

**PROMISCUITY TO MAKE A POINT:
HOOKING UP, REGRET, AND WHY COLLEGE WOMEN KEEP DOING IT**

A THESIS

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Margaret S. Deadrick

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I have read this thesis and agree that it meets the requirements for a Feminist and Gender Studies Thesis:

Heidi R. Lewis

Date

Gail Murphy-Geiss

Date

The following work is in compliance with the honor code of Colorado College. On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this thesis.

Margaret S. Deadrick

April 15, 2014

Margaret S. Deadrick

Date

Abstract: *Existing research on the college hookup culture has shown that women are prone to negative resulting physical, emotional, social, and relational results. The purpose of this study is to identify factors that lead women to hookup regret and factors that prompt women to hookup following regretful experiences. A survey of 181 college senior women from a small liberal arts college in the central United States, and in-depth interviews with ten of those women, indicate that hookup regret is most commonly a result of negative social interactions following the encounter, or negative treatment by the hookup partner. The data also indicates that women continue to participate in hooking up for the resulting sexual gratification. Third Wave Feminist theory encourages sexual autonomy as the path to sexual liberation—many women continue to test this avenue, but scarcely find the results they expected.*

Keywords: *college . hooking up. regret. motivation. feminist theory.*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION..... 6

LITERATURE REVIEW

Regret..... 8

Motivation..... 13

METHODS.....17

RESULTS.....19

INTERVIEWS.....31

CONCLUSION.....48

REFERENCES.....54

APPENDIX A Online Survey.....60

APPENDIX B Factor Coding.....70

APPENDIX C Interview Schedule.....78

INTRODUCTION

Instead of picking up a woman at her front door for a first date, as was once common practice, college men today are more frequently found prowling a dance floor, a crowded bar, or a fraternity event for a partner to spend a less formal night together—that likely won't include dinner and a movie. It is accepted that traditional dating in college has been largely replaced by “hooking up.” This type of sexual interaction is not clearly defined in academia or society; anything from kissing to intercourse can be included, though it is most often categorized as a sexual encounter outside of an exclusive relationship.¹ Casual sexual encounters are not a new phenomenon, but the rate and relative normativity of this kind of union that is seen in college-aged millennials is phenomenally specific to this generation, likely beginning in the 1980s (England and Thomas 2006). Additionally ambiguous is the “hookup script,” or the events that lead up to a hookup encounter. Kathleen Bogle (2008:46) gave a description in her book *Hooking Up: Sex, Dating, and Relationships On Campus*:

Hookups generally occur at the culmination of a night of ‘hanging out’ among a large group of classmates/friends at a campus party or local bar. Either the man or woman can initiate the interaction, but in either case cues will be nonverbal (eye contact, body language, attentiveness, etc.).

Recently, scholars have theorized how the concept of hooking up shapes a generation, and whether hooking up yields positive or negative physical, emotional and social results.

The argument has produced two distinct camps: one that sees hooking up as a tool for

¹ Definition derived from Armstrong, England, and Fogarty 2012; Backstrom, Armstrong, and Puentes 2012; Bogle 2008; Bradshaw, Kahn, and Saville 2010; Epstein et al. 2009; Eshbaugh and Gute 2008; Fisher et al. 2012; Lambert, Kahn, and Apple 2003; Paul and Hayes 2002; Paul, McManus, and Hayes 2000; Stinson 2010; Uecker and Regnerus 2010.

sexual liberation and agency, and the other as a sign of moral decline, related to a hypersexualized media and the promotion of promiscuity (Stinson 2010). Hooking up may be linked to both. Hookup participation and frequency varies by college campus, as well as a number of other factors like gender, age, sexual orientation, and ethnic background. Studies show that anywhere from 53 percent to 85 percent of any given college student population participates in hooking up.²

Sexual liberation is paramount to the Third Wave/Modern Feminist movement, pioneered by Rebecca Walker, and was founded on the premise of “choice,” encouraging the acceptance of all avenues of women’s sexual expression. Yet, this theory often leads women to believe casual encounters, like hooking up, are the best way to find sexual empowerment. However, Bradshaw et al. (2010) reported that more than 95 percent of women and close to 77 percent of men expressed at least some preference for dating over hooking up. Long-term relationships more frequently form out of traditional dating, where women can more easily avoid high potential costs like getting a bad reputation, feeling ashamed, or feeling depressed (Eshbaugh and Gute 2008; Grello et al. 2006; Paul and Hayes 2002). One can conclude that men fear a loss of freedom and independence with committed relationships, and hookups guarantee them that sexual fluidity (Bradshaw et al. 2010). Garcia and Reiber (2008) indicated that only 8 percent of women expect a traditional relationship to result from hooking up. Anne Campbell (2008:169) posed this question: “If women have a barely positive evaluation of the [hookup] experience, why

² Statistics were gathered from England, Shafer, and Fogarty 2007; England and Thomas 2006; Garcia and Reiber 2008; Grello et al. 2003; Lambert et al. 2003; Paul and Hayes 2002; Paul et al. 2000; Stinson 2010.

do they do it?” The current study aims to find an answer by identifying women’s experiences during and following a hookup encounter, which experiences lead women to feel regretful of the hookup, and which factors lead a woman to participate in hooking up following regretful experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Regret

Regret following a hookup is not a novel concept. In fact, a number of studies have been conducted on individual’s emotional responses to engaging in hooking up. According to Paul and Hayes (2002), the most commonly reported feelings after a hookup were ‘regret and disappointment.’ Physical intimacy alone, without the coupling of emotional intimacy, often leaves people feeling used, and questioning one’s self-worth (Eisenberg et al. 2009). A study conducted by Fisher et al. (2012) reported the majority of both men (72 percent) and women (78 percent) state they had felt regret following a hookup. Due to the fact that men have been found to be overall more comfortable with engaging in casual sexual relationships (Fisher et al. 2012; Garcia and Reiber 2008; Lambert et al. 2003), women reported regret more frequently and at higher rates than men (Campbell 2008; Fisher et al. 2012; Garcia et al. 2012). The aforementioned findings demonstrate that men’s frequent positive experiences encourage them to repeat hookups, but women’s experiences never allow them to fully adapt to it (Campbell 2008; Fiedler and Carey 2010b; Townsend and Wasserman 2011). Even as some women discover they are not getting the emotional connection they seek from hooking up, many tend to blame themselves instead of recognizing issues inherent in the hookup culture (Heldman and Wade 2010; Paul and Hayes 2002). The complexity of women’s emotional reactions to

hooking up suggests that emotions cannot be separated from sexual involvement (Paul and Hayes 2002), and it's this inextricable link that ultimately results in regret.

It is important to note that negative reactions may include regret, or they may be a result of initially feeling regret. Those who engaged in casual sex and regretted having the encounter had more symptoms of depression than those who did not regret the encounter; women overall are more likely to feel shame for hooking up (Flack et al. 2007; Grello et al. 2006; Paul and Hayes 2002). As evidenced by the fact that sexual regret studies have produced consistent statistics, I conclude that regret is a common emotional result of hooking up, and women experience regret more frequently and to a greater degree than men.

Previous studies have identified factors of hooking up that have caused people to feel regret. Fisher et al. (2012) found that 30 percent of men but only 12 percent of women regretted hooking up because of a lack of physical attraction. Women's reasons for regret more frequently cite a loss of self-worth (Campbell 2008; Townsend and Wasserman 2011). Researchers present a number of other reasons college-aged adolescents have cited for regretting a hook up.

Society's double standard. The gender revolution granted women more control over their own sexuality, but the connotations for sexual expression are still very gendered (England and Thomas 2006; Glenn and Marquardt 2001). Women today are still held to a stricter standard when it comes to sex and must navigate a fine line between exerting their increased sexual agency and going too far (Bogle 2007; Stinson 2010). The traditional sexual script implies that females owe sexual gratification to males (Paul and

Hayes 2002). Society chastises women but rewards men for expressions of sexuality, often leaving the women ashamed for doing so.

Negativity toward women's sexuality has a great impact on how individuals make sense of their own sexual identity. The internalization of the social construction of gender creates guilt among individuals, especially women, who transgress those norms (Paul and Hayes 2002). Women may be led to believe that they should only hookup with men they are interested in dating, since many believe hooking up is the pathway to relationships. Instead, women often end up in a precarious dilemma in which they risk men viewing them as an undesirable relationship partner due to their promiscuity (England et al. 2007). In short, Campbell (2008) asserted that women have greater potential costs than men in terms of self-esteem and reputation. Men are far from exempt from negative effects, but casual sex is less likely to damage their private and public self-image.

Pleasure and the body. Without commitment as a precursor, sexual pleasure is a strong motivator for participants to hookup, but when pleasure is not achieved, it can also be a strong cause for regret. Armstrong et al. (2009) reported that both men and women do not expect sexual equality in hookups, only relationships. The first time two partners hookup, Armstrong et al. (2009) found that women orgasm only 32 percent as often as men. In a more recent study, only 10 percent of women reported reaching orgasm during a first time hookup (Armstrong et al. 2012). Some male respondents reported to England et al. (2007) that they are not concerned with the woman's orgasm in a hookup, since it is expected to be a one-time encounter. Based on these reports, it seems men's sexual

pleasure takes precedence over women's in most hookups (Armstrong et al. 2009; Heldman and Wade 2010).

Uncommitted sexual relations are the type least associated with pleasure (Bay-Cheng, Robinson, and Zucker 2009); sexual pleasure is much higher in relationships, as partners become more familiar with each other's bodies and desires. Affection and commitment are more predictive of orgasm and pleasure, even in hookups (Armstrong et al. 2012). Specifically, Fisher et al. (2012) cited about a third of women report regretting a hookup for the poor quality of sex. Having a past experience with a partner vastly increases the chances that a woman reflects positively on the hookup, whether or not she had an orgasm. Behavioral trends have developed into norms that favor men's interests. For the most part, women have to be more assertive and explicit than men in hookup encounters because an equal exchange is not implied (Backstrom et al. 2012). With that, it seems some women engage in casual sex as a way to gain emotional gratification by pleasing their partner, rather than physical gratification by receiving pleasure themselves. In hindsight, that servitude and lack of physical pleasure leads them to regret.

Other regrets.³ A number of studies have addressed the link between intercourse in hookups and regret. Eshbaugh and Gute (2008) identified that engaging in intercourse with someone known less than 24 hours is highly predictive of regret. According to Fiedler and Carey (2010b), women experience higher rates of psychological distress from

³ For more information on regret and respect, see Campbell 2008; England and Thomas 2006; and Lewis et al. 2012. For more information on regret and sexual coercion, see Armstrong et al. 2009; Flack et al. 2007; Heldman and Wade 2010; Lambert et al. 2003; Paul and Hayes 2002; Reiber and Garcia 2010; and Wade and Heldman 2012. For more information on regret and the number of sexual partners, see Campbell 2008; Grello et al. 2006; Eshbaugh and Gute 2008; and Townsend and Wasserman 2011. For more information on regret and intoxication, see Fisher et al. 2012; and Lewis et al. 2012.

coital⁴ hookups than men because they are prone to feelings of attachment and vulnerability after having sex. When these feelings are not indulged by one's partner and cannot be suppressed, women tend to regret the sexual encounter (Campbell 2008; Townsend and Wasserman 2011).

As many women today believe that hooking up is a segue into a committed relationship, a lack of further contact from their partner after a hookup is a major source of regret. Women often felt hurt and confused, especially if she did not receive any recognition from the person afterwards (Campbell 2008; Glenn and Marquardt 2001; Townsend and Wasserman 2011). In such situations, women tended to blame themselves for being an inadequate lover, or for having known that emotional attachment was bound to be one sided (Glenn and Marquardt 2001; Paul and Hayes 2002). Yet, even sexually permissive women were not exempt from disappointment; women who hookup frequently, and/or with many partners, have been found to get upset when the other person does not show any interest in them as a person (Glenn and Marquardt 2001; Paul and Hayes 2002; Townsend and Wasserman 2011). According to Eisenberg et al. (2009), a committed partner relationship is associated with better mental health for women. Therefore, when a woman's hookup partner does not show interest in future contact, or leaves her feeling confused about whether or not interest will ensue, she is bound to feel distressed and regretful.

There are a lot of different reasons why a person may regret their participation in a hookup. Whether the cause is an isolated experience with a partner or the

⁴ Involving sexual intercourse, in this case insinuating vaginal (and possibly anal) but excluding oral.

internalization of one of societies expectations for sexual relations, regret leaves a person feeling negatively about a hookup experience overall. However, experiencing hookup regret does not necessarily mean a person will stop engaging in unions of this type. A number of factors have been found to drive people who have experienced hookup regret to do it again.

Motivation

Men and women participate in the hookup culture at practically the same rate, and while some researchers argued that there are no significant gender differences in motivations for hooking up (i.e., Garcia and Reiber 2008), others believed they are drastically different (i.e., Townsend and Wasserman 2011). A number of gender-neutral motivating factors have been identified: Paul and Hayes (2002) cited that both men and women idealized hookups and a lack of communication on campus perpetuated a falsely positive image of this kind of encounter. Meston and Buss (2007) included things like attraction and pleasure, curiosity and opportunity, enhancing social status, and pressure as factors. Some respondents said they were motivated to hookup to release stress, fill a void, cope with low self-esteem or to feel empowered (Glenn and Marquardt 2001; Wade and Heldman 2012). Finally, as the age of marriage continues to decline in the United States, men and women alike seek some of the benefits of relationships without offering too much commitment (Regnerus 2012). These factors position men and women on the same sexual and emotional plane while hooking up, insinuating that their motivations to participate are the same.

Men and women are biological variations of the human, and possess different emotional mechanisms to motivate sexual interactions (Townsend and Wasserman 2011). Meston and Buss (2007) noted that women's motivations were more focused on relational elements, where males seemed more motivated by sexual gratification and social status. After all, sexual prowess is socially rewarding for men but can be socially damaging for women. More permissive attitudes toward men's sexual behavior are likely to motivate them to continue hooking up (Fiedler and Carey 2010b). For millennials in college, opting out of the hookup culture may mean opting out of sex. Many individuals, especially women, who would prefer not have casual sex do so anyway because it seems like their only option (Wade and Heldman 2012). There are a number of motivating factors that may lead them to feel trapped in the hookup culture.

Sex ratio. Whether students acknowledge it or not, the sex ratio on any given college campus influences the way men and women interact sexually. Paula England (2012:512) posited that

The lower the ratio of men to women, the more men have power to get what they want in such partnerships... In common sense terms, if you know you can be easily replaced, but you would have a hard time finding another partner, you are likely to be more accommodating to whatever your partner wants.

According to Uecker and Regnerus (2010), women typically outnumber men on American college campuses, and this leads to a more sexually permissive culture. England (2012) found that women at colleges with a lower ratio of men to women were less likely to have a boyfriend but more likely to have had sex, suggesting that either men are able to exert their power as a scarce resource to get women to "give them" sex without

the commitment of a relationship, or women are willing to do so in order to secure the resource (England 2012; Uecker and Regnerus 2010). Other studies insinuated that the latter may be the case; women's permissiveness in groups where men are fewer allow the men to enjoy a variety of physically attractive heterosexual partners (Garcia and Reiber 2008; Grello, Welsh, and Harper 2006; Regnerus 2012; Townsend and Wasserman 2011). All else being equal, the availability of attractive alternatives *outside* of a pair yet *inside* the campus tends to reduce dependency and commitment to relationships. The imbalanced sex ratio in the college relationship market enables men to remain in the sex market and taint the possibility of relationships for those seeking commitment (Regnerus 2012). When willing relationship partners aren't readily available, women often settle for hookups in place of the committed relationship they really want.

Pluralistic Ignorance. Peer acceptance and social approval continue to drive both men and women to be sexually active during college, despite grave misconceptions about sexual behavior of their peers (Bogle 2008; Stinson 2010). A number of studies have demonstrated a "pluralistic ignorance" effect, in which both men and women misconceive that others are more comfortable with uncommitted sexual behaviors than they themselves are (Fisher et al. 2012, Lambert et al. 2003; Reiber 2012). The idea that "everyone is doing it", or at least doing it more frequently and with more permissiveness, may motivate individuals to hookup, especially if participation is seen as a way to elevate one's social status.

Students frequently overestimate the number of their peers that participate in hookups, and how frequently they do so. Participants in Paul and Hayes' (2002) study

estimated that 85 percent of their peers were hooking up, when in reality it was only 70 percent. Men demonstrated a greater discrepancy between their comfort level and the perceived comfort level of their peers. Women are ultimately more susceptible to the effects of pluralistic ignorance, and are more likely to face negative psychological and emotional consequences as a result (Flack et al. 2007; Reiber and Garcia 2012; Stinson 2010). In short, students believe their peers engage in hooking up primarily because they like doing so, while they see themselves engaging in these behaviors primarily due to peer pressures.

Other motivators.⁵ Several studies show that the desire to start a long-term relationship is a popular motivation for engaging in a hookup (Armstrong, England, and Fogarty 2009; Bogle 2007; Bogle 2008; England et al. 2007; Garcia and Reiber 2008; Heldman and Wade 2010). Fifty-one percent of participants in Garcia and Reiber's (2008) study reported hooking up as a way to potentially initiate a traditional romantic relationship. England et al. (2007) reported 47 percent of women and 36 percent of men are looking to start a relationship with their most recent hookup partner, and Garcia and Reiber (2008) found that 43 percent of women and 29 percent of men saw a traditional romantic relationship as the ideal outcome of a hookup. Women seem to learn over time that in order to get the emotional connection they seek, sex should be relational, and that they will end up being judged more harshly than men for continuing to hookup (England et al. 2007).

⁵ For more information on motivation and intoxication, see Fiedler and Carey 2010a; Fiedler and Carey 2010b; Fisher et al. 2012; Garcia and Reiber 2008; Garcia et al. 2012; Grello et al. 2006; Lambert et al. 2003; Lewis et al. 2012; and Paul and Hayes 2002. For more information on motivation and casual relationships, see Armstrong et al. 2010; Glenn and Marquardt 2001; and Wade and Heldman 2012. For more information on motivation and spontaneity, see Fiedler and Carey 2010a.

Studies show high percentages of both men and women who claim sexual pleasure as their motivating factor to hookup. In Garcia and Reiber's (2008) study, nine in ten students, or 89 percent, reported physical pleasure as a motivation for hooking up. Fiedler and Carey (2010a) found that 80 percent of people are motivated to hookup by sexual desire, and 56 percent by the attractiveness of the other person. On the contrary, seeking emotional fulfillment or connection is the reason 54 percent of Garcia and Reiber's (2008) participants claimed they engage in hookups. Searching for love may bring individuals to hookup, though Wade and Heldman (2012) posited that students are simply looking for positive emotion or meaningful connection. A person might be motivated for selfish reasons, such as increasing self-esteem (Paul and Hayes 2002). It is women, more than men, who endorse emotional motivations (Meston and Buss 2007). Even when physical or emotional ideals don't come to fruition, these factors remain influential to a person's hookup participation in repeat encounters.

As evidenced by the existing research, studies have been done on both regret and motivation in hookup encounters. This study aims for unique findings by collecting motivation factors *following* a regretful encounter, as well as using feminist theories to identify the cause of certain regrets and emotions. Additionally, the incorporation of feminist theory lends a broader speculation as to why women in college feel the necessity to use hookups as their path the sexual liberation.

METHODS

My analysis of the data collected in this study is informed by theories of feminism that give voice and credibility to the experiences of individual women. Audre Lorde once

said, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house,” meaning that if an institution is going to change, it will be done by the hands of the oppressed. It’s important, then, that knowledge and progress toward sexual equality come out of women’s experiences. This notion of consciousness raising for the experiences of women is considered to be inherently Second Wave, and was meant to shed light on marriage, employment, and race issues; however, in the context of sexual liberation and empowerment, we can transfer this lens to the more modern issue of how women use casual sexual encounters to benefit themselves (“Lexicon of the Debates.”:38-39). According to feminist theorist Mary Douglas (1966:168), “No other social pressures are potentially so explosive as those which constrain sexual relations.” She declared that sexual collaboration is the cornerstone of social life, and while the commonality of sexual experience would in theory bring humanity together as one ungendered unit, “sometimes we find that instead of dependence and harmony, sexual institutions express rigid separation and violent antagonism.” It’s rarely physical force, she said, that keeps us strictly adhering to our prescribed sex roles, but instead the association between the sexes that we learn from a young age. In the following analysis, I will work from the distinction set by feminist theorist Gayle Rubin (1975:231), that “the ‘relations of sexuality’ can and should be distinguished from the ‘relations of production.’” Here, hooking up is the sexual institution at hand, and will be considered a strictly social issue, not a reproductive one.

This study used a population of female seniors from a small liberal arts college in the central United States in January of 2014.⁶ Of the 369 students polled, 52 students (49%) partially completed the online survey and 129 students (35%) *completed* the online survey. The survey question pertaining to motivating factors was adapted from the YSEX? survey by Meston and Buss (2007); see Appendix A for survey content. Regret-causing factors and motivating factors were divided into physical, emotional and social categories, which can be found in Appendix B. Demographic questions sought to collect data on sexual orientation and race. Respondents that identified as heterosexual/straight, bisexual, asexual, questioning, or other were included in the results. The survey did not ask participants to specify their partners' gender. Due to the fact that no survey respondents identified as homosexual/lesbian, none of the findings reflect the hookup experiences for that demographic. This finding could be due in part to lesbian women's less frequent participation in hookups, or women's reflections of past hookups. If a woman has had experiences with both men and women in her past, she is likely to declare herself as bisexual.

Participants who completed the survey were given the opportunity at the end to include their name and contact information if they were willing to participate in an individual interview with the researcher. Twenty-seven of the participants included their contact information, and the first ten participants to reply to a follow-up email were selected and interviewed. Private, individual interviews were the chosen method, as opposed to focus groups, due to the sensitive nature of the discussion topic and to protect

⁶ The school's sex ratio is 54 percent women and 46 percent men, according to the school's website.

the anonymity of the participants. A broad outline of questions and topics was used to guide a fluid conversation about the participant's experience with regret and repeated hookups at the particular college; see Appendix E for the interview schedule.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the demographic information of survey participants. Overall, 85 percent (n=176) of respondents reported that they have engaged in at least one hookup encounter during college. Of those, 84 percent (n=148) reported they have felt regret for hooking up. Sixteen percent said they have never felt regret about a hookup encounter in college.

Table 1.
Demographic Statistics

Sexual Orientation (n=127)		
	Heterosexual/Straight	82% (n=105)
	Bisexual	9% (n=11)
	Questioning	4% (n=5)
	Other	3% (n=4)
	Asexual	2% (n=3)
	Homosexual/Lesbian	0% (n=0)
Race (n=124)		
	White/Caucasian	87% (n=110)
	Asian/Asian American	11% (n=14)
	Hispanic/Latina	9% (n=11)
	African/African American	5% (n=6)
	Native American	2% (n=3)
Hookup Participation (n=176)		
	Yes	85% (n=150)
	No	15% (n=26)
Hookup Regret (n=148)		
	Yes	84% (n=124)
	No	16% (n=24)
Hookup Partners (n=150)		
	10 or fewer	65 % (n=98)
	11-20	20% (n=29)
	21 or greater	15% (n=23)

Regret-causing factors were categorized into physical, emotional, and social groups. By comparing frequencies, it was evident that a vast majority of participants, 86 percent, experienced regret in all three categories (n=89). Emotional and physical regret were cited at 98.9 percent (n =102) and 95.5 percent (n =98), respectively. It may be notable that 100 percent of respondents (n=103) cited that they had experienced social regret following a hookup. Women in this study most frequently regretted a hookup for social reasons.

The most common regret-causing factor was that they did not experience an orgasm; 29.7 percent (n=30) of respondents claimed this factor caused them regret in most of their hookups, and 31.6 (n =32) percent said this factor caused them to regret a hookup only sometimes. Table 2 lists the top ten regret-causing factors in order from most often to least often selected. The first regret factor is part of the physical regret category, but the rest are heavily focused on emotional, social, and relational regrets. The table is continued in Appendix C.

Table 2.

Mean frequency of regret (1= never 2=sometimes 3=often) .

Regret Factor	Mean
I did not experience orgasm.	1.92
The person’s intentions for future contact were unclear.	1.82
I felt disappointed but I don’t know exactly why.	1.80
I felt ashamed by my behavior.	1.77
I felt easy, cheap and/or dirty.	1.77
I became emotionally involved though I did not plan to.	1.76
I was not able to establish a friendship with the person after hooking up.	1.76
The person did not try to contact me again after the encounter.	1.72

The encounter negatively affected my friendship with the person.	1.71
I felt guilty but I don't know exactly why.	1.70

Among respondents who reported they have experienced regret, the most common motivating factor was “I was attracted to the person,” with 61.6 percent (n=45) citing this as motivation in most hookups, and 28.7 percent (n=21) citing this as a motivating factor only sometimes. Physical motivating factors were cited by 100 percent (n=78) of survey respondents, making it the most common motivating factor category. Ninety-seven point one percent of respondents said they have been motivated by emotional and social factors. Table 3 shows the ten most frequently cited motivating factors cited, from most common to least common. The top eight factors fall into the physical motivation category; the final two are more emotionally focused. This demonstrates a strong trend in motivation for physical reasons that shifts into emotional, social and relational. Table 3 is continued on Appendix D.

Table 3.

Mean frequency of motivation (Scale: 1= never 2=sometimes 3=often).

Motivating Factor	Mean
I was attracted to the person.	2.52
It's fun.	2.37
It feels good.	2.33
The person's physical appearance turned me on.	2.29
I like the person's personality.	2.28
I was drunk.	2.21
I was not in a committed relationship.	2.18
I wanted to experience the physical pleasure.	2.16
The person made me feel sexy.	2.12
I wanted to the person to want me.	2.11

Examining the factors within the physical, emotional, and social subcategories helps determine whether there is a categorical link between a person's regret factors and motivation factors. Based on a cross tabulation between regret factors and motivating factors, 95.5 percent (n=66) of respondents who experienced physical regret were motivated to hookup by physical factors. Only 4.5 percent who were motivated by physical factors did not experience physical regret. Additionally, 98.4 percent (n=66) of respondents who experienced emotional regret were motivated by emotional factors. The same percentage was calculated for social factors. This leads to the conclusion that frequently hookup participants experience regret that is related to their original motivation to hookup.

INTERVIEWS

In one-on-one interviews, participants recalled their hookup experiences in college. Although 'I did not experience orgasm' was the regret-causing factor cited most frequently by survey respondents, regret factors that were categorized as physical were surprisingly not mentioned in any of the in-person interviews. I believe this is due to the more personal nature of the interview, in which people felt more comfortable addressing emotional and social regret because they had the ability to elaborate. It may also be that personally prompted questions lent to more consideration when answering the question, as opposed to simply checking boxes in the online survey.

Emotional Regret

The hookup script prescribes a union *devoid* of emotional connection, so it's easy to assume that emotions do not play a role in regret. However, many women spoke to

their experiences developing an unintended emotional connection with a hookup partner, or simply feeling negatively about themselves and their behavior. One woman said in her interview, “The physical and emotional are so interconnected...hooking up with someone physical, there has got to be some emotional connection.” The other interviews in this study seem to support this notion. Almost all the women interviewed claimed to have developed emotional ties to a hookup partner at least once; when those feelings were not reciprocated, it led to regret.

As woman get older and gain more hookup experience, they still tend to form emotional connections with hookups, even when they expect that it won't be reciprocated. In an interview, a woman claimed, “I am not a very emotional person in general, but when I have sex with someone, I'll always care. It's just scary because I am always vulnerable, and I rarely feel like guys are vulnerable with me.” Another woman echoed this sentiment when she said, “I don't feel like I did anything wrong. And victim feels like a strong, loaded word, but I was hurt, I was the one who was putting myself out there and I was the one who was getting let down.” When emotional vulnerability feels one sided, it tends to lead the vulnerable party to regret opening up.

Even when women didn't develop an emotional attachment, or feel that they opened up too much to a hookup partner, emotional regret crept into the aftermath. Feelings of disappointment, shame, and guilt for one's behavior were found to make women regretful of the encounter, and wish they'd behaved differently. When it came to shame, an interviewee encompassed her feelings by saying, “If I had a daughter or something, I wouldn't want her to make the choices I made.” The same woman said she

recognized the shame she felt for her past actions when she had to face repeating it. She explained,

A big reason I didn't want to break up with [my boyfriend] when it was coming to an end was, 'I don't want to be freshman [me] again. Like I don't want to be a slut or whatever'...I wouldn't know how else to conduct myself, I guess. And it did happen so that we broke up in the middle of [April] last year, and then I hooked up with two guys a weekend for two weeks.

Guilt is a vague emotion that a number of events can lead to, but feeling it in general often leads to regret. One woman said she felt remorseful when she betrayed guidelines she'd set for herself: "I think I felt a little weird about it because I came to college with the intention of making more meaningful connections with people, and it didn't seem like that was one of them." Regardless, guilt can arise from inaction too, or even from thinking a certain way. "You always blame yourself in all these situations," said one woman. "Whether it's hooking up with someone, or you haven't even had a boy notice you in so long and you just feel so horrible about yourself. My mind gets so far ahead of itself with that kind of stuff and then you have to kind of shut it off, but then it's like 'Why am I not allowed to think that? Why is it so horrible?'"

Negative self-image was a common regret-causing factor mentioned in the interviews. Many said the casual nature of hooking up frequently made them doubt themselves; one student said, "[Hooking up] doesn't make me feel good it makes me feel bad and I feel bad about myself and then I don't want to see that person and it's this whole chain reaction of feelings that happens every single time, it's always the same and it's just like feeling stupid for letting things go as far as they did." Another women said

she tends to take the hookup more personally, though she knows the danger in doing so.

She said,

I can't help but always feeling self-conscious the day after, like I did something wrong, or I'm ugly, I'm bad in bed or something. You just can't help feeling like really self-conscious, and that's when I start regretting it, because I don't want to have those feelings, I shouldn't have done that because I knew it was gonna lead to these feelings and now I just feel dumb, and it feels like they have all the power in the situation.

Emotional regret is a self-fulfilling prophecy, as emotions come from within an individual. Feminist author Jessica Valenti (2007:48) said it is those shameful moments in our sexual past that guide us on a better path forward. She wrote, "Sometimes doing silly, disempowering, sexually vapid things when you're young is just part of getting to the good stuff." However, the impetus for emotional regret in the case of this study is the nature of hookups in which women find themselves. Instead of recognizing the inherently unsatisfying aspects of hooking up (like the lack of emotional connection), they place blame on themselves and continue to engage, in hopes of a better outcome.

Social Regret

You don't have to be publically humiliated to feel social regret. Instead, it's often a result of behaving in a way not condoned by others around you, and defying your internalized understanding about *right* or *wrong*. The regret that some women feel from hooking up centers on the idea of the slut, in which women gain a reputation of promiscuity for hooking up. Valenti (2007:34) explained, "It's easy to say sex is a good thing. Living it is the hard part. Women have been taught for so long that having sex—or even just hooking up—means you're a slut, so it's kind of a hard thing to get over." One

woman recalled, “I’m definitely guilty of slut-shaming myself sometimes, [but] there was a ranking of the sluttiest girls in the freshman class, and *I* was the sluttiest girl in the freshman class.” There are even cases, said one woman, where other’s overt opinions don’t mean as much as your own shame. An interviewee explained, “There were times when I’ve just felt very weird, ‘unclean’ sounds borderline religious, but you walk home or you have to sit there that morning and it keeps coming back to you. You just get that clenching gut feeling of, ‘Ugh, why did I have to do that?’” Though she couldn’t pinpoint a specific reason why the hookup made her feel bad, she insinuated that it had to do with the decision she made while intoxicated. The same interviewee went on to explain, “There’s a lot I regret, usually because I wake up after being completely blacked out and be like ‘What the fuck, why did I do that?’ Sometimes it was ‘Who am I with?’ That’s never a good sign.” In our society, sexual activity is understood to be intimate and personal; if one feels dirty following an encounter, or forgets who they had sex with, it can lead to regret out of fear of social implications. Going against the norms of society can mean getting a bad reputation or being rejected by a social circle, and inclusion plays a role in a person’s happiness.

Though far less universal today, there is still an idea in Western society that it is most moral to wait to have intercourse until you’re in a committed union, based on the prevalence of abstinence-only sex education in U.S. public schools. With that, researchers found that engaging in uncommitted intercourse actually increases your chances of regretting the encounter. An interviewee admitted, “Sleeping with someone, one night stand style, I don’t think I’ve ever felt good about that...it doesn’t make me

feel like I valued myself at all if I give it all up in one night.” With the prevalence of casual relationships today, infidelity does not carry the weight it once did, but it is certainly a regret-causing factor in some situations. Claire Snyder-Hall (2010:255), Director of Interdisciplinary Studies at George Mason University, clarified that, “Third Wave Feminism insists that each woman must decide for herself how to negotiate the often contradictory desires for both gender equality and sexual liberation.” An interviewee declared her most regretful hookup as one where she cheated on her boyfriend with someone she *thought* she had a connection with. She explains,

It was kind of like my needs were at odds with each other. I was jeopardizing the more stable, probably more emotionally healthy thing with the instant gratification that I got from a hookup that I wanted to have for so long. And even when I felt regret when we were making out, I still went for it because I was already in the situation. It was like, ‘Why not?’ Burn it down. That’s not healthy at all.

Not only does regret in this situation affect the interviewee, but also the committed partner who she cheated on. Here, she realistically does face the possibility of social repercussions from people she may have hurt by her infidelity. Hooking up is most frequently an engagement to superficially and immediately benefit oneself. Whether those benefits are realized or not, the result of a hookup typically has social implications that *do not* benefit participants. Women’s rights activist Victoria Woodhull (1873) addressed the socially unacceptable nature of casual sex: “To this very considerable portion of female humanity [unmarried women], the right to the exercise and enjoyment of their sexual instincts is absolutely denied, under penalty of social death.” Though her manifesto was written more than 100 years ago, the implications of engaging in casual

sexual relations can have equal social repercussions and can prove to be particularly regret-causing for women. The issue of the double standard is still very relevant today, and it is evident that there is still research to be done on the issue.

Relational Regret

Regrets shared by all of the women in the interviews were overwhelmingly the ones caused by hookup partners. In some cases, women regretted *who* they'd hooked up with, but more often their regret stemmed from how they were treated during and after the hookup encounter. Gayle Rubin (1975:233) discussed women as gifts that men exchange. She said, "If it is women who are being transacted, then it is the men who give and take them who are linked, the woman being a conduit of a relationship rather than a partner to it. The exchange of women does not necessarily imply that women are objectified, in the modern sense, since objects in the primitive world are imbued with highly personal qualities. But it does imply a distinction between gift and giver." Her theory posits that with men as the active party in heterosexual unions, and women as the passive, it is men who will continue to live their most desired relational outcome. Rubin explained, "To enter into a gift exchange as a partner, one must have something to give. If women are for men to dispose of, they are in no position to give themselves away." Rubin's explanation may serve as evidence as to why many of the women I interviewed felt like their hookup partners did not acknowledge and validate their desires.

As commitment isn't expected in a hookup, the negotiation of future relations caused many women to regret the initial encounter. Often, the woman has hopes for future relations; when they aren't met, it can be regretful. One interviewee recalls, "I

mistook us hooking up every weekend as the foundations of a relationship, and he was so not there...I thought there were feelings, but not really.” A different woman felt similar regret, but to a more severe degree due to the loss of her virginity: “When I lost my virginity, I thought we would keep in touch...I didn’t really want a relationship but I guess I just wanted recognition of some sort.” For others though, it *is* a relationship they are looking for, and hooking up can seem like the most direct way to get that. One woman acknowledged in her interview that this desire for a relationship is at the root of her regret. She said, “I honestly think that the regret factor has always come from wanting something that doesn’t happen, which is probably a relationship or a consistent, respectful thing.” Regret is often a product of unfulfilled desires or expectations, and in many cases, what women desire is a long-term partner. Unclear signals about the possibility of a relationship have led women to regret the initial encounter out of resentment for the unknown.

Sometimes, though, the other person is very clear about their intentions—and they are negative. A lack of contact between partners after a hookup encounter was the most commonly noted regret-causing factor in the interviews. A number of the women said the encounter itself wasn’t inherently negative, but when the person never tried to contact them again, they wished they had not hooked up. One student said, “I feel like [the regret] kind of always happens after the fact. If it was fun and I want to do that again, then they don’t call, it’s like ‘Why not?’” Another added, “The morning after, or a couple days after, I’d be like, ‘Is he ever gonna text me again? Are we ever gonna see each other again?’” Many women insinuated that they engage in hookups time and again thinking

that it will go differently than before; they are frequently let down. An interviewee expanded upon the frequency of this regret-causing factor: “I couldn’t help but feel a little used afterwards, especially if you don’t hear from them again, which is pretty much like every time.” She continued, “When it’s in this close environment here, you know you’re gonna see the person, and if they don’t call you back, you can’t help but take it personally and feel stupid.” Negative feelings about oneself inflicted by the actions of the hookup partner are what frequently lead women to regret the experience altogether. When asked why this particular factor is so poignant for women when it comes to hooking up, a number of interviewees turned to the idea of closure. An individual explained,

I think closure is something we don’t get a lot in this hookup culture; you hookup with someone and it happens so fast, it’s not like dating where it’s progressive. You might have sex the first night and you don’t know this person...And even if it was like weird, I don’t know, I think there’s something about closure, almost a bit of you thinks it’ll feel better if you hookup with them again. It could be confidence, or it’ll make you feel like it was worth it because they wanted you again and it wasn’t just this one time thing.

In a close-knit campus environment like the one in this study, many hookup pairs already know each other on a social level prior to becoming sexually involved. Many note that being friends with someone after hooking up can be awkward and uncomfortable, leading them to regret the encounter in the first place. One woman elaborates, “Hooking up with friends, it’s too freaking complicated...It’s cut me off from so many people who I thought were genuinely really cool and I would have loved to be friends with. Because I’d never really hooked up with people who I don’t like as people.” She added, though, that women have it worse than men: “Once a guy hooks up with you, you’re no longer

valid as a person. That objectification factor is totally unreasonable.” Rubin (1975:238) touches on the notion of kinship systems, or social interactions that dictate factors including sexual activity. She explained, “The exchange of goods and services, production and distribution, hostility and solidarity, ritual and ceremony, all take place within the organizational structure of kinship,” which widely varies from one social environment to the next. The idea that engaging sexually without commitment cannot exist in conjunction with friendship is a kinship structure that seems to have developed in this particular college environment. The effect that hooking up has on friendship is an aspect many of the women said they began to understand over time, often prompting them to change their hookup behavior to avoid this regret-causing factor.

It’s evident from the testimony of the women who have lived these experiences that regret is born from unmet desires and their emotional reaction to that. The majority of cited regrets were in the relational category, insinuating that without certain behavior from the hookup partner, women wouldn’t experience regret. Feminist theorist Luce Irigaray (1977:261) problematized women as a mere prop for the fulfillment of men’s desires. She felt that the women before her time did not have the opportunity to consider their own desires, and called the role of women in sexual exchange, “a masochistic prostitution of her body to a desire that is not her own, and it leaves her in a familiar state of dependency upon man.” This declaration can be placed in comparison to women who enter hookups with the hopes of something more, but end up only fulfilling their partner’s carnal desires. Women’s recollections of partners who do not call, or treat them with disrespect, and the emotional regretful feelings, like shame and guilt that follow,

insinuates that regret is directly correlated to the expectations they entered the engagement with.

Physical Motivation

When asked why, after experiencing regret caused by a hookup, they continue to engage in such behavior, it was physical pleasure and sexual gratification that most women cited as the driving force. Attraction was the most common motivating factor for hooking up in the online survey, and interviewees said attraction to a specific individual has become a more poignant motivating factor over their time in college. After the initial attraction though, women said they were motivated by the prospect of gaining sexual gratification. If a woman is looking to have sexual needs met in college, interviewees said hooking up is the easiest avenue because, “With college boys I think it’s hard to find ones that are good and want to be in a relationship.” Hooking up, in the eyes of the women I interviewed, allows them the sexual experience they crave without the struggle for commitment that many men reject.

The notion of ‘being horny’ came up in interviews, which some say is just part of human nature. One student said, “If you have a physical need or a physical want, you go for it.” Interviewees were not hesitant to name sexual gratification as a primary reason for hooking up. One said, “I do it because it’s fun and it makes me feel good,” while another added, “I wanna have a pleasurable experience.” A number of the women saw participation in the hookup culture as the only way to have their sexual needs met, but that hooking up should not be misunderstood as anything more:

Coming in with the mindset that you’re not going to expect anything and having that wisdom—it must be something you learn over your

years [here] or in college, you just have to understand the mentality that you have to enter it with. It's that, there's nothing necessarily wrong with getting some sexual gratification, you know, and having a good time, but just not setting yourself up to be super let down or expecting a relationship out of it or expecting it to be anything more than just this fleeting, beautiful moment of connection with someone.

Above all else, the ease with which one's sexual needs are met in the hookup culture keeps people engaged. "I definitely would rather have a hookup for the consistent affection than nothing," said an interviewee. All of the women reflected on the last three years of college, and concluded that having low expectations for their hookups was something they learned after a number of trials. Sexual gratification is seemingly the most constant and dependable of outcomes from a hookup encounter. Valenti (2007:33) says that pleasure, one of the most primitive *reasons* for having sex, is often overshadowed by abstinence-only and marriage-only agendas. Even if college women are not looking to conceive a child, commitment to any degree can take away from the physical pleasures of sexual engagement. While many argue that commitment increases sexual pleasure (i.e., Bay-Cheng et al. 2009), Valenti encourages women to seek pleasure regardless of their relationship status. Thus, it is not surprising people cite it as the primary reason for coming back and repeating behavior that has been regretful emotionally and relationally in the past.

Emotional Motivation

Despite its tendency to lead to regret and negative emotions, the quest for emotional gratification in hookups does not deter many women from repeating their regretful behavior in hopes of a different outcome. Even if nothing permanent results (and we know commitment is the long-term goal of a lot women who hookup), and even

though it is often viewed as pathetic and inexplicable, the validation women crave from a hookup plays a large part in their participation. One woman said she learned this early in college, when she realized, “I enjoy this, it feels good, I like the attention and I have so much fun when I go out and drink and talk to boys.” The need to be validated by a desirable partner turned out to be a common thread through the interviews. One interviewee said seeing her friends seek validation from men is frustrating. She said, “We’re all attractive women, so what the fuck? I’m like ‘God, I wish you could just see what I see.’ Why do we need that validation? But we do!” The answer to her question arose in other interviews. Hookups serve, for some women, as a cure for loneliness. One student claimed, “Sometimes the loneliest feelings I’ve had in college have been at a very crowded party. Who doesn’t want someone to want to be with them?” Being able to recognize this motivation is something that, for some, came about after experiences with pain. With recognition, women came to accept ‘the hookup cure’ for what it was: a quick fix that wouldn’t last in the long term.

A portion of the women interviewed felt that hookups were a viable avenue for emotional closeness. They felt that as humans, we all crave it, and the nature of a hookup (i.e. sexual intimacy) lends to vulnerability for everyone. One woman felt without the emotional side of things, hookups seem unnatural: “You have the emotional and physical side of the relationship, and if they’re both not kind of progressing together, it’s so jolting. You always hear that girls can’t hookup without those emotions...I always wonder if that really is true, if the people who say they can just hookup with anyone just like, hookup and leave.” A mutual, emotional connection is not part of the hookup script.

Luce Irigaray (1977:261) described the difference between men's desires and women's desires, as if they were two different languages, likely leading to emotional disconnects in hookups. She wrote that women frequently enter sexual unions with men, "not knowing what she wants, ready for anything, even asking for more, so long as he will 'take' her as his 'object' when he seeks his own pleasure," because she thinks she is supposed to. Thus, she continued, "she will not say what she herself wants; moreover, she does not know, or no longer knows, what she wants." When women acknowledge their desires for emotional connection, and enter the encounter with the hopes of finding it, it often leads to regret. The women I interviewed said they have learned this over time; most avoid seeking emotional closeness in hookups, but a few said they can't help but feel hopeful.

Social Motivation

Factors outside of oneself, ones having to do with the environment around them, were also common in keeping women engaged in the hookup culture after regretful encounters. The consumption of and intoxication by alcohol is something widely known to lower inhibitions and lead people to hookup. Women in the interviews recalled personal experiences hooking up where alcohol was involved. One woman reflected,

I just feel like there are nights when I have a loss of inhibition going out, and I want to get more drunk than usual so I might make decisions or make moves on people that I usually wouldn't normally make because I really wanna hookup with someone. Alcohol definitely plays a role, but every time you say that out loud or think about it you just feel terrible. That was so stupid. I just got drunk to make the flirting and the texting and the lead up way more uninhibited.

Alcohol as a motivating factor seems to frequently accompany alcohol as a regret-causing factor, as inhibitions are lowered and judgment is impaired. Yet if consumed responsibly, the women said, it makes hooking up less serious. The sentiment of ‘fun’ was widely spoken of in interviews. While some cited fun as a current motivation—“When I think of why I hookup with people, I think because it’s fun and I like it”—others saw it as a factor that initially prompted them to hookup. “I remember having a really relativistic outlook on life and also on hookups when I came to [college],” one student said. “It basically takes out a lot of the weighty significance and specific morality that we put on these things.” Another trend situated fun as a replacement for romance and emotional connection, and often served as reason *not* to feel regret. One student claimed, “I kind of decided to embrace the hookup culture because there were fun aspects about it, and not be too serious with one person because it kind of seemed like a shit show and boys still seemed too immature to have the kind of relationship that I wanted to have.” With that, it was evident that mindset and intentional motivation were important in preventing further emotional and relational regret.

Social pressure, especially from close friends, often encourages women to participate in hookups because following the crowd makes them feel included. Dorothy Allison (1989) discussed the shame women often feel for harboring desires not congruent with the social and sexual norms. Her piece referred to the rise of “choice feminism,” in which women claimed to empower themselves through seemingly patriarchal sexual expressions. However, the same shame was noted by interviewees with regards to *not* participating in the hookup culture, which has been situated as a social norm on many

college campuses. One interviewee recalled that, as a freshman, her new college friends hooked up frequently, but she started school with little interest to participate:

Other people had been hooking up a lot; I was hanging out with a group of girls that every weekend would talk about who they'd hooked up with and I was always the one that was like 'No one!' So I was really excited to get my chance to hookup with someone...It took a long time, but I felt like 'This sucks! I feel like the odd duck out!' It had a lot more to do with acceptance from my peers, even just having something to talk about at Sunday brunch.

Even as seniors, women with like-minded friends recognize the social validation of hooking up, and admit to craving it when they see friends being praised. One student explained,

I think its part social pressure to be hooking up with someone. Even among my friends, who are all very feminist minded kind of people, and we have fun with each other, so much that having a boyfriend is not really a necessity. On nights that you go out, maybe you don't go with the goal of hooking up with someone in mind, but if one of your friends hooks up with a guy or someone does it's like the talk of the town— everyone gets so excited about it and it's such a big thing. So you want that sometimes, you want that attention from your friends and then you'll want that validation too.

Hooking up is inherently personal, but its place in society is very much public. Women continue to hookup after feeling regret for it because they see it as part of the college experience. There is an aspect of fitting in and keeping up with friends that come along with ones' engagement. Even after feeling regret, social motivations create a powerful drive for women to do it again, prompted by others around them or ideas from within.

Relational Motivation

While physical factors were cited as motivation more frequently, being attracted to someone's personality was found to increase the drive to hookup with that person, as

well. When the hookup was partner specific, motivations greater than the physical were common. The desire to find a long-term, committed partner by hooking up was expressed much more frequently in interviews than in survey results. The majority of interviewees said they have hoped for more from a hookup at least once; naturally, all have experienced it to different degrees. One interviewee explained she was hopeful that her hookups would lead to more: “It was exciting, I guess and I wasn’t necessarily expecting that there would be commitment but definitely hoping that there was potential for that to happen.” Another woman added, “I definitely have no regret, but there was hope, I guess, of there being something more.” Victoria Woodhull (1873:86), though she wrote more than a century ago, posited that this desire for more out of purely carnal sexual relations is only natural. She wrote, “Sexual intercourse that is in accordance with nature, and therefore proper, is that which is based upon mutual love and desire, and that ultimates in reciprocal benefit.” It is no wonder that it is more often women who desire a relationship from sex, as Woodhull calls them the rulers in the domain of affection. Hookups by nature, however, are not ones that are based upon mutual love, desire, or reciprocal benefit, yet some women in the interviews seemed to deny themselves this truth: “So we’d hooked up a lot and it became clear that he didn’t want anything but I’d still go back and be like, ‘Maybe if I’m really good this time, he’ll be like, ‘She’s great.’” This woman admitted, however, that she knew from past experiences that this tactic was likely a dead-end.

A number of the women admitted that their ideal romantic and sexual situation would be in a relationship. One woman said, “I think I go into every hookup, and

afterwards am thinking there could be something here. I think [waiting for a relationship] takes more effort than going out and hooking up with someone and hoping for the best. But I think it does work for some people, most of the time not. We all just think we're gonna be the one-percent it works out for." There is a glaring sense of aimless hope when it comes to relational motivation in hookups, because the women admitted across the board that their motivation was fruitless. As evidenced by deeming hookups that lead to relationships 'the one-percent,' this motivation is not one that is frequently successful. Hoping for a committed relationship to come out of a hookup is inexplicably common for the small population it is successful for, and the high rates at which it causes regret.

CONCLUSION

Casual sexual encounters are not a new phenomenon, but the social acceptance of this type of engagement, and the subsequent demise of traditional courtship in college has transformed the way adolescent men and women engage with each other today. The gender revolution and sexual liberation movement have widened the scope of acceptable sexual expressions in young adulthood, but acceptance of such behavior has not fully shifted in conjunction. According to Garcia et al. (2012), the multiple desires, and multiple social pressures prescribed to young adults are conflicting by gender. The most plausible explanation for the disconnect between behavior and attitude is that men and women have competing sexual and romantic interests, with tremendous individual differences. It is this disconnect, I conclude, that leads a large percentage of women in college to regret their engagement in hookups, yet they continue to do so because they've been led to believe it will empower them.

The research conducted in this study reveals how widely sentiments about hooking up are shared among women on one particular campus. More than four-fifths of the women who had hooked up experienced regret, and nearly all women who had experienced regret felt it for physical, emotional, and social reasons at one time, according to the survey results. Additionally, nearly all of those women experienced motivation following a regretful hookup in the physical, emotional and social categories. By examining the results in greater detail, and with consideration of the interview results, I conclude that regret is due to social and relational factors, notably the way a woman is treated by her hookup partner following the encounter. The most common reason to continue hooking up after a regretful experience is for physical reasons, notably sexual gratification and pleasure seeking when a person is outside of a committed relationship.

The “choice feminism” of the Third Wave condones the participation in hookups for one’s own sexual gratification, but we still must consider the fact that women are hurting themselves by their own choices. Claire Snyder-Hall (2010:259) said the point of the Third Wave is to allow women to imagine themselves outside the boxes of patriarchy, that “Third Wave Feminism strives to be inclusive and respectful of a wide variety of choices women make as they attempt to balance equality and desire.” She gives the example of a *Playboy* centerfold model that uses the seemingly patriarchal sexual display as empowerment for herself. Third Wavers like Snyder-Hall encourage women to adopt a “feminist conscious,” keeping in mind exactly why they’re doing what they’re doing, but not necessarily forbidding themselves from doing it. With this in mind, Third Wave Feminism supports and even promotes the institution of the hookup as a way for women

to reclaim their sexuality, their desire for pleasure, and work for their equality to men in the sexual arena. However, equal opportunity for sexual expression has not necessarily infiltrated the college sexual scene. It is evident from this and previous studies that uncommitted hookups are not always the ideal relationship style for a number of women and they can have grave social consequences. Women are subject to conflicting messages out of the Third Wave to take ownership of their sexuality by engaging with whoever feels right in the moment. Shouldn't sexual liberty be a little less prescribed? More progressive feminist agendas, like that outlined by Nannearl O. Keohane (1986) in "A Fourth Wave?" encourage women to take hold of their sexuality by *actually* settling for what they want, and nothing less. She explained that young women of the Third Wave are faced with a case of "rising expectations." Having grown up with "choice feminism" as a viable option, these women now have the opportunity to move back to center, instead of succumbing to a pressure to prove their sexual agency through participating in hookups, pornography, and other forms of casual sex. Therefore, if women across this campus are experiencing shared feelings and emotions about their hookup experiences, especially in the regret category, why aren't things changing? Women expressed in their interviews that they learned lessons about the hookup culture over their time in college, and that by the end of senior year they felt they were ready to move away from hooking up and seek more serious partners—a 'been there, done that' sentiment. However, every woman interviewed (who regularly hooked up throughout college) said she still engaged in hookups at the end of her senior year. What these women feel and desire and what they are actually doing are contradictory, and they feel regret for it.

Coming into adulthood in the midst of the Third Wave, the interviewees internalized the idea that hooking up was the path to sexual empowerment and liberation. After engaging in hookups, many realized that this kind of sexual expression would not secure them bodily and sexual autonomy the way they thought it could. An underlying theme in the interview results and the third most cited regret-causing factor, is disappointment—a sense of ‘I thought if I did this bodily activity, it would lead me to *this* social gain (like a relationship) or *that* emotional fulfillment (like feeling loved)...but it didn’t! Instead it led me to a bad reputation for being promiscuous and an all-consuming sense of guilt for not respecting myself.’ Women fall into an understanding that they are *supposed* to hookup in college as a way to come into your own sexuality, to claim it as an individual, and it’s not coming out that way. Instead, the physically private act of hooking up has highly public implications. Judith Butler (2004) recognized that the bodily autonomy many women seek by hooking up is just a “lively paradox.” She cited the public sphere, ever growing in today’s multi-dimensional world, leaves the body both belonging to the individual and belonging to the public simultaneously. With Butler’s theory in mind, hooking up cannot possibly be purely a means for individual sexual liberation, when public implications are bound to the act.

Jessica Valenti (2007:20) writes, “After marveling at the ridiculousness of things like the sexual double standard and the faux-sexy crap that’s forced down your throat, you just learn to say fuck it.” Sure, some of the women said in their interviews that they’ve *thought about* saying ‘fuck it’ to hooking up, so why haven’t they changed? It’s evident that they know they *want* to say ‘fuck it’ to hooking up, so where is the connection

between ‘fuck it’ and reality? Women in this study pointed to sexual gratification as the reason they don’t stop hooking up, but there is still a very persistent pressure out of the Third Wave that convinces women to use sex and sexuality as their female liberation. Orgasms are a pleasure that is worth returning for, but orgasms can theoretically be achieved by one’s own accord.

There are obvious changes that can be made to the sexual norms on college campuses to reduce regret; the first is deprioritizing the hookup institution as the overwhelming norm in which people engage sexually. Theoretically, if women were more honest with themselves and each other about their dissatisfaction with hooking up, fewer people would engage out of social pressure. Ultimately, if fewer women were willing to hookup, men would be obligated to change the way they treat women during and after hookups. College women hookup in the hopes of finding something not often found in the college sexual arena today: a committed partner. When they don’t get it, they regret it, but they try again anyway, often countless weekends in a row for many years in college, thinking that something will suddenly change. The trends that have stuck on this campus for years do not lend favorably to the desires of the women hooking up; if women can’t change the institution, it would be wise, for the sake of their hopes for the future, to change themselves.

Young adult women are subject to a flood of conflicting messages when it comes to their expressions of sexuality, from conservative abstinence messages, to the Third Wave cries to get out there and experiment. Valenti (2007:21) addresses the women subject to the whiplash of advice on uncommitted sexuality: “If you’re holding off [on

having sex], do it because you're waiting to have sex on your own terms. And don't *not* have sex because you think you're worthless if you do." From a post-modern feminist standpoint, there is nothing wrong with self-motivated sexual expression, but there is something deeply and inherently wrong with doing so because there is an internally-fueled sense of obligation. The days of 'promiscuity to make a point' have passed; drawing feminism back to the center will allow and encourage young women to hook up *and* date *and* abstain, and be perfectly content with whichever path toward sexual liberation they choose.

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APPENDIX A

Online Survey

A hookup is defined as a sexual encounter that includes activity ranging from kissing to intercourse between two people (strangers, friends, or brief acquaintances) who are not dating or in a relationship and where a more traditional romantic relationship is not a condition of the encounter. Considering this definition, have you ever engaged in a hookup during your time as a Colorado College student? (Bogle, 2008; Garcia & Reiber 2008; Paul et al., 2000)

Yes

No

Considering the definition above, how many different partners have you hooked up with? Please try to be as accurate as possible.

1-5

6-10

11-15

16-20

21-25

25+

Have you ever felt regret following a hookup encounter?

Yes

No

Considering all of your hookup encounters during your time at Colorado College, indicate the frequency with which of the following factors have led you to feel regret about your hookup encounter? (Options: never, sometimes, most of the time)

The person was not attractive to me.

I did not experience an orgasm.

The person did not experience an orgasm.

I did not experience any pleasure.

The person did not perform desirable sexual acts on me.

The person performed sexual acts on me that I did not find pleasurable.

The person forced me to perform sexual acts on them.

I experienced non-consensual sexual attention.

I was too intoxicated (on drugs or alcohol) to give consent.

I was too intoxicated (on drugs or alcohol) to remember the encounter.

I contracted an STD or STI from the encounter.

I feared that I had contracted an STD or STI from the encounter.

I became pregnant from the encounter.

I feared that I had become pregnant from the encounter.

We did not practice safe sex in the encounter.

We had vaginal sexual intercourse.

We had anal sexual intercourse.

We had oral sex.

I did not feel a physical connection to the person.

The person was not "good at sex."

I lost my virginity.

I had oral sex for the first time.

I had anal sex for the first time.

I was manually stimulated for the first time.

I felt ill after the encounter.

I wanted to say "no" but I felt bad.

I wanted to say "no" but I was afraid for my safety.

I didn't know how to say "no."

I believe I was "drugged" (i.e. Rohypnal)

I desired another hookup encounter with the person and it did not happen.

It was the last hookup encounter with the person.

I desired a long-term relationship with the person and they did not.

The person desired a long-term relationship with me and I did not.

The person did not treat me with respect.

The person humiliated me.

The person made me feel awkward.

The person embarrassed me.

I used the person for sex.

I was used by the person for sex.

The person seemed embarrassed by the encounter.

I was ashamed by my behavior.

I felt degraded by the encounter.

I had a more negative self-image after the encounter.

I felt easy, cheap and/or dirty.

I thought the encounter would help the person to like me more, but it did not.

I felt depressed but I don't know exactly why.

I was diagnosed with depression.

I felt guilty but I don't know exactly why.

I felt disappointed but I don't know exactly why.

I did not think through the consequences of my actions.

I became emotionally involved though I did not plan to.

I was cheating on my boyfriend/girlfriend.

The person was cheating on their boyfriend/girlfriend.

The person has a reputation of being promiscuous.

I did not know the person's name.
I met the person that night.
I never saw the person again.
I did not remember the person when I saw them again.
When I saw the person again they were not nice to me.
I received a negative reputation after the encounter.
The person spread rumors about me after the encounter.
The person did not try to contact me again after the encounter.
I believe the person did not enjoy our hookup encounter.
I feel I have too many sexual partners.
I feared others would find out about the encounter.
The person seemed embarrassed by the encounter.
The activities that took place were inconsistent with my religious values.
The activities that took place were inconsistent with my moral values.
The person's intentions for future contact were unclear.
I did not feel respected by the person.
I did not respect the person.
The encounter negatively affected my friendship with the person.
The encounter negatively affected my friendships with other people.
I was not able to establish a friendship with the person after hooking up.

Considering all of your hookup encounters during your time at Colorado College, indicate the frequency with which of the following factors have motivated you to engage in hooking up? (Options: never, sometimes, most of the time)

I was not in a committed relationship.
I didn't have other plans.
I was bored.
I was tired.
I was upset about something and wanted to take my mind off of it.
I like the person's personality.
The person was my ex-boyfriend/girlfriend.
The person was my friend.
The person was sweet.
The person made me feel comfortable.
The person's physical appearance turned me on.
The person had a desirable body.
I wanted the pure pleasure.
I wanted to achieve an orgasm.
The person complained about "blue balls."
I wanted the adventure/excitement.
The person had an attractive face.
I was "horny."

It's fun.

The person was too "hot" (sexy) to resist.

It feels good.

I was sexually aroused and wanted the release.

I wanted to improve my sexual skills.

It's exciting, adventurous.

I wanted to experiment with new experiences.

I wanted the experience.

The opportunity presented itself.

I wanted to try out new sexual techniques or positions.

I wanted to experience the physical pleasure.

I was curious about what the person was like in bed.

I had not had sex in a long time.

I was turned on by the sexual conversation.

The person smelled nice.

The person had beautiful eyes.

The person was really desired by others.

The person really desired me.

My hormones were out of control.

The person wore revealing clothes.

I wanted to get the most out of life.

I thought it would relax me.

I'm addicted to sex.

I was curious about my sexual abilities.

The person was a good kisser.

I wanted to see what it would be like to have sex with this person.

The person caressed me.

The person made me feel sexy.

The person was a good dancer.

The person was "available."

I was curious about sex.

I wanted to demonstrate my sexual prowess.

I wanted to release anxiety/stress.

It would allow me to "get sex out of my system" so that I could focus on other things.

I was attracted to the person.

The person seemed self-confident.

I was frustrated and needed relief.

I wanted to feel feminine

I wanted to act out a fantasy.

I wanted to satisfy a compulsion.

I knew the person was usually "out of my league."

The person had a great sense of humor.

It just happened.

I wanted to see whether sex with a different person would feel different or better.
I was "in the heat of the moment."
I wanted to please the person
It was easier to "go all the way" than to stop.
I wanted to see what all the fuss is about.
I could brag to other people about my sexual experience.
I wanted to see if I could get the other person into bed.
I was drunk.
I wanted to increase the number of sex partners I had experienced.
I got "carried away."
The person was mysterious.
An erotic movie had turned me on.
I thought it would make me feel healthy.
It seemed like good exercise.
It became a habit.
I wanted to make a conquest.
I wanted to see what it would be like to have sex while intoxicated by drugs.
I was bored.
I wanted to lose my inhibitions.
The person flattered me.
I was under the influence of drugs.
I wanted to have something to tell my friends.
I was tired of being a virgin.
I wanted to get rid of aggression.
I wanted to dominate the other person.
I was seduced.
I was seeking benefits in my career/employment.
It was an initiation rite to a club or organization.
I wanted to give someone else a sexually transmitted disease (e.g., herpes, AIDS).
I wanted to punish myself.
Someone offered me money to do it.
I wanted to gain access to that person's friend.
I wanted to break up a rival's relationship by having sex with his/her partner.
I wanted to hurt an enemy.
I wanted to get rid of a headache.
I wanted to even the score with a cheating partner.
I wanted to get a favor from someone.
I wanted to breakup another's relationship.
Because of a bet.
The person offered to give me drugs for doing it.
My regular partner is boring, so I had sex with someone else.
I wanted to hurt/humiliate the person.
I wanted to breakup my relationship.

I wanted to be popular.
The person had a lot of money.
I felt jealous.
I thought it would boost my social status.
It was a favor to someone.
I was mad at my partner, so I had sex with someone else.
The person had too much to drink and I was able to take advantage of them.
It would damage my reputation if I said “no.”
I wanted to be used or degraded.
I wanted to get out of doing something.
I wanted to relieve menstrual cramps.
I wanted to enhance my reputation.
I wanted to impress friends.
I wanted to change the topic of conversation.
It would get me gifts.
The person was famous and I wanted to be able to say I had sex with him/her.
I wanted to feel closer to God.
I wanted to get even with someone (i.e., get revenge).
Someone had told me that this person was good in bed.
I was afraid to say “no” due to the possibility of physical harm.
I wanted to make someone else jealous.
I wanted to end the relationship.
Someone dared me.
The person had bought me jewelry.
My friends pressured me into it.
I was competing with someone else to “get the person.”
I wanted to brag to my friends about my conquests.
I wanted to have more sex than my friends.
I wanted to keep warm.
I thought it would help me to fall asleep.
I wanted to become more focused on work – sexual thoughts are distracting.
I wanted to have a child.
The person had taken me out for an expensive dinner.
I wanted to burn calories.
I wanted to test my compatibility with a new partner by having sex with someone else.
I wanted to avoid hurting someone’s feelings.
I was on the “rebound” from another relationship.
I wanted to defy my parents.
I needed another “notch on my belt.”
I wanted to reaffirm my sexual orientation.
I wanted to return a favor.
I wanted to gain acceptance from my friends.

Everyone else was having sex.
I wanted to be in a relationship with the person.
I wanted to prove to the person that I was good in bed.
I wanted the person to want me.
I realized I was in love.
I wanted to increase the emotional bond by having sex.
I wanted to show my affection to the person.
I wanted to communicate at a deeper level.
I wanted to express my love for the person.
I wanted to become one with another person.
I wanted to feel connected to the person.
I wanted to say "I've missed you."
I wanted to celebrate a birthday or anniversary or special occasion.
I wanted to intensify my relationship.
It was a romantic setting.
I wanted to welcome someone home.
I wanted to say "I'm sorry."
I wanted to say "goodbye."
I wanted to say "Thank you."
I wanted to lift the person's spirits.
It was a special occasion.
I wanted to elevate my social status.
I wanted to get the person to express love.
It seemed like the natural next step.
The person was intelligent.
I desired emotional closeness (i.e., intimacy).
I wanted to help the person forget about his/her problems.
I wanted to keep the person satisfied.
I wanted the person to feel good about himself/herself.
I wanted to make up after a fight.
I wanted a "spiritual" experience.
I felt insecure.
I felt like it was my duty.
I did not want to be emotionally involved.
I felt obligated to.
I didn't know how to say "no."
I didn't want to disappoint the person.
I didn't want to "lose" the person.
I was pressured into doing it.
I wanted the person to love me.
I was verbally coerced into it.
I wanted to boost my self-esteem.
I wanted my the person to notice me.

I wanted to be nice.
I wanted to feel attractive.
I wanted to keep the person happy.
It was expected of me.
I felt guilty.
I was afraid the person would choose someone else if I didn't.
I felt like I owed it to the person.
I wanted to feel powerful.
I wanted him/her to stop bugging me about sex.
I wanted to make myself feel better about myself.
I was feeling lonely.
I wanted to feel good about myself.
I wanted to feel loved.
The person kept insisting.
I wanted the person to stay with me.
I wanted to raise my self-esteem.
I wanted to decrease the person's desire to have sex with someone else.
It was the only way the person would spend time with me.
I thought it would help "trap" a new partner.
I was physically forced to.
I wanted to "possess" the person.
I wanted to keep the person from straying.
The person demanded that I have sex with him/her.
I wanted to make the person feel powerful.
I felt sorry for the person.
I was trying to "get over" an earlier person/relationship.
I felt rebellious.
It just seemed like "the thing to do."
I wanted to stop the person's nagging.
I wanted to submit to the person.
I wanted to appease my partner by having sex with someone else.
I wanted to make the person feel better about herself/himself.
I wanted to feel older.
I wanted to manipulate him/her into doing something for me.
I wanted the attention.
It was just part of the "routine".
I had no self-control.
I wanted to "gain control" of the person.
I wanted to forget about my problems.
I wanted to feel young.
I wanted to fulfill a previous promise.
My friends were having sex and I wanted to fit in.
It was easier to have sex than discuss my feelings.

I did not want to be in a relationship.

I was trying to avoid the pain and rejection that can accompany relationships.

I do not have time to be in a committed relationship.

What gender category do you identify with?

Male

Female

Transgendered

Other _____

With which sexual orientation category do you identify with?

Heterosexual/Straight

Homosexual/Gay/Lesbian

Bisexual

Asexual

Questioning

Other _____

Race? Check all that apply.

White/Caucasian

African/African American

Asian/Asian American

American Indian/Native American

Hispanic/Latino

Pacific Islander

Other _____

What is your projected graduation year?

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018 or later

How many semesters have you spent on campus while enrolled at Colorado College?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9 or more

If you are willing to follow this survey with an interview, please include your information below:

APPENDIX B

Factor Categorization

Physical Regret Factors

The person was not attractive to me.

I did not experience an orgasm.

The person did not experience an orgasm.

I did not experience any pleasure.

The person did not perform desirable sexual acts on me.

The person performed sexual acts on me that I did not find pleasurable.

The person forced me to perform sexual acts on them.

I experienced non-consensual sexual attention.

I was too intoxicated (on drugs or alcohol) to give consent.

I was too intoxicated (on drugs or alcohol) to remember the encounter.

I contracted an STD or STI from the encounter.

I feared that I had contracted an STD or STI from the encounter.

I became pregnant from the encounter.

I feared that I had become pregnant from the encounter.

We did not practice safe sex in the encounter.

We had vaginal sexual intercourse.

We had anal sexual intercourse.

We had oral sex.

I did not feel a physical connection to the person.

The person was not "good at sex."

I lost my virginity.

I had oral sex for the first time.

I had anal sex for the first time.

I was manually stimulated for the first time.

I felt ill after the encounter.

I wanted to say "no" but I was afraid for my safety.

I believe I was "drugged" (i.e. Rohypnal)

Emotional Regret Factors

I didn't know how to say "no."

I wanted to say "no" but I felt bad.

I desired another hookup encounter with the person and it did not happen.

It was the last hookup encounter with the person.

I desired a long-term relationship with the person and they did not.

The person desired a long-term relationship with me and I did not.

The person did not treat me with respect.

The person humiliated me.

The person made me feel awkward.

The person embarrassed me.

I used the person for sex.
I was used by the person for sex.
The person seemed embarrassed by the encounter.
I was ashamed by my behavior.
I felt degraded by the encounter.
I had a more negative self-image after the encounter.
I felt easy, cheap and/or dirty.
I thought the encounter would help the person to like me more, but it did not.
I felt depressed but I don't know exactly why.
I was diagnosed with depression.
I felt guilty but I don't know exactly why.
I felt disappointed but I don't know exactly why.
I did not think through the consequences of my actions.
I became emotionally involved though I did not plan to.

Social Regret Factors

I was cheating on my boyfriend/girlfriend.
The person was cheating on their boyfriend/girlfriend.
The person has a reputation of being promiscuous.
I did not know the person's name.
I met the person that night.
I never saw the person again.
I did not remember the person when I saw them again.
When I saw the person again they were not nice to me.
I received a negative reputation after the encounter.
The person spread rumors about me after the encounter.
The person did not try to contact me again after the encounter.
I believe the person did not enjoy our hookup encounter.
I feel I have too many sexual partners.
I feared others would find out about the encounter.
The person seemed embarrassed by the encounter.
The activities that took place were inconsistent with my religious values.
The activities that took place were inconsistent with my moral values.
The person's intentions for future contact were unclear.
I did not feel respected by the person.
I did not respect the person.
The encounter negatively affected my friendship with the person.
The encounter negatively affected my friendships with other people.
I was not able to establish a friendship with the person after hooking up.

Physical Motivating Factors

I was not in a committed relationship.
I didn't have other plans.

I was bored.

I was tired.

I was upset about something and wanted to take my mind off of it.

I like the person's personality.

The person was my ex-boyfriend/girlfriend.

The person was my friend.

The person was sweet.

The person made me feel comfortable.

The person's physical appearance turned me on.

The person had a desirable body.

I wanted the pure pleasure.

I wanted to achieve an orgasm.

The person complained about "blue balls."

I wanted the adventure/excitement.

The person had an attractive face.

I was "horny."

It's fun.

The person was too "hot" (sexy) to resist.

It feels good.

I was sexually aroused and wanted the release.

I wanted to improve my sexual skills.

It's exciting, adventurous.

I wanted to experiment with new experiences.

I wanted the experience.

The opportunity presented itself.

I wanted to try out new sexual techniques or positions.

I wanted to experience the physical pleasure.

I was curious about what the person was like in bed.

I had not had sex in a long time.

I was turned on by the sexual conversation.

The person smelled nice.

The person had beautiful eyes.

The person was really desired by others.

The person really desired me.

My hormones were out of control.

The person wore revealing clothes.

I wanted to get the most out of life.

I thought it would relax me.

I'm addicted to sex.

I was curious about my sexual abilities.

The person was a good kisser.

I wanted to see what it would be like to have sex with this person.

The person caressed me.

The person was a good dancer.
The person was "available."
I was curious about sex.
I wanted to demonstrate my sexual prowess.
I wanted to release anxiety/stress.
It would allow me to "get sex out of my system" so that I could focus on other things.
I was attracted to the person.
The person seemed self-confident.
I was frustrated and needed relief.
I wanted to feel feminine
I wanted to act out a fantasy.
I wanted to satisfy a compulsion.
The person had a great sense of humor.
It just happened.
I wanted to see whether sex with a different person would feel different or better.
I was "in the heat of the moment."
I wanted to please the person
It was easier to "go all the way" than to stop.
I wanted to see what all the fuss is about.
I could brag to other people about my sexual experience.
I was drunk.
I got "carried away."
The person was mysterious.
An erotic movie had turned me on.
I thought it would make me feel healthy.
It seemed like good exercise.
I wanted to see what it would be like to have sex while intoxicated by drugs.
I was bored.
I wanted to lose my inhibitions.
I was under the influence of drugs.
I was tired of being a virgin.
I wanted to get rid of aggression.
I wanted to dominate the other person.
I was seduced.
I was verbally coerced into it.
I was physically forced to.
I wanted to submit to the person.
I wanted to give someone else a sexually transmitted disease (e.g., herpes, AIDS).
I wanted to get rid of a headache.
My regular partner is boring, so I had sex with someone else.
I wanted to relieve menstrual cramps.
I was afraid to say "no" due to the possibility of physical harm.
I wanted to keep warm.

I thought it would help me to fall asleep.
I wanted to burn calories.

Emotional Motivating Factors

I realized I was in love.
I wanted to increase the emotional bond by having sex.
I wanted to show my affection to the person.
I wanted to communicate at a deeper level.
I wanted to express my love for the person.
I wanted to become one with another person.
I wanted to feel connected to the person.
I wanted to say "I've missed you."
I wanted to intensify my relationship.
I wanted to welcome someone home.
I wanted to say "I'm sorry."
I wanted to say "goodbye."
I wanted to say "Thank you."
I wanted to lift the person's spirits.
I wanted to get the person to express love.
I desired emotional closeness (i.e., intimacy).
I wanted to help the person forget about his/her problems.
I wanted to keep the person satisfied.
I wanted the person to feel good about himself/herself.
I wanted to make up after a fight.
I wanted a "spiritual" experience.
I wanted to make the person feel better about herself/himself.
I wanted to feel loved.
I wanted to keep the person happy.
The person made me feel sexy.
I wanted to boost my self-esteem.
I wanted my the person to notice me.
I wanted to be nice.
I wanted to feel attractive.
I did not want to be emotionally involved.
I wanted the person to love me.
I wanted to feel powerful.
I was feeling lonely.
The person flattered me.
I wanted to feel good about myself.
I wanted to make myself feel better about myself.
I wanted to raise my self-esteem.
I wanted to feel older.
I had no self-control.

I wanted the attention.
I wanted to forget about my problems.
I wanted to feel young.
I wanted to punish myself.
I wanted to be popular.
I felt jealous.
I wanted to be used or degraded.
I wanted the person to want me.

Social Motivating Factors

I felt insecure.
I felt like it was my duty.
I was seeking benefits in my career/employment.
It was an initiation rite to a club or organization.
It was expected of me.
I felt guilty.
I wanted to defy my parents.
I needed another “notch on my belt.”
I wanted to reaffirm my sexual orientation.
I felt obligated to.
I didn’t know how to say “no.”
I didn’t want to disappoint the person.
I didn’t want to “lose” the person.
I was pressured into doing it.
I was afraid the person would choose someone else if I didn’t.
I felt like I owed it to the person.
I wanted him/her to stop bugging me about sex.
The person kept insisting.
I wanted the person to stay with me.
I wanted to decrease the person’s desire to have sex with someone else.
It was the only way the person would spend time with me.
I thought it would help “trap” a new partner.
I wanted to “possess” the person.
I wanted to keep the person from straying.
The person demanded that I have sex with him/her.
I wanted to make the person feel powerful.
I felt sorry for the person.
I was trying to “get over” an earlier person/relationship.
I felt rebellious.
It just seemed like “the thing to do.”
I wanted to celebrate a birthday or anniversary or special occasion.
I wanted to stop the person’s nagging.
I wanted to appease my partner by having sex with someone else.

I wanted to manipulate him/her into doing something for me.

It was just part of the "routine".

I wanted to "gain control" of the person.

I wanted to fulfill a previous promise.

My friends were having sex and I wanted to fit in.

It was easier to have sex than discuss my feelings.

I did not want to be in a relationship.

I was trying to avoid the pain and rejection that can accompany relationships.

I do not have time to be in a committed relationship.

It became a habit.

I wanted to make a conquest.

It was easier to "go all the way" than to stop.

Someone offered me money to do it.

I wanted to gain access to that person's friend.

I wanted to break up a rival's relationship by having sex with his/her partner.

I wanted to hurt an enemy.

I wanted to even the score with a cheating partner.

I wanted to get a favor from someone.

I wanted to breakup another's relationship.

Because of a bet.

The person offered to give me drugs for doing it.

I wanted to hurt/humiliate the person.

I wanted to breakup my relationship.

The person had a lot of money.

I thought it would boost my social status.

It was a favor to someone.

I was mad at my partner, so I had sex with someone else.

The person had too much to drink and I was able to take advantage of them.

It would damage my reputation if I said "no."

I wanted to get out of doing something.

I wanted to enhance my reputation.

I wanted to impress friends.

I wanted to change the topic of conversation.

It would get me gifts.

The person was famous and I wanted to be able to say I had sex with him/her.

I wanted to feel closer to God.

I wanted to get even with someone (i.e., get revenge).

Someone had told me that this person was good in bed.

I wanted to make someone else jealous.

I wanted to end the relationship.

Someone dared me.

The person had bought me jewelry.

My friends pressured me into it.

I was competing with someone else to “get the person.”
I wanted to brag to my friends about my conquests.
I wanted to have more sex than my friends.
I wanted to become more focused on work – sexual thoughts are distracting.
I wanted to have a child.
The person had taken me out for an expensive dinner.
I wanted to test my compatibility with a new partner by having sex with someone else.
I wanted to avoid hurting someone’s feelings.
I was on the “rebound” from another relationship.
I wanted to return a favor.
I wanted to gain acceptance from my friends.
Everyone else was having sex.
I wanted to be in a relationship with the person.
I wanted to prove to the person that I was good in bed.
I wanted to have something to tell my friends.
I wanted to elevate my social status.
I wanted to see if I could get the other person into bed.
The person was intelligent.
I knew the person was usually “out of my league.”
I wanted to increase the number of sex partners I had experienced.
It was a romantic setting.
It was a special occasion.
It seemed like the natural next step.

APPENDIX C

Table 2 continued.*Mean frequency of regret (1= never 2=sometimes 3=often).*

Regret Factor	Mean
The person made me feel awkward.	1.70
I desired another hookup encounter with the person and it did not happen.	1.68
I did not think through the consequences of my actions.	1.67
I met the person that night.	1.66
I did not have a physical connection with the person.	1.65
It was the last hookup encounter with the person.	1.65
We had vaginal sexual intercourse.	1.64
I had a more negative self-image after the encounter.	1.63
I felt degraded by the encounter.	1.60
I did not feel respected by the person.	1.59
The person was not “good at sex.”	1.57
I did not experience any pleasure.	1.56
The person had a reputation of being promiscuous.	1.56
I desired a long-term relationship with the person and they did not.	1.54
We had oral sex.	1.50
I did not respect the person.	1.50
The person did not treat me with respect.	1.50
I was used by the person for sex.	1.49
The person was not attractive to me.	1.48
I feared others would find out about the encounter.	1.47
I felt depressed but I don’t know exactly why.	1.46
We did not practice safe sex in the encounter.	1.46
The person performed sexual acts on me that I did not find pleasurable.	1.45
I didn’t know how to say “no.”	1.44
The person did not perform desirable sexual acts on me.	1.42
I used the person for sex.	1.42
I thought the encounter would help the person to like me more, but it did not.	1.41
The activities that took place were inconsistent with my moral values.	1.40
I wanted to say “no” but I felt bad.	1.40
The person desired a long term relationship with me and I did not.	1.38
When I saw the person again they were not nice to me.	1.35

I believe the person did not enjoy the hookup encounter.	1.34
I was too intoxicated (on drugs or alcohol) to give consent.	1.34
I was too intoxicated (on drugs or alcohol) to remember the encounter.	1.32
The person seemed embarrassed by the encounter.	1.31
The person did not experience an orgasm.	1.31
The person embarrassed me.	1.29
I experienced non-consensual sexual attention.	1.29
I feel I have too many sexual partners.	1.28
The person seemed embarrassed by the encounter.	1.28
The encounter negatively affected my friendships with other people.	1.28
I feared that I had become pregnant from the encounter.	1.26
I feared that I had contracted an STD or STI from the encounter.	1.25
The person was cheating on their boyfriend/girlfriend.	1.24
I did not know the person's name.	1.23
I had oral sex for the first time.	1.21
I was manually stimulated for the first time.	1.21
I lost my virginity.	1.21
I was cheating on my boyfriend/girlfriend.	1.21
I never saw the person again.	1.19
I was diagnosed with depression.	1.18
I felt ill after the encounter.	1.17
The person humiliated me.	1.16
The activities that took place were inconsistent with my religious values.	1.13
I received a negative reputation after the encounter.	1.13
The person spread rumors about me after the encounter.	1.12
I did not remember the person when I saw them again.	1.10
The person forced me to perform sexual acts on them.	1.07
I wanted to say "no" but I was afraid for my safety.	1.07
I contracted an STD or STI from the encounter.	1.04
I had anal sex for the first time.	1.03
We had anal intercourse.	1.03
I believe I was "drugged" (i.e. Rohypnol).	1.02
I became pregnant from the encounter.	1.00

APPENDIX D

Table 3 continued.*Mean frequency of motivation (Scale: 1= never 2=sometimes 3=often).*

Motivating Factor	Mean
I wanted to feel attractive.	2.08
I wanted the adventure/excitement.	2.05
I was "horny."	2.05
The person had an attractive face.	2.05
I was "in the heat of the moment."	2.04
It's exciting, adventurous.	2.01
The opportunity presented itself.	2.01
It just happened.	2.00
The person was sweet.	2.00
I was feeling lonely.	1.93
The person seemed self-confident.	1.92
The person really desired me.	1.92
The person made me feel comfortable.	1.91
The person was a good kisser.	1.90
I was sexually aroused and wanted the release.	1.89
The person was intelligent.	1.89
I wanted the pure pleasure.	1.85
The person has a desirable body.	1.85
The person had a great sense of humor.	1.84
I wanted to feel good about myself.	1.83
The person flattered me.	1.82
I desired emotional closeness (i.e. intimacy).	1.82
I wanted the experience.	1.81
I wanted to achieve orgasm.	1.79
I wanted to experiment with new experiences.	1.73
The person was my friend.	1.73
I wanted to boost my self-esteem.	1.71
I wanted to feel loved.	1.70
The person was "available."	1.69
I wanted the attention.	1.69
I wanted to get the most out of life.	1.68
I wanted to feel connected to the person.	1.68
I wanted to show my affection to the person.	1.68

I wanted to be in a relationship with the person.	1.67
I wanted to raise my self-esteem.	1.67
I wanted to see what it would be like to have sex with this person.	1.66
I wanted to please the person.	1.66
I was on the “rebound” from another relationship.	1.66
I got “carried away.”	1.65
The person was a good dancer.	1.65
I seemed like the natural next step.	1.64
I wanted to feel feminine.	1.64
The person had beautiful eyes.	1.64
I was trying to “get over” an earlier relationship.	1.64
I had not had sex in a long time.	1.63
I wanted to improve my sexual skills.	1.63
I felt insecure.	1.62
The person caressed me.	1.61
The person was too “hot” (sexy) to resist.	1.59
I did not want to be emotionally involved.	1.58
I wanted to make myself feel better about myself.	1.57
I did not want to be in a relationship.	1.55
It was easier to “go all the way” than to stop.	1.55
I was curious about my sexual abilities.	1.54
I was curious about what the person was like in bed.	1.52
The person smelled nice.	1.51
The person was mysterious.	1.51
I was curious about sex.	1.51
I wanted to lose my inhibitions.	1.48
I wanted to feel powerful.	1.46
I wanted to keep the person happy.	1.46
It just seemed like “the thing to do.”	1.45
I was seduced.	1.45
I was upset about something and wanted to take my mind off of it.	1.45
I wanted to person to love me.	1.44
I wanted to keep the person satisfied.	1.43
I wanted to person to notice me.	1.43
I wanted to person to stay with me.	1.42
I was under the influence of drugs.	1.41
I do not have time to be in a committed relationship.	1.41
I was bored.	1.40

The person was really desired by others.	1.39
I wanted to try out new sexual techniques or positions.	1.39
I wanted to forget about my problems.	1.39
I wanted to release anxiety/stress.	1.39
I wanted to increase the emotional bond by having sex.	1.39
I wanted to make a conquest.	1.38
I knew the person was usually “out of my league.”	1.38
I felt rebellious.	1.38
I was bored.	1.38
I had no self-control.	1.37
I didn’t know how to say “no.”	1.37
I wanted to see if I could get the other person into bed.	1.36
I wanted the person to feel good about himself/herself.	1.36
I didn’t have other plans.	1.36
I wanted to get the person to express love.	1.36
It was a romantic setting.	1.36
I wanted to communicate on a deeper level.	1.36
I wanted to demonstrate my sexual prowess.	1.36
I wanted to express my love for the person.	1.35
I wanted to be nice.	1.34
I wanted to see what all the fuss was about.	1.34
I wanted to intensify my relationship.	1.33
It was just part of the “routine.”	1.33
I was trying to avoid the pain and rejection that can accompany relationships.	1.33
My hormones were out of control.	1.32
I wanted to see whether sex with a different person would feel different or better.	1.32
I was turned on by the sexual conversation.	1.32
It became a habit.	1.31
I didn’t want to “lose” the person.	1.30
I didn’t want to disappoint the person.	1.30
I wanted to satisfy a compulsion.	1.28
I wanted to prove to the person that I was good in bed.	1.28
It was easier to have sex than discuss my feelings.	1.28
I felt obligated to.	1.28
It seemed like good exercise.	1.27
The person was my ex-boyfriend/girlfriend.	1.27

I was tired of being a virgin.	1.26
It was expected of me.	1.26
I thought it would relax me.	1.26
I was frustrated and needed relief.	1.25
I was pressured into doing it.	1.24
The person kept insisting.	1.24
My friends were having sex and I wanted to fit in.	1.23
It would allow me to “get sex out of my system” so I could focus on other things.	1.23
I wanted to feel older.	1.23
I wanted to keep warm.	1.23
I wanted to celebrate a birthday or anniversary or special occasion.	1.22
Everyone else was having sex.	1.21
I wanted to increase the number of sex partners I had experienced.	1.21
I felt guilty.	1.20
The person complained about “blue balls.”	1.20
It was the only way the person would spend time with me.	1.20
I thought it would make me feel healthy.	1.20
I wanted to feel young.	1.20
I wanted to say “I’ve missed you.”	1.20
I wanted to become one with another person.	1.20
I was afraid the person would choose someone else if I didn’t.	1.19
I felt like I owed the person.	1.19
I wanted to make the person feel good about herself/himself.	1.19
I wanted to have something to tell my friends.	1.19
I wanted to make someone else jealous.	1.19
I needed another “notch on my belt.”	1.18
I wanted to decrease the person’s desire to have sex with someone else.	1.17
I realized I was in love.	1.17
I wanted to lift the person’s spirits.	1.16
I wanted to see what it would be like to have sex while intoxicated by drugs.	1.16
It was a special occasion.	1.16
I wanted to avoid hurting someone’s feelings.	1.16
I wanted to keep the person from straying.	1.15
Someone had told me that this person was good in bed.	1.15
I thought it would boost my social status.	1.15
I wanted to burn calories.	1.15

An erotic movie had turned me on.	1.15
I could brag to other people about my sexual experience.	1.15
I wanted to say “goodbye.”	1.15
I wanted to get even with someone (i.e., get revenge).	1.15
I wanted to help the person forget about his/her problems.	1.14
I was verbally coerced into it.	1.14
I wanted to “gain control” of the person.	1.14
I wanted to brag to my friends about my conquests.	1.14
I wanted to become more focused on work—sexual thoughts are too distracting.	1.14
I thought it would help me fall asleep.	1.14
I wanted to dominate the other person.	1.13
I wanted to “possess” the other person.	1.13
I wanted a “spiritual” experience.	1.12
I wanted him/her to stop bugging me about sex.	1.12
I wanted to make the person feel powerful.	1.12
I wanted to submit to the person.	1.12
I felt jealous.	1.12
I was mad at my partner, so I had sex with someone else.	1.12
I wanted to impress friends.	1.12
I wanted to say “I’m sorry.”	1.12
I wanted to elevate my social status.	1.12
My friends pressured me into it.	1.12
I wanted to reaffirm my sexual orientation.	1.11
I wanted to breakup my relationship.	1.11
I wanted to test my compatibility with a new partner by having sex with someone else.	1.11
I felt like it was my duty.	1.11
The person had taken me out to an expensive dinner.	1.11
I wanted to make up after a fight.	1.11
I wanted to say “Thank you.”	1.11
I thought it would help “trap” a new partner.	1.11
I was competing with someone else to “get the person.”	1.09
I wanted to have more sex than my friends.	1.09
I wanted to act out a fantasy.	1.09
I wanted to welcome someone home.	1.09
I’m addicted to sex.	1.09
I wanted to gain acceptance from my friends.	1.08

I was tired.	1.08
I wanted to get rid of aggression.	1.08
I wanted to be popular.	1.08
I was physically forced.	1.07
I felt sorry for the person.	1.07
The person had a lot of money.	1.07
I wanted to be used or degraded.	1.06
I wanted to enhance my reputation.	1.06
I wanted to stop the person's nagging.	1.05
My regular partner was boring, so I had sex with someone else.	1.05
I wanted to feel closer to God.	1.05
I wanted to end the relationship.	1.05
I wanted to change the topic of conversation.	1.04
I was afraid to say "no" due to the possibility of physical harm.	1.04
I wanted to relieve menstrual cramps.	1.04
I wanted to even the score with a cheating partner.	1.04
Someone dared me.	1.04
The person was famous and I wanted to be able to say I had sex with him/her.	1.04
I wanted to punish myself.	1.04
I wanted to gain access to that person's friend.	1.04
The person wore revealing clothes.	1.04
I wanted to return a favor.	1.03
I wanted to get a favor from someone.	1.03
The person offered to give me drugs for doing it.	1.03
I wanted to get rid of a headache.	1.03
I wanted to hurt an enemy.	1.03
I wanted to hurt/humiliate the person.	1.03
The person demanded that I have sex with him/her.	1.03
I wanted to defy my parents.	1.03
It would damage my reputation if I said "no."	1.03
I wanted to get out of doing something.	1.03
I wanted to break up a rival's relationship by having sex with his/her partner.	1.01
The person had bought me jewelry.	1.01
Someone offered me money to do it.	1.01
I wanted to fulfill a previous promise.	1.01
I wanted to breakup another's relationship.	1.01

It would get me gifts.	1.01
It was an initiation rite to a club or organization.	1.01
The person had too much to drink and I was able to take advantage of them.	1.01
I wanted to manipulate him/her into doing something for me.	1.01
I was seeking benefits in my career/employment.	1.00
I wanted to give someone else a sexually transmitted disease (e.g., herpes, AIDS).	1.00
Because of a bet.	1.00
I wanted to have a child.	1.00
It was a favor to someone.	1.00
I wanted to appease my partner by having sex with someone else.	1.00

APPENDIX E

Interview Schedule

- Thank you
- The format of this interview is simple:
- We will not go over 30 minutes, and it will consist mostly of YOU talking
- I will be prompting you with broad topics
- Anecdotes are encouraged
- Some of the questions may be quite similar to the online survey, but I do not know what you answered online, so repeating your answers will help me guide the interview
- My iPhone will be taking an audio recording but the sound of your voice will never be used for publication; the audio from the interview will soon be transcribed and only a written version of what you said may be printed. Pseudonyms will be used in print.
- This interview is confidential. Though I know most of the interviewees personally, no information from this room will be shared.
- You may skip questions I pose by stating that you don't wish to answer.
- For the purpose of this study, I define hooking up as *'a sexual encounter that includes activity ranging from kissing to intercourse between two people (strangers, friends, or brief acquaintances) who are not dating or in a relationship and where a more traditional romantic relationship is not a condition of the encounter.'*

- ❖ Have you ever hooked up at CC?
- ❖ Think back to the first time...maybe freshman year...if you can recall, what was motivating you?
- ❖ Did you experience regret following that first encounter?
- ❖ (If no)...What were the circumstances of the first hookup in which you experienced regret?
- ❖ Here's the kicker: after you experienced regret, maybe just once, maybe it kept happening, WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO KEEP HOOKING UP WITH PEOPLE?
- ❖ Did you do anything to prevent yourself from feeling regret again? (i.e. changing your sexual behaviors, changing your mindset, influence from others, etc.)
- ❖ Did you notice a shift in motivating factors to hook up between freshman year and now, the second semester of senior year?
- ❖ Has your experience with regret changed from freshman to senior year? How?
- ❖ What have you "learned" about hooking up since freshman year? Did you feel like there was a point when you learned how to "play the game?"
- ❖ How would you describe/characterize the regret and motivating factors of other CC students around you, both boys and girls?
- ❖ Is there anything else you would like to add?