



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Hookups

Youth sexuality and social change

Schuurmans, J.J.

Publication date

2017

Document Version

Other version

License

Other

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Schuurmans, J. J. (2017). *Hookups: Youth sexuality and social change*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

2

'IT'S ALWAYS A LITTLE AWKWARD': HOOKING UP AND COMMITTED RELATIONSHIPS ON BAU

It was one of my last weeks of fieldwork. Sophomore student Nate and I sat outside the library overlooking the lush campus. He mentioned his hookup with Rebecca on previous occasions, but he had not told me the full story. That afternoon, I felt we finally established the rapport to break through decorum. 'The first time that we hooked up, it was so bad... this is how bad I am with girls, so it was clear that we liked each other. She liked me. She was over at our place'. Nate shared an apartment with his best friend Simon. They had invited a number of friends for drinks on a Friday night. His flatmate thought it was obvious that Rebecca and Nate liked each other. 'My friend Simon locked me in the room with her, and I was drunk and she wasn't. I came in to kiss her and then I freaked out'. Nate had recently broken up with his girlfriend Nicky. It had been a painful experience, and Nate still had feelings for her. He, however, liked Rebecca too and felt attracted to her. He was confused about his feelings. 'I fell on the ground, and she was on the bed, and I was just talking to her (Rebecca) about Nicky, and then I was asking her, "Should I try to get back with Nicky?" and obviously that pissed her for off'. Rebecca was taken aback by this sudden change of heart. Did he want to hookup with her, or not? She left the room, and so did Nate. Feeling embarrassed about the situation, he left his house to find solace with another friend. However, he could not get Rebecca out of his mind, and she was still thinking about him too. 'I knew she [Rebecca] was pissed at me, and then she texted me or something'. Rebecca asked Nate if he wanted to come to her room. 'I went over to her dorm room, and then I talked to her for a bit and I was like "I don't know what I was doing" and eventually she came back to my place'. They hooked up and had sex. It was fun, but it undeniably changed the dynamic between them and within their group of friends.

It was kind of weird, because Rebecca was really good friends with Simon, Erik, Hannah [Nate's friends]. So, she was always over, so after we hooked up I would still see her. We would hang out, but after the first time we weren't going out or anything, but it was a little weird, it is always a little weird.

One evening, a couple of weeks after their hookup, Nate and Rebecca were at a party. They felt the tension between them. How were they to behave towards each other? Aided by alcohol, they had 'the talk'. 'We were both pretty drunk, and we were both in the bathroom, and we were talking about it. That's when we both said that we wanted to have a relationship. That's how things started I guess'.

Allegedly, Nate, as the proponents of the battle of the sexes theorem suggests, had the power to impose his will to casually hookup with Rebecca. This, however, is not the impression I got when listening to Nate's story. Nate, like many other men I interviewed, hardly resembled the powerful agent who is knowledgeable about his supposedly high erotic status in the sexual bargaining game with Rebecca. Instead, he was a shy young man and rather gawky in matters of the heart, and if either of the two had more power to enforce their will in the interaction, it would have been Rebecca and not Nate.

Recently, a number of researchers have started questioning the assumptions of the 'battle of the sexes' perspective on sexual relations on campus. Hamilton and Armstrong (2009), for example, argue that many college women want to hookup and consciously withhold committed relationships until after college. College is a time to focus on their personal development. Committed relationships can demand too much time and energy and pose a potential threat to these development projects. Further, meeting a romantic partner on campus can jeopardize a smooth launch of their careers. Who is going to follow whom after graduation? By withholding committed relationships until after college, until after settling into a career, young women at least do not risk a career interruption. Hooking up can thus be a delay tactic for ambitious young women.

Much less is known about the social processes that effect young men's decision to hookup. Their longing for casual sex is often thought of as natural and not warranting an explanation. A number of scholars argue that hookups, especially those with women of high erotic status, are a means to prove one's masculinity among peers (Sweeney, 2014; Kimmel, 2008). This suggests that young men prefer to have casual sex with many than to have a committed relationship with one woman. However, we do not actually know if this is the case. As Hamilton and Armstrong (2009) point out, little is known about how college men feel towards committed relationships, how they experience these affairs, and whether, as is the case for ambitious young women, they construe these as a potential threat to their self-development project in college (2009:611). These are among the most important questions I explore within this chapter.

The battle of the sexes reasoning suggests that the campus sexual arena is marked by strife and conflict, and that men ultimately dominate sexual interactions within

this realm. ‘Sex on campus remains “guys’ sex”. Women are welcome to act upon their desires, but guys run the scene’ (Kalish and Kimmel, 2011:138). While this undisguised wording might overstate male dominance within the sexual scene on campus, much research shows that the playing field is highly gendered and at times uneven. The hookup script abides by gendered role patterns such as the fact that men often initiate sexual activity (England et al., 2008:535; Kalish and Kimmel, 2011:144; Ronen, 2010:367). These relatively fixed gender roles might mean that women have less freedom, compared to men, to act upon their sexual desires. Many hookups happen at fraternity parties where men control the supply of alcohol, the flow of people and the dress code for women (Armstrong and Hamilton, 2013:87). Women have to be flirtatious and sexually enticing at these parties to enjoy the fun of drinking and attracting male attention. If they do not play by these rules, they risk being disparaged (Armstrong and Hamilton, 2013:88). The sexual activity within the hookup script is also highly gendered. Men, for instance, are more likely to receive oral sex in hookups than woman (England et al., 2008:537). Gender inequalities are also found in the pleasure derived from hookups. Men are, for instance, more likely to orgasm in hookups than women (England et al. 2008:535; Kalish and Kimmel, 2011:147), and both men and women prioritize male sexual pleasure above women’s (Armstrong et al., 2012:456; Currier, 2013:717). This double standard extends to the reputational consequences of hooking up. Men accrue status among peers through casual sexual encounters, while women risk the slut stigma (Hamilton and Armstrong 2009:598; England et al., 2008:538-539; Heldman and Wade 2010:326; Kalish and Kimmel, 2011:145). During fieldwork, I had the opportunity to visit a number of college parties and observe some of the interactional dynamics of hooking up. My interest, akin to the aforementioned studies, concerned the gendered dynamics of hooking up and the inequalities it fosters. This chapter will report on these findings.

Among scholars, there seems to be a consensus that hooking up is the dominant norm in intimate contacts on current college campuses, while the extent to which other sexual scripts are part of the sexual repertoire of students is debated. At the far end of the spectrum are authors that claim that hooking up ‘is the only game in town’ (Kalish and Kimmel, 2011:144). Others see a variety of sexual scripts within the sexual arena of college, such as dates, committed relationships and hookups, without one being the dominant form of intimate coupling (Luff et al., 2016:76-77). Furthermore, they acknowledge that one sexual script can easily flow into another –as it did between Nate and Rebecca. The centrality of hooking up in the college experience seems to be related to the presence of an active party scene on campus, in which hookups are a frequent occurrence. Armstrong and Hamilton

(2013), in their ethnography on peer culture in a student dorm, note that a majority of the women in their research partook in the party scene, and those that did not were isolated and had difficulty in forging friendships (2013:84-85). Hooking up was thus almost a necessity for young women in order to take part in the social scene and not feel marginal and excluded on campus. Hooking up, however, is not omnipresent and central to all college experiences. Allison and Risman's (2014) research at a commuter college shows that many students, especially those living off campus, did not flock to the party scene, either because they were too busy with work and school, or because they lacked the social connections to grant them access. Other scholars mention that an active Greek life on campus fuels a lively party and hookup scene (Bogle, 2008:61). Infrastructural arrangements on campus thus seem to play an important role in facilitating hookup culture. The question is if particular infrastructural arrangements are necessary for the emergence of hooking up as a dominant norm of intimate relations on campus. BAU is a commuter college with only a fraction of the student population, around 11%, living on campus and with a marginal Greek community. Another question explored in this chapter is how these infrastructural conditions effect the party and hookup scene.

CASE AND METHODS

BAU is a state college, located within the greater Bay Area. Roughly three student career trajectories exist at BAU: students who do their complete four-year bachelor education at this college, transfer students who enroll at BAU after doing their undergraduate—or part of their undergraduate—at another college (often a community college), and international students who do part of their undergraduate or a graduate program at BAU (5% of the total student population). As in most US colleges, female students (58.3%) outnumber male (41.7%), and undergraduates (25,279) form the bulk of the total student body (29,541). BAU is a commuter school, and only a small fraction of its student population lives on campus, approximately 3000 students,² around 65% of the all freshmen, and roughly 11% of the total student population. An additional unknown, but presumably significant, number of students live in the neighborhoods adjacent to BAU. The general pattern in student residency is that mainly freshmen, few sophomore and very few juniors live on campus. During their student career, more and more students move from campus accommodation to the adjacent neighborhoods and increasingly further into the city of San Francisco.

During the five months of fieldwork, I had hundreds of conversations with students. With fifty-four male students, I had more extensive and often multiple

conversations over time. I asked students whether I could record the conversations or whether they preferred me taking notes. Forty-three students preferred the latter option, eleven the former. I did my utmost to quote verbatim what I considered the most important phrases; stories, explanations, opinions and attitudes were captured within written vignettes. With eleven male students, I conducted recorded interviews, which were fully transcribed. I collected general background data from all the interviewees, including place of birth, profession of parents, religious background, housing arrangement, family situation, income, work, extra-curricular activities, and number of sex partners and other information that might be relevant. All the names of respondents have been anonymized.

During fieldwork, I got to know three different groups of friends who were so kind to welcome me, as an ethnographer, into their social life. I accompanied these students to a variety of social events, such as parties, music shows and dinners. One group was comprised mainly of freshmen students, while another was mainly sophomores, and the last included junior and senior transfer students from the greater Bay Area. The freshmen group lived mostly on campus, albeit some in the surrounding neighborhoods of BAU. Most individuals within this group came from outside of the Bay Area, and it was their first time living away from their parents. This also applied to the sophomore group, most of whom had lived on campus in their freshman year but recently moved off campus to the surrounding neighborhoods of BAU. None of the respondents in the junior/senior group lived on campus or had lived on campus. Most were born and raised within the greater Bay Area and did their freshmen and/or sophomore year at a nearby community college. They had recently transferred to BAU and lived within inner-city neighborhoods of San Francisco. Besides students, I also interviewed staff from the BAU housing bureau, representatives of student organizations, representatives of Greek societies and people from the San Francisco urban planning department. These interviews gave valuable information on the institutional infrastructure at BAU.

Of the fifty-four respondents, thirty lived independently in the greater Bay Area, fourteen lived on campus and ten lived in their parents' homes. Thirty-three respondents identified as White, fourteen as Asian, five as Latino and two as Black. Ten of the students had working-class backgrounds, forty-one students came from middle-class families and three from upper-middle-class families. This sample mirrored the BAU student population poorly. Nearly 25% of my respondents lived on campus, while approximately 11% of the total student body resided in campus housing. Asian and Latino students were underrepresented in my sample in comparison with the ethnic and racial diversity of the total student population. The extent that my sample mirrored the distribution among social class of the total

student population is difficult to tell because BAU does not collect information on students' class background.³ The students' ages ranged from eighteen to thirty, with an average of twenty-two and a median and modus of twenty-one. This meant that many of the students I interacted with were technically seen as minors in the local context, where minors are individuals who are under twenty-one. Four students in my sample were freshmen, six were sophomores, nineteen were juniors, nine seniors and six graduate students.

HOOKING UP AS 'THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN?'

[...] It (hooking up) is kind of an ambiguous term. I know it freaks out parents a little bit. I know in high school a lot of parents were, 'oh, they are hooking up', and it kind of has this connotation that it's sex, but everybody doesn't really think of it like that. It's just like 'hey, they got together', 'they did something sexual' (Martin, sophomore student).

Martin is right that many American parents are 'freaked out' by hookup culture. Fueled by apocalyptic narratives of sex at college, parents get the impression that casual sex is omnipresent and the dominant form of intimate contact among students. But to what extent is this image correct? This will be explored within the following section, in which I will focus on BAU and relate my findings to research done at other campuses. As Martin suggests, part of parents' anxiety seems to stem from their unfamiliarity with the term and practice. They do not know exactly what it means if their children 'hooked up' and might assume that it implies intercourse, but this is not necessarily the case.

A variety of different sexual practices can be part of a hookup script. It might include kissing, petting, manual stimulation, oral sex and anal and vaginal intercourse. While this umbrella term might cause some misunderstandings for parents, among students these multiple meanings of the term were common knowledge. In their view, 'hookups' could be single as well as serial sexual encounters. The relationships in which they were embedded could be undefined or a friendship. What made a sexual episode a 'hookup' was primarily the understanding that expectations of commitment were not part of the script, and the depth of emotional intimacy should remain shallow. Further, expectations of sexual exclusivity were not part of the contract. This does not mean that students continuously oscillated between different hookup partners. Many of the hookups students at BAU described were exclusive in practice. In many ways, a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship was the antonym of a hookup, where the former implied commitment, a move towards deeper emotional intimacy and expectations

of exclusivity. In practice, these two sexual scripts were not diametrically opposed. Hookups could develop into committed relationships and at times, although this did not happen often, committed relationships evolved into hookups.

A number of scholars have found that at the colleges they researched, or among the fraction of the student population they focused on, hooking up was a dominant norm of intimate coupling (Armstrong and Hamilton, 2013:85-87; Bogle, 2008:184; Kimmel and Kalish, 2011:144). At BAU, this dominance of the hookup script was not evident. Fifty-two students reported on their hookup and relationship experiences in the academic year 2013-2014. Less than half, twenty-five students, did not hookup at all that year, and twenty-seven students hooked up at least once that year, but they did not do so at great frequency. On average, students that hooked up did so three times a year. A number of outliers raised this number, hence the modus (two hookups) is slightly lower. This relatively low number of hookups among students in my research corresponds to findings of the large-scale survey among college students conducted by Paula England and collaborators. They found that by their senior year, students on average had seven hookups (median is five) (England et al., 2008:533). Although these figures do not lend themselves to a good comparison, since they report on hookups in different time frames, it is relatively safe to say that hooking up at BAU did not happen that often, as is the case for most college students in America.

Part of the reason why not that many students hooked up regularly at BAU was because it is a commuter college. BAU attracted quite a large number of students that continued to live in their parents' homes all through college, and these individuals were less likely to hookup than their peers living independently. Only three out of ten students that lived in the parents' homes hooked up in the year of my research (with an average of two), compared to nine of the fifteen students living on campus (average of two) and fifteen from twenty-nine students (average is three) living off campus independently. Living at home with parents hampered hookup culture, and there were a couple of reasons for this. Students living in their parents' homes had trouble accessing the college party scene, mainly because these social events happened around campus and were often organized ad hoc. Students thus needed to live on and around campus to have good access to these gatherings. Second, half of the students living off-campus with family came from working-class families, compared to 11% of those living independently, and for reasons that will be explained later, had less interest in the hookup scene. Even when these students managed to find their way to college parties and were interested in hooking up, they seldom went all the way. It all depended on the residential situation of their partner, since taking a hookup partner back to their parents' homes was highly unusual. In America, having sex in the parental home comes close to a cardinal sin (Schalet, 2011).

A sexual regime comprises an ordering of 'sexual scripts' (Gagnon and Simon, 1973:20). These are interactional templates of sexual behavior that are hierarchically structured. This resembles what Gayle Rubin calls 'the sexual value system' (1984:13), in which sexual acts are hierarchically ordered, and a clear line is drawn between good and normal sex- acts that are within 'the charmed circle' (1984:13)- and bad and abnormal acts. This ordering of sexual scripts is enmeshed with, and structured by, different ideologies and social arrangements. In hookup culture, the self-development imperative, which will be delineated in the follow section, is a clear example of such a constituting ideology. Gender and class are examples of social arrangements that structure a sexual regime. In a hookup regime, casual sex is the dominant template for intimate encounters. However, other sexual scripts, like committed relationships and dates, exist and can still be within the 'charmed circle' of sexual acts that are considered legitimate expressions of sexuality within a particular regime (Rubin, 1984:13).

A 'dominant' hookup regime implies that expectations of relationships of students are formed and shaped by hookup culture, and some research indicates this. Allison and Risman (2014) found that nearly all students in their research saw hooking up as an important 'cultural scenario' in their college lives (2014:102), even though not all engaged in it. Some students partook in the party scene and hooked up regularly, while others wished they could do the same but were restrained by residential patterns –living with family- and/or a lack of financial resources. In contrast, not all male student I got acquainted with were interested in partying and hooking up. This was even the case for freshman students, who are often most interested in the hookup scene. Seven students continued their relationships with their high school sweethearts throughout their freshmen year.

Whereas at some college campuses committed relationships are seen as 'social liabilities' that can hamper the development of peer status accumulated through flirting and hooking up, in the party scene, none of my male interviewees framed committed relationships as such (Armstrong and Hamilton, 2013:86). Some, like freshman student Josh, partook actively in the party scene, together with his girlfriend Stacey. He, however, did not feel like he was missing out, nor did he feel unwelcome at these parties because of his committed and exclusive affair. Such an inclusive party scene is not present at all college campuses. Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) note that women in their study felt an imperative to flirt and be sexually enticing to men at parties, at the risk of being scorned or excluded from the fun when not abiding to this norm (2013:88). Male students at BAU with committed relationships were not at the periphery of social life, even within the party scene.

Committed relationships were as central to college life at BAU as hooking up. An indicator of this was the large number of students that were in committed rela-

tionships or had been in one. Twenty of the fifty-four student I interviewed had a monogamous relationship of three months or longer at the time of fieldwork, and only two out of fifty-four students had never had a long-term, committed relationship (over three months) in college. Both sexual scripts were omnipresent, and both were an important part of students' social lives.

Although I question the extent to which hooking up was the dominant norm of intimate relationships at BAU, it did seem to be an intimate arrangement that was particularly frequent at college in relation to other domains of youth. Prior to college, students were aware of parties and hooking up on campus, through what they heard from peers and through the media, but a number of men said that they had to be socialized within the practice. Senior student Thomas, for instance, mentioned that his first hookup happened at the beginning of his freshman year. As a 'rooky' in the party scene, he had hoped that this encounter would evolve into a romance, but his hopes were idle. The woman he hooked up with, like many college women, did not want a relationship; instead, she wanted 'freedom and parties'. Like other students, Thomas had to learn the hard way that commitments did not flow automatically from the hookup script.

Hooking up was a practice foreign to most international students at BAU. French exchange student Jacques contrasted his experiences in the college party scene to what he was familiar with in France. A few weeks prior to our interview, he had celebrated his birthday at a house party with fellow students. At midnight, the attendees congratulated him. A friend mentioned a birthday gift and called on a girl nearby. She came over, placed her hands on his face and asked if he wanted to have sex. Jacques never experienced such directness at home and was 'freaked out' by her approach. Hooking up often implied a very straightforward, sexualized encounter, and many students had not experienced this script firsthand prior to enrolling in an American college.

THE DEVELOPMENT IMPERATIVE AND THE COSTS OF RELATIONSHIPS

In 1990, Dorothy C. Holland and Margaret A. Eisenhart wrote that many young women entered college with high ambitions, but this gradually lessened in the subsequent years. A dominant peer culture of romance existed on campus, in which finding a potential spouse was more valued than high educational attainments for women, and many acquiesced to these norms. Much has changed since then; many young women currently remain ambitious throughout their college years. They experience a stringent self-development imperative on campus, in which 'in-

dividual achievement and personal growth' take priority (Hamilton and Armstrong, 2009:602). College is a time to invest in education and to develop life-skills, to forge friendships and have fun. Romance is something for after graduation. During college, many women prefer to hookup and keep committed relationships at bay (Hamilton and Armstrong, 2009). To what extent do men also harbor these expectations of college and relationships?

I found a similar development imperative among the middle-class male students I interviewed. College was a time to be uncompromisingly selfish and do what you want and not to waste time in a committed relationship. One male student remarked that 'it's [college] probably the only time in your life that you can do whatever you want'. This did not necessarily mean that my interviewees were dedicated students who devoted all their time and energy to education. Their self-development projects included much more. It implied, amongst other things, taking interesting courses, playing sports, making music, film, partying and socializing and experimenting with drugs and sexuality. Students had busy schedules, combining these extracurricular activities with their studies and often with work. Many privileged male students saw an intimate committed relationship as inherently making concessions, in which they had to navigate between investing time in activities they wanted to do and those prioritized by their partner. Many middle-class male students thus consciously withheld committed relationships and instead opted for hookups, similar to many contemporary female students. 'Based on my own experience [...], this new sexual paradigm has given women the freedom to focus on their lives and careers' a young woman told Lisa Wade (2017:68). Other research shows that there are many more women like her that feel the same (Hamilton and Armstrong, 2009).

A tenacious gender belief is that women naturally want relationships. This is also present within the college arena. As a result, women experience peer pressure to get into relationships and to maintain them, despite, at times, preferring to be single (Hamilton and Armstrong, 2009:599-600). When I asked my male interviewees whether they experienced expectations from peers or family to find a girlfriend in college, all of them said no. No relationship imperative existed for my interviewees in the college arena and beyond. This changed, however, after they graduated and settled down with a career. A number of men anticipated that they might feel societal expectations to forge a committed relationship and start a family one day, but this lay somewhere in an indeterminate future. While women might feel social pressure to settle within a relationship at college, there was no such pressure felt by men.

Upon entering college, freshmen are faced with the belief that the coming years are important for forging deep and lifelong friendships. This imperative to be social and make friends at college conflicted with the demands of a committed relation-

ship and was an important reason for students to keep romance at bay and instead opt for hookups. This was especially eminent in the first semester, when students freshly arrived on campus. 'I think when students first get here, they are making a lot of new friends, a lot of energy, it is a time that everybody is really social', one of my interviewees remarked. A number of students (six out of fifty-four) had girlfriends upon enrolling in college and decided to end these affairs because they did not want to feel restrained in the quest to meet peers. This is understandable, since they had experienced that relationships demand dedication and commitment, time and energy, which could not be invested in making new social connections. Sophomore student Paul, for instance, had just broken up with his girlfriend when I interviewed him. While in a relationship, Paul spent most evenings at home with his girlfriend and he felt that he was missing out: 'I wasn't meeting as many people as I wanted'. His expectations of new friendships were formed in relation to the imperative that college is a time to be social and make new friends. Now that he was single, Paul felt that he could pursue the social life that a college student ought to have. Paul currently spent most of his time 'partying and hanging out with friends' and finally living up to the expectations he had of himself in college. This understanding of the college years as a time to make new friends is by no means restricted to men. A young woman quoted by Hamilton and Armstrong reflected on a past relationship: 'We were together every day... It was the critical time of making friends and meeting people, [and] I wasn't there' (2009:603). Both men and women understood college as a time to be social and build a network of friends and acquaintances and felt that committed relationships could jeopardize this project.

Students also resisted committed relationships because they experienced that these could be demanding and emotionally draining. One interviewee spoke about a girlfriend threatening suicide in the case of a breakup, and after his affair with her ended—she did not kill herself—chose to remain single for at least a little while. Committed relationships could also lead to other unforeseen costs. Sophomore student Nate got into a committed relationship in the second semester of his freshman year and moved into an apartment with his then girlfriend. It was his first experience with a serious relationship, and he was sincerely convinced that 'she was the one'. His hopes were idle. They often quarreled, and this escalated on one occasion. The argument started about a triviality and soon erupted into a roar. Nate lost his temper and pushed her. 'I didn't know what I was doing' (Nate). It meant the end of their time together. She moved back to her parents' home in another state, owing Nate \$1100, which he took out from his student loan. After such unfortunate experiences with relationships, many students did not want to commit to anyone for a period and opted for the hookup scene.

College is believed to be a time of hedonist partying and unlimited sexual possibilities and this informed students' stance towards relationships. All interviewees were familiar with the popular narrative of college as a time for free-for-all casual sex. 'College is a time for sexual experimentation', said freshman student Jason. Especially middle-class male freshmen were excited about the prospect of hooking up at college and consciously withheld committed relationships. They expected that a relationship demanded sexual exclusivity and hence restricted their ability to partake in the hookup scene. Many freshmen, however, did not find what they were looking for. A number of students thought that this was particular to BAU, which lacked the wild college parties, at which everybody hooked up, that they had heard about on other campuses. Other students did find the sexual experimentation on BAU that they wishfully expected. One interviewee joyfully recounted an episode in which three women had asked him to join in group sex. Another man reported about a party in which the patrons played a sexual version of 'truth or dare', which ended with a few couples copulating on the floor. The expectation that college boasted a large variety of sexual adventures meant that many freshmen initially had little interest in committed relationships.

Broadly speaking, there were a number of periods in their college careers in which students withheld committed relationships and opted for hookups instead. The imperative of college as a time to experiment and to meet new people was especially prominent among freshmen and sophomore students. Upperclassmen had had their 'wild streak', had established many new friendships, grew out of the hookup scene and were more inclined to forge committed intimate relationships. This 'maturity' was not a permanent state. Students who had recently ended a committed relationship - especially in which they experienced its costs - often dived back into the hookup scene. Additionally, at the end of college, a number of students kept committed relationships at bay and opted for hookups instead. Senior student Tim, for instance, hooked up regularly with his flatmate at the start of the second semester of his final year at BAU. They did not have a relationship but '[...] she will get upset when she hears this'. The two hooked up regularly but never talked about the status of their affair. Both Tim and his partner were graduating soon, and this probably entailed relocating to different cities. Tim realized that in today's gender relations, women were not going to follow their lovers regardless, jeopardizing their own careers in the process. With this foresight, it seemed better not to commit to each other.

Not all students partook in the party and hookup scene. Hooking up is the sexual culture of middle-class and upper-middle-class students (Allison and Risman, 2014; Hamilton and Armstrong, 2009). This was also noticeable at BAU, where only two out of ten students with a working-class background participated (or had

participated) in the college party and hookup scene. Part of the explanation for this pattern rests in the spatial location of working-class students; underprivileged students were more likely to reside in their parents' homes than middle-class students. Five out of ten working-class students lived in their parents' homes, compared to five out of forty-four of the privileged students. Further, underprivileged students often lacked the social and economic resources to access the party scene. Aside from these conditions, working-class students also felt alien in a peer culture of partying and casual sex. Mark, for instance, was a sophomore student from a poor, working-class family. He was the first person in his family to go to college. Two of his six sisters were teenage mothers, with partners that contributed little - or nothing at all - to their upbringing. Mark's parents were teenagers too when he was born and, with only a high school education, struggled to make ends meet. Mark, a very strong-willed and focused young man, had no interest in college parties and focused on his education in the hope of securing a stable job in law enforcement. Mark saw himself as an overly romantic person, primed towards committed relationships and felt that this orientation limited his intimate options at college.

[...] girls my age want to hook up, they want guys that are players, and whatnot, and I am a very serious guy and I take life seriously, and I don't think a lot of girls my age do, that's what I think (Mark, sophomore student).

There were more students like Mark, children who came from working-class backgrounds, who understood college as a time to acquire educational attainments in the hope of securing a stable financial position later in life, who also felt alien in the college hookup scene. They did not see an inherent conflict, as privileged students did, between a development imperative of college and the demands of a committed relationship.

Few underprivileged students participated in the college party and hookup scene at BAU. This pattern has also been found on other campuses (Allison and Risman, 2014; Armstrong and Hamilton, 2013). The reasons for this are contested. Allison and Risman (2014) found that the working-class students in their research desired to hookup but felt restrained by a lack of financial resources and by their residency in their parents' homes. In contrast, most of my male underprivileged respondents did not desire a college experience that included partying and casual sex, concomitant with the working-class female students interviewed by Armstrong and Hamilton (2013). These students had a different relation to cultural capital and relationships. Then again, as noted by Allison and Risman (2014), students' spatial locations impacted their access to the party and hookup scene, and this intersected

with class, with working-class students more often living with their parents. Social class thus divided the campus sexual arena in multiple ways, through its intersection with residency patterns and through its intersection with subjectivities.

The subjectivities that inform students' strategic choices for hookups are remarkably similar for college men and women (Hamilton and Armstrong, 2009), albeit with gendered nuances. Thus, it is problematic to understand hookup culture as a battle between the sexes. Both a part of the male and female student populations want hookups instead of committed relationships. The self-development imperative, the expectations surrounding college about sex and friendships and the costs of relationships are all experienced by men and women alike. However, contrary to college men, women experience a relationship imperative on campus. This relationship imperative can have far-reaching consequences, in that college women might feel more pressure to commit to relationships even if these affairs are harmful to their development projects. Nevertheless, to call this a battle of the sexes is an exaggeration and is inaccurate.

INFRASTRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS MATTER

The connections between hookup culture and an active party scene is often noted (Allison and Risman, 2014; Hamilton and Armstrong, 2009:605; Wade, 2017: 29-30). Hookups are frequently initiated at parties, where at least the first steps of the physical escalation sequence occur. A number of conditions fuel hooking up at these gatherings. The most obvious condition is the relatively large presence of male and female peers wanting to socialize, flirt and be sexual. Furthermore, the plentiful consumption of alcohol reduces students' inhibitions and suspends 'reality', establishing a condition in which students feel less accountable for their actions and those of others. Within this realm, sexual experimentation becomes 'insignificant', diminishing the adverse reputational consequences that sexual experimentation might have (Kalish and Kimmel, 2011:141; Wade, 2017:41-43).

Unsurprisingly, most hookups of the men I interviewed were physically initiated at parties. Of the thirty-five first encounter hookups students told me about, twenty-seven got physical at a larger social gathering, such as a house party or at a bar. Light sexual activity frequently happened at these parties, but oral sex, manual stimulation and intercourse nearly always happened at a more private setting, often students' rooms. Five hookups started in or around the dorms, and four started at different locations such as a car or park. In thirty of these first encounter hookups, alcohol was involved but often in moderate amounts and seldom to a state of obliv-

ion. In two cases, students did not drink but used other substances (marijuana and XTC). Solely three hookups of a total of thirty-five occurred in a sober state. Parties, alcohol and hookups are intrinsically linked. Hookup culture flourishes in a lively and active party scene.

The extent to which a university is a party college depends on infrastructural arrangements, for instance dorm policies, an active Greek scene, a large residential community and nighttime venues in the surrounding area (Allison and Risman, 2014; Armstrong and Hamilton, 2013). These arrangements, or the lack of them, had an impact on the social life of the students in my research. BAU is primarily a commuter college (only around 11% of the total student population and 65% of the freshmen resided on campus) and is remarkably quiet after college hours. Similarly, the adjacent neighborhoods, where many of the students live, are quiet residential zones with little institutionalized nightlife. Greek societies, often the nexus of the college party scene, were a marginal force at BAU. They were not present on campus, and there were no official fraternity and sorority houses in the surrounding neighborhoods. Strictly enforced dorm policies hampered the development of parties on these premises. Students told me countless tales of Residence Assistants (RAs) terminating gatherings in students' rooms. As a consequence of these infrastructural arrangements, the social scene on and around campus was not geared towards partying, and students often complained about the dearth of opportunities to socialize with peers at BAU.

Students primed to party flocked to informal house gatherings organized by fellow students or, if age permitted, to the bar scene within the city of San Francisco. These informal house parties, often organized by sophomores and upperclassmen, gave students under the legal drinking age, mostly freshmen and sophomores, the possibility to enact their college experience of carefree fun. Access to these parties was nearly always invite only, as hosts were understandably anxious about inviting herds of unknown faces into their homes. Hence, students' ability to participate in the party and hookup scene was determined by their talents for making new friends and acquaintances. These skills were likely even more relevant at BAU than at other colleges, since it lacked an organized social scene, due to the small presence of Greek societies. Most upperclassmen opted for the bar scene in the city instead of house parties. When their age permitted it, they could access a whole new world of nighttime adventure, and this was infinitely more exciting than the house parties most of them were familiar with by now. In sweeping generalizations, freshmen, at least in the first semester, lacked the social connections to get access to the party scene, and these gatherings were frequented by sophomores. Upperclassmen primed to party re-directed their gaze to the downtown bar scene and hence visited these house parties less frequently.

Particularly at the start of the first semester, freshmen wanted to socialize and have fun and were anxiously looking for parties. For male sophomores and upperclassmen, this offered an opportunity to hook up with freshmen students, and hosting house parties was a viable tactic to facilitate this. Hosts were reluctant to advertise these parties publically on social media because they wanted to control access. Most invites occurred through word of mouth. Hosts first invited groups of young women to their parties, and when they did not know that many, they could always ask students who were better connected. Freshman student Jason was such a node for connecting different friend groups. On an afternoon, while sitting in the DSA –designated smoking area- Jason got a phone call from a fellow male student. This man was hosting a party that evening and inquired if Jason could bring guests, with the explicit request that two thirds should be women. Hosting parties offered an opportunity for young men to meet women with whom they could potentially hookup.

Greeks often tend to dominate the social scene on campus, and fraternities on many campuses seem to have what comes close to a monopoly on student parties. Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) noted that fraternity brothers stringently controlled access to these gatherings and almost exclusively selected the more attractive women (2013:88). This control of the flow of people to parties obviously demands manpower and a corporate group working towards the same end, for example with some men performing taxi services and others controlling the doors at the venue. At the parties I attended, hosts also tried to control access but never too successfully. I, for instance, visited a party hosted by Jason. During the night, he and a young woman had some intimate moments of kissing and fondling in the kitchen. Later that evening, I observed a small argument between the two. The young woman wanted to invite a friend and asked Jason for permission. Jason inquired about the sex of the guest. It was a boy.

'Fuck you,' Jason smirked half-jokingly, but with an undeniably serious undertone. 'I don't want more guys here. He is not coming to my party.' Later that evening the guest came to the party, only to leave with Jason's flirt right after his arrival. Jason later explained that he wanted to hook up with her and that the unwanted guest was her regular hookup partner.

The hosts of the vast majority of parties at BAU were always individuals or flatmates, and quite a number of male hosts tried to regulate access to these parties in order to select a crowd of young, attractive women they could potentially hookup with; however, this control was not very successful. They lacked the power of numbers

and a closely collaborating corporate group needed to invite, select and regulate the flow of people. As a result, these parties were quite inclusive. Hosts did not manage to select solely the beautiful women, nor did they manage to bar other men from their parties.

These informal house parties came in different shapes and sizes. I visited gatherings of less than twenty people - which were most common - as well as ones with over fifty attendees. One should not overdramatize these parties. At a fairly representative gathering, a group of students congregated around the television screen and played video games, while a dozen lingered in the kitchen, drinking beer, smoking weed and chatting about typical youthful interests. The host later told me that three couples hooked up that night at or after the party, although I cannot verify this. While parties hosted by fraternities often have a dress code and thus control women's attire, making sure that they wear sexually enticing uniforms (Armstrong and Hamilton, 2013:88), this was not enforced at a single party I attended, and a number of interviewees acknowledged that this seldom occurred. Women are often expected to flirt with men at fraternity parties, a code rigorously enforced by men through disparaging and ridiculing women that do not abide by these norms (Armstrong and Hamilton, 2013:88). At the parties I attended, most conversations were rather convivial, and ostentatious flirting and fondling happened but not on a *quid pro quo* basis. I did not observe hosts reproaching female guests because they failed to acquiesce to male advances. Men had limited control over female bodies and interactional dynamics at these parties.

The lack of institutionalized male control over the college party scene meant that more was asked of men's individual charismatic qualities and heterosexual competences in order to hookup. Two interviewees mentioned that they had not had casual sex, despite regularly visiting college parties and their desire to hookup. Numerous others mentioned that they had not hooked up as much as they had hoped to. Male students' success in the hookup scene depended on, of course, their physical appearance and the extent that they embodied a contextually attractive masculinity. In the context of my fieldwork, this centered on markers such as 'wittiness', 'artistic expressiveness' and a capacity for fun and adventure. Stories about legendary womanziners circulated in the friend groups I socialized with. The stories about these individuals had elements of risk-taking behavior, for instance, one featured a sophomore student who in an intoxicated state, in the midst of the night, climbed a construction crane, photographed himself on top and posted these images on Facebook. Another story featured a young man at the Burning Man music festival, who carried a jetpack and flew around the festival terrain, while tripping on LSD. Notwithstanding the truthfulness of these accounts, these stories enhanced the popularity of the protago-

nists of the tales among young women. Yet, a reputation for fun and adventure was not enough; male students also had to rely on their skills in captivating audiences.

I call these performances 'audience games'. They were a prominent interaction dynamic at parties and were nearly always initiated by men. Within these, men competed with each other for the attention, entertainment and appreciation of spectators, particularly women. Amusing audiences by telling stories was a common variant of the 'audience games' performed by young adult men. At one party, I joined students in a round of storytelling, where each man aimed to outcompete his peers in terms of delivery, suspense and captivation. At another party, a number of young men spontaneously engaged in a hip-hop battle, vying with each other in terms of irony and wit. At again another gathering, young men initiated a drinking game, in which they competed for the title of 'wizard' and set to drink their own height in beer cans. This particular occasion ended less than flattering for the 'wizard', who passed out on the concrete floor in his own vomit. Young men felt -rightfully so- that performing well in the 'audience games' and entertaining and captivating their spectators enhanced their chances of hooking up.

Hookup culture has a competitive dynamic similar to dating, in which status is determined by one's desirability as a hookup/date in the sexual arena (Waller, 1937). Hooking up with a person of similar or higher status enhances one's standing, while a sexual encounter with a less popular mate can have the opposite effect. These competitive status games need an attentive audience, and an interaction dynamic existed in which some sexual practices were enacted in public. At the petting parties in the dating era, this was limited to kissing and fondling. At contemporary hookup parties, this includes grinding –a dance where one person (usually a man) rubs his/her crotch against the behind of the other person (usually a woman)-, kissing and fondling and occasionally heavier sexual activity. Sophomore student Nate, for instance, showed me a video on his smartphone, which he recorded at a party. It revealed a young couple having sex on the table in what looked like a brightly-lit basement, in front of a small audience, observing them from the other side of the room. According to Nate, the couple was well aware of the filming and photographing onlookers but 'just didn't care'. Nate and others posted the video and photos on Twitter and Facebook. To my surprise, the post got thumbs up from other men, highlighting the male status dynamic of sexual voyeurism. However, as Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) note, a similar dynamic also exists among women. Female students also gained status among peers from hooking up with high-status men. These hookups, 'particularly when initiated in the public social venue of the party scene, are more amenable to the type of visibility and quick turnover necessary for the pursuit of status' (2013:86). This interaction dynamic of sexual

voyeurism is not new within the college arena, but the sexual norms have changed. This means that different sexual practices are enacted in public now, in comparison with the dating era.

Not all parties had the kind of public sexual activity that Nate showed on his smartphone; in fact, most parties did not. At all the parties that I attended, the public sexual practices remained limited to grinding, kissing and fondling. Often, sexual norms expanded during the night, as the party progressed, and patrons got more intoxicated. Over the course of the night, public sexual acts became more common, and gradually heavier practices were enacted. Earlier in the evening, or at gatherings that remained rather conventionally social, students with a sexual interest in each other established private spheres in which to become physical. This often entailed a physical separation from the group. While I and most other patrons witnessed the hip-hop battle described earlier, host Jason stood intimately entwined with a fellow student at the far end of the room. Later that night, he disappeared with her, leaving his own party. I spotted them again when leaving. They were in the courtyard, kissing and caressing each other and - as far as I could see - remained completely dressed. Two interaction dynamics existed at parties, one of sexual voyeurism and one of sexual privacy. The sexual norms at the party, along with the sliding scale of these throughout the night, determined which practices were suited to voyeurism and which should be conducted privately.

Much has been written about the different reputational consequences of hooking up for young men and women (Bogle, 2008:103-115; Currier 2013; Hamilton and Armstrong 2009:598; Kalish and Kimmel 2011:144-146). Some authors argue that engaging in casual sex does not have negative reputational consequences for men, while it can for women (Bogle, 2008:105-105; Kalish and Kimmel, 2011:144-146). Others present a more complex picture. Young women gain status among peers in the party scene through male's erotic attention, and this entails at least some hooking up. However, they also risk the slut stigma when they hook up too much (Armstrong and Hamilton, 2013:89). Others argue that high erotic prestige within the sexual arena can somewhat safeguard women from the slut stigma (Holla, 2013). The men I interviewed indeed unanimously agreed that men gained status among peers when they hooked up with women of high erotic status. Hooking up with women of lower erotic prestige, however, could lower their standing. There were additional negative reputational consequences of hookups that men might experience. One of my male interviewees reported that a female hookup partner spread rumors about his sexual incompetence and inability to please her sexually, which became a source of hilarity among his peers and affected his status among them. For both men and women alike, hooking up can enhance as well as lower their status amongst

peers, and both can become objects of gendered gossip about their sexual defects, although these defects are gendered.

The infrastructural arrangements at BAU hampered an omnipresent party and hookup scene. Even students wanting to party and hookup had trouble finding locations where they could do so. A small residential community, rigidly enforced dorm policies, the lack of a nearby bar scene and the absence of a buzzing Greek community meant that the party scene was small and scattered. Despite the limitations, hooking up did happen. Infrastructural arrangements can impede the development of a clearly visible and omnipresent hookup culture on campus but cannot completely obviate the occurrence of casual sex among students. The party and hookup scene at BAU was a relatively even playing field for men and women. Presumably, this is partly because Greeks were largely absent from campus, and fraternities did not dominate the social scene as occurs at many American colleges. All male organizations, such as fraternities, through their function as a corporate group, collectively work to advance male privileges, creating a highly uneven sexual playing field. Hookups on BAU were of course gendered, such as the audience games and the reputational consequences of sex and created distinct gendered challenges for men and women.

SEX, EMOTION WORK AND HOOKING UP

Sexual scripts have ‘framing rules’, ‘rules according to which we ascribe definitions or meanings to situations’ and ‘feeling rules’, or guidelines on how we should feel about a particular situation (Hochschild, 1979:566). Within the hookup script, the framing rules indicate that sex is for physical pleasure and perhaps an affirmation of attractiveness, but it does not imply emotional intimacy. The feeling rules make emotions such as sexual arousal, validation and confidence, and maybe even shame, viable but preclude a sense of vulnerability and emotional dependency on a hookup partner. Actors aim to achieve these sensations prescribed by the feeling rules through ‘emotion work’, ‘the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling’ (Hochschild, 1979: 561). Different interaction rituals and strategies were part of the hookup script to aid actors in their emotion work, and from the stories told by my interviewees, these were utilized by both men and women.

One such strategy was to avoid physical and sexual practices that might signal emotional closeness. A number of students mentioned that cuddling, especially after release, was inappropriate within the context of a hookup. Sophomore student Nate, for instance, reported that his current hookup partner was ‘getting cuddly’, and this was a sign that she might want more from the relationship. Other students mentioned that

giving cunnilingus was too intimate for a hookup and hence should be avoided, which resonates with the findings of Backstrom et al. (2012). They found that 35% of the women in their research considered receiving oral sex to be too intimate for a hookup, whereas fewer women held such negative attitudes towards receiving oral sex within a relationship context (2012:5). This corresponds with researchers' finding of a larger orgasm gap in hookups between men and women than in committed relationships (Armstrong et al., 2012). The immediate period after release was especially delicate in hookups because in committed relationships, this is often a time to be tender and caring and exchange thoughts and feelings that can bring partners closer emotionally. Senior student Tim reported that after release, his current hookup partner immediately got out of bed and showered, avoiding the post-intercourse intimacy. He asked her numerous times if she wanted to cuddle up with him after the deed, 'but she didn't'.

Many students found it difficult to abide by the feeling rules of a hookup. They fell in love with their hookup partners and became emotionally dependent on them. These 'risks' were especially pronounced within serial casual encounters, thus many students limited the number of times they would hookup with one single partner. Sophomore student Paul, for instance, mentioned that his serial hookups never spanned more than three encounters because expectations of a committed affair would potentially arise.

Reinitiating contact after a hookup was a particularly delicate matter since this could obviously be construed as wanting more. Most re-engagements happened via smartphone texting, and students abided by certain rules to avoid running the risk of raising suspicions that they might be emotionally involved. It was common for my interviewees to wait a certain number of days before reinitiating contact after a hookup. This waiting period should be 'at least ten days', according to senior student Ramon. The unfolding texting should be rather business like, limiting the information exchanged and the questions to the bare minimum necessary to make arrangements.

JJS: Do you keep in contact after the hookup?

M: Really loosely, I try to avoid it for a few days, maybe a week, just so they don't think that anything is going to evolve out of it, or that I wanted anything more at the time.

JJS: And then after a week what do you do?

M: Just say 'what's up?', 'what are they doing?', if they want to grab a beer or go to a show, do something, nothing date wise, no dinner and a movie or anything, because that can be construed in a completely different manner than you want it to be (Martin, sophomore student).

Any clue within the texting exchange that could hint at dating or a committed relationship script was to be avoided. The safest strategy was to immediately come with a plan for an encounter, for instance to meet at a particular party, a music show or a bar or to ‘watch a movie together’ at one of their residences. Surprisingly, none of my interviewees explicitly invited their partner to meet for sex. Such invites were always shrouded in the aforementioned metaphors; explicated references to sex were construed as inappropriate. Texting that went beyond the minimum conversation needed to make arrangements for the next meeting was suspicious. Similarly, writing long messages or responding swiftly was too eager and signaled emotional involvement. Ramon mentioned being on his guard when a hookup partner sent a message ‘containing over 120 characters’ and responded immediately to his text. ‘An hour’ was a safe interval, but anything sooner signaled too much interest.

When meeting after a hookup, one should not signal a romantic interest. One strategy for avoiding such signals is to immediately become sexual and not waste much time on conversation. Numerous students mentioned that watching a movie or series together was a safe bet for a follow-up hookup. No conversation was needed, and sexual escalation was easy when they were already sitting next to each other while looking at a screen. Discussion on follow-up hookups should remain superficial, and certain topics were off limits. ‘I don’t talk about things that can bring you closer emotionally’, Jade said. There was no discussion of personal lives or histories and no talk about existential dilemmas and insecurities. After the sex, there was no need to spend time together. Sophomore student Nate, for instance, reported that he nearly always left his hookup partner’s room after release.

Students frequently turned cold towards a hookup partner after the initial sexual encounter. Often, this meant ghosting the other, by ignoring him/her presence or paying marginal attention to his/her existence. Sophomore student Marten reported that he would greet his hookup partner when running into her on campus and make small conversation but would not become more amicable. ‘I don’t hit her up to hang out or anything, but if I see her I will definitely stop and talk with her’. Other students were more adamant about ignoring their partners completely, even when running into them. An easy way to ignore a hookup partner was to avoid him/her completely. Freshman student Devon reported that he avoided those areas on campus where he risked running into his hookup partner. ‘So, it became this cat and mouse game of trying to avoid her’. Like Devon, most students were careful to avoid those places where they could potentially bump into their hookup partners.

‘Emotion work’ in hookup culture and the concomitant strategies caused fragility in the bonds between partners. Serial hookups could end suddenly, even when both partners were happy with the arrangement. Sophomore student Martin

had such an experience. In his freshman year, he had a series of hookups with a young woman. One night, Martin sent her a message, asking if she 'would like to hang out' in his room. She came over and seemed stressed and was not up for sex. Instead of hooking up, they talked about college and about their friends. Nothing sexual happened between the two that night, and she left his room at three am. Martin thought that his hookup partner needed space. He did not contact her again for that reason. She did not contact him either. Coincidentally, they ran into each other again a year later at the medical clinic on campus. They talked about their previous affair, learning that neither had wanted a committed relationship at the time, but neither wanted to end the hookup arrangement either. Neither had instigated contact after that particular evening out of fear that it might be construed as a claim towards commitment. The interaction codes of hookup culture meant that contact between partners could easily dissolve, even when they had no interest in this occurring.

Far more often, serial hookup arrangements ended because one of the two developed feelings for the other. Nearly all interviewees who had had serial hookup relationships told stories of such situations. It could have been them or their partners, but almost inevitably, one of the two would become emotionally attached. Most of the times, this resulted in claims of commitment by one of the partners, and this was often a reason to break off their affair completely. I expected to find situations in which an imbalance in the emotional investment of each hookup partner gave rise to power discrepancies that could become exploitive; however, I did not find this in my research.

Of the thirty-five hookups - both serial and single encounters - I was told about in detail, ten ended in an avoidance relationship. The nature of this avoidance varied between a temporal shunning to a more dramatic separating of friend groups. Hookups seldom (two of thirty-five) happened between strangers (also noted by McClintock 2010). In most cases, partners were acquaintances who had seen each other around campus, and occasionally hookups happened between friends. When hookups of the latter sort turned into avoidance relationships, this could potentially cause fissures within the groups of friends. Sophomore student Nate, for instance, hooked up with his friend Jenny at the end of the first semester of his freshman year. They had a series of hookups, which ended because Nate sensed that the affair was moving towards a more committed relationship, which he did not want. The ending of their affair resulted in an avoidance relationship that caused schisms in their friend circle. Jenny and her best friend not only avoided Nate, but they also drifted apart from Nate's close circle of friends. The two young women teamed up with another group and ultimately stopped interactions with Nate's group of

friends all together. I counted three of such fissures in his extended group of friends that year. In contrast with Levi-Strauss' (1969)[1949] axiom that marital sexual relations establish bonds between groups, hookups between friends on campus pushed groups away from each other.

CONCLUSION

A number of scholars argue that specific infrastructural arrangements on campus fuel hookup culture (Allison and Risman, 2014; Bogle, 2007: 781-782; Kimmel, 2008:194). The residential proximity of a large number of likeminded peers, most of whom are sexually active and single, creates an environment of myriad sexual opportunities, and this is enhanced by a buzzing social scene, often fueled by Greek organizations. The tightly integrated communities on campus facilitate familiarity and trust and a rather homogeneous sexual culture. BAU lacked most of these infrastructural arrangements, and this affected the extent that hooking up was a dominant and omnipresent phenomenon on campus. BAU had a relatively small residential community of students, limiting the pool of potential suitors. A stringently enforced dorm policy that prohibited the use of alcohol and drugs as well as loud noises on the premises, crushed medium-sized gatherings that could potentially evolve into much sought after parties. The lack of Greek organizations on and around campus, and the absence of a nearby bar scene, meant that students had to flock to informal house parties hosted by peers to find the style of sociability they were looking for. Hookups did happen, and most of these happened at parties, but since parties were sparse, small and often exclusive, they were limited to those students with a lot of social connections. Did a hookup culture exist at BAU? It did not in the sense that it was 'the only game in town' (Kalish and Kimmel, 2011:144). Hookups and committed relationships existed alongside each other. Nor was hooking up an omnipresent phenomenon on campus or a practice in which students felt they had to partake in order to take part in student life. On the other hand, hookups happened frequently at college parties, as a form of sexual experimentation without expectations of commitment, at least initially.

The sexual arena on campus is not characterized by a battle of the sexes. On the contrary, there is a remarkable correspondence between the motivations of young men and women to eschew committed relationships and opt for hookups, and similar social processes influence their decisions. The young men at BAU also felt a stringent self-development imperative, akin to the young women interviewed by Hamilton and Armstrong (2009). College, for middle-class students, was a time to

be uncompromisingly 'selfish', to explore lifestyle options, acquire educational attainments and vocational skills, and to be social and make new friends. Experiences with committed relationships affected male students' decisions to opt for hookups. Committed relationships could be avaricious in terms of the time and energy invested in them. Some men felt that a committed relationship hampered their ability to make friends on campus; instead of going out socializing with peers, they would have to spend time with a significant other. Moreover, committed relationships had other costs, and some men found them confining, limiting their ability to do what they wanted when they wanted. Relationships could also be emotionally demanding, sources of constant strife that gobbled energy that could otherwise be invested in other projects. It was not gender that determined what individuals wanted from intimate relationships, but instead, social class affected young men's approaches towards relationships. A majority of the working-class students I interviewed felt uneasy with hookups and instead preferred committed relationships. Their self-development imperative included a focus on educational attainments and vocational skills and lacked the middle-class understanding of exploring life-style options and making new friends in college.

The uniformity of the social processes that affected young men's and women's orientations towards intimate relationships does not negate the gendered aspects of sexuality on campus. Men and women had different strategies within the sexual arena on BAU. Young men, for instance, hosted the majority of parties, which were often, at least partially, motivated by the ambition to hookup. This, however, marginally created power imbalances between men and women. Men tried to control the flow of people into these parties, which actually hampered other men's access to these gatherings more than women's. Furthermore, their ability to control these environments and enforce their desires was limited. At these parties, at least the ones that I attended, women were not excluded or scorned if they did not flirt and sexually entice hosts, nor were they forced to drink or respond to ongoing sexual advances. Specific hookup rituals enacted at these gatherings were gendered, for instance the "audience games" that men performed to entice women. However, it can hardly be said that these gendered differences established an uneven playing field. There was even ambiguity surrounding the effects of the double sexual standard. Both men and women accrued peer status through erotic attention from the other sex, and both risked reputational damage due to hookups. For women, this resulted from hooking up too much, while for men, it occurred through rumors about their inadequate sexual performances. The extent to which this established inequalities between men and women remains a topic for further consideration.

Sexual scripts have 'feeling rules', delineating what should be felt during and

after the encounter. Actors try to manage their emotions in accordance with these rules (Hochschild, 1979). Within the hookup script, these rules precluded feelings of emotional intimacy and commitment, and students did the necessary 'emotion work' to achieve this. A number of interactional codes were endorsed to thwart the development of feelings of emotional intimacy. One of these codes was to avoid contact with a hookup partner for a certain amount of time after the initial sexual encounter. This meant that students often avoided those areas where they risked running into their hookup partner. Initiating contact after the hookup was a delicate ordeal and could easily be construed as wanting more. Hence, students often waited a certain number of days, or even weeks, to reinitiate contact. Texting exchanges between hookup partners were limited to making arrangements for a subsequent meeting. This subsequent get together should happen at a party or within the privacy of a home, and activities that hinted at a conventional date were precluded. When meeting, hookup partners' conversations should remain superficial and not touch upon vulnerabilities and deeply felt emotions. Even sexual activities were regulated by the principle of avoiding emotional involvement. Practices such as cuddling and, for some, cunnilingus, though not fellatio, were too intimate for many and therefore avoided. Hooking up demanded the labor of avoiding relationships.

BIOGRAPHY

- Allison, R. and Risman, B.J. (2014). "It Goes Hand in Hand with the Parties": Race, Class, and Residence in College Student Negotiations of Hooking Up', *Sociological Perspectives*, 57(1): 102-123.
- Armstrong, E.A., England, P. and Fogarty, A.C.K. (2012). 'Accounting for Women's Orgasm and Sexual Enjoyment in College Hookups and Relationships', *American Sociological Review*, 77(3): 435-462.
- Armstrong, E.A. and Hamilton, L.T. (2013). *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Backstrom, L., Armstrong, E. A., and Puentes, J. (2012). 'Women's Negotiation of Cunnilingus in College Hookups and Relationships', *Journal of Sex Research*, 49(1): 1-12.
- Bogle, K.A. (2007). 'The Shift from Dating to Hooking up in College: What Scholars Have Missed', *Sociology Compass*, 1(2): 775-788.
- Bogle, K.A. (2008). *Hooking Up: Sex, Dating, and Relationships on Campus*. New York: New York University Press.
- Currier, D.M. (2013). 'Strategic Ambiguity: Protecting Emphasized Femininity and Hegemonic Masculinity in the Hookup Culture', *Gender & Society*, 27(5): 704-727.
- England, P., Shafer, E. F., and Fogarty, A. C. (2008). 'Hooking Up and Forming Romantic Relationships on Today's College Campuses', pp. 531-593 in Michael S. Kimmel (ed.) *The Gendered Society Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gagnon, J., and Simon, W. (1973). *Sexual Conduct: The Social Sources of Human Sexuality*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Hamilton, L and Armstrong, E.A. (2009). 'Gendered Sexuality in Young Adulthood: Double Binds and Flawed Options', *Gender & Society*, 23(5): 589-616.
- Heldman, C. and Wade, L. (2010). 'Hook-Up Culture: Setting a New Research Agenda', *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 7(4): 323-333.
- Hochschild, A.R. (1979). 'Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure,' *American Journal of Sociology*, 85(3): 551-575.
- Holland, D. C. and Eisenhart, M. A. (1990). *Educated in Romance: Women, Achievement, and College Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Holla, S. (2013). 'Processen van 'Seksueel Leren' in de Praktijk: Een Studie naar Seksueel Labelen en Handelen van Tieners in Nederland', *Sociologie*, 9(3): 296-317.

- Kalish, R. and Kimmel, M. (2011). 'Hooking Up: Hot Hetero Sex or the New Numb Normative?', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 26(67): 137-151.
- Kimmel, M. (2008). *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1969)[1949]. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Translated from French by J. H. Bell, J. R. Sturmer and R. Needham, Rodney. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode.
- Luff, T., Hoffman, K., and Berntson, M. (2016). 'Hooking Up and Dating Are Two Sides of a Coin', *Contexts*, 15(1): 76-77.
- McClintock, E.A. (2010). 'When Does Race Matter? Race, Sex, and Dating at an Elite University', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72(1): 45-72.
- Ronen, S. (2010). 'Grinding on the Dance Floor: Gendered Scripts and Sexualized Dancing at College Parties', *Gender & Society*, 24(3): 355-377.
- Rubin, G. S. (1984). 'Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sex,' pp. 267-319 in Carole S. Vance (ed) *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*. Boston: Routledge.
- Schalet, A.T. (2011). *Not Under my Roof: Parents, Teens and the Culture of Sex*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sweeney, B. N. (2014). 'Masculine Status, Sexual Performance, and the Sexual Stigmatization of Women', *Symbolic Interaction*, 37(3): 369-390.
- Wade, L. (2017). *American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Waller, W. (1937). 'The Dating and Rating Complex', *American Sociological Review*, 2(5): 727-734.