it was my birthday too so everybody is feeding me shots so, you know, I was so wasted. I didn't even know who hit me. I couldn't even see who hit me.

My eye is all cut, I had blood in my eye, and I'm like "who hit me, who hit me!?" and there was this other white guy leaning up against the car, and he is laughing, he's like whatever like, talking shit. So I just hit him, I know that wasn't the guy that hit me. The guy that hit me was big, this guy was like a little smaller than me, but I was just so angry that I had to hit somebody so I hit that guy and we both fell to the ground and I started trying to have my finger in his eye socket, and that's when it all

started. I guess his friends just started hitting me and stuff, and I got up

and I was still talking shit and someone else came after me and I was so

drunk that I just fell back, like trying to backpedal. And they eventually

just got in a car and left. (Dale, BM 21)

This storyline exhibits some features of racial threat theory (Blalock 1967), albeit

in an informal, non-legal context. When initially proposed, racial threat theory

emphasized the dominant groups' use of state apparatuses, including criminal law, to

control subordinate groups who threaten their social status or interests, particularly black

men. The theory suggests that dominant groups respond to increases in minority

populations through political discrimination, symbolic segregation and threat-oriented

ideologies. While the original theory and subsequent interpretations pay little, if any,

attention to informal mechanisms or micro-level, interactional processes as a means of

exerting social control over minorities, the application of racial threat theory to new

social contexts may constitute an effective way to conceptualize the racial affront

storyline. Furthermore, its application here can be useful in understanding how structures

of inequality are constituted and reproduced through patterns of social interaction.

Defensive/Retaliatory Action

The primary component of the defensive/retaliatory action storyline was an

attempt at self-preservation or the protection of property when one is attempting to

commit or committing a crime against the individual. That is, the individual, someone

close to them, or their property is marked as a target for a crime (for example, a robbery

or a theft), and the individual commits physical assault to protect either themselves or

their property. Among the respondents, this motivation was usually related to self-defense, but in the course of defending oneself or one's property, the nature of the assault often escalated, and the targeted victim (now the offender) continued their defensive effort (now retaliatory) well after the immediate threat to person or property has been quelled or removed.

This storyline differs somewhat from the two previously mentioned, although there are also some key important similarities. Similar to the racial affront storyline, the situational spark leading to the physical assault event is very specific. Also, in the defensive/retaliatory action storyline, there is a clear challenge or direct threat to the individual, as there is with the racial affront storyline. However, the nature of the threat or challenge is not related to the maintenance of one's status or identity, but rather, is directly related to the immediate physical safety of one's person or property, or that of a friend or loved one. This is an important difference from the general and racial affront storylines. Moreover, the typical negative emotions associated with crime such as anger and frustration become less important in shaping a defensive/retaliatory physical assault incident. Rather, this storyline shares clear similarities with the physiological acute stress response commonly termed "fight or flight" (Cannon 1915), which results in a temporary reduction in self-control. The following vignette from James illustrates the defensive/retaliatory action storyline:

> I was almost mugged leaving a club. I had left the club to go home,
> I lived in south Philly. I was by myself when I walked out, 2 in the
> morning, I saw 2 kids standing on that, you know on Wilson street, there's

that median in the center that breaks the traffic up? They were standing there, I know this, I saw them I was like why the hell are these guys standing there, they are waiting for somebody obviously. I walk around the corner, I hear [makes noise of knife opening] I see the one kid, he pulls out a knife, he came up to me, he went to slash me, I was like this isn't fucking happening. First of all I don't have any money, second of all I'm all juiced up from break dancing for the past 3 hours. He took a swing at me with the knife. I punched him and started running. He fell down when he was running. He whistled, his friend came around the corner, he got down in a football player kind of stance. The guy I hit was younger, he ended up being 16 years old, tall guy though. His friend was much older, much bigger. I figured if I would run past the guy trying to trip me I know this guy with the knife gets a shot at me. I decided instead of running past them I would run directly at him. By will of God, I don't know, it was just fear motivated; it wasn't me being tough it was me being scared. I jumped in the air and kicked him in the chest and ran away.

This was two years ago. Right out in front of the, out in front of the stand that's shut down. The young one was a black guy and the older one was a white guy. What ended up happening was I went back to get my friends at the club, at least to escort me home if nothing else. So before I got to the club, there was a house being torn down, so I took a pipe. I was running around the block looking for these fucking guys. I don't see them

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but I keep the pipe just in case like I come across them. Not that I, at this

point it was like not that I wanted to hit them anymore, I just wanted to get

home when these 2 guys with weapons are out and I just pissed them off. I

get to the corner, I see a cop parked at a red light. I place the pipe down;

you know, let me look like the good citizen. I flag him down; I tell him

what happened. After I tell him he taps me on the shoulder and goes is that

them right there, they are across the fucking street. I'm like holy fucking

shit that is them. He throws me in the back of the cop car, we run, we get

them, he got one guy there, and the other guy ran. Ended up going to court

3 times over it. One went to juvie, the other one got 3 years in the klink.

(James, AM 28)

Storylines of Sexual Assault

Of the 41 sexual assault victimization incidents that were reported (see Chapter

three), there were 20 total storylines, dispersed across 15 different respondents. All of the

sexual assault storylines were recounted by women. Based on the substantive content of

their storylines, two broad typologies of sexual assault storylines were generated; (1)

competing definitions of the situation, (2) *opportunistic predation*, and (3) *drug and*

alcohol use. Each of these typologies will be explained in depth in the following sections,

followed by a sample vignette for each of the storyline typologies generated.

Table 4.2 provides a demographic breakdown of those respondents reporting

storylines of sexual assault, the type of storyline(s) they reported, and the total number of

sexual assault incidents they reported during the interview. As with physical assault,

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sexual assault storylines were dispersed across a broad age range (20-31). Unlike

physical assaults, however, younger women (aged 20-25) reported more incidents and

storylines more often than did older women. With regard to the racial dispersion of

sexual assault storylines among the respondents, black women reported incidents and

storylines more frequently than white and Asian women. While this breakdown supports

earlier research that found sexual assault as occurring more frequently among black

women in urban areas (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006), the small sample size precludes

the ability to confidently regard this as a broader demographic trend in Philadelphia

nightlife. The *competing definitions of the situation* storyline occurred the most

frequently (a total of 9 times), followed by *opportunistic predation* (a total of 6 times).

The *drug and alcohol use* storyline occurred the least frequently (a total of 3 times).

Table 4.2. Storylines of Sexual Assault (victimization).

Total (N=15)

Alias*	Race	Age	# Incidents	# Storylines	Type of Storyline
Shelly	Asian	25	3	1	Pred.
Donna	Asian	28	1	1	Def. of sit.
Audrey	White	21	3	2	Pred., Drug/alc.
Laura	White	31	1	1	Pred.
Norma	White	31	2	1	Def. of sit.
Sarah	Asian	20	2	2	Pred., Def. of sit.
Jocelyn	Black	23	1	1	Def. of sit.
Lucy	Asian	22	1	1	Pred.
Catherine	Black	24	3	1	Def. of sit.
Betty	Black	20	2	2	Def. of sit. (x 2)
Maddie	Black	20	1	1	Def. of sit.
Nadine	Black	25	5	1	Pred.
Evelyn	Black	21	3	1	Def. of sit.
Ronette	White	25	4	2	Pred., Drug/alc.
Eileen	White	21	2	1	Drug/alc.

ABBREVIATIONS: Pred: Opportunistic Predation; Def. of sit.: Competing definitions of the situation; Drug/alc.: Drug and alcohol use.

Competing Definitions of the Situation

The storyline had two key components, which when taken together, represent a scorned sexual advance (Deibert and Miethe 2003). First, there was a misinterpretation of what was perceived as a sexualized behavior performed by the victim, directed at the offender and perceived as inviting sexual contact (see also Abbey 1987). The offender would then attempt to engage in some form of more aggressive sexual behavior, or to begin more forcefully pursuing a sexual encounter. In all of the respondent accounts, the offender was a man. The woman did not regard her initial behavior as communicating any such intentions, or inviting any such advances. Indeed, she may not have even perceived the initial behavior in question as directed at the offending individual, and in some cases, as even being sexually provocative in any way (ex: dancing). While similar situations have often been regarded simply as embarrassing, often friendly misunderstandings (Abbey 1987), in the stories recounted here, the respondents noted that the behavior of the offender was typically overly aggressive, and furthermore, that the sexualized behavior they would attempt to rebuff would continue to be pursed aggressively even after they clearly communicated their disinterest in any kind of sexual encounter. It was at this point; once the misunderstanding was clarified, and the intentions or wishes of the woman were clearly communicated, and subsequently (sometimes repeatedly) disregarded by the offending other, that a sexual assault had occurred.

Similar to some of the aspects of the physical assault storylines discussed earlier, competing definitions of the situation also featured a direct threat to an individual.

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However, the nature of the threat was related to both the maintenance of one's status or identity (as an adult woman), as well as to one's immediate physical safety. The key difference was the physical, and in some cases, social, power differential between two parties involved in the situation. Whereas when one man challenged or disrespected another man (either with an objective or perceived slight), the result was often a physical assault incident motivated by the need to maintain male honor or status, or in saving social face (Deibert and Meithe 2003; Hagedorn 1997). For these women, threats to one's sexual identity and related affronts to an individuals' social self (i.e., the repeated, forceful pursuit of some form of sexual courtship) were more common precipitating events in this storyline. The following vignette from Sarah illustrates how the competing definitions of the situation storyline would often play out:

> Some guys just come up to you and grab you. Sometimes they grab you to try and dance and sometimes they just grab your ass or tits in passing. Like last year, I think this was probably my 3rd time going to a club and my friend is Jamaican, so we went to a black club, or a majority of them were black, and this guy just pushed me against the wall and just started groping me and I just called for help and my friends pulled me away from that guy and we just left the club. We were dancing, but at first it was kind of innocent. Then he started to get more aggressive and just threw me up against the wall trying to make out.
>
> Some of these guys have the wrong motives to begin with, and the one time this guy and his friends just like surrounded me and it was him,

me, and his boys around me. They had like this system so that they could

block my friends out and push me against the wall. I've seen it before.

Sometimes a guy, one of the guys in a group, will target one girl and he

would start dancing with you and then all of a sudden his friends would

surround you. So, my friends are not there to pull me away. And then, all

of a sudden, he pushed me against the wall and guys are still all around,

just like a wall of guys. And I was scared because I was never exposed to

that kind of behavior before, so that kind of threw me off and made me

question what happened and what's going on. So, then I kind of back

tracked and slowed down with my behavior. (Sarah, AF 21)

Opportunistic Predation

This storyline can be defined as the unwanted sexual groping of the female victim

by a male stranger, or occasionally, a group of strangers, with whom the individual had

no prior contact or interaction. This storyline had two main elements. First, the victim

would be preoccupied in some manner, and unaware of the presence or threat of the

offender. For example, the woman might have been walking to the bathroom, or in a

conversation with a friend. Second, the offender would then observe the opportunity to

engage in brief, fleeting act of uninvited sexual contact without evidence that a tangible

or sufficiently severe cost would be incurred. For example, in a crowded, dark nightlife

venue, a would-be offender would find himself in close proximity to a woman whom he

found sexually attractive. The attractiveness would not only be sexual, but instrumental;

that is, it would be magnified by the apparent absence of capable guardians (friends,

security staff, capable others), as well as the lack of immediate awareness displayed the target. The target, for example, may have been intoxicated, or otherwise distracted or occupied. Because the opportunity for crime is fleeting, the offending party may feel a pressing urge to take advantage of the situation.

This storyline shares commonalities with theories of rational choice and routine activities, as well as social control and learning, all of which posit that a victimization experience is more likely to occur when the offender assesses the costs of committing the act as low, and the benefits relatively high (see Clarke and Cornish 1985; Felson 2002). It also shares similarities with feminist criminological scholarship arguing that young men will often actively form social groups that work to encourage the sexual objectification and assault of women, or to buffer any shame associated with the commission of sexual assault (Grazian 2007; Martin and Hummer 1989; Mustaine and Tewksbury 2002; Schwartz and Pitts 1995), thereby normalizing such behavior.

However, it is important to note that the tangible benefit of such behavior to the offender is marginal, or, at best, fleeting (some kind of minor sexual gratification), I assert that the perceived lack of negative sanctions (low cost) is the more important factor at work in shaping this kind of victimization event. The opportunistic predation storyline was less common than competing definitions of the situation, due primarily to the specificity of the perceived motivation of the offender (predatory, rationally calculating), and the lack of precipitous behavior (perceived or objective) on the part of the victim or "target." That is, the offender does not seek a more intimate sexual encounter with the victim, nor does he misconstrue the actions and/or demeanor of the victim as

communicating the desire for a sexualized encounter. The following vignette from Nadine illustrates how the opportunistic predation storyline will often play out:

> I get touched or grabbed probably about once a week. People try to grab you and then run away. Usually some guy will grab my butt when I'm walking by. But you don't always know who it is, ya know, you are walking through a crowd of people, it's dark, whatever. But it tends to happen whenever I go to CLUB J; which tends to be about once a week. I'm not really at too many other crowded places like that. I mean, that place is packed, so it's easy for guys to get away with and not get caught. Some girls laugh, it doesn't seem to bother them. Some girls will get upset, like I usually do.
>
> How I handle it depends on how much I've drank. If I'm good and drunk, and I'm feeling that way, I will turn around and curse everywhere. Like I said, I don't necessarily know who did it, but I'll curse everywhere. If I haven't been drinking I'm usually not feeling very confrontational at the time and I just want to keep enjoying myself, so I just keep walking. But like if I'm buzzed, tired, and ready to go, everyone is getting cursed out. And if I can, I will grab the guy's hand that did it and say, "ok, what you need to do is watch who the fuck you are touching like that because I'm not your standard whore," and then keep moving. They always look so embarrassed, because, ya know, they aren't supposed to get caught.
> (Nadine, BF 25)

Prior research on cultural factors contributing to sexual assault has found that collectives of college-aged men, particularly those in fraternities, often actively work to create a distinct socio-cultural context that fosters sexual coercion in interactions and relations with women (Martin and Hummer 1989). As with this earlier work, both the competing definitions of the situation and opportunistic predation storylines described above feature similar cultural norms: narrowly defined definitions of masculinity that emphasize dominance, competition, and sexual prowess; the treatment of women as commodities and sexual prey; an emphasis on group loyalty and secrecy; and the pervasiveness of physical force and aggression. With specific regard to the nightlife context, Grazian (2007) notes that hegemonic masculinity is expressed not only by competitiveness, but camaraderie, with norms rooted in hostile sexism, where women are regarded as at least partially responsible for any of the harms they experience (Abrams et al. 2003; Viki and Abrams 2002).

Drug and Alcohol Use

The key characteristic of this storyline was the voluntary or involuntary use of either drugs or alcohol to the point of severe inebriation, which was followed by a sexual assault, or an attempt at a sexual assault. This storyline shares similarities with both the competing definitions of the situation and opportunistic predation storylines discussed earlier, but is more specific with regard to a tangible precipitous action either *knowingly performed by* the would-be victim, or *unknowingly performed on* the would-be victim. In the case of the former, the victim described engaging in some (usually minor) consensual sexual behavior after consuming large amounts of alcohol or drugs (primarily alcohol),

and during the course of the increasingly intense, consensual, sexual encounter, the woman began to feel uncomfortable in the situation. This would be followed by the woman attempting to disengage from the sexually charged encounter, and the man then resisting the woman's attempts to do so. At this point, the woman would sometimes resist more forcefully, or on occasion, become a passive recipient, allowing the sexual encounter to continue.

In other cases, the would-be victim reported being drugged by a would-be assailant, in what could commonly be referred to as a spiked drink episode (Anderson et al. 2007). In these cases, the women reported engaging in minimal alcohol use (usually reported as 1 or 2 drinks) at a nightlife venue, followed by feelings of severe intoxication and disorientation, occasionally accompanied by nausea. In each of these cases the women recalled seeing an unknown or unfamiliar other nearby, shadowing them throughout the evening, or attempting to encourage the target (woman) to leave the venue with them in a vehicle. As with the opportunistic predation storyline, the chances for victimization here is also fleeting and ephemeral, further enabled by the presence of environmental factors such as alcohol availability, and lack of environmental deterrents such as capable guardianship. This aspect of the storyline shares some key similarities with prior research on forced or coerced alcohol and drug use among women, initiated by men (Schwartz and Pitts 1995; Tyler, Hoyt, and Whitebeck 1998). It also features elements of rational calculation on the part of the would-be offender, and lack of cautiousness, or risk management behavior (see Chapter seven) on the part of the target.

The following vignette from Audrey illustrates how the drug or alcohol use storyline would sometimes play out:

I met a guy at PARTY C earlier this year who was there randomly and he was a really nice guy, a lawyer. He was just there when I came in and I agreed to go out with him. So I went and I had a dinner with him elsewhere at some other place and he called me. I was parking the car and he said "tell me what you want to drink and I'll have it ready for you when you get here" so I told him "I'll have a vodka and cranberry." So I went in and there is the drink. And by the end of the first one I couldn't understand how drunk I was. I was just smashed. He said "do you want another drink or do you want to go do something else?" And I said "well we're here, so let's have another drink." So I got halfway through the second one, went to the bathroom and just started throwing up. I threw up six times in two hours. I was really, really scared and I totally should not have been driving, but at that point I was like "I need to get away from you." I felt like I was threatened.

So this dude tried to get me come up to his apartment and he was like "I brought something back for you from Mexico and I want to give it to you." That didn't make sense coz I had just met him. He started rubbing on my legs and stuff and I was like "get away from me, just get the fuck out of my car and get away from me." I'm positive that he spiked my drink. That was this year; that was maybe like three or four months ago. I

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was scared to death, but it was completely random, that was not related to the club scene at all. Let me clarify that. This guy just happened to be at PARTY C at that night and we got along, he was hanging out with all of us. I just hope that he never shows his face again because a lot of people were also pissed about that, ya know what I mean? (Audrey, WF 21)

This storyline can be viewed in somewhat broader terms, as being a kind of unfortunate development that is at least in part the result of the broader social organization of contemporary urban nightlife. In addition to the commercialization of nightlife and dance culture more generally (see Anderson 2009; Bennett 2001; Thornton 1996), prior scholarship has revealed that contemporary nightlife scenes tend to draw disparate groups that have varied motivations for attendance (Anderson 2009; Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008). As Irwin (1977) notes, such scenes are "available." With particular regard to the EDM nightlife scene, based largely on the fact that such events are now held in licensed premises serving alcohol (versus the clandestine locations where EDM events were located decades prior), this scene has become "available" to disparate groups with highly varied levels of interest (see Anderson 2009 or Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008 for more on this). In particular, there was a disconnect or kind of clash between those attendees who were there primarily for music appreciation and controlled substance use versus those who were there to abuse drugs and alcohol and pursue sexual encounters. Occasionally this dynamic resulted in attempts at sexual assault, with would-be offenders using drugs and/or alcohol as a means to accomplish this end.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I elaborated on three different storylines of physical assault offending and victimization, and three different storylines of sexual assault victimization, providing sample vignettes for each of the storylines generated. Some aspects of these storylines share important similarities with those generated by Agnew (2006), while others aspects represent important departures. For example, while the description of both *the general affront* and *the racial affront* share key similarities with different variations of Agnew's (2006) *unresolved dispute* storyline, such as the presence of a status challenge or a romantic dispute, several key distinctions should be noted.

First, Agnew's conceptualization of the unresolved dispute drew heavily on research describing the events and conditions leading up to severe interpersonal violence among gang members, and in cases of homicide in low income urban areas among disenfranchised minority males (see Hughes and Short 2005; Kennedy and Forde 1999; Luckenbill 1977; Polk 1994; Short and Strodtbeck 1965; Tedeschi and Felson 1994; Wilkinson 2002; Wilson and Daly 1998). Conversely, the incidents I am referring to here generally occurred among strangers (the obvious exception being the *prior conflicts* sub-storyline of the general affront in instances of physical assault), with no long-standing feuds or competing allegiances. As such, they share more in common with Deibert and Miethe's (2003) theoretical concept of "character contests," which specify various types of physical assault incidents occurring among a more demographically diverse segment of the population.

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Indeed, as the demographic profile of the respondents in Chapter two indicates, the men and women that comprise this sample are largely young professionals, with a mean age of roughly 25 and a half; who should be right on the cusp of "aging out" of criminal behavior; particularly interpersonal violence (see Sampson and Laub 1993, 2003); if they haven't already done so. The vast majority of the respondents had well-established bonds to various conventional institutions; most with respect to their career or employment, but some also had children, or were involved in serious long-term romantic partnerships. The fact that physical assault incidents were still occurring (though they were not exactly commonplace) among those respondents aged 28-31, is significant, and presents something of a challenge to prior scholarship on age and violent transactions among men (Hagedorn 1997; Messerschmidt 1993).

Perhaps more importantly, these storylines reveal an interesting social class effect. Namely, that physical assault is by no means the exclusive domain of poor, disenfranchised, urban minority men, nor is it exclusively the domain of youths involved in gang activity (Katz 1988; Oliver 1997; Wilson and Daly 1998), or enmeshed among those in chronically delinquent peer groups. Instead, "focal concerns" or "conduct norms" related to the acquisition and maintenance of status and respect seem to be, in fact, quite general. If the current work is any indication, these norms can be observed among a much larger segment of the population than prior work has suggested (Anderson 1999; Kobrin 1951; Miller 1958; but see Deibert and Meithe 2003). Correspondingly, challenges or threats to these core values tended to result in the same (or similar) violent ends.

As with physical assault, the storylines of sexual assault victimization developed here also share important similarities with Agnew's (2006) prior storyline types. For example, the description of both the *opportunistic predation* and *drug and alcohol use* storyline can be viewed in terms of the broad *brief but tempting opportunity for crime* typology, as they all share the elements of routine activities necessary for victimization to occur (lack of effective guardianship, a suitable target, and a motivated offender who engages in a cost-benefit analysis of the potential offending situation). However, these storylines also differ in one fundamental respect: whereas Agnew's storylines were offered to explain a wide variety of criminal offending, those generated here are offered with the specific intent of explaining victimization incidents. While the perceived motives and behavior of the offender certainly played a key role in developing the typologies discussed earlier, the accounts of the victim, not the offender, provided the primary bases for this analysis. Furthermore, the typologies generated here are offered with the intent of explaining distinct kinds of sexual assault victimization, rather than offering a generalized template to explain very different types of offending behavior (property crime, interpersonal crime), as Agnew's prior work did.

It is important to note that all three of the physical assault storylines uncovered here; general affronts, racial affronts, and defensive/retaliatory action; are all forms of strain or stress (Agnew 1992), and they elicited either negative emotions or stressors that then led to physical assault transactions. For all three of the physical assault storylines, the respondents often framed their actions as justifiable (if somewhat excessive), or expressed a "they deserved it" kind of reasoning when discussing specific incidents. The

fact that this kind of justification occurred across three different kinds of storylines is worth emphasizing, as it speaks to the generality of this particular neutralization technique for physical assault events in general, and in demonstrating that neutralization techniques do not necessarily vary for different types of physical assault.

With regard to the three storylines of sexual assault victimization, routine activities factors related to lack of self-protection and lack of guardianship were of primary importance in shaping the events. As such, the women who reported these victimization storylines were more likely to attribute their experiences to their own carelessness than were men in cases of physical assault. It should be noted that this kind of reasoning was not a universal sentiment among the respondents, and was observed only in the competing definitions of the situation and drug and alcohol use storylines.

While physical assault events had a number of varied causes, all of the three storylines shared one important similarity: that is, some kind of threat to something of importance to the individual. Whether that threat was to a status or identity, a value or principle, or a tangible threat to personal property or to a friend or loved one; all of the storylines generated here share that single commonality. With respect to the storylines of sexual assault victimization, the common theme is more subtle. There is no clear affront or intentionally antagonistic behavior; however, each storyline is related to the aggressive pursuit of a sexual encounter in an environment where such pursuits are expected, and in many cases, encouraged. Each of the three storylines of sexual assault victimization generated in this analysis can be viewed as stemming from a collective masculine hegemony resembling Grazian's (2007) depiction of "girl hunting" behavior performed

by men "that fabricate gender difference and male superiority while transforming women into targets of the collective male gaze and objects of sexual desire" (p. 237; see also Parks and Scheidt 2000; Quinn 2002). In the current research, however, the consequences of this sentiment tended to be more serious than either the verbal harassment or social embarrassment that prior scholarship had found (but see Parks 2000; Parks and Miller 1997; Parks and Zettes-Zanatta 1999).

In closing, it is important to emphasize that, while physical and sexual assault events often have varied causes, motives, and are situationally unique, the storylines for each of these respective outcomes share clearly identifiable patterns, and play out in somewhat predictable ways. Moreover, it is important to highlight that there is often some overlap between storylines, and that one storyline can sometimes trigger, or contribute to another. This kind of overlap has been discussed in prior scholarship (Agnew 2006) and was confirmed here. In the current research this was especially apparent with regard to the storylines of physical assault, particularly in the case of the general affront, where sexual disputes often gave rise to storylines involving racial affronts, subtle hostilities, and prior conflicts. However, it was also more subtly observed in storylines of sexual assault, where competing definitions of the situation can also be regarded as contributing to incidents of opportunistic predation. In the following chapters I focus on articulating some of the commonalities shared across storylines with regard to the dispositional and contextual factors that shaped these transactions

Chapter 5

DISPOSITIONAL INFLUENCES ON STORYLINES OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

In this chapter I discuss how factors related to ones individual disposition and personal-social background rendered respondents more likely to become entangled in the storylines of physical and sexual assault that were discussed in Chapter four. As Agnew (2006) notes, storylines describe the events and conditions leading up to a crime and, although they may refer to the situation in which the crime occurred, these stories will often focus on events and conditions prior to that situation. Agnew (2006) further notes that storylines can last anywhere from several minutes to several weeks, eventually becoming a part of one's individual background. As mentioned earlier in Chapter one, if the storylines leading to crime can last for several weeks or even longer, it would logically follow that a more rigorous and thorough exploration of one's individual background, beyond the events of the past few minutes, days, or weeks, would shed additional light on their storylines, either as offenders or victims.

For example, as regards physical assault; ten of the respondents reported the general affront storyline, five reported the defensive-retaliatory action type, three reported experiencing a racial affront, and three reported multiple storylines. Still other respondents reported no involvement in physical assault. How can we make sense of

these differences? To what extent do those who reported storylines of physical assault have something in common in their background that differentiates them from the others? Are these factors different for those who experienced one type of storyline versus another? It is with these questions in mind that I examine the role of one's individual disposition, or background, in contributing to storylines of both physical and sexual assault.

This chapter is divided into two sections. First, I identify and define the various dispositional factors that emerged as relevant in shaping involvement in physical and sexual assault. After discussing the factors shared among those respondents who reported involvement in physical or sexual assault, I provide a sample "identity profile" of those who experienced these outcomes. These profiles provide a narrative account of how each of the dispositional factors discussed ensured a greater likelihood that those who experienced them were more likely to become involved in physical or sexual assault. I conclude with a discussion on the utility of individual-level "dispositional" factors in shaping physical and sexual assault storylines. Before discussing these findings I provide a brief review on research on background factors in shaping criminal and victimization outcomes.

The field of criminology has been dominated in large part by micro-level, or social psychological, theories of crime causation (Agnew 1992; Akers 1998; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969; Sutherland 1947). These micro-level paradigms have identified a number of individual-level or "dispositional" variables that can reliably predict both criminal offending and victimization. Some of the key factors specified by

these theories are: the development of low self-control in childhood or early adolescence, the experience of social psychological strain in childhood or adolescence, affiliation or identification with drug-involved or otherwise delinquent peers, and a failure to bond with conventional others or to internalize socially proscribed norms. Although various theories of crime causation stress the primacy of particular variables relative to the impact of others, many criminologists acknowledge that all of the factors aforementioned are, to some degree, interrelated.

For example, while prior drug and crime involvement is an important predictor of low self-control (and future offending and victimization), insight from research and theory on the development of deviant subcultures is also important to understand how individual-level factors shape involvement in, or exposure to, criminal offending and victimization. These insights stem from Sutherland's (1947) differential association-social learning theory (see also Akers 1998), Cohen's (1955, 1965) theory of class-based delinquent subcultures, and Hirschi's (1969) theory of the social bond. With regard to drug-involved subcultural groups specifically, research has found that heavy drug and alcohol use has the potential not only to isolate individuals from conventional social networks (Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph 2002; Laub and Sampson 2003), but to insulate and embed them in their deviant social groups (Adler 1993; Becker 1963; Hagedorn 1994; Schroeder, Giordano, and Cernkovich 2007). Urban nightlife scenes are regarded as having prominent and largely distinctive subcultures (Shuker 2002; Bennett 1999a, 2001; Mahiri and Conner 2003) with their own unique behavioral and cultural

norms that also normalize the use of drugs and alcohol, as well as isolating individuals from involvement with conventional others.

Another factor that has been consistently linked to crime is hypermasculinity (Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009; Kreiger and Dumka 2006; Mosher and Tomkins 1988; Murnen and Byrne 1991); that describes men who adhere strictly to traditionally proscribed notions of what it means to be a "man." Hypermasculinity is linked to antisocial behavior, substance abuse, a positive attitude toward violence and risk-taking, and unsympathetic sexual attitudes toward women. Assertion of this kind of masculinity, barring traditional outlets such as competitive sports, has been linked to theft (Copes and Hochsteller 2003), "punking," or bullying (Phillips 2007), as well as physical and sexual assault (Buddie and Parks 2003; Anderson et al. 2009; Graham and Wells 2001, 2003; Martin and Hummer 1989). Such displays can be regarded more generally as evidence of low-self control, with the emphases on preferring physical to mental tasks and positive attitudes toward risk-taking (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990).

The point to emphasize is that the development of a disposition conducive to involvement in crime and/or victimization appears to be the result of a dynamic process and cannot be reduced to the particular influence of any one variable. Rather, such involvement seems to stem from personal factors related to family experiences and identity development in youth, delinquent peer influence (particularly the influence of drug-involved peers), as well as the construction of masculinity in youth and young adulthood. Indeed, in the current research, dispositions conducive to physical and sexual assault were shaped over one's life, and the basic causal factors were similar across the

different types of storylines reported earlier. These commonalities were particularly

apparent in regard to physical assault.

Individual Disposition and Physical Assault

As discussed in Chapter three, there were 60 total physical assault incidents

reported that were dispersed across 16 different respondents. Of those respondents who

reported one or more physical assault incidents, 15 were men, one was a woman.

Individual-level factors influencing physical assault were identified based on respondent

interview data pertaining to identity formation with regard to familial and childhood

experiences, experiences in adolescence and young adulthood (middle school, high

school, and/or college), particularly with regard to the peer group, substance use, and

other factors related to lifestyle. Based on the substantive content of the interviews, and

using respondents' accounts of these major areas of their individual-level development as

benchmarks, identity profiles were constructed.

Figure 5.1 provides a breakdown of the respondents who reported involvement in

physical assault and how they were rated across the six individual-level factors discussed

above that emerged as relevant for physical assault storylines. In order to assess the

relevance of these factors in contributing to likelihood of physical assault, data for those

who did not report physical assault is also included. As mentioned, the analysis showed

that certain key factors that were reliably observed across a substantial portion of those

respondents who reported involvement in physical assault. While I acknowledge that

there are likely many people who engage in physical assault in urban nightlife that may

not have experienced or exhibit all (or any) of the factors discussed here, it is important

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to note that prior research has identified similar factors that shape involvement in other forms of deviance, particularly drug use and addiction (Anderson 1994, 1998; Anderson and Mott 1998).

Figure 5.1. Individual-level Factors for Physical Assault.
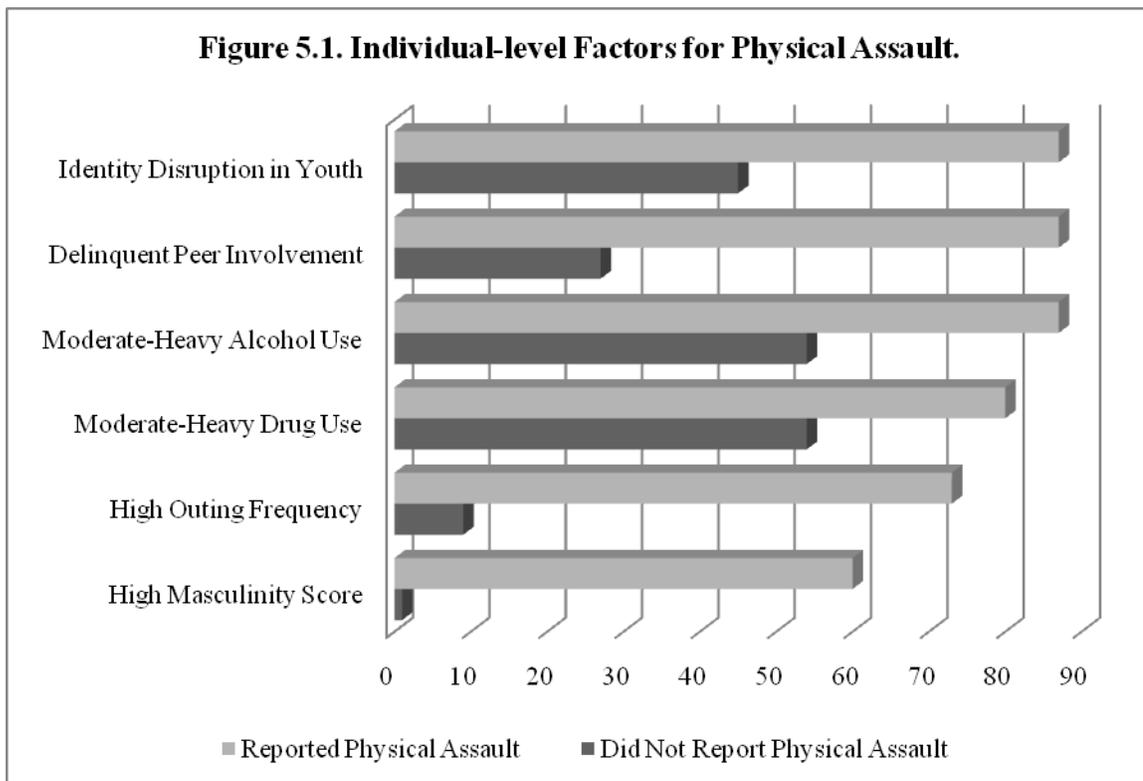
* Data are reported as percentages.

The first major predictor was an *identity disruption in youth* (IDY). An IDY refers to some kind of traumatic event in either childhood or adolescence that causes the individual to experience a serious amount of stress, strain, or personal discomfort. Prior work has theorized that the cumulative effect of this experience as resulting in personal marginalization, or strain (Agnew 1992) which "can sever individuals from norms or what is socially acceptable in their worlds" (Anderson 1998:244). The kinds of identity

disruptions reported among the respondents consisted primarily of (1) a disruption in the family that occurred in childhood or youth. This generally referred to a parental separation, (2) a lack of responsible and consistent parenting at some point in childhood or adolescence; (3) difficulty to adjusting to moving residences (or frequent moves), or (4) the death of a close friend or relative, including a parent. These kinds of events or experiences often caused a disruption in positive or conventionally gratifying identity development and functioned to negatively isolate youth from positive linkages they once had (Anderson 1998, Anderson and Mott 1998). Andy provides an example of an identity disruption that severed him from conventional norms:

My family in Colombia was very dysfunctional, that's the reason I ran away. My mother hopped from one husband to the other, and ya know; I had two brothers and she worked all the time, and she was living off of these guys, and I was sent from here to there, in different houses. I guess that affected me. My birth father didn't show up that much. I was curious and I asked my mom where he was and then I went to live with him for a little bit; didn't work out though. I ran away and when they found me I got put up for adoption when I was like 9 or 10.

My [adopted] mom worked for the adoption agency, she saw me in a picture or read about me or something, and that was that. My family here wasn't really that functional either. My [adopted] mom was a workaholic, working all the time. I was raised in a strict way, she was very strict. Like she was just scared of me I think; to let me do things, coz ya know, it was

just a trust issue the whole time. We were never really close or anything. It

was almost worse in a way. (Andy, HM 27)

For the *identity disruption in youth* concept, respondents were assigned a "Y" if they

experienced one or more of the 4 events listed earlier or an "N" if they did not experience

any of them. Of the 15 respondents who reported physical assault, 13 reported an identity

disruption in youth, whereas only two did not experience any. Of the remaining 11 men

who did not report any physical assault incidents, five reported an identity disruption in

youth, whereas six did not experience one.

The next predictor was delinquent peer involvement. Simply, this entailed

hanging out with peers who abused drugs and alcohol, typically in middle or high school,

and in other forms of delinquency, such as truancy, fighting, petty theft, or graffiti. Due

in large part to some identity disruption in youth or childhood, often experienced as strain

and trauma and withdrawal from conventional interests or pursuits, these individuals

would often form uniquely strong bonds with their drug-involved peers, and

subsequently, become enmeshed in subcultural groups that further normalized drug use

and delinquency. Again, this general pattern has been found in prior research, where

identity disruptions predict future identification with a drug-based subcultural group

(Anderson and Mott 1998). Pete, who reported multiple physical assault incidents, and

the general affront storyline, described his delinquency:

Throughout elementary school like I had a really, really bad, bad

aggressive attitude, so I'd be constantly getting into fights and stuff like

that. So I constantly would be getting suspended and then my parents

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pulled me out of public school, said you're going to a private school…

Then in high school was like when all the drugs kicked in (laughs). Eighth

grade I was smoking pot and then 9th grade, it was the introduction of

mainly booze and psychedelics; LSD and mushrooms and a little bit of

dust. And I was a good student; that's the funny thing. I was never there,

but I could always ace a test, I scored high on my SATs, did all this shit

and my teachers used to get pissed coz, like, you're smart, but you're

flunking coz you're never here. That's why I failed.

I would go there and be so fucking bored. I'd just either take a nap

or just leave… So then I started going out and going to clubs all the time,

met a bunch of new people through - I hate calling it this, through raves -

the rave scene or whatever. I used to call them parties, it's just a party. But

yea, I went to a bunch of raves, a bunch of parties, got into electronic

music, met a bunch of kids, we hung out, did a bunch of drugs. That's

pretty much how I spent my teens and 20's. Hanging out and doing drugs

was just a lot more fun. (Pete, WM 28)

Thirteen of the 15 involved in physical assault reported delinquent peer involvement,

whereas two did not. Of the 11 non-offenders, only three reported delinquent peer

involvement, whereas the remaining eight did not.

The next two factors that were common among those respondents involved in

physical assault were related to their current levels of alcohol and drug use (as reported in

the past 6 months). Levels of substance abuse tended to correlate with how frequently

they reported attending nightlife events. These factors can be regarded as a rough

indication of one's level of self-control (Gottfredson and Hirschi; Grasmick et al. 1993),

and the pattern was relatively straightforward; the more often an individual engaged in

the excessive use of alcohol, used illicit drugs, or reported attending nightlife events

where such behaviors were normalized or encouraged, the lower their level of self-

control, and the higher the likelihood they would become involved in physical assault.

Bobby, who reported three incidents and one storyline of physical assault, talked about

his current level of alcohol use at nightlife events:

> I go out, and I drink a lot. Enough to get a nice buzz, which is not as much
>
> anymore. So, I will have six or seven drinks. I drink to get drunk more of
>
> the time, I drink to enjoy myself. I mean, I never really did drugs. I'm into
>
> the music, but I feel I need some kind of crutch, ya know? I dunno, I guess
>
> alcohol is just my drug, ya know? Sometimes it causes problems. Like
>
> meatheads trying to fight me, ya know? (Bobby, AM 27)

The following narrative from Leo, who also reported multiple incidents as well as two

storylines of physical assault, further illustrates the link between outing frequency, drug

and alcohol use, and likelihood of physical assault involvement:

> Well I go out 5 nights a week, and right now I just drink socially. I'll have
>
> 4 or 5 when I go out. If I go out and don't drive, I might have about 8 or
>
> 9... I've smoked pot like once a day for maybe the past 8 or 9 years. I've
>
> experimented with some drugs, not a lot though. I actually took ecstasy
>
> last weekend; but before that I hadn't done it since 1999 or so. In the past

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5 years I've tried coke but I'm not too big on it, don't do it regularly, or even close to it. It's like a once a month type of thing, or like for special events. It seems like I do it more when I'm hanging out with my high school friends, like someone will break out a bag and we'll go do a bump the bathroom or something like that. It's probably gotten [me and my friends] in plenty of fights. My friends are a bunch of idiots. It starts over stupid, little shit; stepping on shoes, bumping into people, spilling drinks; but it only ever seems to happen when we're all fucked up, ya know?

(Leo, WM 24)

Current alcohol use was coded as either low, moderate, or high: "high" use was coded as drinking 3 times a week or more, or binge-level use (five or more drinks in a single sitting) 2 times a week; "moderate" use was coded as drinking 1-2 times a week, or binge-level use 1 time a week; and "low" use was coded as drinking less than one time a week, or rare binge-level use (one or two times a year). Thirteen of the 15 respondents reporting physical assault had moderate to high levels of current alcohol use, and two reported low levels of use. All of the respondents - even those with low levels of current use - reported having used alcohol one the day or night of their physical assault incidents. Of the 11 non-offenders, six had moderate to high levels of current alcohol use, and five reported low levels.

 Current drug use was also scored using the low, moderate, high designations. Respondents were scored "low" if they used one drug minimally (ex: monthly use of marijuana), "moderate" if they reported using two or more drugs minimally, or one or

two drugs moderately (ex: bi-weekly use of marijuana and monthly use of ecstasy), or "high" if they reported moderate use of three or more drugs, or extensive use of one of two drugs (ex: daily use of marijuana; bi-weekly use of cocaine, bi-monthly use of prescription narcotics). Twelve of the 15 who reported physical assault had moderate to high levels of current drug use, one had a low level of current use, and one did not currently use. The one non-user had been sober for one year, after seven years of serious drug abuse culminating in multiple arrests and mandatory stays in rehab. Of the 11 non-offenders, six reported moderate to high levels of illegal drug use, and the remaining five reported low levels or no current use.

Respondent *outing frequency* was also coded as low, moderate, or high; attending nightlife events 3 times a week or more was coded as high; 1-2 times a week was coded as moderate; and less than one time a week was coded as low. Based on these criteria, 11 of the 15 respondents reporting physical assault had high outing frequencies (including six of the eight who reported multiple incidents), while the remaining four reported moderate outing frequencies. Of the remaining 11, only one reported a high level of nightlife participation; seven reported moderate, and three reported low levels of nightlife participation.

Finally, respondents were assigned a *masculinity score* based on their self-reported gender identity across three different times in life and/or social settings derived from prior work by Anderson and colleagues (2009): (1) childhood and adolescence (masculinity in youth), (2) currently (masculinity in present), and (3) when in attendance at nightlife events (masculinity in nightlife) (see Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009 for a

more detailed breakdown of these three dimensions of masculinity). Masculinity in youth was comprised of trouble or difficulty in school, involvement in illegal activities, a focus on girls, and involvement in sports. The masculinity in present was based on evidence of masculine identification in adulthood during the interviews. The interview guide contained a modified version of the classic "identity test" (Kuhn and McPartland 1954; Spitzer et al. 1966). The original test asked respondents to provide 20 responses to the question "who am I?" The respondents were asked for five. Their masculinity was then determined based on a perusal of adjectives derived from well-established prior measures, including the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem 1974), Chafetz's (1974) seven domains of masculinity, and the masculinity and femininity scale of the MMPI-2 (see Graham 2005). All three of these scales use descriptors such as independent, assertive, athletic, strong, intellectual, and so forth, to define masculinity. Finally, the masculinity in nightlife concept was coded using three dimensions of behavior that respondents engaged in while in attendance at nightlife events; a focus on women (girl chasing), interpersonal competitiveness, and substance use (especially alcohol abuse, or binge drinking).

In the prior study, respondents were scored using low, moderate, and high designations, based on how many dimensions of the three concepts they exhibited. For this study, these three scores were averaged to arrive at a composite masculinity score. Fourteen of the 15 respondents involved in physical assault had moderate to high levels of masculinity. Conversely, of the 11 who did not report physical assault, six had low levels of masculinity, whereas the remaining five had moderate scores.

Identity Profile for Physical Assault

One of the most notable findings here was that all of the aforementioned individual-level factors were observed across those who reported the three different storyline types reported in Chapter four. That is, there was something of a dispositional uniformity in terms of those who reported physical assault storylines. While the storylines reported among these respondents were situationally unique, it is notable that those who reported them were similar across the six dispositional dimensions discussed above. The fact that a similar disposition was observed among those who reported different types of storylines may obscure a larger conceptual point; the fact that a disposition conducive to the experience of physical assault storylines is not the result of one particular individual-level factor; but rather, a composite of all of the factors specified.

The dimensions of a disposition conducive to experiencing storylines of physical assault tended to play out in the following manner. First, some kind of identity disruption caused social psychological strain in childhood or adolescence and functioned to sever the individual from conventional norms. This subsequently led to involvement with delinquent peers and the commission of crimes in youth (such as fighting, truancy, drug selling, and property vandalism), and moderate to heavy alcohol and drug use in adolescence. Both crime and substance abuse functioned as ways to assert masculinity in the absence of more conventional outlets. While involvement in delinquency typically lessened as these boys entered young adulthood, their use of alcohol and drugs typically continued, and they tended to favor recreational activities and peers supportive of these

interests; namely, extensive involvement in nightlife. Their nightlife involvement essentially functioned as a more socially acceptable means for these young adults to assert their masculinity, by engaging in continued alcohol and drug use, a focus on pursuing sexual encounters in nightlife venues, and by engaging in fighting to resolve disputes or misunderstandings. The following identity profile provides a compelling example of how these factors coalesce to shape a disposition conducive to the experience of physical assault storylines. I acknowledge this identity type is a broad conceptual category approximating Weber's (1947, 1949) "ideal" or "pure" types, and that this "ideal type" may not be perfectly identifiable in real life settings.

Profile. Hank is a 31 year-old Puerto Rican man. He is somewhat unique among those who reported physical assault storylines, as he is the only respondent who experienced all three storyline types reported in Chapter four. Hank works as a computer technician at a local University hospital and has been employed there for seven years. He has been separated from his wife for 3 years, with whom he has two children; a 6 year old son and a 12 year-old daughter. He sees both of them regularly and made it clear that he is not just a "weekend dad."

Hank has lived his whole life in Philadelphia. His mother a housewife and his father a factory worker, Hank grew up relatively poor. His parents are still together, and he has two brothers and one sister, all younger. He described his relationship to both his parents and his siblings as close, and noted that he regularly "hangs out at bars" with his two brothers. He was a committed athlete and an above average student until freshman year in high school when his father was sentenced to prison. Hank declined to discuss the

details of this situation as it was too emotionally painful to re-live, even some 17 years

after the fact. He freely admitted, however, that this was a turning point in his life.

Immediately following his father's incarceration Hank began experimenting in earnest

with drugs and alcohol, lost interest in sports and academics, and began spending most of

his time with delinquent peers.

Hank started drinking alcohol at this time, in his early teens. He was the oldest

looking of his friends and was able to purchase alcohol without being carded. "I've been

going to bars and clubs since I was 19. When I was 14 I used to be the runner, going in

the bar to get booze for everyone, and even once in a while, have the balls to say give me

a shot of southern comfort. If you are gonna give me four fuckin' forties, you're gonna

give me a shot. And I would come outside and say 'ahh, I just had a shot of southern

comfort' and my friends would be like *damn*. Fuckin' 14-15 years old, you're the man, ya

know." From ages 14-18 Hank used marijuana and alcohol exclusively. He stated that at

this age he was more interested in "hanging out, partying, and hooking up with chicks"

than anything else.

In addition to truancy, underage sex, and illegal drug and alcohol use, Hank was

also heavily involved in graffiti and property vandalism, and reported that he was

"getting into fights constantly." At age 16 he was arrested for stabbing someone with

whom a group of his friends had a prior altercation. After being temporarily detained in a

juvenile facility as a result of the incident, the charges were dropped because the judge

ruled that Hank had acted in self-defense. At age 17 he was arrested for graffiti

vandalism.

Despite his delinquency and substance abuse, he managed to graduate high school on time and enrolled in community college, after refusing a scholarship from a prestigious state university. His reason for refusing the scholarship was that he didn't want to leave his mother after all he and his father had put her through. Despite remaining close to home his delinquency continued. He quickly flunked out of community college and began engaging in more extensive drug and alcohol use. He began smoking "dust" around this time, between ages 18-24.

At age 19 Hank began attending nightlife events regularly. His motivations for clubbing were to engage in heavy alcohol use, meet women, and enjoy the company of his peers, while listening to music that he avidly enjoyed. His substance abuse and fighting continued through his mid 20s, exacerbated by his involvement in nightlife. He was arrested for DUI at age 22, but did not stop drinking or even scale back his use after the conviction. He eventually enrolled in a technical school to get his computer technicians certification, which he completed by age 25. His binge-level drinking continued in during this time, as did his aggressive behavior and fighting.

Currently, Hank regularly engages in binge-level drinking and characterized alcohol as his substance of choice. He had quit using marijuana and dust in his late 20s, noting that he started to become depressed after use. Alcohol, however, has remained a constant in his life. He goes out to clubs or bars around four or five times a week. His involvement in the commercial and underground hip-hop nightlife scene revolves largely around his love of alcohol, and he noted this is the one thing he has in common with other people who attend nightlife events. He stated that he can easily drink 12 beers and

several shots of alcohol during a night out, and that he generally does not have fewer than 10 drinks when at an event. In describing how he chooses an event to attend, he stated, "wherever there is booze at, I'm gonna go."

While Hank admits that alcohol use is a routine part of his life, his consumption more than triples when he is out at a nightlife event. He described himself as more of "a bar person" than a "club person" but stated that he goes to clubs because he loves hip-hop music. To him, it is simply a bar that features music he likes. Hank will often "pregame" at cheaper bars before going out to a nightlife event; "The clubs, like I said man, they fucking cost an arm and a leg. I can't afford 6-7 dollars a beer, ya know what I mean? So we get fucked up before we go… I end up going to a few of the dumps around my way first. Ya know what I mean, like the places I can get a 2 dollar beer, 2 dollar shot."

At age 28 Hank began using cocaine on a casual basis, and this was a direct result of his involvement in nightlife. He made it a point to note that he will not buy cocaine, but is open to using it "if it's around." Based on his characterization, cocaine is something that makes an appearance from time to time, and is more of a complement to his alcohol use, as the stimulant effects allow him to drink more over a longer period. Hank reported last using cocaine four months prior to the interview. He also mentioned a brief period of time in his late 20s when he was using Xanax during bouts binge-level drinking, and that using these substances concurrently made him feel "a million miles away; just out of it."

As regards his alcohol use, Hank admits that he is more likely to do something stupid when he is drinking heavily at a club, like get into a fight, but also that the "vibe"

of the events he attends is more aggressive and conducive to violence. "Going to a club
does pose a threat because you don't know what's going to happen. I guess that's what
part of the adrenalin rush is. You don't know if you are gonna meet a girl there; you don't
know if you are gonna get into a fight there; but the booze is definitely a major factor in a
lot of stupid shit that's been done over the years, no doubt."

While the previous profile of Hank is unique in certain respects, the cumulative
impact of all the factors specified is apparent. A childhood and adolescence defined
largely by family strain, delinquency, substance use (particularly alcohol abuse)
continued into adulthood, and hypermasculinity were associated with high levels of
participation in nightlife, and thus his reports of physical assault storylines. In terms of its
implications for extending the storyline concept, the advancement for Agnew's (2006)
work is twofold; first, it is evident that while storylines are, by definition, heavily
dependent on situational occurrences, as described in Chapter four, these storylines
appear far more likely to be experienced by those who share certain dispositional criteria;
this is true across different types of physical assault storylines, indicating that the impact
of disposition on physical assault is somewhat general in scope.

Second, as Hank's identity profile demonstrates, the various strains and stresses
that resulted in storylines were not temporally limited. That is, they did not necessarily
occur over a period of hours or days, as Agnew suggests they do. Rather, factors that
gave rise to storylines did, in fact, develop in subtle and often indirect ways over a period
of years. That is, storylines occurred in large part because these predisposed individuals
entered into certain kinds of interactional situations where they brought their cumulative

experiences and behavioral dispositions. Storylines of physical assault were therefore, at least in part, shaped by one's background, across six key dimensions. In the following sections I discuss how dispositional factors shaped storylines of sexual assault victimization among women.

Individual Disposition and Sexual Assault

As noted, there were 42 total sexual assault victimization incidents reported (see Chapter three) across 20 different respondents. Of those who reported storylines of sexual assault, all were women. As with physical assault, the individual-level factors influencing sexual assault were identified based on respondent interview data pertaining to identity formation with regard to family background and childhood experiences, experiences in adolescence and young adulthood (middle school, high school, and/or college), particularly with regard to the peer group, drug and alcohol use, and other factors related to lifestyles, including how often respondents reported participating in nightlife activities, and their prior experiences with victimization. There were six key individual-level factors that were associated with having reported sexual assault storylines.

Figure 5.2 provides a breakdown of those respondents who reported incidents and storylines of sexual assault, and how they rated across the six individual level factors that emerged as relevant predictors of sexual assault storylines. For comparison purposes, data for the remainder of women in the sample who did not report sexual assault is also included. Despite the fact involvement in physical and sexual assault constitute two very different kinds of outcomes, many of the same predictors and life experiences were reported among women who experienced sexual assault, as were reported among those

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involved in physical assault. Many of these factors, such as current levels of alcohol and drug use, frequency of time spent in nightlife spaces, and prior victimization experience, have been well established in prior research on individual-level predictors of sexual assault (Abbey et al. 1996, 2004; Parks and Miller 1997; Parks et al. 1998; Ullman, Karabatsos, and Koss 1999). Others, however, have not. These factors are elaborated on below.

Figure 5.2. Individual-level Factors for Sexual Assault.
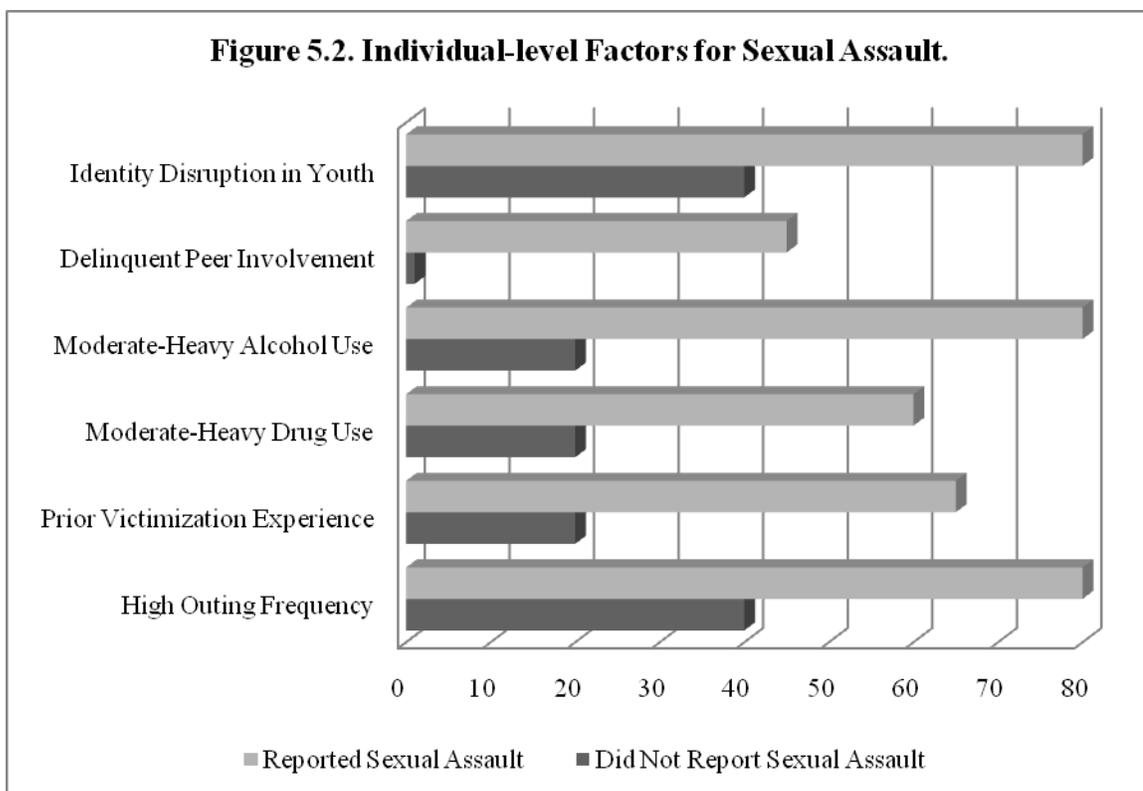
* Data are reported as percentages.

As with physical assault, one of the major background factors that victims of sexual assault shared in common was an *identity disruption in youth* (IDY). As noted earlier, an IDY refers to a traumatic event that the individual experienced either in

childhood or adolescence that caused them to incur a severe amount of stress, strain, or personal discomfort, resulting in personal or social marginalization from conventional institutions or others. The kinds of identity disruptions reported among the women were similar to those reported for men involved in physical assault, and consisted of (1) a parental separation or divorce, (2) a lack of responsible and consistent parenting at some point in childhood or adolescence; and (3) difficulty to adjusting to moving residences (or frequently moving residences). A notable exception that was uniquely reported among the women in the sample was (4) a disjunction between culturally proscribed norms and culturally experienced norms.

Related to point four, this IDY would occur when moving from one culturally distinct continent (in the case of these women, Asia or Africa) to the U.S. Several women in the sample experienced stress due to the tension between the cultural expectations condoned or enforced by their parents (consistent with that of the home country), versus those experienced first-hand in the U.S. in school or other institutions, among peers, and in popular culture. While prior research on sexual assault victimization has established a link between sexual abuse in early childhood and adolescence and sexual assault victimization in later life, this body of scholarship has not, to my knowledge, considered whether more generalized experiences of stress or strain in youth may have a similar impact on the likelihood of future victimization. Shelly described this:

> We're from Cambodia, originally. I was born in Thailand. My parents
> moved here when I was a year old. I've been living in Philadelphia almost
> all my life, since I was one. I have three brothers. There was a lot of

tension in the house, just cultural differences and stuff like that. So my

parents got divorced when I was 13. I understood the reasons why they

broke up, but it was still hard for me. It was harder on my brothers,

though. My youngest brother, he looked up to my father a lot. So, it was

hard for him when my parents split up. I'm still really close to my mom,

we all are. My dad still lives in Philadelphia, but I hardly speak to him.

He has this new family now... (Shelly, AF 25)

The IDY concept was coded the same as it was for physical assault; respondents were

assigned a "Y" if they experienced one or more of the 4 types of events listed earlier in

this section or an "N" if they did not experience any of them. Of the 20 respondents who

reported one or more sexual assault incidents, 16 reported experiencing one or more

identity disruptions in childhood or adolescence, whereas four did not experience any. Of

the remaining five women who did not report any sexual assault victimization, two

reported an identity disruption in youth, whereas the remaining three did not experience

one.

The next individual-level factor reported that emerged for many of those who

reported sexual assault victimization was *delinquent peer involvement* during the teen

years. This was typically in the form of extensive drug involvement, but occasionally

accompanied by involvement in other acts of delinquency such as truancy. Although

delinquent peer involvement was not as powerful a predictor as it was for men who

reported storylines of physical assault, a number of sexual assault victims still reported

some involvement with a drugs or delinquency in their youth. This form of drug-centered

delinquency often directly preceded, and in many cases directly led to, ones' involvement in urban nightlife, that then provided these women with a social context in which to continue or expand their drug use. Betty, who had experienced parental divorce, frequent geographic moves, and other identity strains during childhood and adolescence, provides a good example:

I was living in a small town and the school system was horrible and here I come they are putting my name in the paper for making straight A's. I thought this was the easiest thing I have ever done. They were giving me plaques and stuff. So anyway, my mom takes me to [a regional school for gifted children] so not only was I just this weird kid, but if you are perceived to be smart, then you are just a loser and alienated from the pack. So I change schools and now I'm the one black kid that goes to this all white school in Alabama.

I started getting into grunge music, like Nirvana, and everyone in my neighborhood looked at me like I was an idiot, coz they thought I was trying to be white. There was this club where all the ravers went, that was the scene, where me and my friends from school went. I wasn't really into the rave scene I was just into the drugs. So, I did ecstasy and I took acid and I didn't really smoke a lot of pot actually. I never started smoking a lot of pot until after I was already doing other stuff. That's kind of how I was exposed to the whole club scene or whatever. (Betty, BF 20)

As with the IDY concept, respondents were assigned a Y if they reported delinquent peer involvement or an N if they did not. Only nine of the 20 sexual assault victims reported *delinquent peer involvement*, whereas the remaining 11 did not. It is important to stress that delinquency in the form of extensive drug use was observed among all of the women who reported the "drug and alcohol use" storyline, whereas serious drug involvement in youth was not associated with the other two types of sexual assault storylines. As such, this particular factor appears to be a better predictor of a specific type of sexual assault storyline rather than a more general predictor as was the case regarding storylines of physical assault. Of the five non-victims, none reported involvement with drugs or other delinquency during their youth.

The next two factors were related to the respondent's *current levels of alcohol and drug use* (as reported in the past 6 months). Substance use by the victim is a well-established correlate of sexual assault, particularly among younger women (Abbey et al. 1996, 2004; Mohler-Kuo et al. 2004; Mustaine and Tewksbury 1998, 2002; Parks and Miller 1997; Schwartz and Pitts 1995; Testa, Van Zile-Tamsen, and Livingston 2007). Prior work has found that men tend to regard drug, and especially heavy alcohol use, by women in one of the following three ways: (1) as a nonverbal cue of sexual availability, (2) as an indication of low moral character that may justify the aggressive pursuit of a sexual encounter, or (3) as a boon to seduction, as they expect that women are more receptive to sexual advances if intoxicated (Richardson and Hammock 1991; Wilson, Calhoun, and McNair 2002). Evelyn, who reported multiple sexual assault incidents

consistent with the competing definitions of the situation storyline, described her alcohol and drug habits:

> I would say lately I've probably been drinking like three times a week,
> which is basically every time I go out. When I go out I'm more of a
> tequila, Jack Daniels, vodka kind of girl. At home or a house party it's
> more beer or wine. But when I'm out I'll probably have like a total of five
> drinks, I try not to be too heavy of a drinker coz I'm really weird about
> getting really fucked up at a party. Like I hate being sick at a party coz it's
> just like a waste of time, just a waste of a night. So I try to keep it down to
> like five drinks. Like if I'm drinking tequila sunrises I don't really need
> much more than that anyway (laughs). As for drugs, I do ecstasy, coke,
> shrooms, and recently acid; and also weed, marijuana which, that's like
> almost an all the time thing, like every day. (Evelyn, BF 21)

Current alcohol use were coded the using low, moderate, high designations, and the criteria used to determine level of use were the same as for physical assault. The only difference was that binge-level use was defined as four drinks in a single sitting, rather than five. Using these criteria, 16 of the 20 sexual assault victims reported moderate to heavy levels of current alcohol use and the remaining four reported low levels. Of the five non-victims, one reported a high level of current alcohol use, and four reported low levels. *Current drug use* was also coded using the low, moderate, and high designations, and again, the criteria to determine extent of use were the same as for physical assault (see above). Based on these criteria, 12 of the 20 who reported sexual assault

victimization had moderate to heavy levels of current substance use, four had low levels, and three did not currently use. Of the five non-victims, one reported moderate to high levels of current use, two reported a low level of current use, and the remaining two abstained from using drugs.

Respondents also reported how many nightlife events they attended per week (*outing frequency*), as research has consistently found lifestyles that involve spending extensive amounts of time in nightlife spaces are particularly conducive to victimization (Parks and Miller 1997; Parks et al. 1998; Parks 2000; Schwartz and Pitts 1995). The criteria to determine outing frequency was the same as for physical assault (see above). Sixteen of the 20 respondents who reported sexual assault victimization had high outing frequencies (including eight of the 10 women who reported multiple sexual assault incidents), while the remaining four reported moderate outing frequencies. Of the five non-victims, two had high levels of nightlife participation, two moderate, and one reported a low level of nightlife participation.

The final factor used to examine individual-level influences on sexual assault was reports of *prior victimization experience*. Prior research has found that one of the best predictors of future sexual assault victimization is prior victimization, and prior sexual assault victimization in particular (Breitenbecher 2001; Classen, Palesh, and Aggarwal 2005; Miller, Markman, and Handley 2007; Testa et al. 2007). For prior victimization experience, respondents were scored as none, low, moderate, or high. If respondents reported only one sexual assault victimization incident, they were assigned a "none," as the incident was regarded as an isolated occurrence. If respondents reported multiple

(two) sexual assault incidents, they were scored "low." If respondents reported two sexual assault incidents, and one other form of victimization, such as theft of personal effects, they were scored "moderate." If respondents reported more than two sexual assault incidents, and one or more other forms of victimization (ex: multiple instances of personal theft), they were scored "high." Only those who reported moderate to high levels of prior victimization are represented in Figure 5.2. Using this criterion, 13 of the 20 sexual assault had a moderate to high level of prior victimization, five had low levels, and three reported no prior victimization beyond the one sexual assault incident. Of the five non-victims, one had a moderate level of prior victimization (robbery and personal theft), two reported low levels (one personal theft, the other verbal harassment), and two reported no prior victimization experiences whatsoever.

Identity Profiles for Sexual Assault

The individual-level factors discussed above allow us to gain a clearer picture of the commonalities shared by those who reported sexual assault storylines. Generally, sexual assault victims experienced some kind of identity disruption in youth that severed them from conventional norms and institutions, resulted in ego identity discomfort (see Anderson 1998), or dissatisfaction with ones sense of self. This severance allowed them to explore alternative groups, norms, institutions, and cultural standards in developing their identities during early and into late adolescence. For some, the strain associated with an identity disruption in youth subsequently gave way to involvement in delinquency, most often in the form of extensive substance use in adolescence, although as figure 5.2 indicates, this pattern was not as overwhelmingly prominent. While serious long-term

involvement in drug use was not necessarily common, these women tended go out to nightlife events quite frequently, use drugs casually or have positive attitudes toward drug use, and use alcohol moderately or regularly. However, there were some differences which precluded labeling sexual assault victims as a homogenous group, and there was variation according to which storyline women reported. Further analysis revealed two different "identity types" of respondents who reported sexual assault victimization. The identity types are discussed below, followed by a sample profile.

Profile #1: Drug and Alcohol Use. Six of the 20 sexual assault victims could be classified as current or former drug enthusiasts. Three of these women reported the "drug and alcohol use" storyline, one reported the "opportunistic predation" storyline, and two reported incidents but no storylines. These respondents shared two key characteristics. Chief among them was a connection with drug-related music collectives that facilitated their introduction to, and current involvement in, nightlife. This centered on the rave and EDM nightlife scene, which peaked in popularity in Philadelphia between 1997 and 2002 (Anderson 2009). Second was an extensive, long-term personal history with illegal drug use, which serves, or served at an earlier point in time, as one of their primary motivations for current nightlife involvement. Audrey provides a good example of this identity type.

Audrey is a 21 year-old white woman who reported the drug/alcohol use storyline on two occasions. Audrey is unemployed living with two friends in Philadelphia, having just moved to the city from Boston about two weeks prior to the interview. She has been performing as a DJ in electronic dance music (EDM) clubs since the age of 17, and has

been pursuing this professionally since graduating high school. In addition to Harriet, Audrey has lived in Virginia (DC metro) and New York for short periods of time. She recently left Boston after having become depressed due to working a string of dead-end, low-wage jobs. She is looking for work in the food service industry while working to further her DJing aspirations. Audrey currently provides babysitting services for her friends in exchange for room and board.

Audrey moved to New Jersey at the age of four, around 30 minutes from the city of Philadelphia. Her parents are currently married, and she has one sister. Audrey noted that while she is very close to her mother and always has been, her relationship with her father is cold and distant. He had always blamed Audrey's mother for this, which in turn made Audrey resent her father even more. She explained that she "doesn't hate him as much anymore coz I'm not in that teenage anger stage anymore. It's still pretty bad though." Her older sister went to live in Japan as an exchange student when Audrey was five years old, and she commented that "it was pretty much like being an only child."

Audrey was exposed to EDM courtesy of her older sister at the age of eight, when she was back visiting from Japan. She began exploring DJing at the age of 14 and began attending club events in Philadelphia at 15. Throughout high school Audrey noted that she was "getting beat up all the time, people calling me names and stuff" and that she had serious problems making friends with anyone in school, due in part to her "looking different and being into weird music and clothes." Audrey proudly stated that she has met all of her friends through the nightlife scene. As her interest and involvement in EDM continued to evolve, her interest in academics began to wane. At age 17 she began

perform as a DJ in clubs in New York and Philadelphia, in addition to attending club

events socially.

Audrey also engaged in minor acts of delinquency, such as truancy, drinking,

marijuana use, and minor theft. She was arrested at age 16 for drug involvement. "I was

at my boyfriend's house, and his roommate and his girlfriend insisted on coming with us

to this club, so we were all in cars, it was like 1:00 AM and they were driving me home,

and the cops pulled us over and his roommate that was sitting in back was a coke dealer

apparently, and he had weed on his lap. So the cop pulled him out of the car and pulled

14 bags of coke out of his pocket… Everybody got arrested..." Audrey described the time

period in her life from ages 16-18 as somewhat of a blur. Though her school performance

continued to deteriorate, she managed to graduate high school. After graduating Audrey

turned her attention more seriously to DJing and involvement in EDM culture. As such,

she began spending progressively more time at nightlife events networking and

socializing.

At age 18 she used ecstasy for the first time and her use quickly became habitual.

She also began regular use of other drugs such as cocaine, psilocybin mushrooms, and

ketamine. During this time Audrey relocated to major cities fairly frequently, falling in

with various friends here and there, staying and moving on as she pleased. At the age of

19 she was involved in an abusive relationship. She gave up DJing at age 19 as her drug

use spiraled out of control. Audrey described, "I was doing a lot of E, and for all the

wrong reasons. I was doing it to make myself happy, not even considering that doing

more makes you more depressed when you're not on it. We would be on it literally for

days. And it got to the point where, I delivered pizza at the time, and I would go home

and sleep for two hours and then I got up to go to work, and crushed up E pills and

snorted lines of 'em in the bathroom. I was just on it all the time."

It was during this time period (age 18-19), when she was attending nightlife

events about five times a week that she was first sexually assaulted. Audrey described her

main reasons for attending nightlife events as socializing with like-minded peers and

engaging in illicit drug use. Although Audrey was assaulted a total of three times at

clubs, she regarded each incident as an aberration. "I've never felt threatened. I kind of

feel like the rave scene, like the whole thing was just pure, ya know? Like peace, love,

unity, and respect. So there has always been this kind of feeling like everybody is

together, that kind of thing. I mean, it's obviously changed a lot, but when I go out in

Philadelphia even now, I know pretty much everybody so I never feel like I have any

kind of problem." Although she regards nightlife events in the EDM scene as a kind of

safe haven, in addition to the three sexual assault incidents, Audrey has also been the

victim of several other types of crime. "I've had tons of shit stolen at club events. I've

had my camera stolen, I've had a bag stolen, lost money; my car window got smashed in

Virginia; nothing like that's happened in a while though." She rationalized, "I'm not very

materialistic, so if I lose something like that it's just kind of not that big of a deal, ya

know?"

Since turning 21, Audrey has made a point to slow down her drug use, citing

serious problems with depression from prolonged, daily use of ecstasy and other drugs.

She still smokes marijuana weekly, and uses ecstasy on "special occasions" or for large

EDM nightlife events. In fact, she reported having used LSD for the first time several months prior to the interview at one such event. Audrey currently attends nightlife events roughly four times a week. When asked about her alcohol use, she admitted to drinking between two and three times a week, and having between 4-6 drinks in an evening. She recently had her drink spiked by a man attempting to commit sexual assault roughly 3-4 months prior to the interview. Again, she regards this incident as an aberration.

Profile #2: Regular Girls and Alcohol Outlets. The remaining 14 respondents who reported sexual assault victimization were broadly categorized as "regular girls." These women tended to favor mainstream nightlife events held in venues that were more crowded, and that feature music commonly heard on commercial radio. While some of the respondents were motivated to attend these venues due to their desire to consume alcohol, for many women the primary motivation was simply to socialize with friends, unwind or relax, and dance. While these women occasionally reported engaging in courtship behaviors, this was not regarded as a primary motivator for nightlife involvement. While a number of the women fitting this identity type did engage in heavy alcohol use, especially at nightlife events, the majority used alcohol moderately. Most women were either college students or young professionals beginning their careers. Nadine provides a good example of this identity type.

Nadine is a 25 year old black woman. She has experienced multiple instances of sexual assault consistent with the opportunistic predation storyline described in Chapter four. Nadine currently works as a computer programmer for a company in a Philadelphia suburb and has been employed there for two years. She is considering going back to

school for a MBA, and stated that she is starting to become bored with the computer science field. Nadine recently bought her own home in suburban area on the outskirts of the city of Philadelphia. Prior to this she was living in a three bedroom apartment with her mother, who recently relocated to Philadelphia to live with her daughter after having incurred financial hardship.

Nadine was born and raised in a small town in upstate New York. Her parents divorced when she was a child and she lived with her father. Though her father was a mechanical design engineer and her mother a chemical engineer, Nadine explained that the financial strain of the divorce did not always reflect her upper middle class roots. She has two sets of step-siblings, from her father and mother's second marriages. She described her relationship with her step-sisters on her father's side as very close, and said that she does not even know those from her mother's second marriage. Nadine described her relationship with her father as very good, but noted that she and her mother have had a strained relationship for as long as she can remember.

Nadine was a model student throughout her life and rarely ever engaged in deviance. She tried marijuana only one time in her life (age 15), and did not use alcohol until her 21st birthday. She stated that she only had one close friend throughout high school, and that growing up in a small, affluent Jewish community caused her to feel somewhat distant from her peers, with whom she felt she had little in common. Still, she excelled in both academics and extracurricular activities, participating in both cheerleading and track and field. She received a full scholarship to a Philadelphia area university for the latter, and has been living in the Philly metro area since the age of 18.

In college Nadine went out to bars and clubs only one or two times a year, due in part to being a committed athlete and student, and in part to a negative experience she had early on. "As me and my boyfriend at the time were leaving this one club in *Riverfront*, some guys bumped into me. And I didn't even notice that they did it on purpose and then did it again. And I just kind of walked around the one guy because I wasn't expecting anything. Then the next thing I know, the whole group of guys surrounded us. We were almost going to get into a physical altercation and I took off my shoe, I was like, "I'm throwing it at someone." A bunch of guys just surrounded me and my boyfriend and kind of shoved him. They were just standing outside of the club. My boyfriend was going to fight and so was I and then they just ended up backing off. I guess they were just drunk and standing around outside. That is the last time I went down to *Riverfront* and that kind of put me off clubbing for a while."

Nadine only began attending nightlife events again in the past year, and currently goes out to clubs between three and four times a week. When asked if there was any reason why she started going to nightlife events so often fairly recently, despite the fact that nightlife was never of much interest to her earlier, she responded, "I feel like because I spent so much time in school and track that I just didn't have the time to have fun. But now I have the time, and I want to experience stuff I didn't get to do in college because I was working so hard. Track was work and school was work. So I basically just worked and trained. Now I want to try something different."

Trying something different also includes a newfound enthusiasm for alcohol use, which had never been a major part of Nadine's life until her recent nightlife involvement.

"Like now I go out and I drink because it's something to do. I don't necessarily have to
do it, but usually I will say ya know what; I want to drink, so let's go out tonight." She
mentioned, however, that her relative newness to the club scene can also work against her
in this regard. "I'm usually the designated driver because my friends drink so much more
than me, so I have to stop drinking at like 12 and start drinking water. And being the
designated driver sometimes can like impede how much fun you have. Like I basically
just started drinking a year ago when I started going out, and I like to experiment with
alcohol now. But when I'm driving everyone home I can't drink as much as I sometimes
might want to."

In addition to alcohol use, for Nadine, nightlife is also about style and status.
"Like every time I go to the club I gotta put on nice clothes. Like me and my girls will
spend two days figuring out what we're wearing. If I start getting ready at 6pm I can
make it to the club by 11. I can spend an entire day shopping for clothes for the club,
though. I've done it. I've spent 11 hours looking for a pair of brown Capri's; I get a little
obsessive." Nadine then discussed how she and her friends select events to attend. "We
have our old standby, which is whatever is open until 3:30 am, which is always CLUB I
or CLUB J and we know some of the owners, or the bartender, and we can get free drinks
there. Or we go to the places where ya know, girls are free before 11, ya know, that stuff.
So I don't spend that much on drinks."

While considerations related to alcohol use or availability and having fun with
friends were Nadine's primary criteria for choosing events, she described how even
moderate alcohol use changed her behavior. "I'm more likely to dance when I've been

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drinking; more likely to talk to people who I don't know or say what's on my mind. I mean, I don't have to be drinking to dance; but I'm more likely to dance with someone else if I have been. If I haven't been drinking, I won't dance with someone else. I wouldn't want him touching me because the guys get pretty touchy feely. They try to grind, it's terrible. Sometimes they get really excited and start trying to corner you." Nadine noted that she is sexually harassed roughly once a week, and that she has experienced the opportunistic predation storyline four times. While initially deeply upset by such incidents, she now regards them as merely hazards of the club scene. "I'm getting used to it, but it's a little ridiculous. People just get too drunk and you have to kind of handle it."

Reconciling Differing Identity Types

As these two identity profiles demonstrate, while the background factors that result in sexual assault can often be quite similar, the individual trajectories of these women can also often very different. Concerning the similarities, each of these women experienced an identity disruption in youth. Similarly, both women experienced "outsider" status at some point during youth. While this perceived outsider status eventually led to identification with a drug-involved peer group for Audrey during her adolescence, Nadine stayed out of trouble and moved away to attend college on a full scholarship. While nightlife involvement functioned as a form of recreation for both women, it was for very different reasons. Perhaps as a result of these basic identity differences (related to substance use), these two victim types experienced different storylines of sexual assault. Whereas Audrey was interested primarily in drug and alcohol

use at nightlife events she was also very serious about her involvement in music. While her drug and alcohol use behavior seems to have directly impacted the type of storyline she reported, it is also worth stressing that the scene she is involved in (EDM) is, in general, less sexualized and less tolerant of aggressive sexualized pursuits (Anderson 2009) that were likely to result in the *competing definitions of the situation* and *opportunistic predation* storylines.

Conversely, Nadine's nightlife involvement was less serious, driven by the desire to simply have fun with friends, meet men, and experiment with alcohol. Nadine had only been attending nightlife events regularly for the past year. Indeed, she explained that the reason for her nightlife participation is largely related to the fact that the demands of being a collegiate athlete were such that she didn't have much free time. As such, she was currently seeking new experiences that she regarded as fun and novel; namely clubbing in popular, mainstream venues that are often intensely sexualized (see Chapter six). As such, her dispositional characteristics and taste preferences (related to both substance use, music, and other cultural products such as clothing) resulted in the exploration of different kinds of nightlife scenes, and ultimately, experiencing different types of sexual assault storylines.

This constitutes a departure from the disposition predictive of physical assault storylines. These findings suggest that for sexual assault victims, while a childhood and/or adolescence defined by some form of identity or family disruption was a key commonality, it tended to impact different women in different ways. Notably, the type of sexual assault storylines reported later in life seemed to be dependent (at least in part) on

whether the strains experienced in early life resulted in subsequent involvement with illegal drugs (both in adolescence and currently). That is, after experiencing an identity disruption in youth, some women became extensively involved with a drug subcultural group, whereas others did not. Those who did were more likely to report the drug and alcohol use storyline, whereas those who did not experienced either the competing definitions of the situation or opportunistic predation storylines.

The advancement for Agnew's (2006) work is, again, twofold; first, as was the case with physical assault, the various strains and stresses that result in storylines tended to develop in subtle and indirect ways, over a period of years. However, for women, these stresses and strains did not later shape involvement in offending (violent or otherwise), but rather, victimization. The second, and most important, advance is that one's drug and/or alcohol trajectory largely functioned to shape individual identities in ways that were predictive of specific types of sexual assault storylines. So, while the women who reported the three storylines of sexual assault do indeed share certain dispositional commonalities (an identity disruption in youth, prior victimization experience, frequent participation in nightlife), the particular type of storyline reported seems to have been shaped by substance use history and current drug or alcohol preferences (as well as preferences related to cultural tastes), and what kinds of social environments were conducive to these preferences. More broadly, that a clearly identifiable point in one's background can be linked to the likelihood of experiencing a specific type of sexual assault storyline, suggests that while one's disposition is only a general predictor for

physical assault storylines, it can predict victimization storylines with a greater degree of

specificity.

CONCLUSION

Agnew (2006) notes that storylines of crime must be broadly defined so that they

can account for experiences that extend into one's background, largely to determine the

impact of these experiences in temporarily altering their "normal" disposition. At the

beginning of this chapter I have argued that, if Agnew suggests that an important part of

storylines is a brief, limited examination into one's background over the past several

hours, days, or weeks, logic would suggest that a more thorough examination of one's

background might be useful in understanding how dispositional factors shape particular

storylines. More broadly, doing this has the potential to expand the storyline concept to

better account for the role of one's individual disposition in shaping physical and sexual

assault outcomes.

This chapter demonstrates that those who reported storylines of physical and

sexual assault share some important dispositional commonalities. For physical assault,

the pattern was almost universally observed: an individual experienced some kind of an

identity disruption in their youth; this functioned to effectively sever the individual from

conventional others, norms, or institutions, and they began to explore "alternative"

(generally, drug-involved, or delinquent) groups, to ameliorate the identity strain they

were experiencing. Again, a similar pattern has been observed in other research on

substance use, drug subcultures, and identity development (Anderson 1994, 1998, 2009).

This involvement in deviance, or exploration of alternative groups eventually gave way

to moderate or heavy alcohol and drug use in early adulthood (and currently) at frequent
nightlife attendance.

Moreover, most of the men who reported storylines of physical assault reported
high levels of masculinity throughout their lives; this dispositional feature further
functioned to shape physical assault situations "in the moment", as men attempted to
quell "affronts" to their manhood (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Messerschmidt
2004). As noted in Chapter four, the idea of strain building over time has been suggested
by Agnew's (1992) general strain theory, wherein he discusses the cumulative impact of
strain, or the fact that strains can build over time (past strains upon present ones),
increasing the likelihood that strain will lead to a criminal event. The fact that cumulative
strain tended to result in involvement in violence for those with particularly high levels of
masculinity is an important point to emphasize, and further speaks to the gendered nature
of coping responses to various forms of strain (Broidy and Agnew 1997; Hay 2003).
More generally, it is pertinent to note that the dispositional composite offered here –
comprised of familial and personal identity strains, drug and alcohol use habits, and
masculinity – was observed across all of the three physical assault storyline types
reported in Chapter four.

A somewhat similar dispositional composite was found among the women who
reported sexual assault victimization, albeit to a lesser degree, and with more case by case
variation. For example, while identity disruptions in youth were observed among a
majority of the sexual assault victims, a comparably smaller number became involved in
drug-centered delinquent peer groups in adolescence, and their overall patterns of drug

and alcohol use in adulthood were lower than that of men who reported storylines of
physical assault. Still, generally speaking, the women who reported sexual assault
storylines tended to attend nightlife events quite often and used alcohol fairly liberally
when in attendance. Importantly, one's identity profile, and particularly their trajectory
with drugs, tended to predict particular types of sexual assault storylines. Namely,
extensive involvement with a drug-using peer group in youth tended to predict the
likelihood of the *drug and alcohol use* storyline, whereas those not extensively involved
with drugs during their youth reported either the *competing definitions of the situation* or
opportunistic predation storyline. It is worth pointing out however, that, those women
who reported all three kinds of storylines tended to have much higher levels of substance
use (particularly alcohol use) than those who did not experience sexual assault. This
speaks to the importance of substance use by the victim as a general predictor of sexual
assault.

The fact that a similar set of individual-level predictors were found for two very
different types of outcomes, is also significant. Most scholarship on individual level
predictors of sexual assault has focused on basic demographic factors, such as race, age,
and income (Bachman and Saltzman 1995; Tadjen and Thoennes 1998). While a
substantial body of work has found that substance use by the victim is often a significant
predictor (Abbey et al. 2004; Mustaine and Tewksbury 1998, 2002; Parks and Miller
1997; Testa and Parks 2006), this research has not accounted for the dynamic processes
that can propel individuals toward these kinds of lifestyles, and how variations in one's

background, particularly with respect to substance use, can impact particular types of sexual assault outcomes.

As for physical assault, this research supports a number of theories of criminal behavior, including strain (Agnew 1992), social bond (Hirschi 1969), learning (Akers 1998; Sutherland 1947), and self-control (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990), alcohol use (Bushman 1997; Chermack and Giancola 1997; Collins and Messerschmidt 1993) as well as recent work on masculinity and violence (Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009; Graham and Wells 2001, 2003; Leonard et al. 2003). However, while prior work has emphasized the importance of a particular factor over that of others (parenting; strain; alcohol use; hypermasculinity), I have found here that dispositions conducive to physical assault are a composite of factors related to three main areas; identity strain, substance (particularly alcohol) abuse, and masculinity. This speaks to the continuity of disposition in shaping physical assault storylines across fluid situations.

In closing, while this chapter demonstrates that there are certain dispositional predictors that contribute to storylines of both physical and sexual assault, it is worth noting that some of these factors were also observed across respondents who did not experience either physical or sexual assault. This suggests that, while certainly important, dispositional factors such as identity disruptions and levels of substance abuse are not wholly sufficient to explain storylines of physical and sexual assault. As such, Chapter six details the contextual-level factors that further shaped these storylines.

Chapter 6

CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON STORYLINES OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

While factors related to one's individual disposition are able to explain some of the variation between those who reported storylines of physical or sexual assault with those who did not, it is important to remember that dispositional factors do not exist in a vacuum. Social contexts provide attractive locations and suitable opportunities for motivated individuals to offend, or for targets to be victimized; individual factors are not, by themselves, sufficient to fully understand storylines of crime and victimization. One of the key components of storylines as articulated by Agnew (2006) is that they are broad enough in scope to account for the settings, or contexts where criminal acts occur. Despite noting the importance of settings in shaping storylines of crime, a thorough analysis of how particular aspects of social contexts contribute to crime is lacking in Agnew's initial typology. The following narrative from Hank speaks to the importance of contextual in shaping storylines:

> Over like the last two years or so I've been in like six fights. And they're
>
> always at clubs and bars; I mean, I don't really just get in fights walking
>
> down the street, ya know what I mean? It's these places; booze, egos,

meatheads. You feel that tension. You gotta have your head on a swivel,

man, I'm tellin you. (Hank, HM 31)

As this narrative suggests, storylines are often shaped by the contexts in which they

occur, but what are the specific aspects of contexts that are important in shaping

storylines? Are these factors more relevant to certain types of storylines than others? It is

with these questions in mind that I explore how particular aspects of nightlife settings

contribute to the storylines of physical and sexual assault previously discussed in Chapter

four.

The chapter is divided into three primary sections. First, I review prior research

on the role of social contexts in shaping deviant outcomes. Second, I map individuals'

nightlife attendance, identifying the kinds of contexts they were most likely to frequent.

Finally, I discuss how social context shapes physical and sexual assault storylines. This

entails a comparison of nightlife venues and events; that is, detailing the particular

aspects of the contexts where physical and sexual assault storylines happen versus where

they do not, and how individual's motivations and behaviors were largely shaped by the

contexts in which they chose to spend their leisure time. I then conclude with a discussion

of how the concepts generated in this work contributes to criminology's understanding of

how social context functions to shape physical and sexual assault.

For the last 30 years the major theoretical paradigm that has guided most of the

research and theory on social environments, or contexts, and criminal offending and

victimization is routine activity theory (RAT) (Cohen and Felson 1979; Felson 1994).

RAT posits that crime and victimization result from the confluence of three factors: (1) a

suitable target is available (person, object, or place), (2) the lack of a suitable guardian to prevent the crime from occurring (police, security, or parents), and (3) a motivated offender who is either tempted or provoked. If a target is not sufficiently protected, and if the reward is worth it, crime will happen. Crime does not need to be perpetrated by chronic offenders or convicted felons. Rather, crime will occur if there is an opportunity available.

More recent scholarship on social context and crime has found that masculinity is also important in shaping criminal outcomes. While masculinity is often regarded as a part of one's individual disposition, or a trait (see Chapter five) and that it may be some what stable across various periods in the life course, feminist criminologists have consistently stressed that masculinity requires an institutional context (Connell 1993; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Demetriou 2001) in order to emerge, or be realized. Urban nightlife spaces serve as important contexts for the performance of masculinity, especially among young adults (Anderson et al. 2009; Grazian 2007). Research has found that gender norms such as male honor and masculine status reinforce criminal behavior, particularly with respect to alcohol use and aggression at bars and nightclubs (Graham and Wells 2001, 2003; Graham, Wells, and Jelley 2002; Graham et al. 2006; Norstrom 1998; Polk 1994, 1999). That is, young men view both violence as well as excessive substance use as proof of masculinity, and engaging in excessive drinking and fighting constitute "normal" forms of masculine expression (Gorman and White 1995; White and Gorman 2000). This proclivity toward violence can be strengthened by involvement with

like-minded peers (Akers 1998; Grazian 2007; Warr 2002), further normalizing such behavior.

The conceptual question of precisely how contextual-level factors influence deviant outcomes has recently been addressed by Rhodes (2002) and his notion of "risk environments." Rhodes defines the risk environment simply as the space - both social and physical - wherein a number of factors interact to increase (or decrease) the likelihood of deviant outcomes such as physical and sexual assault. Rhodes distinguishes between several levels of risk environments, which he locates at the micro (physical and social) and macro (economic and political) levels. Using Rhodes' framework, the levels of environmental influence most pertinent to this study are located at the micro level: that is, the physical and social environment.

Micro-level risk environment research suggests that risk perception and corresponding risk-taking behaviors are a result of the confluence of several factors. They can be defined as: (1) perceived social norms, rules and values, (2) peer group and social influence, and (3) the immediate physical and social setting in which persons find themselves (Hunt et al. 2007; Kelly 2005; Rhodes 2002). Importantly, there may be a symbiotic relationship between these two levels of influence, in that physical space may enable the proliferation of social factors that contribute to deviant outcomes, or social factors may neutralize deterrents present in the physical environment. While Rhodes (2002) framework was initially developed to explain illicit substance use and health-related consequences, the various aspects of the risk environment concept are certainly applicable to other forms of deviance such as physical and sexual assault.

Social Context and Physical and Sexual Assault

Recently, Anderson and colleagues (2007, 2009; Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008, 2009) found that while different types of nightlife scenes feature different cultural traits, with regard to violent behavior and consequences, the key characteristic is whether the nightlife event can be defined as *commercial* or *underground.* Commercial nightlife events are those with an audience preference for popular music (anything on commercial sponsored radio), an atmosphere of elitism, a prioritization of social status and style (high fashion), and highly sexualized gendered interaction styles featuring "hooking up" objectives (see also Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008). Conversely, underground events are warm and friendly, prioritizing the importance of music enjoyment and music-related discourse, as well as celebrating uniqueness, diversity, and respect, and a communal sense of belonging (Anderson 2009; Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008).

Some scholars have expressed concerns regarding the utility of the commercial-underground distinction in relation to urban nightlife in general, and to EDM nightlife events in particular. Indeed, Thornton (1996) challenged the commercial-underground dichotomy the noting that with a shift toward growing popularity and commercial success, the scene was consequently sexualized. Most of these criticisms, however, stem from observations of nightlife in Britain. Anderson (2009) suggests that in the American nightlife scene, events can be classified on a kind of continuum, where events are anchored somewhere between "authentic" underground types, and those that conform more rigidly to aspects of commercial nightclub and bar culture. As such, for American club culture, the commercial-underground distinction retains analytical significance. As

Anderson, Daly, and Rapp (2009) note, "commercial events, both HH and EDM, called for hypermasculine traits and prioritized hetero-normative sexualities, while underground events showcased more muted masculinities and de-emphasized sexual motives and actions" (p. 6).

Of the physical and sexual assault storylines that were reported by the respondents or incidents that were witnessed live during direct observation, the majority occurred at nightlife events that met the criteria (aforementioned) for classification as *commercial*. While reports of physical or sexual assault incidents occurring at underground venues did occur, such reports were exceptional and uncommon, and related to particular types of storylines. For example, in regard to storylines of physical assault, two of those four who reported *defensive-retaliatory action* storylines reported them as occurring in the context of a night of clubbing at underground venues. In both cases, the physical assaults occurred as a reaction to something that happened outside of the particular venue (one in an attempt to prevent a robbery, described in Chapter four, and the other in an attempt to get even with several young men who vandalized the respondent's vehicle). The other two defensive-retaliatory action storylines occurred in commercial venues. As regards sexual assault, one of the three *drug and alcohol use* storylines that was reported in Chapter four occurred in an underground venue. The remaining two, as well as all of the *opportunistic predation* and *competing definitions of the situation* storylines occurred in commercial venues.

Table 6.1 provides a breakdown of respondent nightlife attendance patterns with respect to the type of event (commercial and underground) and incidents and storylines of

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physical and sexual assault they reported. During the interviews, respondents were asked about the kinds of nightlife events and venues they had frequented in the past five years. Also, when discussing physical or sexual assault experiences, respondents were asked to specify the particular event or venue where the incident occurred. These events were then classified as either commercial or underground based on either direct observations performed at that particular event or venue, or the respondents characterization of the event or venue.

With several exceptions, the data indicate that overwhelmingly, those who experienced physical and sexual assault outcomes and reported storylines had a far higher percentage of attendance at commercial nightlife venues over the last five years than attendance at underground venues. For men who reported physical assault, 60% reported attending commercial events more frequently than underground ones. For those who did not report physical assault, only 18% attended commercial events more often than underground ones. The percentages are roughly the same for those who reported sexual assault victimization; 60% of those who were victims had a higher rate of attendance at commercial events. Only 20% of those who did not report a victimization incident had a higher rate of attendance at commercial events.

Some of the exceptions to this pattern include men such as Bobby, Ed, Pete, and Jerry, and women such as Catherine, Jocelyn, and Annie. While all of these respondents reported attending a substantial portion of commercial nightlife events during the past five years, they also reported trending more toward underground events more recently, largely to avoid some of the risks or situations that they regard as having led to these

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negative outcomes at commercial venues in the past (see the following chapter for more

on this). However, these respondents did note that the crime or victimization incidents

they experienced occurred in commercial nightlife spaces.

Table 6.1. Physical and Sexual Assault and Event Type.

PHYSICAL ASSAULT				SEXUAL ASSAULT			
Total (N=26)				Total (N=25)			
Men	# PAIs	# SLs	%Com./%Und.	Women	#SAIs	#SLs	%Com./%Und.
Dale	1	1	71/29	Shelly	3	1	72/28
Harry	1	1	71/29	Donna	1	1	64/36
Bobby	3	1	38/62	Audrey	2	2	70/30
Ben	1	1	60/40	Laura	1	1	74/26
James	7	2	67/33	Norma	2	1	75/25
Leo	3	2	78/22	Sarah	2	2	87/13
Mike	2	1	71/29	Jocelyn	1	1	29/71
Pete	3	1	50/50	Lucy	1	1	43/57
Hank	5	3	75/25	Catherine	3	1	45/55
Ed	1	1	40/60	Betty	2	2	50/50
Andy	3	2	73/27	Maddie	1	1	50/50
Jerry	1	0	33/66	Nadine	4	1	100/0
Albert	1	0	70/30	Evelyn	3	1	76/34
Lawrence	1	0	0/100	Ronette	4	2	84/16
Gordon	2	0	33/66	Eileen	2	1	50/50
Harold	0	0	40/60	Annie	1	0	29/71
Will	0	0	42/58	Julee	2	0	68/32
Leland	0	0	70/30	Sylvia	1	0	50/50
Garland	0	0	50/50	Nancy	1	0	60/40
Thomas	0	0	22/78	Harriet	1	0	62/38
Dick	0	0	50/50	Lana	0	0	50/50
Sam	0	0	37/63	Jenny	0	0	63/37
Bernard	0	0	50/50	Trudy	0	0	42/58
Carl	0	0	50/50	Maria	0	0	24/76
Jacques	0	0	73/27	Heidi	0	0	50/50
Chet	0	0	24/76				

ABBREVIATIONS: #PAIs: number of physical assault incidents; #PASLs: number of physical assault
storylines; %Com./%Und.: percentage of events attended at commercial and underground nightlife venues,
respectively; #SAIs: number of sexual assault incidents; #SASLs: number of sexual assault storylines.

The point to emphasize, then, is that the storylines of physical and sexual assault reported in this dissertation tended to take place in particular kinds of social contexts; namely, commercial nightlife spaces. Precisely how, then, do the particular aspects of these social contexts further shape storylines of physical and sexual assault? Agnew's (2006) work on storylines does not allow for the luxury of a simple answer, but does provide a launching point from which to further explore this important question. Agnew notes that, while immediate situational interactions are the most important aspects of storylines, often times the factors that give rise to storylines transcend specific situations and that they are, in fact "often far removed from the [specific] situations in which crime occurs" (p. 125).

To give an example, in the opportunistic predation storyline of sexual assault discussed in Chapter four, the availability of attractive targets for assault may be conceptualized as a situational variable in that the opportunity to victimize the target is temporally limited. But what of the social contexts in which these targets are located? The characteristics of these contexts are typically stable for durations well beyond that of the situational occurrence of the storyline. The point is that storylines tended to materialize under certain sets of conditions. So, having established that physical and sexual assault storylines were more common in commercial nightlife contexts, it is important to clarify what the specific conditions of commercial nightlife environs were that contributed to these storylines. The following sections are devoted to describing the factors that shaped physical and sexual assault storylines and moreover, whether these factors were better able to predict particular types of storylines than others.

Event Vibe

In both the interview and observation data, two broad and interrelated dimensions of commercial contexts proved salient in shaping storylines. They were: (1) the vibe of the nightlife event, and (2) the social organization of the event. *Event vibe* can be defined as the social climate or cultural atmosphere of a particular nightlife event, or venue. It is non-material or symbolic, and important in defining the norms, expectations, identity markers, interaction patterns and other behaviors associated with particular kinds of nightlife events (Anderson et al. 2007; Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009). The vibe of a particular nightlife event or venue can be gauged by the dominant stylistic and fashion norms, the musical selection and preferences of the patrons, as well as other identity markers, such as speech patterns, and interaction styles among those who attended nightlife events (Anderson et al. 2007). Vibe essentially refers to the cultural atmosphere of a social context.

As noted earlier, the vibe of underground events were typically described and witnessed as warm and friendly, prioritizing the importance of music appreciation. Many of those who attended underground events were long term friends or acquaintances. Moreover, underground events typically featured a grassroots organizational style, where attendees and performers (DJs) were often one in the same. As such, they had a personal and professional stake in maintaining the scene (Anderson 2009; Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008), that they felt intimately connected to, and sometimes, partial ownership of. It was a relaxed and casual atmosphere wherein people were encouraged to be

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"themselves." Status concerns and sexual competition were virtually non-existent at these kinds of venues.

The vibe of commercial events was nearly the opposite of the underground variant, typified by a preoccupation with style and status, and featured highly sexualized interaction styles between men and women (including competition for sexual partners, observed among, and reported by, both men and women). Consistent with the general affront storyline reported in Chapter four, commercial events featured a higher potential for physical and verbal confrontations over minor issues, perceived slights, and subtly hostile behaviors. Misunderstandings such as bumping into someone when attempting to pass through a crowd of people, or mistakes, like spilling a drink on someone were often interpreted as hostile or threatening in commercial environs. Additional characteristics of commercial nightlife events included excessive alcohol use, illicit drug (especially cocaine) use, hypermasculinity (displays of aggression, toughness, or sexual conquest as a form of status attainment, and misogynist attitudes toward women).

These dimensions of commercial events can essentially be regarded as contextual versions of the dispositional factors discussed in Chapter five. Here, such variables coalesced to form a distinctive cultural atmosphere, and were active for a period of time far beyond the specific situation (generally, the duration of the nightlife event), and influenced whether individuals – especially predisposed individuals – would commit crimes, or become victims in specific situations. Another prominent dimension of these contexts was an emphasis on sexualized interactions and a "hooking up" objective (Anderson et al. 2007; Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009). In particular, there were two key

aspects of the event vibe of commercial contexts which contributed to both physical and sexual assault storylines. Both are related to the norms, expectations, attitudes, and behaviors of nightlife attendees across the performance of gender. This is discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Gender Norms: Benevolent and Hostile Sexism. At commercial nightlife events, narrowly defined, or traditional gender role constructions contributed to the highly sexualized vibe and hooking-up objectives that increased the likelihood of physical and sexual assault storylines. With regard to physical assault, a large portion of the incidents that the respondents described were related to the acquisition or sexual pursuit of women, which functioned as a symbol of social, or masculine status attainment (see also Grazian 2007). These types of confrontations typically played out in ways consistent with the *sexual dispute* variation of *the general affront* storyline described in Chapter four.

This was typically related to one man encroaching on another's romantic partner, or a woman perceived as a partner (or even a potential partner). At commercial nightlife events women were often regarded as the property of the men, and these men would often engage in physical assault when another was perceived as a threat to steal "their woman," by extension disrespecting them. Two of the respondents who reported physical assault involvement described the kinds of "girl-hunting" (Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009; Grazian 2007) norms that were common in commercial nightlife:

> The majority of guys at commercial clubs don't dance, they just stand
> around drinking. And that's how you get the girls, coz the girls are looking
> to dance. I can go up to them and dance with them and flirt with them and

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stuff and I always have a thing, like "yea I can take their girl." It's like a

little competition or a game, ya know? (Dale, BM 21)

Bobby further discussed the girl-hunting dimension of commercial nightlife and how

these norms can result in physical assault:

This guy was just harassing my friend's girlfriend. He just kept picking

and picking and picking, just kept bothering her to dance or whatever. My

friend eventually got mad, pushed him, and the minute he pushed him, he

got jumped by 14 of this dude's friends. That's how it always happens.

Ninety percent of the time it's related to females... So the party stopped,

we got thrown out, we, from what I heard, they left and came back with

guns looking for us. It just kind of escalated, ya know, just in the heat of

the moment it escalated to something out of control.

Not only does Bobby's account illustrate the hypermasculine and sexualized norms of

commercial contexts in general, but also how these norms give rise to specific types of

storylines, and how these storylines can often overlap with one another. For example,

whether the sexual assault storyline experienced by the woman in this scenario was

related to competing definitions of the situation or opportunistic predation, for physical

assault, it illustrates both the sexual dispute variation of the general affront (for the

aggressor), as well as the defensive-retaliatory action storyline (for Bobby's friend). In

both of these storylines, physical assaults occurred as a result of competing attempts to

exert dominance, or establish masculine status (Deibert and Miethe 2003; Polk 1999).

This was also related to the acquisition of social power and prestige, and an attempt to

save face or avoid embarrassment when dealing with potentially compromising social encounters (Goffman 1967; Graham and Wells 2003; Leather and Lawrence 1995), both key aspects of the general affront storyline. On the other hand, the defensive-retaliatory action storyline can be linked to traditional gender ideologies such as chivalry and protective paternalism, both key aspects of benevolent sexism (Glick and Fiske 1996), and mired in rigid and often negative gender stereotypes. Most importantly, the example given above illustrates how different types of storylines were often the result of the same contextually determined gender norms, and as Agnew (2006) notes, how one storyline can give rise to others.

Whereas rigid gender norms associated with benevolent sexism often played a role in shaping physical assault incidents among men, similar, though more deleterious gender norms played an important role in shaping sexual assault incidents. The vibe at commercial nightlife events, with its focus on style as status, hooking-up, and sexual competitiveness, was frequent mired in both benevolent *and hostile* sexism (Abrams et al. 2003; Glick and Fiske 1996; Viki and Abrams 2002). Hostile sexism, as opposed to the benevolent variant, refers to negative attitudes that are directed specifically toward women in terms of behavior. Hostile sexism has three sources: the need to control women; the devaluation of women; and hostile heterosexuality, or, viewing sex as a resource and women as controlling sex for their own purposes. Prior research has also found that those who endorse benevolently sexist ideals tend to regard women who enter into some kind of relationship with a man are regarded as inviting sexual attention, and therefore responsible for any negative consequences they experience (Abrams et al. 2003;

Viki and Abrams 2002). Catherine elaborated on how benevolent and hostile forms of sexism often typified men-women interactions at commercial events when successful sexual or romantic pursuits were not achieved.

> Me and my cousin were in CLUB J, I had my hair all curly and big; and this dude was like "yo what's up; damn yo, let me talk to you, you lookin' all sexy." And I'm like "no," and I went to get up. So he's like "well fuck you then bitch, with your big ass hair," all drunk. It was just crazy; he got all in my face cursing me out. He got close, he was talking real hard, and he was just real drunk. His eyes started crossing and I was like "what?" And he was spitting when he was talking. Then this other guy that tried to talk to me earlier, I asked him to help me and get this guy out my face, and he was like "nah, I ain't your man." (Catherine, BF 21)

So, while the oversexualized vibe of commercial contexts often shaped storylines related to the sexual dispute variant of the general affront, and, as Bobby's narrative illustrates, a defensive-retaliatory action storyline mired in benevolent sexism, these contextual norms also shaped sexual assault in a way consistent with hostile sexism. Indeed, as Cathrine's narrative indicates, often times when men were denied sexual encounters with women they would refuse to function as guardians to prevent against subsequent sexual assault incidents from occurring, as they perceived that there was nothing to be gained by doing so.

Behaviors and dialogue indicative of hostile sexism were also witnessed during direct observation at commercial events, where attendees engaged in various elements of

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performance management on different stages in the venue. Often the most blatant displays of sexism and misogyny occurred in venue bathrooms, where men could reasonably ensure that their target audience (women) did not have access to their performance (Goffman 1959). Documentation of this kind of "back stage" behavior, or bounded stage, as it were, emerged as a kind of field discovery. During direct observation I developed the habit of taking observation notes covertly, in the restrooms at various points during the course of the night, so as not to disrupt or inhibit behavior on the "front stage." The following field journal entry is representative of how men used this backstage time to shore up their masculinity for one another, and re-establish their collective purpose:

> Sitting in the restroom stall taking notes shortly after midnight -
> two men enter and one says to the other "yea I'm fucked up dog." The
> tone and inflection of his voice indicated that he was associated to some
> degree with a more urban, hip-hop kind of a crowd - or at least adopted
> that manner of speaking. The restrooms were on the lower floor of the
> venue - I could hear animated yelling coming from outside the restrooms.
> Several more men entered the restroom and I remained to listen to their
> conversation. They were talking about women, whom they referred to as
> "bitches." They were talking about how women change you and cause
> problems in your life. One guy was talking about moving in with his
> girlfriend and another said "don't let that bitch change you - if it change

on you, spit on her - and by that I mean give it two days and you're out the

fuckin' door, dog."

The conversation was loud and it was apparent that these men were

all intoxicated; which is unsurprising, given the drinking patterns observed

earlier. I heard someone mention that they were too drunk to drive home.

There was also some masculine competitiveness occurring between these

men; for example, talk about who's tougher than who, who could kick

who's ass in a fight, who could get more women, and so forth. While this

dialogue was indeed boastful and challenging, it was also delivered in a

lighthearted jovial manner, in essence serving as a kind of gentle reminder

to remain "on point" or "in character." (Field journal entry, PK)

As this narrative suggests, the atmosphere of commercial contexts functioned not only to

reinforce norms conducive to benevolent and hostile sexism with regard to actions and

behaviors of men toward women, but also how men engage in semi-private rituals and

behaviors designed to reinforce collective sentiment, boost confidence in hypermasculine

performance and reinforce notions of heterosexual power.

Indeed, prior research has found that, in general, this kind of competitive

exchange is quite common in male-centered settings and groups (Grazian 2007; Martin

2001; Martin and Hummer 1989), and moreover, this kind of camaraderie and discourse

tend to emphatically stress rigid adherence to traditional gender roles, and reinforce

misogynistic attitudes (Lyman 1987). As such, it appears that storylines conducive to

sexual assault; particularly the opportunistic predation and competing definitions of the

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situation storylines; are cultivated and reinforced in specific cultural contexts, according to the norms and attitudes that are common in that particular context. So, although storylines are the result of specific interactive situations, they are influenced by the broader context in which these situations play out.

Importantly, attitudes conducive to benevolent and hostile forms of sexism were not only reported and observed among men. Interestingly, several of the female respondents also expressed scorn and contempt for other women at nightlife events whom they regarded as deserving of the unwanted sexual contact, assault, or harassment they experienced. These attitudes reflected cynical views regarding the motivations that some women had for nightlife involvement, or with regard to their presentation of self at nightlife events. This had to do with both fashion and behavior. Perhaps ironically, many of those who expressed these views were themselves victims of sexual assault or unwanted sexual contact. Additional testimony from Catherine is representative of this sentiment:

> I've seen guys grab girls' butts and stuff, touchin' them all on the chest, but then the girls are like "hahaha, stop it." A lot of times the girls, I mean, that's not fair that you're wearin' an outfit that guys should touch you, but a lot times the girls ask for it. Not like ask for like you deserve to be touched, but their behavior; shaking their butt all crazy in the club. They behave like nothin's' gonna happen if you do that. Droppin' it like it's hot with a little skirt on and their panties showin; tryin' to be nasty… I don't like the way the people act, the way the guys treat the women. But then I

don't like the way the women treat themselves. They just, they don't know

how to act. The guys they just don't have respect but then the girls don't

have respect for themselves either. Coz you don't have to have your titties

out and your coochie hanging out to look nice at the club. (Catherine, BF

21)

This sentiment, representative of that expressed by a number of women in the sample,

offers an interesting take on what is regarded as acceptable boundaries of femininity and

sexuality among women with active night lives. The contemptuous disgust displayed in

these narrative accounts support the argument that bold displays of sexuality do not

register as a liberated pursuit of feminine sexuality, but rather, an abandonment of it, and

that in normalizing these types of sexual displays, women are reinforcing gender

stereotypes and sexual exploitation (Levy 2005). It is therefore important to point out that

while women are often well aware of the hypermasculinity and hostile sexism that

permeate commercial contexts and shape risk, in terms of sexual assault storylines, these

same women often regard the victims as conforming to and perpetuating these gender

norms, essentially encouraging their own victimization.

In addition to norms related to gender performance and sexuality, the majority of

respondents expressed concern over many of the behavioral norms in commercial

contexts with specific regard to drinking behavior and its impact on physical and sexual

assault. Prior research indicates that higher alcohol sales are associated with increased

risk that customers will commit alcohol-related offenses (Markowitz 2000; Stockwell

2001) and research consistently indicates that alcohol intoxication is significantly

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associated with aggression in social locations like bars and taverns, particularly among men (Graham et al. 2006; Graham and Wells 2003). This was the case in the current research as well. For many men at commercial nightlife events, binge-drinking was a norm and expectation, and excessive alcohol use often functioned as a form of social capital or masculine performance. Pete, who reported multiple instances of physical assault, described how the use of alcohol often gave rise to physical assault incidents consistent with the general affront storyline described in Chapter four:

> Alcohol and mainstream commercial clubs and music are probably the number one reason why there are fights. You have all those muscle heads, they're first to pop off at the mouth so then there's a brawl. I bump into some guy, I turn around and I'm like "my bad" and I get a shitty look and everybody wants to fight me. It gets old. Back then I would go out Friday Saturday and Sunday, so usually at least one of those nights there would be some sort of confrontation where somebody would get punched in the face. (Pete, WM 28)

Not only did the focus on alcohol consumption in commercial contexts contribute to the likelihood of general affront storylines due to a hostile interpretation of some kind of interactional mistake or faux pas. Interestingly, the attitude displayed by others in commercial contexts often had a pronounced effect on one's own attitude. So, while it might not have been Pete's intention to engage in physical assault at nightlife venues, the behavior of others directed toward him often necessitated such a reaction, both the misinterpretation and the reaction fueled by the psychopharmacological effects of

alcohol. Again, this speaks to the way in which multiple storylines can play out in one

physical assault incident (Agnew 2006). Using Pete's as an example, for one individual,

involvement in physical assault may have been the result of a general affront; however,

Pete's storyline in this example would be one of defensive-retaliatory action. This was

the case among many of the men in the sample. They did not necessarily go out looking

for a fight, but rather, found themselves in social settings where such behavior was

normalized, or necessitated as a form of self-protection.

Although binge-level alcohol use functioned as a form of social capital in

commercial contexts, and was regularly observed, the most serious and problematic

alcohol abuse tended to occur on Friday and Saturday nights. As noted in Chapter two,

the mean age of the respondents was around 25 years, and many nightlife attendees were

young professionals, or college students. An increase in conventional ties, particularly

with regard to employment, made it difficult for many of the respondents who frequented

commercial events to indulge in heavy alcohol abuse until 2am on a weekday due

primarily to work obligations (see also Anderson 2009; Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008).

Ben further described this:

> I mean there is weeknight stuff going on, but I think that for most
>
> commercial clubs, for those people I think that [clubbing is] more of a
>
> weekend thing. I think its more of a rarity to be able to really go out and
>
> enjoy themselves, you know what I'm sayin', it doesn't happen as often as
>
> it does down here, I think for financial reasons, proximity reasons, and
>
> then its Tuesday night. Tuesday, Wednesday night down here you can

draw people maybe fifty people, but up there it's kinda like "it's

Wednesday we got work tomorrow, we're not fucking doing all that shit."

(Ben, BM 23)

During weekends, however, commercial nightlife venues tended to serve as popular

destinations for city residents, as well as tourists hailing from the surrounding suburbs in

Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, looking to enjoy a night out. The following

field journal entry describes the alcohol norms at a commercial nightlife event on a

Friday night:

> The crowd was drinking, liberally. There were certain people or groups
>
> who were drinking at the bar, literally, the entire night. They never even
>
> went to the dance floor. Bottles of domestic beer (Coors, Miller, and Bud
>
> light) were all 2 dollars before midnight. Around midnight I observed
>
> people buying two and three beers at a time in order to take advantage of
>
> the special. Alcohol consumption and lots of it was definitely an
>
> expectation here. The jell-o shots were popular, and I noticed the
>
> bartenders persuading guys to buy them after they initially declined. Once
>
> I noticed a white man and his friend each do three in a row. (Field journal
>
> entry, PK)

Those who attended commercial nightlife events primarily to abuse alcohol, and who did

so primarily on Friday and Saturday nights (and into the early hours of Saturday and

Sunday morning), were often self-described, or referred to as, *weekend warriors*. Indeed,

the majority of the physical and sexual assault storylines occurred at commercial events

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during these times. This finding is somewhat unsurprising, and is supported by prior research on the social ecology of criminal victimization (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006). However, it further speaks to the temporal component of alcohol abuse in these contexts, thus shaping when all manner of storylines are most likely to occur.

As the previous sections demonstrate, commercial nightlife contexts feature a certain cultural atmosphere, mired in rigid gender norms emphasizing the performance of masculinity via displays of sexual prowess, or physical toughness and aggression. This atmosphere, perpetuated by the use of alcohol, was implicated in giving rise to storylines of both physical and sexual assault. With respect to physical assault, the norms associated with hypermasculinity typically gave rise to sexual dispute storylines, which in turn gave rise to storylines of defensive-retaliatory action. In terms of sexual assault, the intensely sexualized vibe of commercial contexts often led to competing definitions of the situation; where women regarded behaviors such as dressing provocatively or dancing as essentially harmless, men often viewed them as clearly communicating sexual intentions. These kinds of sexualized norms were often reinforced by men in collective rituals, essentially "fulfilling the same function as the last-minute huddle (with all hands in the middle) does for an athletic team" (Grazian 2007:230) in backstage areas of these contexts.

While criminological research has consistently shown that high levels of alcohol abuse tend to be associated with aggression and the increased likelihood of both violent behavior and sexual aggressiveness, and that benevolent and hostile forms of sexism are associated with attitudes supportive of sexual assault, the question as to precisely how

such norms are created and reinforced in commercial contexts is less clear (see Fox and Sobol 2000 and Hadfield 2006 for exceptions). In the following sections I offer a detailed descriptive account of some of the organizational tendencies and norms of commercial nightlife environments, and attempt to elucidate how these contexts can further contribute to physical and sexual assault storylines.

Social Organization

The ways in which the event vibe impacted physical and sexual assault storylines was further linked to both the physical and social organization of commercial nightlife contexts. Here, social organization can be defined in terms of a venue's physical layout and use of space, attendance level and capacity, staff responsibilities and operational style, and its use of drink specials or contests as well as entertainment props or gimmicks, such as provocatively dressed female dancers or wait staff, or games and prizes involving attendees. Such organizational factors were important determinants of an event's vibe. There were three specific dimensions of a commercial nightlife venue's social organization that emerged as important in shaping physical and sexual assault storylines: they were (1) levels of venue crowding, (2) the role of venue security, and (3) sex and alcohol as themes around which the event was organized. The following sections elaborate on how aspects of these dimensions functioned to shape particular types of storylines.

Venue Crowding: Tension and Subtle Hostility. By definition, commercial nightlife events were far more popular and thus far more highly attended than events in the underground scene. High attendance was a desirable for club or event management,

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as higher levels of attendance resulted in higher profit margins. However, the desire to host a successful nightlife event - defined in terms of money earned - often trumped concern for the safety or well-being of the attendees. Commercial events were often overcrowded to the point where it was difficult to move through the various rooms in the venue. Thus, attempts to engage in basic activities such as dancing, drinking, and socializing were transformed into challenges that had to be negotiated. The result was that people were often physically uncomfortable (hot and sweaty), which would then led to irritability, and feeling tense or annoyed.

Overcrowding typically resulted in a much higher likelihood of people being bumping into one another or pushing, which would result in minor confrontations that could (and often would) escalate to full-blown instances of physical assault, consistent with the subtly hostile behavior variant of *the general affront* storyline. Overcrowded venues also provided more opportunities for sexual assault to occur. As regards sexual assault, women reported that it was much easier for men to commit sexual assault in crowded venues, as the environment was often so packed and disorienting that it was difficult to identify an offender with certainty. This organizational phenomenon can be regarded as directly contributing to the *opportunistic predation* storyline of sexual assault. The following field journal entry of a popular commercial nightlife venue in Philadelphia described this phenomenon:

> As has become my habit during observations, I went to the bathroom
> several times to discreetly take notes during the course of the evening, and
> every time I did I had to fight my way through crowd traffic to get there.

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> Upon doing so, I bumped shoulders with several people, always other men, who made it a point to stop and look at me to assess whether this bumping was accidental (and whether I was suitably contrite for the faux pas) or if it was intentional, as some kind of mean-spirited personal affront. This became an annoying, but interesting phenomenon that I noticed occurring between others as well. I did not see any of this shoulder bumping result in fighting, just words exchanged, as friends were quick to separate the aggrieved parties. However, some of these people seemed to be actively looking for trouble, practically willing to invite some kind of violent interaction. (Field journal entry, PK)

The interpersonal tensions and subtle (occasionally overt) hostilities that were observed and reported in commercial contexts had to do with the fact that the crowds were largely anonymous, comprised of cliques and peer groups who regarded one another in competitive terms. This competitive atmosphere had much to do with the behavioral and status norms that defined most commercial nightlife events.

For men, this manifested itself in terms of binge level alcohol use and the aggressive pursuit of sexual encounters or relationships, discussed earlier. And while this competitive atmosphere was typically playful or good-natured among those who were friends or acquaintances, for strangers, the competitive nature of such contexts manifested itself in hostile or negative terms in ways consistent with the general affront storyline. For women, high levels of venue crowding resulted in a higher likelihood of the opportunistic predation storyline of sexual assault victimization.

Venue Security: The Dickhead and the Gallant Warrior. Venue crowding and other aspects related to the physical use of space also impacted the style and effectiveness of venue security. This also had unique implications for physical and sexual assault storylines. In general, it was much more difficult for security to function effectively at large, overcrowded commercial contexts. That these venues were generally packed to (and often times over) capacity was detrimental in two key ways. First, crowding at these levels made it much more difficult for security staff such as bouncers and doormen to swiftly identify and diffuse instances of physical and sexual assault, if they were even aware of their occurrence at all.

The second point relates to the physical organization of the venue itself. Prior work by Hadfield (2006) found that particular aspects of interior design, furnishing, and lighting are linked to the creation of "blind spots" which hinder effective surveillance of the venue. This was the case here as well. Security effectiveness was inhibited due to the fact that many of the commercial venues in Philadelphia were large and often times had multiple rooms and levels, complete with staircases, numerous nooks and hiding places, basements, VIP rooms, "chillout" spots and so forth.

It was often challenging for venue security and other staff to navigate their through the myriad rooms and levels of these spaces. So, although security may have been dispersed throughout the entire venue, the overwhelming majority were stationed at or near the main entrance, performing pat-downs and frisking would-be attendees at the door engaged in what Hadfield (2006) termed "boundary work," or strategically placed in corners. Other than the initial checkpoint at the door, where staff monitored admission or

refused entry based on dress code violations (or occasionally due to their subjective discretion), formal social control in commercial nightlife environments was inhibited by physical layout and overcrowding (Hadfield 2006; Hobbs et al. 2003). Moreover, the dance floor areas, where a substantial portion of sexual courtship behaviors occurred, were generally kept dark and were thereby difficult for security staff to effectively police. Lighting served no functional purpose, and rapidly moving effects such as strobe and smoke merely added to the disorienting atmosphere of the tightly packed dance floor areas.

The inability of venue security to monitor and police key spaces of the venue (the dance floor and the chillout areas, for example) created situations conducive to the competing definitions of the situation storyline of sexual assault. Based on the sexualized gender norms and expectations associated with the event vibe, innocuous behaviors such as dancing were often interpreted by men as invitations to engage in highly aggressive attempts at sexual courtship. Without security present to effectively diffuse these attempts, sexual assault storylines would materialize.

Additionally, the effect that venue crowding often had on the overall mood of the crowd and vibe of commercial contexts often impacted the interaction style of venue security. The style of security in most commercial nightlife events was socially distant and punitive, as opposed to a more personalized interaction style in underground events. Respondent testimony confirmed this observation. Security staff at most commercial events were regarded as intimidating, concerned primarily with venue liability, and not much concerned with protecting attendees or ensuring their safety. Moreover, security

personnel were afforded a lower social status at the large-scale commercial events. The following field journal entry illustrates this dynamic playing out a large-scale commercial EDM event hosted annually by one of Philadelphia's largest venues:

> On a few occasions I noticed patrons having conversation with the
>
> bartenders, but I did not witness patrons talking with security at all. This
>
> suggests a clear us/them, in/out group division. As the night progressed,
>
> security personnel that were not stationed in strategic areas moved around
>
> more. They seemed to be on the prowl for rule violations. Over the course
>
> of the night I witnessed several people passed out on the ground or in
>
> chairs and a few others sick and vomiting – presumably from drug use. At
>
> no point, however, did I observe security staff approach these people or
>
> ask if they were okay. To me this suggests that they were less concerned
>
> with the health of the attendees, and more with club liability (Field journal
>
> entry, BB).

Security staff were often poorly trained, employed on a casual or temporary basis, and there was typically high turnover. This may be construed as evidence of the relatively poorly paid, unsociable, and ultimately dissatisfying nature of their work, and was often reflected in their interaction styles. A number of respondents reported that security staff would often instigate, or provoke attendees; in effect, exacerbating disputes or other problems, rather than working calmly to effectively resolve various issues that would inevitably arise. Jerry explained:

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> I've had security be pretty rough with me but I would never say that they
>
> have actually assaulted me. It's borderline though. A lot of, ya know,
>
> shoulder grabbing and pushing you if they think you're up to something,
>
> especially in [commercial clubs], like if they think you are up to no good,
>
> they will come over to you and rough you up and see what your deal is.
>
> They're pretty much dickheads (Jerry, WM 23).

This stands in stark contrast to the interaction style of security at underground events, one of whom described himself as a gallant warrior. In an in-depth discussion, he described his job as being a diplomat at a musically and socially diverse nightclub, noting that he had nothing to prove and is only there to protect the safety of all attendees. A number of respondents confirmed that security at the smaller, underground venues tended to have a more protective and nurturing interaction style, and, in general, that underground events are largely policed by the scene members and patrons, making social control more effective than in the larger, more anonymous commercial contexts.

With regard to physical assault specifically, there was a cynical perception about the role of security as they were often regarded as playing a role in contributing to storylines of physical assault. Among men, security personnel were regarded not as useful resources to be relied upon in diffusing situations, but rather, as being responsible for escalating these situations, or, at best, considering only the legal repercussions to the venue in their decisions to act. Mike noted:

> I'd say security hinders things because all they try to do is get people out
>
> of the club as fast as possible so that they aren't liable. I don't see any of

them trying to mediate or put blame on a particular person, they just kind

of kick everybody out. (Mike, WM 27)

So, for men engaging in pushing and shoving, verbal assaults perceived as escalating to

more serious levels, or even a fight in the early goings, the focus was quite a bit different.

In such instances, simply removing them both from the premises to avoid potential legal

complications for venue ownership was the priority. Both men were automatically

viewed as equally culpable, without regard to extenuating circumstances or who may

have initiated hostilities. The general sentiment was "we don't care what's going on here,

take it outside."

It is apparent then, that the distant, punitive aspects of security in commercial

contexts contributed to storylines of physical assault both directly and indirectly. They

contributed directly by failing to diffuse negative encounters before they escalated to full

blown instances of physical assault; rather, they simply relocated the individuals. They

also contributed to physical assault storylines in an indirect manner. This was with

particular regard to their interaction style. Their often punitive and aggressive approach

to dispute resolution had a deleterious impact on the event vibe. Rather than ensuring that

patrons would be on their best behavior in fear of reprisal, their socially distant and

aggressive approach contributed to an attitude among patrons that emphasized toughness

and aggression as a means of dispute resolution.

Sex and Alcohol as Organizational Themes. The final way that social

organization of commercial contexts contributed to physical and sexual assault storylines

was with regard to the strategic use of sex to encourage heavy alcohol use. Indeed, at

most commercial events binge-level alcohol use was encouraged by the establishment, and in the majority of these venues, the consumption of alcohol was based around a sexualized normative structure. The DJ played a key role in this regard. As prior work has noted, in most nightlife contexts, the DJ not only functions as the focal point for the night's entertainment, but also as a mouthpiece for management, conveying messages to the crowd regarding drink promotions, first and last calls, and so forth. In this respect, the DJ, as the main source of audience entertainment, plays a key role in maintaining social control inside the venue (Hadfield 2006).

In commercial contexts, however, the DJs did not use their communicatory role to effectively manage and control crowd behavior as was the case in Hadfield's (2006) study of the nightlife in English pubs. In the commercial nightlife venues of Philadelphia, the DJs often used their role to promote and further normalize binge-drinking, as well as induce heightened states of sexual preoccupation that often led to rowdiness and aggression. Club owners or the DJs hired to host particular events were observed openly giving specific commands such as *now I want the girls with really big asses to get up on the stage.* Girls would then rush up to the stage and begin shaking their behinds or breasts in the direction of the crowd on the dance floor. Several times DJs ordered all men to clear the area, using language like *we only want hot-ass girls on this stage, so if you're a guy, get the hell off.* The following field journal entry further illustrates how this would play out:

> Everyone was following the orders of the DJ. He was controlling the party. He would call people up on stage, and then tell them to "get the

hell off the stage." In every instance it was females who were summoned to the stage. The DJ would say things like "I want to see some big-ass boobies up here right now. If you got big ol' boobies get your ass up here right now." The club gave free shots at midnight. I was positioned near the dance floor when the DJ announced this, encouraging people to go and do several. I fought my way up to the bar to observe it when it was announced. I saw mostly men walking to the bar and getting shots of alcohol poured down their throats out of a bottle by a provocatively dressed woman who was standing on the bar, flirtatiously inviting men to flock around her. Most purchased more shots after receiving their free ones.

Shortly after midnight, the DJ announced that the girl-on-girl "contest" was slated to start. The DJ began with a story about watching pornography with his girlfriend – a lesbian scene. The crowd cheered as he talked about how intensely aroused the scene had made him, and in particular, his girlfriend. He then selected a very attractive and provocatively dressed woman from the audience, called her up to the stage, and had her bend over backwards, with her buttocks sticking out, over a chair. He then selected five more women from the crowd to come up and simulate humping her from behind. The DJ held the microphone up to the woman getting humped, so that she could pretend she was having orgasms for the crowd to hear. Whichever woman gave her the best

sounding orgasm "won." He encouraged the women to "grab her tits and

pull her hair and get all into it." All five of the women were happy to

oblige. The crowd was loving it and the girls were really playing it up for

the audience (Field journal entry, PK).

This kind of occurrence functioned to further sexualize the event vibe, and objectify the

women at commercial events; not only those participating in the activity, but all women

in attendance, who may be regarded as complicit in this sexual objectification ritual; and

directly contributed to the competing definitions of the situation and opportunistic

predation storylines of sexual assault.

Many commercial events promoted drink specials (three shots for a dollar, free

shots at midnight, girls drink for free, and so forth.). In the majority of instances, the use

of drink specials was highly sexualized. Provocatively dressed female bartenders would

walk around venues with a tray "free shots," approaching or being summoned by male

patrons. Groups of men would often do their first free shot and then immediately

purchase three or four more. On several occasions venue staff were witnessed openly

drinking with attendees (typically female bartenders drinking with male patrons). The

following field journal entry describes this sexualizing of alcohol use:

As well as being clearly status-oriented, this club also featured

what can best be described as a "fraternity party in a bar" kind of an

atmosphere. I noticed bartenders doing shots with patrons occasionally,

and the female bartenders would occasionally hop up on the bar with

bottles and give anyone with their mouth open a shot of liquor. There were

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also female bartenders walking around offering jello shots. Everyone was drinking liberally. When popular 80s glam-rock anthems like Bon-Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer" or Def Leppard's "Pour Some Sugar on Me" were played, the crowd would drunkenly sing along, spilling drinks in their fervor.

The bartenders were comprised almost entirely of physically attractive women who were wearing Philadelphia Eagles football jerseys that were very tight fitting, and modified in some way, as to be more sexually provocative and revealing. The necklines were cut so that cleavage was showing, jerseys were tied up to reveal taught, shapely abdomens and tattoos, or the sleeves were cut off – sometimes all three. The women were all wearing remarkably short skirts, with some of the women revealing thongs. There were also several men tending bar dressed in what can be described as "silly" Eagles football gear. For example, one male bartender was wearing shoulder pads and green knee socks and cleats. Another was wearing an Eagles stove-pipe, cat-in-the hat style hat. Evidently, the sexualizing of bar staff applied only to the women. The male staff basically functioned as court jesters, or clowns of some sort. (Field journal entry, PK)

Such gimmicks were designed to lure men (who engaged in the clear majority of binge-drinking behavior both observed and reported) to the venue so that they would spend more money. The intensely sexualized interaction styles of the female bar staff ensured

that male attendees would continue to drink once they have entered the venue. That the sexualization of alcohol use and sale was feminized should not come as any surprise, as research has long shown that nightlife venues tend to rely on the attractiveness of service staff and the promise of eroticized interaction to recruit customers (Allison 1994; Lloyd 2005; Spradley and Mann 1975).

The encouragement of alcohol use in a sexually charged manner ensured not only that men would continue to drink, but also that they would continue to aggressively pursue sexual encounters. The use of alcohol in a sexualized manner also played a role in shaping the drug and alcohol use storyline of sexual assault. Laura described one such experience:

> Somebody gave me GHB one time in my drink, and it was, I think it was supposed to be funny, I'm still not sure. But I almost rushed to the hospital because I thought I was dying. This guy I think tried to separate me from my fiancé, but when I got sick he played it off like it was a joke. (Laura, WF 31)

As Ariely and Loewenstein (2006:95) note, "the increase in motivation to have sex produced by sexual arousal seems to decrease the importance of other considerations such as behaving ethically toward a potential sexual partner... Like other drive-states, and also somewhat analogous to the effects of alcohol, sexual arousal seems to narrow the focus of motivation, creating a kind of tunnel-vision where goals other than sexual fulfillment become eclipsed by the motivation to have sex."

Thus, individual behaviors and activities such as talking closely in order to be heard over the noise of the venue, dancing with friends, consuming alcohol, and so forth - activities and behaviors that may not be regarded as sexually arousing or provocative when one is not sexually aroused - suddenly take on new, more sexually charged meanings (Ariely and Loewenstein 2006; Lowenstein, Nagin, and Paternoster 1997). Moreover, activities or behaviors that are, in fact, attractive or provocative even when one is not aroused become even more sexually attractive and meaningful in that moment, under the influence of arousal. So, when aroused, a person will regard a comparably diffused range of activities and behaviors as imbued with sexual meaning. As such, it becomes apparent that sexual preferences and behavior are not entirely intrinsically motivated, or the function of individual disposition. Rather, sexual arousal states and the corresponding sexual behaviors are very much "made" and defined by the contexts in which they are enacted.

It is clearly apparent, then, how an organizational context focused on sexualizing the use of alcohol contributes to all three of the storylines of sexual assault reported in Chapter four. Moreover, it is evident how the intensely sexualized organizational norms of commercial nightlife environs – and its pairing of sex with excessive alcohol use – indirectly contributed to storylines of physical assault consistent with the general affront; not only the sexual dispute variant but also in terms of subtly hostile behavior toward perceived "competitors." That is, men would essentially be competing with one another for women, and such competition – mired in the haze of sexual arousal and further fueled

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by the fog of extreme intoxication – often resulted in the hostile interaction styles among men that contributed to these storylines of physical assault.

The social organization of nightlife venues is, therefore, another important contextual concept that shaped physical and sexual assault storylines. As routine activity theory states (Cohen and Felson 1979; Kennedy and Forde 1999), the social organization of places provides environmental opportunities for crime and victimization to occur. To the extent that venue owners and managers crowd their premises with young clubbers, host drink specials and other alcohol promotional features that promote and normalize binge-level alcohol consumption, and encourage a highly sexualized vibe, storylines of physical and sexual assault will continue to occur with greater frequency.

CONCLUSION

One of the promises of Agnew's (2006) storyline approach is that it can reconcile the impact of individual-level dispositional factors (of both offenders and victims), the situations or interactions leading up to crime and victimization, and "the settings that contribute to crime" (p. 122). In this chapter I have demonstrated how two interrelated aspects of the social context of particular nightlife venues – the event vibe and social organization – function to shape storylines of physical and sexual assault. As noted in the beginning sections of the chapter, the majority of physical and sexual assault storylines discussed by the respondents and observed live occurred at commercial venues. Indeed, this fieldwork suggests that commercial nightlife venues served a discrete social function compared to that of underground venues. Whereas underground nightlife events and venues tended to stress patron sociability and interaction, a sense of community, and the

artistic merit of the music, commercial nightlife events were instead focused on the novel; or, as Hadfield (2006:90) succinctly describes, focal concerns such as "excitement, sexual encounter, and spectacle within a context of conspicuous and often exaggerated consumption."

The role of particular nightlife settings in providing a normative context for physical and sexual assault storylines to play out implies that it is possible that certain individuals may be influenced by environmental cues or contextual factors to the degree that they will alter their behavior to conform to these contextual norms. So, for example, where a high level of masculinity was associated with a disposition conducive to physical assault storylines, simply entering a context that emphasized masculine displays and rigid adherence to gender norms could (and often did) cause certain individuals to temporarily alter their dispositions (Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009). This basic premise exemplifies one of Agnew's previously articulated storylines of crime: a temporary break with conventional others and/or institutions.

Whereas Agnew's propositions were much more general in the temporary break with conventional institutions storyline, with regard to the specific context in question, some framing is important. The fact that commercial nightlife venues featured a disruption of daily routine and order was appealing to a substantial number of young adults, who, in seeking to disavow (at least in particular moments in time) the norms and responsibilities traditionally associated with adulthood and their parent culture, actively sought out more hedonistic environs in which to reinvigorate social life and further delay their transition to adulthood (Maffesoli 1996; Bennett 1999b; Malbon 1999). Commercial

nightlife contexts temporarily reduced ones stake in conformity, while simultaneously providing a new set of norms suggesting contextually appropriate behaviors; ones that normalized physical and sexual assault.

More generally, this work suggests that event vibe and social organization are useful conceptual tools for better understanding precisely how social spaces play a role in shaping storylines of crime and victimization. In regard to physical and sexual assault in urban nightlife, this is by cultivating norms conducive to sexual objectification of women, the fetishization of sex and alcohol use, and other aspects of hypermasculinity such as an emphasis on toughness and sexual conquest (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Anderson, Daly, and Rapp 2009). More generally, this chapter demonstrates that a central part of understanding storylines of crime and victimization is to understand the nature of social environs, and how contextual factors can structure and normalize criminal behaviors. In Chapter seven I detail the tactics individuals used to minimize risk in these kinds of nightlife spaces.

Chapter 7

MANAGING PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ASSAULT RISK

While the previous chapters detail the individual- and contextual-level influences on physical and sexual assault, it is important to understand how individuals who have experienced these outcomes manage such risks during their participation in urban nightlife. Thus, the focus of this chapter is on the tactics and strategies individuals employ to protect against risk, once they have already entered nightlife environs. This chapter is divided into three primary sections. First, I review prior research on risk management and lifestyle theory, and describe how gender plays a role in both risk perception and management. Second, I detail the various strategies that were employed to guard against physical and sexual assault, and describe the situations when particular tactics were most likely to be invoked. I then conclude with a discussion of how the risk management behaviors uncovered in the analysis can be useful in better understanding how routine activities (and the modification thereof) impact the likelihood of experiencing physical and sexual assault, and how gender functions as an organizing concept by which we can better understand gender differences in regard to both risk exposure and management.

Understanding Risk Management Behavior

Although we know that guardianship exists at both the formal (i.e., official and institutional) and informal (personal behavior) levels, relatively little is known about the use of most forms of individual-level protective behaviors. In terms of property crime, for example, research examining offenders' choices of targets clearly indicates that the most effective guardianship activities are, in fact, accomplished on the individual level, rather than at the official or institutional levels (Buck, Hakim, and Rengert 1993; Cromwell, Olson, and Avary 1991; Wright and Decker 1994). As such, it is important to assess the characteristics of persons (both in terms of demographics and lifestyles) who employ individual-level guardianship measures, and to detail the strategies they use to self-protect. In this way, we can determine whether individuals' use of self-protection is related to their risks of victimization as measured by how often they come into contact with potentially criminally minded persons and how suitable they are as a target or their perceptions about these issues.

While previous research has examined individual characteristics and how they relate to the use of self-protection, most of this work tends to focus on basic demographic characteristics such as race, age, gender, and social class. Although these analyses are informative, it is likely that a person's use of self-protection is based on more than just their socially defined statuses. Certainly, individuals are aware of the risks for victimization that are present in society, their own neighborhoods, and in various social institutions, and must make decisions about how to best manage these risks when avoidance behavior is not possible. These decisions are not made in a vacuum but rather

are based on individuals' lifestyles, how often their lifestyles lead them into potentially dangerous situations, and the resources that are immediately available to them in the situations or environments in which they find themselves.

Routine activities theory has traditionally focused on identifying suitable targets or places where persons have increased exposure to potential offenders. More recently, this work has begun to explore the contribution of lifestyles and behaviors to the identification and description of the potential offender, and how individuals (particularly women) actively avoid certain locations due to fear of victimization. However, identification of the specific forms and tactics of guardianship and self-protection have been largely neglected in the literature, especially with regard to interpersonal victimization.

Given the relative dearth of systematic investigation into management of individual-level interpersonal victimization risks, important gaps tend to persist in understanding the nature of perceived risk and its implications for risk management. This is particularly the case with regard to women and sexual assault risk. Prior research has examined constraints on women's behavior and participation in public life that result from both fear and perceived risk, with many scholars arguing that the threat of sexual violence functions as a powerful mechanism of social control in women's lives (Day 2000, 2001; Gordon and Riger 1989; Madriz 1997). Importantly, far less scholarly attention has been given to men's perceived risk or risk-avoidance strategies, and even less attention has examined the gendered nature of these phenomena (see Cobbina, Miller, and Brunson 2008 for an exception). Moreover, most research on risk and risk

management has focused on adults (see Brown and Gourdine 2001, and Fishkin, Rohrbach, and Johnson 1997 for exceptions) despite the fact that youth and "emerging adults; that is, individuals between the ages of 19-29; are at far greater risk for most types of victimization; particularly interpersonal victimization such as physical and sexual assault (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006). The following sections of this chapter describe the specific tactics individuals used to manage risk, as well as addressing the gendered nature of the tactics uncovered during the analysis.

Overview of Risk Management

Our respondents discussed a number of innovative tactics used to both manage and diffuse potential victimization experiences from occurring. Many of these tactics were adopted after the respondent or someone close to them encountered a harmful or potentially dangerous situation while active in urban nightlife. The data were organized in terms of two broad conceptual categories that illustrate two different but interrelated approaches to managing risk: (1) individual-level risk management tactics and (2) environmental-level risk management tactics. Briefly, *individual-level risk management* may be defined as a general approach to handling risky situations where the would-be victim recognizes their capacity act, and effectively shape or impact situational outcomes. Individual-level risk management involves making certain distinct behavioral choices; either engaging in specific behaviors one otherwise wouldn't engage in, or modifying and controlling the behaviors that one normally would engage in. *Environmental-level risk management* entails manipulating or adjusting the particular setting in which the individual resides. This approach to risk management is draws heavily on Rhodes' (2002)

delineation of "risk environments," which refer simply to social situations and contexts where victimization is produced and reduced.

With respect to gender, men engaged in risk management less often than women, and the vast majority of instances were related to physical assault. In regard to women, risk management tactics were reported more frequently, and related to sexual assault and harassment in almost all instances. This gendered effect was predictable and is supported by well-established epidemiological trends of criminal victimization, which indicate that men and women are, for the most part, victims of very different kinds of crimes for very different reasons (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006; Catalano 2004). Accordingly, men developed risk management tactics to guard against physical assault and fighting because they are much more likely to be victims of these forms of violence. Women are much more likely to experience victimization of a sexual nature so the focus of their risk management was to protect oneself from sexual assault.

More interestingly, there was a gendered effect with respect to risk management tactics along our two broad typologies. First, women were much more likely to engage in individual-level risk management than their male counterparts, whereas men were more likely to invoke the role of the context and social environment than women were. So, not only did risk management play out differently by gender in terms of victimization type (physical vs. sexual assault), but there were also differences with respect to the approach used to effectively manage risk. Gender differences with respect to risk management approaches were not universal; women did discuss the role of the environment in shaping risk and its importance in risk management, and likewise, we found instances of men

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discussing individual-level tactics they engaged in. The following sections describe the specific tactics used by the respondents, as well as addressing the gendered nature of these phenomena.

Among the respondents, individual-level risk management tactics were both re-active and pro-active and included both solo and small group tactics. In all instances, individual-level tactics were more common among the women respondents and, of course, were primarily related to sexual assault risk. Specific tactics included shaming aggressors to deter future incidents, clubbing in groups, monitoring alcohol purchases (and consumption levels), the use of gestures and signals to alert friends to potentially compromising situations, and avoiding interacting with strangers. For conceptual clarity, the various individual-level tactics are further grouped into two broad categories: (1) protective and (2) retaliatory.

Protective

The most common manner in which risk was managed at the individual level was through the use of protective tactics. Protective tactics refer to pro-active measures that individuals take, either alone or with their friendship networks, to insulate themselves and one another from victimization risks. Among our respondents, protective approaches generally fell into two categories: (a) peer-centered (uniting and bonding with others), and (b) substance-specific (self-monitoring or awareness of drug and alcohol abuse).

Peer-centered: Risk management tactics that centered on the peer group were much more commonly employed among the women in our sample and were primarily related to managing risk of sexual assault. A number of women indicated that they relied

on their peer group to prevent unwanted advances, or to avoid ending up in potentially compromising situations. Sarah elaborated:

> Sometimes they grab, actually. They just grab you without knowing you and just start dancing with you. That's why my friends and I have a method of protecting ourselves. Whenever we can see some random guy coming towards us, we pull together and start dancing with our friends. So we pull away from them. We form a circle and whenever there is a random guy, you will ask our friend, "well, do you want to, yes or no?" and if it's yes, then we will leave them alone. If not, we stay in a group.
>
> (Sarah, WM 21)

Such tactics were primarily designed to provide some physical distance between the female and the male who was attempting to interact sexually with her. Research has found that similar tactics are utilized to manage risk among other populations (Spivey 2005). However, while some of these would-be victims may have occasionally been able to mobilize others to prevent the escalation of such incidents, we learned through our interviews that male perpetrators also have peer support systems that encourage and help to facilitate sexual assault. Sarah further discussed an incident:

> This guy just pushed me against the wall and just started groping me and I called for help and my friends pulled me away from that guy and we just left the club. They have this system so that they could block my friends out and push me against the wall. I've seen it before. Sometimes one of the guys in a group will target one girl and he would start dancing with

you and then all of a sudden his friends would surround you. And my

friends aren't there to pull me away. And then, all of a sudden, he would

push me against the wall and guys are still all around, just like a wall of

guys. That's why I stopped dancing with random people because I just

don't want to initiate anything. I try to avoid it. (Sarah, AF 21)

So, despite the added protection and comfort that peers can offer would-be victims,

occasionally a counter-strategy would emerge to neutralize their protective effect. It is

here where another important tactic to minimize the risk of sexual assault emerged re-

emphasizing the importance of the peer group and the role they can play: that is, stay

close to your friends and do not dance or interact with strangers (particularly of the

opposite sex) while engaged in nightlife.

Many of the other women in our sample noted engaging in similar cautionary

behaviors, as a result of experiencing unwanted, overaggressive sexual advances by men.

In this sense, peer groups functioned as tight-knit impenetrable cliques, and clubbing

became social only insofar as it was shared with those with whom one is already

acquainted. It is not necessarily about meeting new people or potential romantic partners.

For many, socializing occurs within the bounded confines of their established friendship

network. More broadly, this behavior ensured that the social nature of nightlife has an

important dimension of exclusivity, which was viewed as necessary to protect oneself

from sexual assault risk.

Substance-specific: The idea of exclusivity as a protective tactic also entailed

establishing self-imposed rules or boundaries with regard to the consumption of alcohol.

Specifically, women reported reluctance or unwillingness to accept drinks from strangers, as doing so was often misinterpreted as implicitly signaling receptivity to sexual advances. Evelyn elaborated:

> I try not to let guys spend money on me; because some guys, like once they buy you a drink they're just on you all night, so I try not to do it too much because I feel like I owe them something and I really don't. So I just avoid getting drinks from guys I don't know who just want to get with me or whatever. They're just trying to get some [sex] and everybody is just trying to talk to you coz it's like 2:30 in the morning. (Evelyn, BF 21)

Other substance-specific tactics discussed among our female respondents were also alcohol-centered, but were related to pro-active self monitoring of alcoholic beverages. A number of our respondents discussed monitoring their level of intoxication so that they could remain in control of their behavior and more alert. Some limited their number of drinks (ex: two-drink minimum) while at a nightclub event. Additionally, a number of individuals reported modifying their alcohol use in some way to prevent the possibility of someone spiking their drink as a precursor to an attempt at sexual assault. Stories of buying one's own drinks, closely watching drinks purchased (sometimes termed "babysitting" drinks), and never accepting drinks from strangers were all common among female respondents, even those who had not been prior victims. Other times such strategies were adopted as a result of prior negative experiences. Eileen recounted the following experience:

> Two years ago somebody definitely spiked my drink. I only drank one

> drink and I got plastered and I went to the bathroom, coz I was gonna
> throw up. I fell asleep on the toilet seat and my husband came and picked
> me up. I don't remember anything after that, but there could have been
> some serious things that happened, something really bad. After that I
> definitely don't let go of my drink. (Eileen, WF 21)

Respondents indicated that friends and intimate partners were critical in preventing potential sexual assaults via spiked drinks, but that they were not necessarily helpful in preventing the drink from being spiked in the first place. Instead this situation was managed by the respondents through self-imposed rituals regarding drinking behavior. These tactics consisted of not leaving a drink unattended, and refusing to accept an open container from someone you don't know, etc. These particular tactics (related to aggressively monitoring their actual drink) were employed exclusively by women.

Other respondents (both men and women) discussed making a conscious effort to limit their alcohol use in an attempt to remain cognizant and aware with regard to their decision-making. The reasoning was that excessive alcohol use resulted in disinhibition, making the user more likely to enter into potentially dangerous situations or interact with others in a more confrontational manner than they otherwise would if they hadn't been drinking. Prior research and theory has consistently found that alcohol has this kind of an effect with respect to physical assault among men, particularly at bars and nightclubs (Goldstein 1985; Hobbs et al. 2003; Leonard et al. 2003; Graham and Wells 2001; Graham et al. 2000). Among those in our sample, most times the reasoning behind not drinking, or consuming in moderation, was made after respondents had some negative

experience wherein alcohol was perceived to be an important factor. It was their belief that avoidance of alcohol would decrease the likelihood that they would be victimized. Ben explained:

> The last physical confrontation that I really got into, basically this guy came to this girl's party that I was cool with; he came to the place all drunk and was just knocking shit over. I was a little tipsy and we got into words and we stepped out in the street and scrapped. I'm not normally likely to walk up on someone and be like "mother fucker, I'll fuck you up," but when I've been drinking I'll take anyone out. That's why I don't really drink like that when I go out anymore. I'll get high as shit, but I won't drink much at all. I think it changes you. (Ben, BM 23)

Retaliatory

Retaliatory tactics may be defined as re-active, post hoc approaches to risk management. Retaliatory tactics are employed after an act of victimization (or attempt) has occurred, and are aimed at preventing escalation of a situation, or deterring future victimization attempts. Retaliatory tactics are necessarily confrontational, and require the victim to be assertive and aggressive toward the aggressor. While retaliatory tactics were employed among men and women with respect to both physical and sexual assault, women generally experienced more successful outcomes using these approaches. Retaliatory tactics can be separated into interrelated types of approaches: (a) confront and shame, and (b) social support (quality and type) available in the venue.

Confront and Shame: The "confront and shame" tactic was employed exclusively by women and was regarded as very successful among our respondents. The reasoning was that, for the most part, women are regarded by men as passive recipients of minor forms of sexual assault, and are therefore, in some sense, willing participants in the transaction. The aim of confronting an aggressor and shaming them publicly was to shock them, and get them to think more carefully about engaging in such behavior in the future. Donna described an incident where she used the "confront and shame" approach:

> If you react to somebody violating you, disrespecting your space, they're
>
> not going to come back. You know why - because you just brought
>
> attention to them. Like this one time this guy was grabbin on me, pushin
>
> on me. So I turned around and gripped him up - you're not gonna get into
>
> my fuckin space. I've lived too fuckin long to let anyone put their hands
>
> on me when I don't wanna be touched. I'll put him back in his place. If
>
> your momma didn't do it then I'll sure as hell help you. (Donna, BF 28)

This approach to handling sexual assault was taken among more older, more experienced club attendees who had been active in the scene for a longer period of time. Many of the women we interviewed were jaded, had both seen and experienced a lot of harassment, and didn't want to put up with it any longer. They would ignore potential threats, but once harassment occurred, they would respond autonomously and aggressively. This tactic was employed in hopes of exposing and embarrassing the offender, with the ultimate aim of deterring future acts of sexual assault - if only for the night. The message to the both the offender and other clubbers (potential aggressors) in the immediate area

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was clear: don't touch me or you'll be sorry. Similar tactics have been documented among women who frequent other risk environments (Spivey 2005). Other women in our study handled similar incidents in a more dramatic fashion. Laura described an incident:

> He tried to put a hand on my skirt and grab my ass. I didn't have any underwear on. It was so aggressive, but by the time he could actually grab me or anything like that I just punched him in his face. His eye got all black and blue. The bouncer had to pull me off him because I was kicking him like a fucking animal. I don't take that shit from anyone anymore.
>
> (Laura, WF 31)

Those who were victims of multiple incidents of sexual assault or harassment over the course of their trajectory in the scene, were more apt to retaliate against sexual victimization in a more assertive and confrontational way. Again, the general sentiment was that they had had enough and weren't going to tolerate such violations any longer. For these women, it was threats to their sexual identity and, more generally, disrespect to for their social space that resulted in the use of retaliatory tactics. Previous research has found that women often behave similarly in dispute-related assaults (Deibert and Meithe 2003).

The level of aggression used to retaliate against antagonists varied across respondents and was contingent on three situational factors: (i) the perceived seriousness of the violation (the more serious, a greater likelihood of retaliation), (ii) the perceived threat of the antagonist (the more threatening, a lesser likelihood of retaliation), and importantly, (iii) the perceived effectiveness of venue security staff. In venues were

security presence was perceived as minimal or ineffective, or the attitude of security deemed aloof and distant, women were less likely to react to sexual victimization with retaliatory tactics, for fear of reprisal. In venues where security was perceived as competent and effective, women were more likely to retaliate either on their own, or by using security as a resource, or form of social support.

Social Support: Social support, either in the form of security staff or peer networks functioned not so much as retaliatory tactics in their own right, but rather can be thought of as having an important impact on the likelihood that retaliatory tactics would used. For some, a strong security presence was utilized as a form of retaliation in and of itself. Jocelyn described doing this:

> I walked over to [security] at the party and I was like, "that dude right
>
> there, grabbed me. You need to do something about it before I tell people
>
> that at your club, girls get assaulted." So, they did. They kicked him out
>
> and he was not allowed to get back into that particular party. They
>
> confronted him and they were talking to him outside and that meant
>
> something to me. (Jocelyn, BF 25)

As noted in Chapter six, men regarded security as ineffective and contributing to problems. This meant that retaliatory tactics were often related to the presence of a large or supportive peer group. In general, men in our study were much more likely to engage in physical assault transactions if the were alone, or not interacting closely with their friends or acquaintances present in the venue. The presence and support of a peer group was often mentioned as instrumental in preventing initial confrontations or situations

from escalating. Often times, however, peer support functioned only to change the nature of the confrontation: from a one-on-one fight to a "brawl." So, in instances where peer support had this effect, the potential victim simply changed their role to that of victim-offender. While this form of peer support may have been intended to help the potential victim avoid serious injury, aggressive retaliation among men functioned primarily to escalate conflicts.

Drug and Alcohol Use: For both men and women, whether retaliatory tactics were employed was largely contingent on how much the individual had to drink that night, which could impact (i) or (ii) above. The role of alcohol proved consistently relevant in shaping ones' response to victimization at the individual level. Many of our female respondents indicated that how they would react to being groped or harassed was largely dependent on their level of alcohol use, and how excessive use would often alter their mood, increasing the likelihood that retaliatory tactics were invoked to manage risk, or quell potential threats. We found a similar effect among men with respect to physical assault. In general, greater levels of alcohol consumption were predictive of a more confrontational approach to managing instances of sexual victimization. Nadine explained:

> It depends on how much I've had to drink. If I've had a good amount and
> I'm feeling [confrontational], I will turn around and curse everywhere. I
> don't know who did it, but I will curse everywhere. If I can I will grab the
> guy's hand that did it and say "okay, what you need to do is watch who
> you're touching like that. I'm not your standard whore." If I'm not feeling

> very confrontational at the time and I just want to keep enjoying myself I
>
> just keep walking. But it really depends on how much I've had to drink
>
> and how I'm feeling. (Nadine, BF 25)

Whereas alcohol was important in facilitating aggressive behavior, and increasing the

likelihood of a retaliatory response, interestingly, other forms of drug use were frequently

cited as having the opposite effect. Other drugs were credited with promoting increased

tolerance to the potentially stressful behavior of others, or allowing the individual to react

calmly or avoid situations or interactions where risk of victimization was apparent. As

James explained, this was particularly true with respect to marijuana use:

> Drugs never really caused me to go out and fight people.
>
> Drinkinghowever, I'm definitely more apt to do so. If someone was to
>
> bump into me or whatever and I'm drunk, I would definitely be more apt
>
> to be yelling atthem and start some shit, whereas if I'm high - high being
>
> stoned on pot – I would brush it off much more easily. Alcohol man,
>
> forget it. (James, AM 28)

Here marijuana use actually functioned as a protective tactic that had the effect of

decreasing one's likelihood of physical or sexual victimization. In numerous instances,

respondents spoke about the importance of psychopharmacological effects of marijuana

(and to a lesser extent ecstasy), and how it was associated with "mellowing out" or

"relaxing." Quite simply, the effects of marijuana made people more likely to sit around,

zone out, and enjoy music. Ecstasy was used far less frequently, but was noted as serving

a similar function in terms of allowing users to tolerate behaviors and situations that would otherwise be compromising.

This was often contrasted with the pharmacological effects of alcohol, which were regarded by many of our respondents as playing a central role in contributing to victimization. This is not to suggest that they were using marijuana or ecstasy specifically to avoid victimization; this was certainly not the case. However, many had extensive experience using these drugs and were quick to point out that, in addition to being perceived as relatively harmless in terms of health consequences, use of marijuana, and to a lesser degree, ecstasy, had a buffering effect, and consumption of these substances proved useful in insulating them from entering into potentially dangerous situations in the first place.

In sum, the micro-level risk management tactics that our respondents fell into two categories: retaliatory and protective. Both were largely re-active in the sense that they were put into practice following an incident of victimization. Certain individuals used these experiences to become more pro-active about risk management, and began using protective tactics. However, older, more experienced clubbers chose instead to use retaliatory tactics centered on confronting and embarrassing the perpetrator in hopes of deterring future acts. For women, retaliatory tactics were often effective only during the bounded moment in time in which they occurred, and not successful in deterring future incidents. Still, such acts of self-efficacious behavior functioned to instill confidence and allow individuals to take responsibility for their clubbing safety into their own hands. For men, retaliatory tactics were largely ineffective, serving only to change the way in which

physical assault played out. Retaliation functioned in most cases to escalate the conflict, often culminating in a brawl involving multiple people.

Switching vs. Shifting

Switching the environment of ones' clubbing was not only a commonly invoked risk management approach for dealing with instances of physical assault among men, but sexual assault and harassment among women as well. Although the women in our sample were more likely to report or elaborate on micro-level risk management tactics overall, a number of them also discussed the importance of the environment in minimizing risk. However, it is important to note that simply switching to a different environment wasn't didn't always occur in such a straightforward manner. Some of our respondents were well aware of the fact that certain commercial clubs were riskier environments, and while they would often prefer to attend smaller events in the underground scene, they didn't always do so. The fact that many of our respondents (correctly) identified commercial club events as riskier environments did not lead to their steadfast refusal to attend commercial venues under any circumstance. Rather, these decisions were predicated on other social factors.

So favoring the smaller, more close-knit underground nightlife scene in lieu of the more hedonistic commercial scene was something that many often preferred to do, but not something that they necessarily did exclusively. Involvement in nightlife is necessarily a social activity, and most participants engage in this activity with friends. If one's friendship network is comprised of individuals who wish to attend commercial clubs (at least on a particular night), some of our respondents would opt to attend these

types of venues. We are not implying that the commercial and underground scenes are wholly exclusive in terms of their membership. There is indeed overlap between the two. This highlights an important distinction between "switching" and "shifting." Many of the respondents made it a point to switch the environment of their clubbing activity; from commercial to underground. This switch was generally a more permanent and enduring lifestyle choice. It can be regarded as an avoidance behavior, though the switch was done in large part with consideration of the social consequences. That is, there was a conscious decision made to avoid certain locations that they perceived to be more dangerous, but with an eye toward becoming part of a new social group.

Conversely, others would shift between commercial and underground venues. That is, they would drift back and forth between these two different types of venues, based primarily on who they were with on a particular evening. For some of the respondents, the benefits of attending mainstream commercial events simply outweighed the victimization risks. Often times this had to do with commercial venues featuring alcoholic drink specials or other promotion gimmicks that would allow them to drink more, and do so cheaply. "Blowing off steam" or "relaxing" were reported as primary motivations involvement in urban nightlife in the first place. Accordingly, for many respondents, a night out club-hopping was associated with moderate to heavy alcohol consumption. Naturally, saving money on alcohol was often a key determinant in selecting where to go. As such, alcohol promotions and drink specials not only served to increase alcohol consumption inside the venue, but were often key reasons that people chose go attend certain club events in the first place. Betty noted:

> Since I'm still technically a student and I'm broke all the time anyway,
>
> we're always looking for free events, happy hours, stuff that's going on
>
> where you get like 2 dollar drinks and like specials and stuff like that.
>
> (Betty, BF 20)

For others, the decision to attend commercial events was based simply on the fact that they enjoyed mainstream music more, or enjoyed the more sexualized ethos common at most commercial nightlife events. This type of atmosphere provided a sense of novelty and excitement not present in their day-to-day lives. Management of risk among these respondents then occurred at the micro-level. Tactics such as monitoring alcohol or drug consumption, not interacting with strangers, shaming someone for an act of sexual assault, clubbing with friends or significant others, and remaining in a group of friends throughout the evening were the kinds of strategies most commonly reported in diffusing victimization attempts.

Despite the pronounced way in which the atmosphere of certain types of events and venues functioned to shape risk, few regarded external factors as playing an important role in shaping physical or sexual assault. Instead, they were resigned to the fact that certain venues were more dangerous than others, and simply opted to stop attending these kinds of places (or at least avoid doing so when reasonably possible). So, after experiencing or witnessing acts of victimization, many of the individuals in our study made a distinct effort to alter their clubbing behavior. They abandoned the commercial scene, where most acts of victimization were experienced, and opted to attend smaller venues in the underground scene. These events placed a greater focus on

the artistic merit of the music, a more positive interaction style, and consequently, far fewer risks. Once these individuals changed the environment of their nightlife behavior, they often became involved in maintaining the underground scene on a grassroots level.

As such, many of the individuals used their negative experiences in the commercial nightlife scene as an opportunity to change the context of their recreational behavior to an environment that better reflected their motivations for going out in the first place: music appreciation, stress release, escapism via controlled substance use, peer interaction, and so forth. The people interviewed were, for the most part, excited and talkative about their involvement in the underground scene, and believed that the problems they experienced were largely the function of specific nightlife environments, rather than any inherent problem with nightclubbing as a leisure activity more generally. For these individuals, changing the environment, or rather, finding a new one and becoming more intimately involved in it, proved efficacious in managing risk.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have elaborated on the various individual-level risk management tactics used when alteration or control of the social environment is not possible, or undesirable for obligatory social reasons. I have also specified how individuals often chose to alter their social environment to avoid risk. Alteration of the nightlife environment (switching from commercial to underground nightlife events) was particularly common among men, whereas women tended to report the use of individual-level tactics with greater frequency than men. This chapter also specifies how risk management at both the individual-level are impacted by substance use and related

norms, with marijuana and mild hallucinogens serving to attenuate risk, and alcohol use and binge drinking functioning to exacerbate it.

With respect to gender, the fact that women engaged in risk management at the individual level, whereas men typically invoked the role of the environment, is worthy of some discussion. While the men in the sample tended to report an awareness of physical assault risks, they were much more likely to manage these risks with comparatively dramatic adjustments than women – by altering their context of their behavior. Perhaps more importantly, it appears that this alteration of the social context was accomplished, at least in part, with the requirements of masculinity construction in mind. Switching the context of their nightlife participation to underground venues and becoming more intimately involved in this scene functioned to satisfy this need in some manner. That is, by cultivating a "new" social status as a scene insider, these individuals were intimately connected to the happenings in underground nightlife, sometimes even hosting and organizing their own events. Essentially these individuals rejected the hedonistic excesses of commercial contexts and opted instead to cultivate "subcultural capital" (Thornton 1996) in the underground scene.

This form of status attainment essentially functioned as a new, safer, and typically more personally rewarding kind of masculinity construction for many of these men (also see Anderson et al. 2009). It is important to also note, that in many instances, the cultivation of status in the underground scene was not explicitly linked to masculinity performance or a rigid adherence to gender norms. In some instances, it can simply be

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regarded as a personal lifestyle choice, and such decision-making was not universally a vehicle for "doing" masculinity.

Conversely, because of concerns about sexual victimization, the women in this study adopted a range of precautionary strategies. These included heightened vigilance in public spaces (monitoring alcohol intake and guarding drinks, clubbing in groups), as well as the avoidance patterns or environment alteration that men reported. Prior research has found similar patterns among women with regard to fear of crime and self-protection. Whereas some scholars have pointed out that such tactics essentially constrain women's full participation in public life (Day 2000, 2001; Gordon and Riger 1989; Madriz 1997; Stanko 1990), others point out that women's heightened fear and perceived risk in fact result from routinized victimization experiences such as public harassment, victim-blaming, as well as messages that women receive about their individual responsibilities for risk avoidance (Gilchrist et al. 1998) function to shape their approach to risk management. It appears that, for these women, their participation in public life was not at all impacted by their fear of victimization, and that they took personal responsibility for managing sexual assault risk in these spaces. While these risk management tactics were often impacted by prior interpersonal victimization experiences, some women adopted protective strategies based on accounts or descriptions (often unverified) of friends of friends' negative experiences.

In closing, while prior research has found that men and women are often victims of different types of crimes for largely different reasons, and that they tend to regard both the fear of victimization and self-protection quite differently, none of this work, at least

none that I am aware of, has considered how gender functions to actually organize perceptions of danger differently for men and women, thereby, dictating different behavioral responses. Future research on social contexts, routine activities and risk management behavior would benefit tremendously by considering the ways in which gender structures perceptions of risk, as well as risk avoidance behaviors.

Chapter 8

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Examining the dispositional and contextual influences on physical and sexual assault among new populations, such as those active in urban nightlife scenes, is of importance to scholars of crime and deviance, criminal justice practitioners as well as the general public; particularly those involved in urban nightlife, either as venue owners or participants. Nightlife scenes, like those who participate in them, have their own unique norms and expectations. Those who engage in crime, or experience victimization in these particular contexts, are often impacted not only by their own individual experiences and proclivities, but also by their immediate situational circumstances, and more broadly, by the contextual and situational norms that function to constrain behaviors and dictate responses. While criminology has certainly theorized on the influence of dispositional factors such as one's level of self-control in criminal involvement, as well as the impact of environmental factors such as lack of guardianship in shaping criminal events, most scholarship has not used respondent narratives, or storylines, to demonstrate the dynamic impact of both individual- AND contextual-level factors. This is the conceptual contribution of this dissertation.

The notion of the "storyline" is again instructive here. As a work of qualitative criminology, it is likely useful to frame the findings in this dissertation not as a formal

exploration of various theoretical concepts, but rather, as both the offenders and victims quoted throughout this dissertation have - in terms of a story. The "story" of dispositional and contextual influences on physical and sexual assault in urban nightlife is a story about risk; how it is experienced, and how it is negotiated. More broadly, it is a story about young adults who place a high value on leisure activity, novelty, and recreation in clubs and bars. Why did some experience negative outcomes whereas others did not? As this dissertation has shown, enjoyment of nightlife is relative, and defined differently by different people. For some, enjoyment of nightlife revolved around binge-level alcohol use and attending events almost nightly; for others, their enjoyment revolved around music appreciation and social interaction with close friends. Some were looking for trouble, or found themselves in situations or places where trouble was perceived as unavoidable. The story goes on to discuss the role of clearly identifiable "background" factors that propelled people not only toward involvement in nightlife culture more generally, but also further toward some of attitudes and/or behaviors that are associated with involvement in interpersonal crime and victimization. With regard to the social environment, the story also described how particular aspects of nightlife events themselves functioned to shape the physical and sexual assault outcomes that many of the respondents reported experiencing.

Agnew's (2006) concept of the storyline provided a useful conceptual umbrella to help understand the impact of individual disposition and social context, and the numerous factors that comprise these multi-dimensional concepts. To recap; the storyline approach builds on the criminal event perspective, which posits that a comprehensive explanation

of crime must address interaction between the offender and victim, the offender's disposition, and the social environments in which the crime occurred (Meier, Kennedy, and Sacco 2001; Sacco and Kennedy 2002). It also builds on Short's (1998) research on the individual interactions leading up to crime, as well as notions of "accounts" of criminal behaviors (Sykes and Matza 1957). However, storylines are broader in scope as they encompass interactions with others, the settings for interaction, particular accounts or neutralizations, as well as individual characteristics of the offender.

This dissertation uses the notion of the storyline as a broad conceptual framework to understand physical and sexual assault events, but also expands it in three key ways. First, by substantially elaborating on the role of one's individual disposition (beyond the events of the past few hours or days, as Agnew has suggested) in shaping storylines, and second, by elaborating on the role of social context in shaping storylines. The current research found that all manner of physical assault storylines were most likely to be reported among men who shared certain dispositional characteristics. As for sexual assault storylines, I found that the type of storyline reported was associated with one's involvement in drugs during youth.

Moreover, storylines of physical and sexual assault were far more likely to occur in commercial nightlife contexts that had certain social and organizational features. Moreover, particular organizational features contributed to particular storylines of physical and sexual assault. While Agnew's original theory ephemerally references the importance of social contexts in shaping storylines, he does not devote any time to

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clarifying their role. Finally, broadly speaking, I have expanded Agnew's storyline framework to account for victimization as well as offending.

Review of Findings

The story effectively begins in Chapter four, where I describe the three different types of storylines generated for each of the two outcomes. The three storylines of physical assault were (1) the general affront, (2) the racial affront, and (3) defensive/retaliatory action. The broadest and most commonly reported of the three was *the general affront.* Although there are different variations, the general affront storyline has several key components: first, someone engages in a behavior that the individual finds offensive in some regard. This offensive behavior provides the situational spark for physical assault to occur. The specific kinds of general affronts reported among the respondents that were most likely to lead to physical can be further separated into three main types: (a) subtly hostile behaviors, (b) sexual disputes, and (c) prior conflicts; although there was sometimes overlap between them.

Subtly Hostile Behaviors were comprised mainly of relatively minor, nonphysical offenses, and included verbal insults or harassment, ridicule, "hard" stares or glaring, personal threats, spilling a drink on someone (either accidentally or purposely), or bumping into another (accidentally or purposely) were all subtly hostile behaviors that respondents reported as inciting instances physical assault. *Sexual disputes* took several forms; such disputes generally consisted of (i) an outsider trying to disrupt a partnership, typically by making romantic or sexual advances on the individual's partner; (ii) a sexual partner (or potential sexual partner) being, or perceived as being, unfaithful in public,

thereby disrespecting the individual; and (iii) competition with others over a potential sexual partner. *Prior Conflicts* occurred when two individuals who had wronged one another in a previous situation; either days, weeks, or months earlier; accidentally ran into one another in a public space. Upon seeing one another, the negative feelings stemming from the prior event which defined their last encounter surfaced and defined their current interaction, resulting in hostile behavior toward one another, and eventually, agitation to the point where physical violence was used to resolve the matter.

The second type of storyline, *the racial affront* storyline was defined as discriminatory treatment of an openly hostile nature based on one's ascribed racial or ethnic status. This mainly included verbal harassment and taunting. Such inflammatory behavior was sometimes persistent, occurring repeatedly over a prolonged period of time (several hours); whereas other times a single comment would escalate the confrontation. Finally, the *defensive-retaliatory action* storyline was characterized by an attempt at the protection of self or property when some criminal other was attempting to commit a crime against the individual. That is, the individual, someone close to them, or their property, was marked as a target for a crime (for example, a robbery or a theft), and the individual turned to physical violence to protect either themselves or their property.

The three storylines of sexual assault were: (1) competing definitions of the situation, (2) opportunistic predation, and (3) drug and alcohol use. The *competing definitions of the situation* storyline had two key components, which when taken together, essentially represent a scorned sexual advance (Deibert and Miethe 2003). First, there was a misinterpretation of what was perceived as a sexualized behavior performed by the

victim, directed at the offender and perceived as inviting sexual contact. The offender would then attempt to engage in some form of more aggressive sexual behavior, or to begin more forcefully pursuing a sexual encounter. The *opportunistic predation* storyline can be defined as the unwanted sexual groping of the female victim by a male stranger, or occasionally, a group of strangers, with whom the individual had no prior contact or interaction with. This storyline had two main elements. First, the victim would be preoccupied in some manner, and unaware of the presence of threat of the offender. Second, the offender would then observe the opportunity to engage in brief, fleeting act of uninvited sexual contact without evidence that a tangible or sufficiently severe cost would be incurred.

The defining feature of the *drug and alcohol use* storyline was the voluntary or involuntary use of either drugs or alcohol to the point of severe inebriation, which was followed by either a completed or attempted sexual assault. This storyline played out in one of two ways. In one instance the victim described engaging in consensual sexual behavior after consuming large amounts of alcohol or drugs (primarily alcohol), and during the course of the increasingly intense, consensual, sexual encounter, the woman began to feel uncomfortable in the situation. This would be followed by the woman attempting to disengage from the sexually charged encounter, and the man then resisting the woman's attempts to do so. In another instance the would-be victim reported being drugged by a would-be assailant, in a spiked drink episode (Anderson et al. 2007). In these cases, the women engaged in minimal alcohol use at a nightlife venue, followed by feelings of severe intoxication and disorientation, and nausea. Women recalled seeing an

unknown other nearby, shadowing them throughout the evening, or attempting to encourage them to leave the venue with them.

Storylines of physical assault revealed an interesting social class effect. The implications are that physical assault is by no means domain of poor, disenfranchised, urban minority men, nor is it exclusively the domain of youth enmeshed in chronically delinquent peer groups. Rather, "focal concerns" or "conduct norms" related to the acquisition and maintenance of status and respect seem to be, in fact, quite general in predicting a wide range of physical violence. Each of the three storylines of sexual assault victimization can be viewed as stemming from a collective masculine hegemony resembling Grazian's (2007) depiction of "girl hunting" behavior that reify gender differences, and, by extension, gender inequality.

Chapter five demonstrated that those respondents who reported physical and sexual assault storylines shared certain dispositional commonalities. Interestingly, these factors tended to be largely similar for storylines of physical and sexual assault. For both outcomes, the general pattern was as follows: an individual experienced some kind of an identity disruption in their youth; this functioned to effectively sever the individual from conventional others, norms, or institutions, and they became involved with drug-involved or otherwise delinquent peers, in large part to ameliorate the identity strain they were experiencing. This general pattern was particularly evident among those involved in physical assault, where drug and alcohol involvement and other forms of delinquency served as ways to assert masculinity. This assertion of masculinity typically continued

into adulthood, in terms of continued alcohol and drug use and frequent nightlife

participation.

Although a similar trajectory was found among the women who reported sexual

assault victimization, it was observed only among those who reported the drug and

alcohol use storyline. Those who did not report extensive drug involvement in youth were

more likely to experience either the competing definitions of the situation or

opportunistic predation storyline. So, while the dispositional composite for men showed

uniformity across different types of storylines, there is some dispositional variation across

storyline type for sexual assault victims.

The key contribution of Chapter six was in detailing the dimensions of certain

nightlife contexts that willingly promote and tolerate predatory victimization of, or

aggression among, patrons. These findings suggest that those who attended commercial

nightlife spaces were at far greater risk for physical confrontation or predatory sexual

aggression than those who frequented underground venues. Here, event vibe and social

organization appear to be useful conceptual tools for better understanding precisely how

social spaces can shape offending and physical and sexual assault storylines, particularly

with regard to cultivating norms conducive to sexual objectification of women, the

fetishization of both sex and binge-level alcohol consumption.

Moreover, the fact that commercial nightlife venues featured a disruption of daily

routine and order was appealing to young adults, who, in seeking to disavow (at least in

particular moments in time) the norms and responsibilities associated with adulthood and

their parent culture, actively sought out more hedonistic environs in which to reinvigorate

social life and further delay their transition to adulthood (Maffesoli 1996; Bennett 1999b; Malbon 1999). However, such foci simply increased the likelihood that patron encounters were either sexualized or aggressive.

Chapter seven elaborated on the various individual-level risk management tactics used when alteration or control of the social environment is not possible, or undesirable for obligatory social reasons. I also detailed the mechanisms and reasons why certain individuals voluntarily chose to alter their social environment to avoid physical and sexual assault risk. Alteration of the nightlife environment (specifically, switching from commercial to underground nightlife events) was particularly common among men. Importantly, it appears that this alteration of the social context was accomplished, at least in part, with the requirements of masculinity construction in mind.

This form of status attainment essentially functioned as a new, safer, and typically more personally rewarding kind of masculinity construction for many of these men. Conversely, women tended to report the use of individual-level tactics with greater frequency than men. Because of concerns about sexual victimization, women adopted a range of precautionary strategies, including heightened vigilance in public spaces (monitoring alcohol intake and guarding drinks, clubbing in groups). Some women were also engaged in the alteration of the social context that men reported, but did so less frequently. This chapter also specified how risk management at both the individual-level were impacted by substance use and related norms, with marijuana and mild hallucinogens serving to attenuate risk, and alcohol use and binge drinking functioning to exacerbate it.

Implications for Theory and Policy

There are two key policy implications that are logically suggested by this research. First, in examining the link between individual disposition and social context with respect to criminal offending, it is possible to better understand the manner in which these causal factors are related to one another. Too often in criminology, researchers either point to the importance of individual level factors *OR* contextual factors. Generally speaking, little effort is made to understand the manner in which one may be dependent on the other, or how these factors operate in conjunction with one another. In highlighting both dispositional and contextual factors in shaping physical and sexual assault storylines, it is my hope that policy-makers will be better able to allocate resources in a way that takes this relationship into account. Alternatively, it may, in fact, prove easier or more practical to alter contextual or situational factors associated with physical and sexual assault (see Chapter seven) than to alter background factors, which research suggests are far more stable and resistant to change (Agnew 2006; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). In clearly articulating what these contextual factors are and how they exert their influence, policymakers, or nightlife venue owners can work to effectively neutralize some of these factors; or, at the very least, manage these factors more responsibly.

Furthermore, focusing on individual's storylines of crime and victimization has additional implications for crime control. For example, efforts could be made to alter storylines in hopes of reducing crime (Agnew 2006). This could occur with individuals in positions of authority in either the particular social setting (nightlife venue) or in some

other context, such as the community, taking a more active role in monitoring disputes between individuals in an attempt to resolve them before they erupt into violence. There is evidence of the effectiveness of such mediation programs among other at-risk groups, such as rival gang members (Hughes and Short 2005; Spergel 1995). It would logically follow that altering storylines would be useful with other offending populations as well. As such, it would prove particularly important to improve the effectiveness of security staff at nightlife venues, in terms of conflict management training and stressing the importance of dispute resolution.

It is my hope that this work has demonstrated the utility of the storyline concept in understanding how dispositional and contextual factors function to shape offending and victimization events. While the particular storylines of physical and sexual assault generated in this dissertation certainly had varied causes, motivations, and were situationally unique, it is also important to remember that those who reported these storylines shared a number of dispositional or background characteristics. Importantly, these dispositional factors were remarkably similar across physical and sexual assault outcomes. Moreover, the vast majority of those respondents who reported storylines of physical and sexual assault reported experiencing them in specific contexts, where clearly identifiable aspects of the physical and social spaces functioned to shape the storylines. Again, these contextual factors contributed to storylines of both physical and sexual assault.

The significance of this finding cannot be overstated. The fact that a number of the explanatory mechanisms discussed in this dissertation have been identified as

significant predictors of involvement in crime in prior research and theory (namely: alcohol use, identity disruptions, and cultural norms related to masculinity construction and maintenance) obscures two larger conceptual points. The first, and arguably most important, is that two remarkably different kinds of criminal and victimization outcomes can be attributed to very similar dispositional and contextual factors. This is something that prior research on storylines of crime (Agnew 2006), or that dominant theories of crime causation such as self-control (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990), social learning (Akers 1998), general strain (Agnew 1992), and routine activity (Cohen and Felson 1979) have not fully considered. The second is the unique ways in which certain individual-level factors associated with physical and sexual assault are essentially created in specific social contexts. The ways that these contexts function to reinforce, or sometimes reshape, norms and behavioral expectations contributing to storylines of crime and victimization such as physical and sexual assault is significant as well.

In closing, I believe this research illustrates the importance and richness in understanding the lives, lifestyles, interactions, and identities of those who have experienced physical and sexual assault in particular social contexts. Moreover, I believe this work demonstrates the usefulness of narrative data in understanding the impact of three different factors in shaping physical and sexual assault: situation, disposition, and context. Over time, it is my hope that scholars will use storylines, or a modified version thereof, in attempts to explain a wide variety of offending in other unique socio-cultural environments.

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