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# An Examination of the relationship between the hypersexual environment of Las Vegas and forcible rape

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HYPERSEXUAL  
ENVIRONMENT OF LAS VEGAS AND FORCIBLE RAPE

by

Lisa Ann Dooley

Bachelor of Arts  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
2008

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the

**Master of Arts in Criminal Justice  
Department of Criminal Justice  
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**Graduate College  
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THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

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**Lisa Ann Dooley**

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**May 2010**

## ABSTRACT

### **An Examination of the Relationship between the Hypersexual Environment of Las Vegas and Forcible Rape**

by

Lisa Ann Dooley

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The purpose of this study was to examine whether rates of forcible rape in Nevada are high, possibly a side effect of living in a hypersexual city. The study will explore whether these rates compare to other cities of the same size that are tourism focused and whether rates of forcible rapes are higher in counties without prostitution than with prostitution. This paper will also consider rates of sexual victimization among undergraduate students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University. Lastly, the study will consider whether the hypersexual nature of the city is reflected in the sex drives of college students, another factor that puts individuals at risk for becoming a victim of rape.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of the Study

“What happens here...”, “America’s adult playground”, “Sin City” are all common catchphrases to describe Las Vegas. However, the one word to portray Las Vegas is sex. The supply and the demand of the sex industry are abundant in Las Vegas and are far from being obsolete. Nonetheless, the one thing that does not appear in these marketing campaigns is the risk of sexual victimization.

Las Vegas is one of the top attractions in America. According to the “America’s Top 10 Tourist Attractions” (Baedeker, 2009), Las Vegas was ranked number two with 37.5 million visitors (2009). Times Square, New York City was ranked number one with an estimate of 37.6 million visitors. Ranking number 3 was the National Mall and Memorial Parks in Washington, D.C. with 12 million less visitors than the top 2 at 25 million visitors. Visitors to Las Vegas are not visiting monuments and memorials; they are coming for the adult activities that are advertised.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) estimated that the State of Nevada’s rate of forcible rapes is ranked number 8 in the nation (FBI, 2008). States which rank above Nevada include Alaska, New Mexico, South Dakota, Arkansas, Michigan, Kansas, and Colorado. To understand the magnitude or prevalence of rape in the State of Nevada, local level rates should also be considered. A meeting with Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department officials (November 2009) confirmed that Las Vegas is struggling with elevated rates of

sexual victimization in various command areas. However, little attention is drawn by the media to address the issues of awareness and self protection. It is hoped that this study will assist and support policy development surrounding this issue.

High rates of forcible rapes in Las Vegas are perhaps elevated by the community's culture which utilizes sexuality to welcome individuals to "Sin City" with the slogan "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas." This popular advertisement slogan encourages individuals to think that there are no consequences to their carefree behavior while visiting and or residing in Las Vegas. Much of this behavior is encouraged by the environment which contains billboards advertising various venues using sex appeal. Many of these billboards contain sexual innuendoes located on and near Las Vegas Boulevard (aka "The Strip"). This sexually aggressive or hypersexual atmosphere affects all parts of the city, including college campuses.

Across the United States, high rates of forcible rape occur among college age students. Rape is a significant issue which affects an estimated 12 to 22% of woman over the age of 18 (Russell & Bolen, 2000). In 2005, the rate of forcible rape was approximately 11% at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (FBI, 2005).

Previous research has shown that campus environment plays a contributing factor in forcible rape. For example, a study revealed that college women were five times higher than women in the general public of being raped annually (5.2% vs. 0.9%: Kilpatrick, Resnick, Ruggiero, Conoscenti, & McCauley, 2007). Kilpatrick et al.'s findings suggest that the college environment is a risk. This paper will look at rates of sexual victimization reported by the University of

Nevada, Las Vegas students. Data will be analyzed to consider whether students are experiencing high rates of forcible rape when compared to other college campuses in non-sexualized cities. The project will focus on identifying and assessing the prevalence of sexual victimization of college women who reside in a hypersexual city such as Las Vegas. While both male and female students will be analyzed, this study expects to focus on women as they tend to report higher prevalence rates for sexual victimization (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Hypersexuality is defined as “exhibiting unusual or excessive concern with or indulgence in sexual activity” (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, 2009). The impact on sexual drive will be examined to determine whether college age men and women’s sex drive differ in this hypersexual environment.

#### Research Questions

The purpose of this research project is to examine whether there is a relationship between the hypersexual environment of Las Vegas and sexual victimization. The project seeks to answer research questions in three areas. The first area of questions relate to whether the environment of Las Vegas creates elevated rates of forcible rape: Do these rates compare to other cities of the same size that are tourism focused? Are forcible rape rates higher in counties without prostitution than with prostitution? The second area of enquiry is focused on college rates of sexual assault: Do Las Vegas students experience higher rates of forcible rape than students on other campuses? Finally, this study will examine whether the environment of Las Vegas is reflected in higher sex drives among UNLV students than for students in other cities?

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Commercial Sexual Activity

Las Vegas is a unique community which provides twenty-four hour entertainment, seven days a week. The main attractions include adult entertainment, gambling, gentlemen's clubs and prostitution. This highly sexualized environment includes exotic dancers on stripper poles traveling along the strip in a clear bus advertising a gentlemen's club with the use of a loud speaker encouraging spectators to come and see her (Schoenmann, 2009). Stripper poles located in hotel rooms potentially promoting high risk sexual promiscuity. Additionally, much of Las Vegas' entertainment consists of shows which feature bare breasted showgirls and sexual content.

In addition to the businesses like strip clubs and gaming as mentioned above, a large source of adult entertainment in Las Vegas is the underground illegal sex trade. It is underground in that it is not legal or hidden but is advertised at every turn. For example, prostitution is openly advertised in the telephone directory. There are approximately 109 yellow pages of "Entertainers" who come straight to the privacy of your hotel room (Embarq Yellow Pages, July-December, 2008). Also on these pages are graphically described "gentlemen" clubs and massage parlors offering full body services.

Another example of the sexualized businesses featured in Las Vegas is the publically advertised and accessible swingers clubs. Multiple swingers clubs exist in Las Vegas. Green Door Las Vegas advertises itself as the "America's most

unique adult social club” offering a clean and safe place for swingers to have consensual sex (greendoorlasvegas.com). Rates consist of \$20-\$100. Las Vegas Red Rooster is another swingers club which advertises itself as the “oldest and most well Swinger’s Party for couples and singles” (vegasredrooster.com). Suggested donations range from \$10-\$50 depending on the day of the week and whether you are a single or a couple.

Perhaps, the most distinguishing feature of the sexual nature of Las Vegas is the nearby proximity of legal commercial sexual activity. Prostitution is illegal in the city of Las Vegas but nearby counties as close as 60 miles outside of “sin city” have legal brothels. However, this does not prevent prostitution from occurring within the city. Newsstands containing booklets and newspapers, available on or near the strip, advertise escorts and strippers. If you choose to walk the Las Vegas Strip, individuals wearing brightly covered shirts line the sidewalks trying to hand you “nude girls direct to your room” cards which advertise various escort venues (Schoenmann, 2009). Another popular trend is the rolling billboard trucks which drive along the Las Vegas Strip advertising “Hot babes direct to you.” In January 2009, Nevada advertised the “State’s first male prostitute” as the first licensed male prostitute employed at the Shady Lady Ranch located 150 miles northwest of Las Vegas (Brean, 2010). His services, which include “anything within reason,” range from \$300 an hour to \$500 for two hours.

Las Vegas Craigslist, an online classified advertisement, also offers “adult services.” This section posts a picture and price via internet offering erotic

entertainment for a cost of \$10. Previously, the section was named “erotic services” which allowed prostitutes/escorts to post nude photographs for free (Kennedy & Taylor, 2010). These characteristics create unique conditions which increase the risks for prostitution and sexual victimization. Kennedy (2007) analyzed 12,444 advertisements. This study demonstrated that approximately 80% of the advertisements included telephone numbers while a third of the advertisements enclosed costs for specific services.

### Sexual Assault and Rape

The definition of sexual assault and rape vary from state to state. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI, 2008, 2), rape is defined as “The carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults or attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included; however, statutory rape (without force) and other sex offenses are excluded.”

Because the legal definition of rape is limited, many states utilize a broader category such as sexual assault. According to Nevada law (NRS 200.364), sexual assault is defined as “a person who subjects another person to sexual penetration, or who forces another person to make a sexual penetration on himself or another, or on a beast, against the will of the victim or under conditions in which the perpetrator knows or should know that the victim is mentally or physically incapable of resisting or understanding the nature of his conduct, is guilty of sexual assault.”

## Rape Prevalence

The prevalence of rape is difficult to determine because many occurrences go unreported. However, estimates are accessible. The Uniform Crime Report includes those incidents of rape which are reported to law enforcement. The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI, 2008) reports the estimated national rate of forcible rapes was 57.7 offenses per 100, 000 female inhabitants. According to the data collected by the FBI, the estimated number of forcible rapes was 89,000 (FBI, 2008). This number decreased by 1.6% from 2007.

In contrast to stable or declining national rates, Nevada had 1,102 reported offenses of forcible and attempted rapes in 2008 compared to 1,094 in 2007 (Nevada Department of Public Safety, 2008). Again, these are only the assaults reported to law enforcement. Of the total, 926 were actual rapes, while 176 were classified as attempted rapes. In 2008, most rapes in Nevada occurred during the months of March, July, and August which accounted for 347 (31.49%) of the yearly total of 1,102 incidents. The month of July reported the highest monthly total of 124 incidents (11.25%).

Based on the Uniform Crime Report, adults (18 years of age and older) accounted for 86 percent of 2008 forcible rape arrestees (FBI, 2008). Of those adults arrested for the offense, 65.2 percent were white, 32.2 percent were black, and 2.6 percent were identified as other races, with males accounting for 80.7 percent of arrestees (FBI, 2008).

Nevada's arrest characteristics for rape are similar to the national pattern. According to the Nevada Department of Public Safety (2008), of those persons



arrested for rape in 2008, the clear majority is male (99%) who are 18 years or older (88%). The percentage of arrests has increased from 2008 compared to 2004 by 77% (Nevada Department of Public Safety).

### Rape of College Age Women

Rape on college campuses affects one in five women during their college career (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). One in four college women have been rape victims or a victim of attempted rape since they were sixteen years of age (Fisher et al., 2000). The “stranger in the bush scenario” is no longer solely observed. Date rape has gained notoriety. Johnson and Sigler (2000) revealed that 13.3% of college age women were forced to engage in sex while in a dating situation. The likelihood of the victim knowing their perpetrator occurred 9 out of 10 times (Fisher et al., 2000).

Indications of date rape occur more often than one may believe. Humphrey and White (2000) revealed that 70% of women between the age of 14 and the end of their fourth year in college experienced some form of sexual victimization. Victimization demonstrated to be 50% higher among adolescents while the rate declined steadily with each year of college. Girls aged 14 or younger who experienced some type of coercion were likely as adolescents to have a similar experience while those adolescents were five times more likely to experience some form of sexual coercion in their first year of college.

Men play a significant role in the perpetration of a college rape. Studies revealed one in twelve college men have admitted to engaging in a rape (McDonald & Kline, 2004). Similarly, another study (N=343) revealed that 5% of

college males admitted to rape while 3% attempted rape (Abbey, McAuslan, Zawacki, Clinton, & Buck, 2001).

### Aftermath

Rape is detrimental in various ways. The aftermath can generate not only physical effects but also physiological effects (Campbell & Wasco, 2005). Victims increase their risk of suicide and self mutilation (Noll, Horowitz, Bonano, Trickett, Putnam, 2003). Some may choose to keep the violation to themselves because of fear or shame (Fisher et al., 2000). Others choose not to identify their rapist because of their existing relationship. Krogan (2004) revealed that 61% of rapes and 71% of attempted rapes were not reported because the perpetrator was known to the victim. The most common reason women choose not to disclose or often delaying disclosure is because of embarrassment (Krogan, 2004). Others reasons include the matter was personal, fear of retaliation, and police bias (Krogan, 2004).

Similarly, Millar, Stermac, and Addison (2002) examined reasons why women seek or delay treatment. The study (N=1,118) revealed women were more likely to seek treatment within 12 hours when they were forced to perform fellatio or assaulted with a knife. Women who were assaulted in the act were likely to seek treatment within a twenty four hour period. Furthermore, women who had knowledge of the offender sought treatment two or more days after the assault. However, if the victim sought treatment within twelve hours, he or she was more likely to continue treatment.

## Rape Culture

One possible explanation for the rates of forcible rape in Las Vegas could be the culture propagated in this hypersexual community. A rape culture is defined as “a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women” (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 2005). A rape culture exists within an environment when sexual aggression is encouraged towards women (Buchwald et al., 2005). Within a rape culture, individuals assume that sexual violence is a normal part of life. This power and control behavior encourages the perpetrators to make excuses in regards to their actions and often blame their victims. Not only is power and control a part of sexual victimization but also entitlement (Filipovic, 2008). A number of men feel entitled to control and dominate women. Sex is a substance driven by supply and demand which can be “given, bought, sold, or stolen” (Millar, 2008). This culture degrades women, supports rape myths, accepts violence toward women, and considers sexual intercourse to be a casual encounter (Abbey, Zawakci, Buck, Clinton, & McAuslan, 2004). Many of these cultural images are located within the media, on billboards, buses, magazines, and music videos (Buchwald et al., 2005). These images often suggest everything is for sale and are often considered to be pornographic in nature.

McGinley (2007) found that employers who create highly sexualized environments, such as the Hard Rock Hotel, require women to waive their right to sexual harassment. Therefore, women employed at Hard Rock Hotel assume the risk and subject themselves to customer harassment. However, McGinley

argues that hypersexual environments exploit women for the benefit of others. Women should not accept responsibility from men who have difficulty controlling their sexually aggressive behavior. Employers who utilize the sexuality of women to earn a profit should provide protection to female employees. Casinos argue that women assume the risk of harassment from patrons because of the obvious signs of dress code, environment, and promotions utilized to advertise venues such as the Hard Rock Hotel.

### Routine Activities Theory

Routine activities theory was developed in an effort to explain the upward trend of crime rates in the 1970s (Cohen & Felson, 1979). In this chapter, the components of the routine activities theory are considered to assess the occurrence of rape and the situational dynamics among the offender and the victim.

Routine activities theory assumes that crime occurs through the union of a motivated offender, a suitable target for victimization, and a lack of capable guardians (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Individual acts performed on a daily basis such as working, spending time with friends, and or shopping increased their probability of being victimized.

#### *Motivated Offender*

Cohen and Felson (1979) works describes a motivated offender possesses “criminal inclinations and the ability to carry out those inclinations” (590). The theory does not explain the offender’s motivation. However, it assumes that

offenders are rational and choose criminal activities based on free will satisfying their own personal needs.

### *Target Suitability*

A suitable target represented value “the material or symbolic desirability..., physical visibility, access and the inertia of a target against illegal treatment” (Cohen & Felson, 1979, 591) to the offender. Targets which the offenders desired were seen as profitable, easily controlled, and accessible (Felson, 2000).

Miethe and McCorkle (2001) demonstrated that young, minority females who were single and not previously married, with low socio-economic status residing in urban areas had an increased risk of sexual victimization. Offenders were more likely to be African American, under the age of 25, and unemployed (Miethe & McCorkle, 2001).

The research on the criminality of places became influential in the 1980s (Wilson & Kelly, 1982). Criminal activity along with increased opportunity increased when both the offender and the victim congregate in areas known as “hot spots”. Hotspots such as hotels/motels (Rice & Smith, 2002) and liquor venues (Sherman et al., 1989) increased the likelihood for victimization between potential offenders and targets.

### *Lack of capable guardians*

The third component of routine activities theory is a lack of capable guardians. Capable guardians are “persons, (e.g. housewives, neighbors, pedestrians, private security guards, law enforcement officers) or objects (e.g. burglars alarms, locks, barred windows)” (Cohen, Kluegel, & Land, 1981, 508).

The union of the motivated offender and suitable target combined with the absence of capable guardians creates a criminal event. Researchers have attempted to adapt the findings of the routine activities theory. Cohen et al. (1981) claimed that individuals who were single were at a high risk for victimization because of the lack of availability of guardians. Maxfield (1987) assessed the characteristics of victimizations. He discovered that female victims were likely to be victimized by acquaintances. These incidents occurred in or near the immediate vicinity of their home. The results were supportive of the routine activities theory.

Several studies utilized routine activities theory to explain rape (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2002; Schwartz, Dekeserdy, Tait, & Alvi, 2001). A brief summary of these studies are provided.

Schwartz et al. (2001) surveyed college students in Canada (N=3142) about sexual victimization. In order to represent offender motivation, Schwartz et al. included male respondents. Higher victimization was hypothesized for females who drank alcohol frequently in addition to utilizing controlled substances among their partners. In addition, men were hypothesized to report abusive behaviors if their male peers supported this type of behavior.

The study utilized the Koss's Sexual Experiences Survey (1982) by having the dependent variable measure female experience with force and force used by males. Four categories of victimization (victimization, rape, attempted rape, sex with coercion, and no victimization) tested this variable. Female consumption of alcohol and the utilization of controlled substances were treated as proxy

measures of target attractiveness. Male offender motivation measured the utilization of alcohol or controlled substances and support of male peers. Likewise, reduced guardianship represented measures of male peer support. Males who engaged in sexually coercive behavior were not deterred from any type of social control. Furthermore, support for coercive behavior by males would not provide guardianship for sexual victimization. The study revealed that 19% of female participants were raped while 8.5% reported an attempted rape. Additionally, 5.6% of men admitted to committing a rape while 2.8% acknowledged to being involved in an attempted incident.

The findings revealed that the concepts of the routine activities theory were predictive of the increase in sexual victimization. Correlations existed between female consumption of alcohol and victimization. Females were perceived to be less likely to protect themselves against rape. Correlations also existed between male consumption of alcohol and the tendency to use force. Males consuming alcohol four or more times in a week were likely to utilize force.

The findings regarding the utilization of controlled substances among partners were not statistically significant. However, male peer support that supported physical aggression was a significant variable. Results demonstrated that 9.6% of male participants engaged in rape when the consumption of alcohol two or more times per week and male peer support were simultaneous.

Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) examined lifestyles variables to determine if a relationship exists between the risk of sexual victimization and routine activities theory. The study consisted of twelve questions, varying from feeling pressured

to engage in a date to rape with the use of threat or force. The sample was divided into categories. These categories consisted of 177 participants who answered yes to any of the twelve questions and 73 participants who answered yes to those questions regarding sexual assault with the use of threat or force. The dependent variable was experiencing forcible rape.

These lifestyle questions consisted of the participants exposure and proximity to offenders by measuring their experience of high school; target attractiveness measured their lifestyle; the exposure to offenders was determined by the participant's presence at school activities; exposure measured leisure activities; proximity and suitable targets were determined by the consumption of alcohol and utilization of controlled substances; and lastly, behaviors regarding guardianship consist of whether protective devices were possessed.

Results proved that victims were likely to be involved in clubs, utilized controlled substances, and associated with friends at night. Females who associated with friends at night were not necessarily at risk for sexual victimization. However, females were at risk if they were exposed to offenders in areas conducive to victimization such as parties and bars.

The survey also concluded that the measures involving behaviors of self protection, demographics, and the status of lifestyle along with the consumption of alcohol were not significantly related to the risk of increased victimization. Mustaine and Tewksbury (2002) explained that as the measures of lifestyle risk are introduced, the significance of demographic variables decreases. Those



explanations included the insignificance of guardianship may be reflective of the sample. A majority of the incidents involved someone the victim knew.

The previous summaries have illustrated choices involving social outings, friends, and the consumption of alcohol have placed females at risk for victimization. However, these studies suffer from limitations including the lack of analyzing guardianship specifically instead of focusing on risk factors which involve target suitability and offender motivation. The samples used are another concern. Samples of college aged women and the circumstances of the event may not be representative of victims and limit the generalizability of such studies. Furthermore, types of behaviors by college women used to measure target suitability are not representative of victims as a whole. While the routine activities theory appears to explain sexual victimization, there is a need for further research.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Descriptions of the sources of data used in this thesis are included in the following section. Where appropriate, sample descriptions of participants, instrumentation, and procedures are included.

#### Data Source 1

The prevalence of forcible rape was first examined through the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). More detailed information was accessed through the State of Nevada Department of Public Safety's Crime and Justice in Nevada reports. The UCR consists of data from nation, states, and individual agencies regarding crime rates, arrests and clearances. The Crime and Justice in Nevada reports consist of annual data collected from cities and counties within the state regarding crime statistics.

#### Data Source 2a

The second source to consider rates of assault was secondary data from the Legal and Social Issues Lab at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) originally collected for a study on social networking. While the original purpose of the survey was to examine the prevalence of victimization on social networks, the survey touched on a number of issues regarding sexual victimization. Only the items dealing with sexual victimization were examined for the purposes of the analysis. The sample consisted of participants who were enrolled in an Introductory of Criminal Justice course (CRJ 104) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

### *Sample*

Five hundred and one students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas served as the sample for this study. The final sample consisted of 289 females and 209 males (one person did not reveal their age and two other surveys contained missing data for all questions). The mean age for all participants was 21.87 (SD=5.821). The major ethnic and racial self-identification were 55.1% (51) as Caucasian, 11.6% (58) self-identified as African American; and 13.4% (67) as other. Demographic information is presented in Table 1.

From the population of students enrolled in an Introductory of Criminal Justice course (CRJ 104), 498 were recruited using a non random convenience sampling. The use of CRJ 104 students as participants in this study greatly restricts the generalizability of the results.

### *Instrumentation*

Attitudes towards criminal behavior and victimization was measured with a questionnaire developed for use in this study. The questionnaire consisted of a number of questions from the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; Koss, 1982). Participants were asked to indicate to what degree they were victimized by answering each question by signifying never to several of yes interpretations. The complete questionnaire is shown in Appendix 1.

Victimization was measured using the Sexual Experience Survey (SES). This measure is a self-report instrument that is designed to identify hidden rape victims and undetected offenders among a normal population (Testa, Vanzile-Tamsen, Livingston, & Koss, 2004). By using varied wording, it is possible to

Table 1

*Demographic characteristics of the UNLV participants(Sample 2a)*

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	209	41.7
Female	291	58.1
Not specified	1	0.2
Age		
18	111	22.3
19	81	16.3
20	73	14.7
21	59	11.9
22-24	98	19.7
25+	74	14.8
Ethnicity		
African American	58	11.6
Asian	51	10.2
Caucasian	276	55.1
Hispanic	46	9.2
Other	67	13.4
Major		
Crimininal Justice	195	38.9
Psychology	42	8.4
Sociology	12	2.4
Other	238	47.5

identify victims who had not previously associated their victimization with rape. Testa et al. (2004) found that the SES measures both rape and sexual victimization involving coercion accurately. However, the measure does not accurately measure attempted rape due to the highly specified wording of questions.

The scale also determines those participants who might have experienced incidents categorized as physical assault rather than sexual victimization. These questions consist of “have you ever had sexual intercourse with another person when you didn’t want to because that person threatened to use physical force (e.g. twisting arm, holding down) if you didn’t cooperate,” “have you ever had sexual intercourse with another person when you didn’t want to because that person used some degree of physical force,” and “have you ever been in a situation where another person engaged in sexual acts with you such as anal or oral intercourse, when you didn’t want to by using threats or physical force?” If participants answered yes to any of above questions, they were considered unacknowledged victims.

### *Procedure*

Participants registered for the study through the Criminal Justice Department's research website as CRJ 104 students. Participants selected an appropriate date and time to complete the survey. Participants were ensured confidentiality and anonymity of responses. Initially, participants were provided with an informed consent form which stated the study's purpose. The session was concluded by a debriefing form which provided participants with information regarding the availability of counseling services at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Participants were provided with an informed consent form, which had been approved by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas institutional research review board, describing the purpose of the study, benefits, and assured anonymity of responses. The form indicated the study concerned perceptions towards criminal behavior and victimization. Potential participants were asked to sign the form acknowledging that they freely agreed to participate and were free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

In order to maintain confidentiality, the questionnaires were administered in the research lab by a research assistant. After completing the questionnaires, students placed questionnaire into a sealed box. Upon completion, the participant was given a debriefing form advising the availability of counseling services on the campus of University of Las Vegas, Nevada in the event he or she found the questionnaire disturbing.

## Data Source 2b

Data used to compare rates of forcible rape was secondary data originally collected for a study regarding sexual victimization in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The sample consisted of participants who were undergraduates from two large British Columbia universities, the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University.

### *Sample*

One thousand and two hundred eighty three (N=1,283) participants at two British Columbia universities served as the sample for this study. The participants consisted of 981 females and 302 males. The mean age for all participants was 19.56 (SD=2.461). The largest ethnic groups were European descent (26.8%) and Chinese descent (44.7%). The ethnic and racial self-identification of the participants are presented in Table 2.

In order to perform analyses between the two samples, 2a and 2b needed to be comparable. Therefore, the data regarding ethnicity of sample 2b was simplified into 5 categories (African American, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, and other).

Table 2

*Demographic characteristics of the British Columbia participants (Sample 2b)*

Characteristics	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	302	23.5
Female	981	76.5
Age		
16	1	0.1
17	62	4.8
18	399	31.1
19	370	28.8
20	192	15.0
21	102	8.0
22	76	5.9
23	19	1.5
24	17	1.3
25+	45	3.8
Ethnicity		
European descent	459	35.8
Chinese	574	44.7
Southeast Asian	87	6.8
Indo-Asian	102	8.0
Afro-Caribbean	8	0.6
Middle Eastern	20	1.6
Hispanic	10	0.8
Aboriginal North American	11	0.9
Other	12	0.9



### *Instrumentation*

Victimization was measured with a questionnaire developed for use in this study. The questionnaire included the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; Koss, 1982) items described in Sample 2a. The complete questionnaire is shown in Appendix 1.

### *Procedure*

Participants were recruited through psychology department advertisements. Participants completed the survey in a group setting of six or less. Participants were ensured confidentiality of responses. Initially, participants were provided with an informed consent form which stated the study's purpose and anonymity of responses. The session was concluded by a debriefing form which provided participants with information regarding the availability of counseling services.

Participants were provided with an informed consent form, which had been approved by the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University institutional research review boards, describing the purpose of the study, benefits, and assured anonymity of responses. Potential participants were asked to sign the form acknowledging that they freely agreed to participate and were free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. There were no participants whom withdrawn from the study.

In order to maintain confidentiality, the questionnaires were placed into a sealed box. Upon completion, the participant was given a debriefing form advising the availability of counseling services on the campuses in the event he or she found the questionnaire disturbing.

### Data Source 3

The third source of information regarding this study was secondary data, again collected in the Legal and Social Issue Lab at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This data was originally collected for a study on attitudes toward prostitution. Only the items dealing with the sexual drive were examined for the purposes of the analysis. The sample also consisted of participants who were enrolled in an Introductory of Criminal Justice course (CRJ 104) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

#### *Sample*

Eight hundred seventy three (N=873) students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas served as the sample for this study. The final sample consisted of 352 males and 515 females (6 individuals within the sample did not specify gender). The mean age for all participants was 21.20 (SD=4.551). The major ethnic and racial self-identification were 13.9% (121) self-identified as African American, 55.1% (479) as Caucasian; and 14.3 % (124) as Hispanic. A complete description of demographics is in Table 3. From the population of students enrolled in an Introductory of Criminal Justice course (CRJ 104), 873 were recruited using a non random convenience sampling due to participants being university students. The use of CRJ 104 students as participants in this study greatly restricts the generalizability of the results. Also presented in Table 4 are the sexuality and relationship demographics of this population.

Table 3

*Demographic characteristics of the participants (Sample 3)*

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	352	40.3
Female	515	59.0
Not specified	6	0.7
Age		
18	254	29.1
19	128	14.7
20	131	15.0
21	108	12.4
22	63	7.2
23	49	5.6
24	29	3.3
25	20	2.3
26	17	1.9
27	13	1.5
28-49	61	6.8
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	479	55.1
Hispanic	124	14.3
Black/African America	121	13.9
Pacific Islander/Asian	46	5.3
Middle Eastern/Persian	3	0.3
Milato(Black and White)	2	0.2
Other	95	10.9
Religion		
None	194	22.3
Christian	457	52.5
Mormon	41	4.7
Jewish	21	2.4
Islamic/Muslim	13	1.5
Catholic	42	4.8
Buddist	3	0.3
Other	100	11.5

Table 4

*Sexuality and relationship status (Sample 3)*

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	810	93.6%
Bisexual	33	3.8
Homosexual	22	2.5
Relationship Status		
Single	537	61.8
Married	62	7.1
Divorced	11	1.3
Separated	2	0.2
Widowed	4	0.5
Committed Relationship	250	28.8
Common Law	1	0.1

*Instrumentation*

This study included five items from the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Inventory (DSFI) (Derogatis, 1978). The DSFI tool is primarily a medical tool that is used when assessing sexual dysfunction, but it has standardized U.S. norms (Derogatis, 1996). These five items measured the level of sexual drive or level of interest or investment in sexual activities. Participants were asked to rate the five items on frequency of intercourse, masturbation, kissing and petting, sexual fantasies, and the ideal frequency of intercourse indicated by the participant. Items used in this questionnaire are in Appendix 2.

The Derogatis Sexual Functioning Inventory (DSFI) is a self-report psychological inventory consisting of 10 sections designed to measure sexual functioning. This study focuses on the sub-section of drive. The items are scored on a 9 point scale consisting of “not at all, less than one month, once or twice a

month, one week, two to three times a week, four to six times a week, one day, two to three times a day, two to three times a day, and four or more a day.” Each of the items “not at all, less than one month” is scored as zero (0), and progressing sequentially to “four or more a day” which receives a score of 8. The drive score is the sum of scores assigned to each item with a range of 0-40.

*Procedure*

Participants were recruited through the CRJ 104 course. Data collection procedures were identical to data source 2a. The study had been approved by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas institutional research review board (Protocol number 0702-2235 and 1001-3335M), describing the purpose of the study, benefits, and assured anonymity of responses. The form indicated the study concerned perceptions of criminal behavior and street prostitution.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS OF STUDY

In order to answer the research questions of this thesis, multiple sources of data were analyzed. This data is split into three main samples. Each of these three samples will be explored to see if there is any support for the idea that the hypersexual environment of Las Vegas creates an elevated rate of forcible rape. The first data source considers data presented at the state, county and city level. The second and third data sources considered rates of forcible rape at the college level.

#### Data Source 1 – Law Enforcement Estimates of Forcible Rape

To establish whether Las Vegas experiences elevated rates of forcible rape, law enforcement data for the area was explored. The data collected for the FBI Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) was the source of data in this sample. Unless otherwise indicated in this section, data comes from the UCR website or the Nevada Department of Public Safety website. Nationally in 2008, the rate of forcible rates was estimated 57.7 percent per 100,000 female inhabitants. Victimization of males, or other forms of rape such as statutory rape or date/acquaintance rape (when without force), are not included. The estimated number of forcible rapes in 2008 was 89,000 incidents compared to 90,427 incidents from the previous year. This is a slight decrease from 2007 by 1.6%. The rates of forcible rape are presented in Figure 1 for both the State of Nevada and nationally and for men and women combined.

Figure 1. Nevada and national rates regarding forcible rapes

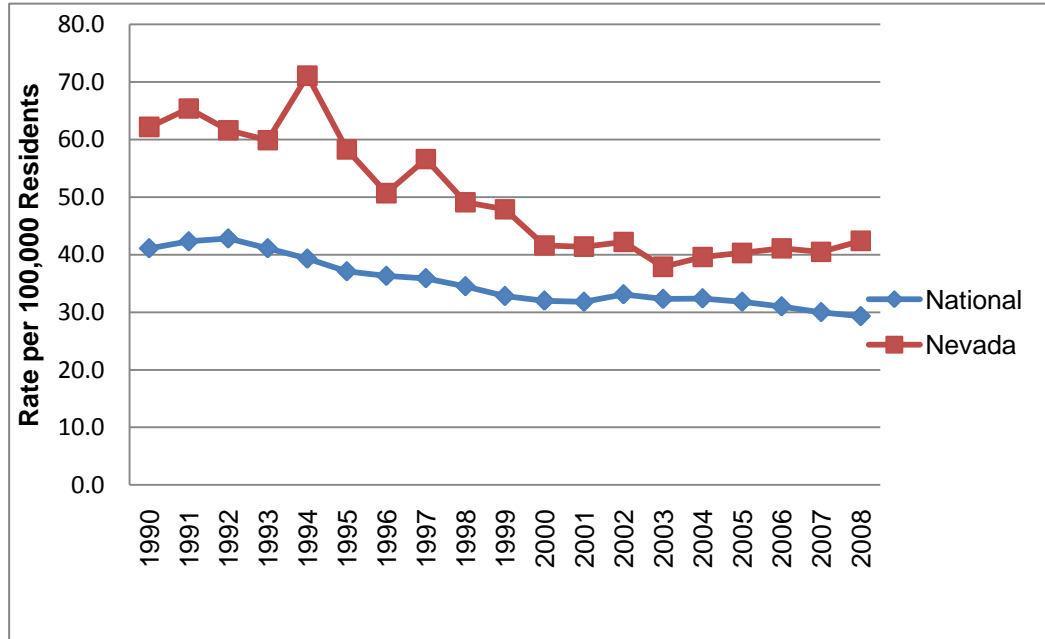


Figure 1 reveals that Nevada rates increased slightly in 2008. Nevada reported 1,102 incidents of both forcible (926) and attempted (176) rapes compared to 1,094 in 2007. The rates of forcible rapes for Nevada was 41 per 100,000 inhabitants (Nevada Department of Public Safety, 2008). The total population for Nevada in 2008 was estimated to be 2,715,799. Clark County comprises almost three quarters (72.5%) of Nevada's population with a total population of 1,967,716 in 2008. Clark County reported 881 incidents of rape, 80% of the state's incidents. Only 242 of those Clark County incidents were cleared by arrest. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department reported 729 of the total number of rapes in Nevada. Las Vegas represents the largest portion of the population compared to the suburb cities of Henderson and North Las Vegas.

Figure 2 reveals that the trends for Las Vegas forcible rape rates have been largely consistent or increasing in contrast to the overall decline seen nationally or in other parts of Las Vegas.

Figure 2. Rates of forcible rapes in Las Vegas area

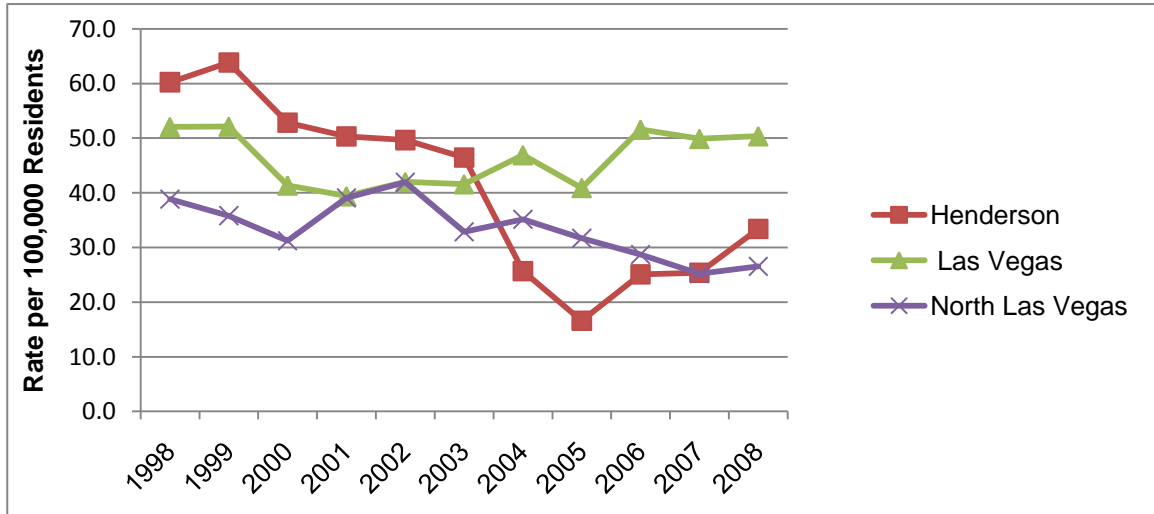


Table 5 presents State rankings of reported rate of forcible rape per 100,000 inhabitants. Nevada's rate is 42.4 forcible rapes per 100,000 inhabitants. There is no easily identifiable pattern to this ranking as the states vary by size and culture. Also included in the table are a few states that will be contrasted to the state of Nevada.



Table 5

*State's rank of reported rate of forcible rape per 100,000 inhabitants*

Rank	State	Rate	Population
1	Alaska	64.3	686,293
2	New Mexico	57.4	1,984,356
3	South Dakota	53.7	804,194
4	Arkansas	48.9	2,855,390
5	Michigan	45.0	10,003,422
6	Kansas	42.5	2,802,134
7	Colorado	42.5	4,939,456
8	Nevada	42.4	2,600,167
12	Ohio	38.5	11,485,910
21	Texas	32.9	24,326,974
23	Florida	32.6	18,328,340
34	Louisiana	27.9	4,410,796

Crime data is organized by the UCR in different ways. Data is reported by metropolitan areas. The UCR describes a metropolitan area as an urbanized area with a population of 50,000 inhabitants and may be located in more than one county or state depending on geography. In 2008, Las Vegas with the population of approximately 1.8 million, was ranked 52<sup>nd</sup> for rates of forcible rape in the United States by metropolitan statistical area. The vast majority of areas which ranked higher were regions where population was less than 300,000 inhabitants (72.5% or 37/51). Another 13 areas were under 700,000 (25.5%). There was only one metropolitan area with a population comparable to the metropolitan area of Las Vegas that ranked higher-Columbus, Ohio with a population of 1,773,358 reported a rate of 51.2 forcible rapes per 100,000 people. Table 6 presents the rankings by metropolitan areas.

Table 6

*Crime in the United States by Metropolitan Statistical Area, 2008*

	Metropolitan Statistical Area	Rate	Population
1	Farmington, NM.	121.8	123,156
2	Fairbanks, AK.	120.3	37,407
3	Rapid City, SD.	119.3	121,526
4	Long View, WA.	92.6	101,545
5	Anchorage, AK.	88.0	301,010
6	Pine Bluff, AR.	85.4	100,732
7	Bremerton, WA.	82.1	237,527
8	Lima, OH.	80.1	321,552
9	Battle Creek, MI.	78.3	135,300
10	Redding, CA.	73.6	180,598
11	Jackson, MI.	73.4	162,183
12	Lawton, OK.	70.3	113,817
13	Niles, MI./Benton Harbor, MI.	69.0	157,892
14	Waco, TX.	66.5	229,941
15	Muskegon, MI./Norton Shores, MI.	64.0	173,418
16	San Angelo, TX.	63.7	108,373
17	Dover, DE.	63.1	155,344
18	Bay City, MI.	63.0	106,303
19	Sioux Falls, SD.	63.0	233,355
20	Colorado Springs, CO.	67.1	618,723
21	Flagstaff, AZ.	62.5	128,071
22	Abilene, TX.	59.7	159,257
23	Pittsfield, MA.	59.3	129,918
24	Kalamazoo, MI./Portage, MI.	58.8	321,552
25	Corpus Christi, TX.	58.4	415,807
26	Grand Junction, CO.	58.4	142,140
27	Wichita, KS.	57.6	601,018
28	Panama City/Lynn Haven/ Panama City Beach, FL.	57.3	164,007
29	Monroe, MI.	56.8	153,241
30	Flint, MI.	55.5	430,816
31	Midland, TX.	55.5	127,849
32	Amarillo, TX.	54.9	244,209
33	College Station, TX. /Bryan, TX. Fayetteville, AR./Springdale, AR./	54.9	205,756
34	Rogers, AZ./McDonald County, MO.	54.9	447,732

Table 6 (con't).

*Crime in the United States by Metropolitan Statistical Area, 2008*

Metropolitan Statistical Area	Rate	Population
35 Fort Smith, AR. /Sequoyah County, OK.	54.8	291,712
36 Saginaw, MI.	54.6	199,649
37 Manhattan, KS.	54.4	119,523
38 Little Rock/N. Little Rock/Conway, AR.	53.8	673,330
39 Victoria, TX.	53.5	114,072
40 Gainesville, FL.	52.1	257,041
41 Tallahassee, FL.	51.7	352,043
42 Columbus, OH.	51.2	1,773,358
43 Pocatello, ID.	51.2	87,959
44 Lansing, MI./East Lansing, MI.	50.9	453,640
45 Holland, MI./Grand Haven, MI.	50.1	259,600
46 Ocala, FL.	50.0	329,862
47 Casper, WY.	49.1	73,249
48 Winchester, VA. /Hampshire County, WV.	48.7	123,259
49 Augusta, GA./Richmond County, SC.	47.6	531,442
50 Jonesboro, AR.	47.7	117,434
51 Long View, TX.	47.4	204,851
52 Las Vegas/Paradise, NV	47.1	1,868,909
Reno, NV. /Sparks, NV.	34.2	412,231

Las Vegas is the largest metropolitan area in Nevada representing 68.8% of the total population. To properly consider rates in Las Vegas, it was contrasted to other large metropolitan areas with a focus on tourism. This data is presented in Table 7. The second largest metropolitan area in Nevada, Reno, is also presented.

Table 7

*Crime in Metropolitan Statistical Tourist Areas (2008)*

Metropolitan Statistical Area	Rape Incidents	Population	Rate per 100,000
City of Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department	729	1,353,175	53.87
City of Reno	83	218,556	37.98
West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Boynton Beach, FL M.D	393	1,267,953	30.99
New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	259	1,114,055	23.25
City of San Francisco	166	798,144	20.80

Even though population is a variable used in computing crime rates, communities are changed by the influx of tourists as well. For this thesis, it might be informative to consider the number incidents by area populations that included tourist numbers as well. Table 8 shows estimates of crime rates for six years that calculated rates by dividing incidents reported by regular and tourist populations combined. Las Vegas<sup>1</sup> consistently had high number of visitors among the areas considered. In Table 8, the incidents also considered the rates calculated for the entire Clark County area. For comparison purposes, visitor estimates were gathered for tourist destinations like Miami<sup>2</sup>, Atlantic City<sup>3</sup> and New Orleans<sup>4</sup>. It should be noted that the number of tourists for New Orleans dramatically decreased as a result of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

<sup>1</sup> [http://gaming.unlv.edu/abstract/nvstate\\_2008.html](http://gaming.unlv.edu/abstract/nvstate_2008.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.miamiandbeaches.com/Pictures/WebRpt/Annual%202008%20Visitor%20Profile.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://cber.unlv.edu/tour.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.neworleanssvb.com/>

Table 8

*Rates of forcible rapes including the number of annual tourists*

Area	Rape Incidents Reported	Geographic Population	Annual Tourists	Total Population	Rate of per 100,000
2008					
Las Vegas, NV	881	1,967,716	37,481,552	39,449,268	2.23
Atlantic City, NJ	37	39,425	31,800,000	31,839,425	0.12
Miami, FL	685	2,373,744	12,128,600	14,502,344	4.72
New Orleans, LA	65	281,440	7,600,000	7,881,440	0.82
2007					
Las Vegas, NV	849	1,954,319	39,196,761	41,151,080	2.06
Atlantic City, NJ	28	39,781	33,300,000	33,339,781	0.08
Miami, FL	725	2,401,971	11,965,900	14,367,871	5.05
New Orleans, LA	115	220,614	7,100,000	7,320,614	1.57
2006					
Las Vegas, NV	845	1,874,837	38,914,889	40,789,726	2.07
Atlantic City, NJ	46	40,399	34,500,000	34,540,399	0.13
Miami, FL	822	2,416,083	11,585,000	14,001,083	5.87
New Orleans, LA	87	431,153	3,700,000	4,131,153	2.11

Table 8 (con't).

*Rates of forcible rapes including the number of annual tourists*

Area	Rape Incidents Reported	Geographic Population	Tourists Annually	Total Population	Rates per 100, 000
2005					
Las Vegas, NV	723	1,796,380	38,566,717	40,072,118	1.80
Atlantic City, NJ	44	40,669	34,900,000	34,940,669	0.13
Miami, FL	778	2,416,950	11,301,600	13,718,550	5.67
New Orleans, LA	89	471,0587	6,700,000	7,171,057	1.24
2004					
Las Vegas, NV	734	1,715,337	37,388,781	38,678,224	1.89
Atlantic City, NJ	37	40,668	33,300,00	33,340,668	0.11
Miami, FL	901	2,393,176	10,961,800	13,354,976	6.75
New Orleans, LA	189	471,057	10,100,000	10,571,057	1.79
2003					
Las Vegas, NV	665	1,620,748	35,540,126	36,768,592	1.81
Atlantic City, NJ	23	40,397	32,200,000	2,240,397	1.03
Miami, FL	941	2,375,298	10,445,000	12,820,298	7.34
New Orleans, LA	213	475,128	8,200,000	8,675,128	2.46

Another way to look at the rates of rape in Nevada is by county. A unique feature of Nevada is the existence of legalized prostitution. Since this industry contributes to the hypersexualization of the state, rates were compared between counties by existence of legalized prostitution. Nevada’s law allows counties with a population of less than 400,000 inhabitants to license brothels. All prostitution is illegal in the metropolitan areas of Las Vegas and Reno and in their respective counties, Clark and Washoe. There are three counties that have prohibited prostitution –Carson City, Douglas and Lincoln. There are eight counties that currently have legalized prostitution. The remaining four counties could have prostitution but do not currently have any brothels. Table 9 compares the rates of sexual victimization by existence of prostitution. The four counties without prostitution were combined with the three rural counties that have prohibited prostitution for comparison purposes. Rural counties with prostitution have higher rates of rape than counties without prostitution. However, urban counties continue to have the highest rates. Figure 3 also presents the trends in rates of forcible rape for the urban areas of Las Vegas and Reno. It is contrasted to the rates reported by a rural area which also prohibit legalized prostitution. Figure 4 presents the trends in rates of forcible rape for the rural areas with prostitution.

Table 9

*Rape rates and prostitution in Nevada*

Rates	1998	2003	2008
Urban Counties without Prostitution	52.7	40.6	43.0
Rural Counties without Prostitution	33.4	15.7	10.0
Rural Counties with Prostitution	26.2	24.6	34.5

Figure 3. Rates of forcible rape in counties without prostitution in Nevada

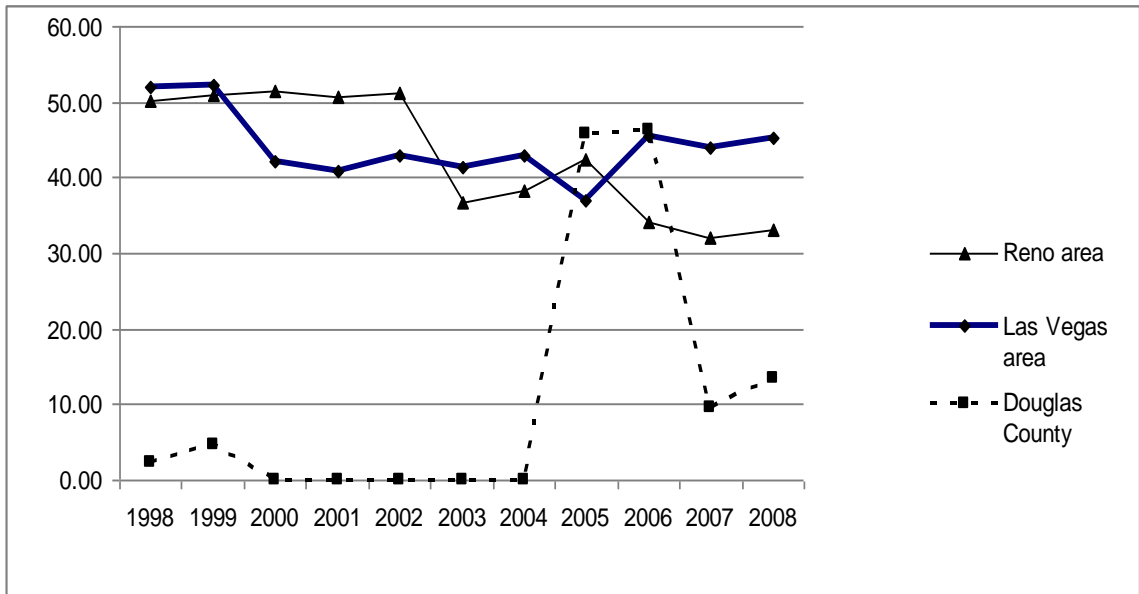
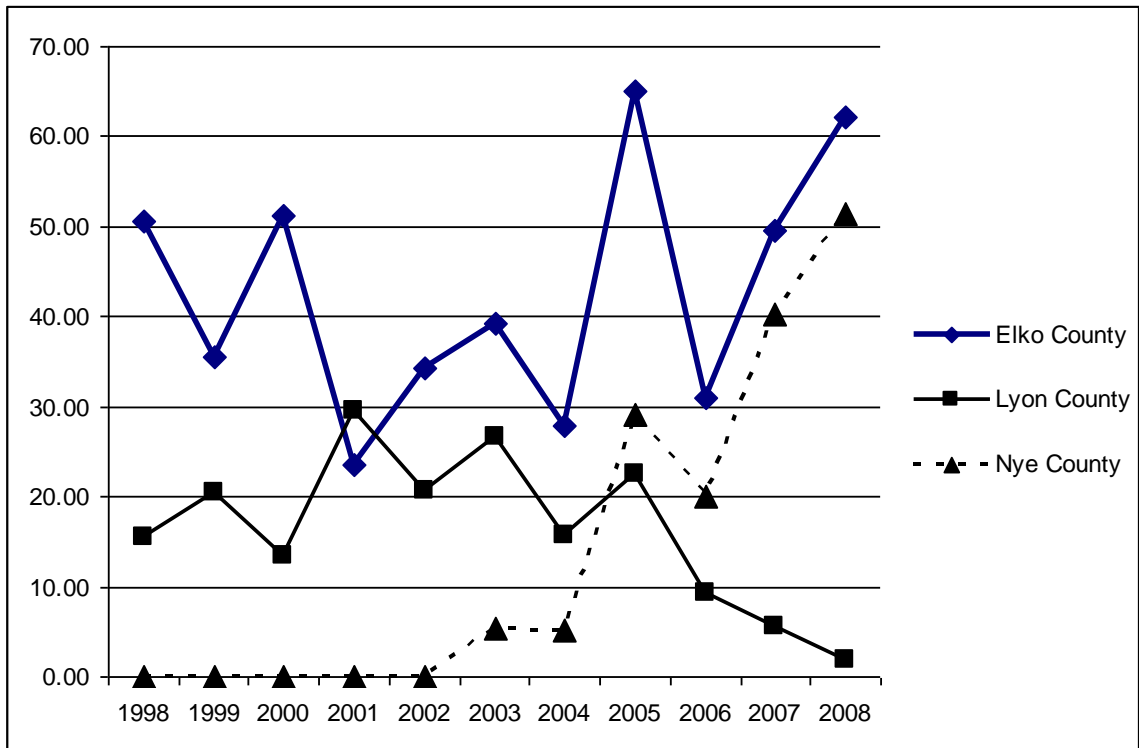


Figure 4. Rates of forcible rape in counties with prostitution in Nevada





## Data Source 2 – College Rates of Sexual Victimization

To determine the “hidden figure” of crime, researchers must look beyond data collected by the federal government. Another approach is utilizing self report surveys to measure sexual victimization. This sample consider responses to Koss’s Sexual Experience Survey (SES) measuring a range of sexual aggressive behaviors, including sexual contact, sexual coercion, attempted rape and completed rape. The SES has been used in a series of studies to establish the prevalence of rapes. Table 10 presents some findings using this measure for college women populations, including the rates seen among female students at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV).

Table 10

### *Studies using the Koss’s Sexual Experience Survey*

Author	Year	% of Sexual Victimization	Number of Victims	Sample Size	Data Obtained
Sample 2a, UNLV	2010	27.8	80	291	Las Vegas, Nevada
Crawford, Wright, & Birchmeier	2008	24.9	101.1	406	Miami University
Messman-Moore, Coates, Gaffey, & Johnson	2008	9.5	26.2	276	Midwestern university
Messman-Moore & Brown	2006	13.9	43	309	Midwestern university
Testa, VanZile-Tamsen, Livingston, & Koss	2004	17.2	174.4	1014	Buffalo, New York

To further consider difference in rates of sexual victimization, two samples of college students were compared in detail. Table 11 presents the differences in rates of victimization among the two student populations. As noted above, UNLV female students reported high rates of victimization on the SES at 27.8%. This rate also exceeded the UBC/SFU female rape rates of 13.9%. UNLV students were also much more likely to be sexually active at 79.5% for women and 74.5% for men in contrast to UBC/SFU rates of 45.5% and 45.5% for women and men respectively.

Table 11

*Rates of sexual activity and victim of forcible rape among two college samples*

% Yes (n)	UNLV		UBC/SFU	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Victim of forcible rape	27.8% (80)	5.3% (11)	13.9% (135)	4.7% (14)
Sexually active	79.5% (230)	74.5% (156)	45.4% (450)	45.5%(140)

To explore these differences in depth, demographic factors were entered into logistic and multiple regression analyses. The dependent variable was whether forcible rape occurred. The first predictors of victimization considered were gender, age and ethnicity. The location of the sample was entered in a second step to see if it changed the predictability of the demographic variables. The models are presented in Table 12. In the first step, which including the

Table 12

*Logistic regression analysis adding location in the second model*

	Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$	Sig
<b>Model 1</b>					
	Gender	-0.133	0.018	-0.174***	0.000
	Age	0.009	0.002	0.126***	0.000
	Ethnicity - White	-0.023	0.022	-0.033	0.298
	Ethnicity - Asian	-0.054	0.023	-0.077*	0.016
R <sup>2</sup> = .046, Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.044					
<b>Model 2</b>					
	Gender	-0.142	0.018	-0.187***	0.000
	Age	0.008	0.002	0.110***	0.000
	Ethnicity - White	-0.014	0.022	-0.021	0.518
	Ethnicity - Asian	-0.028	0.024	-0.040	0.236
	Location	0.062	0.020	0.082**	0.002
R <sup>2</sup> = .052, Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = 0.049, R <sup>2</sup> change = .005, Adj. R <sup>2</sup> change = .005					

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

demographic variables, the model was significant ( $F = 21.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This model explained 4.4% of the variance in sexual victimization. By adding location in the second step, the percentage of variance explained increased to 4.9% ( $R^2$  change  $p = .002$ ). This indicated that adding location as a predictor improved the predictability of the model.

Ethnicity was not a significant predictor of victimization. However, gender, age and location were significant predictors. Women were significantly more likely to be victims. The older the students, the more likely they were victimized. Being a student at University of Nevada, Las Vegas also made you more likely to be victimized. Location was a significant predictor of victimization even when age, gender and ethnicity were controlled for.

One difference that also stood out was differences in rates of sexual activity between the two populations. It was decided to rerun these models but include sexual activity as a predictor. The first step of this regression included gender, age, ethnicity and being sexually active. This model was significant ( $F = 21.628$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The regression results can be seen in Table 13. This model explained 5.5% of the variability. In the second step, location was added and the  $R^2$  change was significant ( $p < .05$ ) raising the adjusted  $R^2$  by 0.3%. It was a small change but indicated that location predicts victimization while controlling for the other included predictors.

In this new model taking sexual activity into account, gender and age remained significant predictors. Ethnicity was not a significant predictor. Being sexually active was also a significant predictor of being victimized as was location.

Across populations, students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University revealed differences

Table 13

*Logistic regression analysis adding location in the second model and sexual activity*

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$	Sig
<b>Model 1</b>				
Gender	-0.133	0.018	-0.175***	0.000
Age	0.008	0.002	0.111***	0.000
Ethnicity – White	-0.032	0.022	-0.046	0.153
Ethnicity – Asian	-0.042	0.023	-0.059	0.065
Sexually Active	0.078	0.017	0.114***	0.000
R <sup>2</sup> = .058, Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .055				
<b>Model 2</b>				
Gender	-0.140	0.018	-0.184***	0.000
Age	0.007	0.002	0.100***	0.000
Ethnicity – White	-0.024	0.022	-0.035	0.273
Ethnicity – Asian	-0.024	0.024	-0.034	0.314
Sexually Active	0.071	0.017	0.103***	0.000
Location	0.046	0.020	0.060*	0.025
R <sup>2</sup> = .061, Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .058, R <sup>2</sup> change = .003, Adj. R <sup>2</sup> change = .003				

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

by age. The participants from the universities in Vancouver were younger (19.5 years) than the students at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (22 years).

However, in both populations as age increased, so did the rates of victimization.

In both groups women were more likely to be victimized. Those participants, who were sexually active, reported higher rates of victimization. Finally, being a student in Las Vegas was a unique risk independent of the other factors.

#### Data Source 3-College Rates of Sexual Drive

It has been demonstrated that rates of forcible rape are elevated at the city level and among college students. The final research question to examine the relationship of the environment of Las Vegas to victimization was to look at rates of sexual activity generally. To explore whether sexual drive might be elevated among college undergraduates in a hypersexual city, the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Inventory (DSFI) subscale was used. The UNLV students were already reporting higher rates of consensual sexual activity as measured by the first item of the SES as reported above. The DFSI Drive is measured separately for women and men and can be used to compare to standardized measure norms (Derogatis, 1978). The means for UNLV students are presented in Table 14 along with the DSFI general norms.

*Table 14*

DSFI drive

	Males Mean (SD)	Females Mean (SD)
UNLV	18.8 (7.8)	13.7 (7.6)
US Norm	17	17

UNLV students differed by gender in drive. The male students were above average in their interest and investment in sexual activity. In contrast, the UNLV women were below average. To further explore these rates, the UNLV rates were contrasted to findings from other research studies in Table 15.

Table 15

DSFI drive comparisons

	Males Mean (SD)	Females Mean (SD)
UNLV	18.8 (7.8)	13.7 (7.6)
Hong Kong college students <sup>a</sup>	9.40 (4.78)	7.48 (4.87)
UBC (males only) <sup>b</sup>	16.6 (7.6)	N/A

<sup>a</sup> Tang, Lai & Chung, 1997

<sup>b</sup> Klein, Kennedy, Gorzalka & Yuille, 2003

UNLV male students were both above the norm and above the t-scores seen in other college populations (Tang, Lai & Chung, 1997: t-score 40; Klein, Kennedy, Gorzalka & Yuille, 2003: t-score 49). UNLV women, in contrast were below the norm. While their drive was higher than among Hong Kong students (Tang et al., 1997: t-score 38) it is interesting that they were not as high as their male counterparts. The Hong Kong women had t-scores of 38 which were closer to the Hong Kong men at 40. UNLV women had a t-score of 44 which is considerable lower than the UNLV male t-score of 53. There is additional research available on the drive of women in medical dysfunction research. Some examples are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

DSFI drive comparisons for women

	Females Mean (SD)	t-score
UNLV	13.7 (7.6)	44
Eating disordered patients (anorexia) <sup>a</sup>	9.5	40
Eating disordered patients (bulimia) <sup>a</sup>	14.7	46
Opiate dependent women	13.0	43
Gynecological patients	16.2	48

<sup>a</sup> Rothschild, Fagan, Woodall, & Andersen, 1991

<sup>b</sup> Svikis et al., 1996

UNLV students ranked similarly or lower than young women in treatment for diagnosed eating disorders for sexual drive (Rothschild, Fagan, Woodall, & Andersen, 1991). They also ranked comparably to drug addicted women but lower than the comparison group of Baltimore women visiting a health clinic for annual gynecological exams (Svikis et al., 1996). Unfortunately, the DSFI Drive measure has not been reported for non-clinical college populations in the United States which may have been a more informative comparison.



## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Discussions of Results

The purpose of this research project was to examine whether there is a relationship between the hypersexual environment of Las Vegas and forcible rape. The project sought to answer whether Las Vegas has elevated rates of forcible rape. Also examined was whether there are elevated rates of forcible rape reported among college students.

The findings revealed that a rape culture does appear to exist in Las Vegas. The study demonstrated a consequence to living in the hypersexual environment of Las Vegas which actively encourages and sustains behaviors of sexual aggression that subsequently demean women. This is exemplified in the law enforcement data considered in the first data source – city, county and state data. The findings demonstrated that Las Vegas experiences elevated rates of forcible rape. The trend for Las Vegas forcible rape rates are in stark contrast to that of the national trend of declining crime rates and may explain why the State of Nevada ranks as the eighth most dangerous state for the rate of forcible rape.

When comparing Las Vegas to the rankings by crime in the United States Metropolitan Statistical Area, Las Vegas metropolitan area was not at the top but its 52<sup>nd</sup> place ranking may be deceiving when you consider how the statistics for areas with small populations can be skewed by only a few incidents. There was only one other area listed in the top 52 that had a population over 700,000. The only large city outranking Las Vegas was Columbus, Ohio. Columbus, Ohio

appears to have its own risk factors for forcible rape and should be explored in future research. The everyday routine activities in which exacerbated the risk in Columbus, Ohio was not addressable with the measures used in this study.

Las Vegas did not obviously stand out when it was contrasted to metropolitan areas with a focus on tourism. These findings revealed a mixed pattern. Las Vegas consistently had high rates of forcible rapes when compared to the numbers of Atlantic City, another city with focus on gaming and high tourist rates comparable to Las Vegas. Las Vegas had higher rates of forcible rape than New Orleans two of the three years post-Katrina but also had lower rates in some years. Las Vegas had lower rates of forcible rape when compared to the Miami area. Miami has a similar sized permanent population to Las Vegas but lower numbers of tourists. Las Vegas actually had more forcible rape incidents than Miami in 2008 but their rate is higher when you simply add the tourism numbers in, elevating their rates per 100,000 to above those in Las Vegas. There may be a limitation to simply adding in the tourism numbers because they do not specify the length of stay, and that pattern was immeasurable. Interestingly, Las Vegas college students reported higher rates of sexual assault than the Miami students in the Crawford, Wright, and Birchmeier study (2008). It appears that both cities are struggling with high rates of sexual assault.

The current study also compared the rates of sexual victimization by existence of prostitution. The findings proved that rural counties with prostitution have higher rates of rape than counties without prostitution. However, urban

counties continue to have the highest rates. These findings debunk the myth that legalized prostitution is an outlet that prevents forcible rape (Klein et al., 2003).

Another negative consequence seen in Las Vegas is elevated rates of forcible rape on campus. The current study compared college rates of sexual victimization among student populations of the University of Las Vegas, University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University. The findings revealed students at UNLV reported high rates of victimization on the SES scale. UNLV students were also considerably more likely to be sexually active.

Similar to prior research findings, women were more likely to be victimized than men (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Age also increased the likelihood of reporting a history of sexual victimizations. The older the student, the more likely they were victimized. Ethnicity was not a significant predictor of victimization. However, location was a significant predictor of victimization when controlling for other predictors. Living in Las Vegas made you more likely to experience victimization. Women at UNLV reported rates of forcible rape of 27.8% - more than 1 in 4 students had already been sexually assaulted. These rates are higher than those reported by students at other universities across the United States.

The final distinguishing factor considered were the high rates of sexual activity among UNLV students. There were significantly more involved in sexual activity than other campuses. Interestingly though, UNLV women reported lower sex drives than the standardized norms. Their scores on the DSFI drive scale were comparable with clinical, dysfunctional populations. It appears that women in Las Vegas are having sex and being victimized at high rates but for some

reason, this city suppresses or interferes with their interest and investment in sexual activity. Men, in contrast, are not experiencing the same high rates of victimization and the hypersexual environment corresponds with an above average sex drive.

### Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Study

The sex drive results in this hypersexual environment may offer a theoretical explanation for elevated rates of victimization. Victims in Las Vegas may be, through their behavior, exposing themselves to potential offenders. The everyday routine of Las Vegans such as visiting establishments within hypersexual environments places these individuals into situations where victimization is likely to occur. Future research is needed to determine the likelihood of victimization is increased because of an absence of capable guardianship in these hypersexual environments.

Each approach within this study provided a picture of elevated forcible rapes but from different perspectives. The strengths and weaknesses will be reviewed. Previous research demonstrates that one in six women will report their victimization to the police (Kilpatrick et al., 2007). Reports from the Uniform Crime Report website which are reported and founded incidents of forcible rape are often vastly underestimated as not all victims report their victimization. Additionally, the definition of rape is skewed. Participants might have answered “yes” to questions regarding their victimization but may not fully understand that the experience, in fact, was not rape. Furthermore, asking the participant if you have been raped is open to diverse interpretations.

Second, sexual victimization is measured through behavioral specific questions from the SES assessment tool. This tool may capture prevalence rates that the UCR may not have captured. However, the SES assumes that the participant understands the experience she is being asked to recall and that she is accurately answering the question to the best of her ability. There are, therefore, limitations in interpreting whether true victimization rates are being gathered with this tool.

Third, the Derogatis Sexual Functioning Inventory subscale explored sexual drive among college undergraduates. The downside to using the DSFI measure is it rarely reported for non-clinical college populations in the United States.

Limitations in the methods of assessment are equally important. Sample of college students are convenient and represent a domain where victimization is elevated. Previous research demonstrates that women who are in their late teens to early 20's are four times more likely to be raped (Rand & Catalano, 2007). Given that the typical student is between that age range, researches have argued that this elevates the risk of victimization (Fisher et al., 2000). However, evidence is limited and caution must be exhibited in that students entering college may have experienced rape prior to entering college. Further research is needed. Additionally, because of the non-random sampling strategies used in generating the data for the current study, any findings derived from this study must be interpreted in the specific research context. Nevertheless, given the descriptive nature of the study and the lack of existing research in hypersexual environments, any findings may help shed light on theory and research.

Despite these limitations, the results of this study suggest a number of future directions for research aimed at understanding the relationship between Las Vegas and rape. In particular, future studies should examine whether women who reside in a hypersexual environment increase their risk of victimization. Additionally, future research is essential in determining whether the use of drugs and alcohol are causally related with victimization. This research should aim to determine whether the use of alcohol place women at a higher risk of being victimized and or the likelihood of men to perpetrate. Furthermore, increasing the number of alcohol related questions within the SES would be beneficial regarding the role of alcohol in rape.

The data discussed within this paper demonstrated that there is a correlation between victimization and the hypersexual environment of Las Vegas. An awareness of the extent of the problem should be an important first step in developing a clearer understanding of the issue at hand.

## APPENDIX 1

### SEXUAL EXPERIENCES SURVEY QUESTIONS (SAMPLE 2a and 2b)

1. I have been sexually assaulted.
2. Have you ever had sexual intercourse with another person when you both wanted to?
3. Have you ever had another person misinterpret the level of sexual intimacy you desired?
4. Have you even been in a situation where another person became so sexually aroused that you felt it was useless to stop him/her even though you did not want to have sexual intercourse?
5. Have you ever had sexual intercourse with another person even though you didn't want to because he/she threatened to end your relationship otherwise?
6. Have you ever had sexual intercourse with another person when you didn't really want to because you felt pressured by continual arguments?
7. Have you ever found out later that another person had obtained sexual intercourse with you by saying things he/she didn't really want to?
8. Have you ever been in a situation where another person used some degree of physical force (e.g. twisting arm, holding down) to try to make you engage in kissing or petting when you didn't really want to?
9. Have you ever been in a situation where another person tried to have sexual intercourse with you when you didn't want to by threatening to use physical force if you didn't cooperate, but for various reasons sexual intercourse did not occur?

10. Have you ever been in a situation where another person used some degree of physical force to try to get you to have sexual intercourse with him/her when you didn't want to, but for various reasons sexual intercourse did not occur?
11. Have you ever had sexual intercourse with another person when you didn't want to because that person threatened to use physical force (e.g. twisting arm, holding down) if you didn't cooperate?
12. Have you ever had sexual intercourse with another person when you didn't want to because that person used some degree of physical force?
13. Have you ever been in a situation where another person engaged in sexual acts with you such as anal or oral intercourse, when you didn't want to by using threats or physical force?
14. Have you ever been sexually assaulted?



## APPENDIX 2

### DEROGATIS SEXUAL FUNCTIONING INVENTORY (SAMPLE 3)

Please place a check in the space below which indicates how often you usually engage in the following activities during the past year:

	Not at all	Less than month	1-2 month	1 week	2-3 week	4-6 week	1 day	2-3 day	4 or more day
Intercourse									
Masturbation									
Kissing & Petting									
Sexual Fantasies									
Ideal Frequency of Sexual Intercourse									

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