

Exploring Sexual Aggression in College: The Roles of Antisocial Potential, Offending Histories, and College Party Culture

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ANTISOCIAL POTENTIAL, OFFENDING HISTORIES, AND COLLEGE PARTY
CULTURE**

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Resumo

Agressões sexuais são frequentes no contexto universitário e apresentam um grande problema para a segurança e bem-estar da comunidade universitária. A presente dissertação tem como objetivo expandir o conhecimento sobre comportamentos sexualmente agressivos no contexto universitário português. Este estudo explora o papel preditivo de um histórico de delinquência geral e sexual durante a adolescência, das atitudes antissociais e de aspetos ambientais da experiência universitária – *cultura de festas universitárias* – nos comportamentos sexualmente agressivos. Considera-se ainda a interação entre estes fatores de risco. A amostra inclui dados de 524 estudantes de ensino superior com mais de 18 anos que participaram num questionário online de autorrelato, direcionado para o envolvimento na cultura de festas universitárias, comportamentos delinquentes durante a juventude, atitudes antissociais e comportamentos sexualmente agressivos na universidade. Alinhados com a literatura existente, os resultados revelaram que estes fatores de risco são preditores estatisticamente significativos da perpetração de agressão sexual na universidade. Assim, um histórico de delinquência sexual e geral são propícios à prática de comportamentos sexualmente agressivos na universidade. Adicionalmente, verificou-se um efeito estatisticamente positivo das atitudes antissociais, e do envolvimento na cultura de festas universitárias, na perpetração de agressão sexual. Apesar disto, uma interação entre estes fatores de risco individuais e situacionais não foi confirmada. Em suma, este estudo contribui para uma melhor compreensão do fenómeno da agressão sexual em contexto universitário português, adicionando informação relevante sobre o impacto de vários fatores de risco em grupos ofensores.

Palavras-chave: *agressão sexual, cultura de festas universitárias, delinquência, potencial antissocial*

Abstract

Sexual aggression is prevalent within university settings, posing a significant challenge to the well-being and safety of the academic community. The present dissertation aims to expand knowledge on sexual aggression perpetration in a Portuguese university context. This study explores the predicting role of a general and sexual history of delinquency during youth, individual antisocial attitudes, and situational aspects of the college experience – *college party culture* - on sexual aggression during university, also considering the interaction between these risk factors. Our sample includes data from 524 college students over 18 years old, who participated in a self-report online survey targeting the involvement in college party culture, delinquent behaviors conducted during youth, antisocial attitudes, and sexually aggressive behaviors conducted during university attendance. Results showed that the considered risk factors significantly predicted sexual aggression perpetration in college. These findings go in line with the literature linking both a sexual and general history of offending prior to university to the propensity for sexually aggressive behaviors during college attendance. Additionally, it found significant effects of both antisocial attitudes and college party culture involvement on sexual aggression perpetration, although an interaction between both risk markers was not found. Consequently, this study contributes to a better understanding of sexual aggression within Portuguese universities by offering valuable insights into the impact of various risk factors on offending groups.

Keywords: sexual aggression, college party culture, history of offending in youth, antisocial potential

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Exploring Sexual Aggression in College: The Roles of Antisocial Potential, Offending Histories, and College Party Culture

Introduction

Sexual Aggression During College

Sexual aggression can be defined as any contact of sexual nature obtained by a coerced consent or by its absence (Basile et al., 2014). Sexual violence in university is a phenomenon that has been prominent over the years, being a focus subject of many investigations that procured to better understand it (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990). The American college scene, according to Fedina et al. (2018), is frequently linked with the expression of sexually aggressive behaviors on campus. This systematic review of sexual assault in universities (Fedina et al., 2018), spanning from 2000 to 2015, revealed that unwanted sexual contacts were the most prevalent occurrence, followed by incapacitated rape and attempted or forced rape. Accordingly, self-report studies suggest that 5% of young adult males report having raped someone (Lussier & Cale, 2013). In addition, when the definition of sexual aggression was broader, including deceptive or coercive behaviors, the prevalence of reports increased by 25%. Due to the relevance of this issue, scientific research that includes a public security report of crimes committed on campus is required by *The Clery Act* in some American universities. This is a measure that requisites transparency and response programs for prevention and awareness for its students.

Literature indicates that the prevalence of sexual aggression in university extends across multiple countries. Studies conducted on university samples in Germany, Turkey and Chile found that sexual aggressive perpetration and victimization was a common occurrence for both men and women, confirming patterns established in an extensive body of evidence from North America (Krahé & Berger, 2013; Schuster et al., 2016a; Schuster et al., 2016b). An investigation conducted by Carvalho and Sá (2020) in a Portuguese college sample, revealed that sexual aggressive behaviors in college ranged from unconsented kissing and touching to completed rape. This study showed a significant number of male college students (52.6%) reporting to have attempted sexual interaction using aggressive strategies and have influenced women to engage in sexual contact by aggressive means (50%). Although most research done on non-criminal samples who commit sexual violence focus on university

samples, there is still an absence of comprehensive understanding regarding the interpersonal factors that predispose this behavior, especially when compared to criminal samples (Carvalho & Sá, 2020). There are also many investigations focusing mainly on differential male sexual offending and female victimization experiences (Zinzow & Tompson, 2015), resulting in a gap in literature concerning the risk markers for sexually aggressive behaviors committed by noncriminal samples of women and queer people.

Continuity of Offending from Adolescence Throughout College

Understanding the implications of sexual offending in college requisites an identification of perpetrators individual risk markers. Zinzow and Thompson's (2015) longitudinal study, collected self-reported data on sexual offenses committed by male college students during four years of school attendance. Results showed that involvement in multiple offenses during this timeframe was associated with the presence of antisocial personality traits and dysfunctional sexual beliefs, with these students also indicating a propensity for engaging in risky behaviors. Findings also suggested that a big part of the offending students had initiated sexually aggressive behaviors while they were still minors.

Some studies support the continuity of youth sexual offending into college years and the connection between a sexual history of offending in youth and the propensity for sexual perpetration in the future (Loh et al., 2005; White & Smith, 2004). However, investigations such as McCann and Lussier's (2008) meta-analysis indicated that sexual aggression in youth had a limited influence on adult sexual offending rates, which ranged from 5 to 10%. This uncertainty regarding the predictive value of a history of sexual offending for lifelong behavior persists in literature. This is underlined by Robin's (1978) theoretical work, and several studies that support it, highlighting this paradox where there is a correlation between youth and adult sexual offending and yet, the vast majority of persistent sex offenders start their criminal behavior in adulthood (Lussier, 2017; Lussier & Blokland, 2014; Lussier & Cale, 2013). Additionally, research repeatedly highlights that young sexual offenders are far more likely to return to the justice system for non-sexual crimes (Lussier & Blokland, 2014; Lussier et al., 2024). In consequence, the vast discontinuity of sexual offending from adolescence to adulthood results in a small degree of sex offending continuity (Lussier & Cale, 2013). These findings align with criminal behavior theories that support versatile (rather

than specialized) offending patterns, superimposing criminal actions taking place according to situational opportunities that surface (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Literature also suggests the significance of the predictive value of a diverse or more general criminal history in youth on sexual aggression perpetration in the future (Abbey & McAuslan, 2004; Walters, 2019). Key findings by Lussier and Blokland's (2014) study indicate that a higher frequency of general offending during youth was associated with an increased likelihood of committing sexual crimes in adulthood. Although sex offending in adulthood is not always correlated with having a criminal history in youth, individual's socialization processes and development should not be overlooked. An exposure to socially deviant peers, and the learning of antisocial behaviors can lead to more fixed personality traits. In consequence, delinquency and antisocial behavior in youth can result in lasting detrimental effects and an increased risk of recidivism (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Dishion et al., 1999; Lussier et al., 2024).

Theories regarding the continuity of offending over the life course indicate different patterns of age of onset and prevalence of offending (Moffitt, 1993; Farrington, 1989; Zara & Farrington, 2009). Moffitt (1993) proposes two trajectories of criminal behavior: a) adolescent limited antisocial trajectory, that shows a spike in offending during adolescence, that naturally decreases when emerging into adulthood; and b) life-course persistent antisocial trajectory, defined by an early onset of offending that prolongs through adulthood. Although Moffitt's taxonomy was aimed to describe patterns of antisocial behaviors, it is unclear whether this taxonomy best describes sexual offending patterns (Lussier et al., 2012).

The college experience sits on the gap between youth and adulthood, often promoting the development of independence and experimentation due to a less supervised environment. It raises the question on whether criminal behavior during this timeframe could be associated to an extension of the experimental period of adolescence suggested by Moffitt (1993) or the start of late onset offending (Farrington, 2005; Zara & Farrington, 2009). Considering this, it is of extreme importance to examine this timeframe, and specially these offenders and their characteristics to better distinguish the implications of this context on sexual aggression, as well as the development of patterns and typologies of offending from adolescence through adulthood (Fedina et al., 2018).

The Role of College Party Culture

The environmental aspects associated with the college experience have shown considerable significance on the prevalence of sexual aggression perpetration in this context. Sweeney (2011) examined the concept of "college peer culture" as the established behaviors and values that students produce and share in interaction with each other. This notion highlights expected forms of socializing and provides a sense of belonging with communal peers (Light, 2004; Corsaro, 2010). The college scene is often associated with engagement in partying and hooking up, with students viewing these experiences as opportunities to find fun, meaning and purpose, often exploiting alcohol consumption to enhance them (Sweeney, 2011).

Investigations conducted on college samples found a significant effect of alcohol consumption for both sexual perpetration and victimization experiences (Abbey, 2002; Krahe & Berger., 2013; Schuster et al., 2016a, 2016b; Testa & Livingston, 2009). Abbey et al. (2001) identified that a tendency for drinking more heavily was a prominent occurrence for college sexual perpetrators when compared with non-perpetrators. In addition, a relevant interaction was found between heavy episode drinking and impersonal sex, resulting in a bigger impact on sexual aggression rates (Abbey et al., 2011). Testa and Cleveland's (2017) longitudinal study over 5 semesters of university, supports the link between these phenomena, since the odds of sexual assault perpetration appear to be higher for men with elevated bar and party attendance. Furthermore, expanding on this interaction and on its impact, this study also uncovered that sexual assault perpetration was more likely in semesters where the number of hook-ups exceeded average. Therefore, the endorsing of hookup culture has also been suggested as predictor of sexual assault and rape myths acceptance (Reiling et al., 2018).

Edwards and Jones (2009) explored party culture on college campuses that often reinforces gendered norms for how men should behave, encompassing behaviors like binge drinking, substance use, frequency of hook-ups, number of sexual partners and fraternity belonging. In line with this, the engagement in college party culture and male sexual aggression in university is correlated with cognitive distortions, higher hostile beliefs/attitudes about women, a positive orientation towards impersonal sex, and situational factors such as alcohol consumption (Abbey et al., 2001; Malamuth et al, 1995; Malamuth, 1998).

In Spencer et al.'s (2023) meta-analysis, a study focusing on identifying the main risk markers for male sexual aggressiveness in university, *college party culture* – which was

conceptualized as a participation in frequency of party attendance, overconsumption of substances, and frequency of hook-ups - was a main enhancer of sexual aggressive behaviors. Another relevant risk marker mentioned in this study was hegemonic masculinity - the normalization of peer's violent behavior. This concept is sometimes associated with *rape culture*, that joins peer pressure, the promotion of dysfunctional sexual beliefs and predatory behavior towards women, sometimes enhancing societal stereotypes (Sweeney, 2011). Lindo et al. (2018) supported this notion, focusing on the significant effects of football games – mainly male populated events - which intensify partying among college students and lead to the escalating numbers of rape. Party environments have been associated with the occurrence of episodes of sexual aggression, called *party rape*, where the sexual aggressive behavior plays out during, or immediately after party attendance (Boswell & Spade, 1996; Lindo et al., 2018). Although both men and women experience sexual victimization, women's rates are slightly higher in college and in the general community (Black et al., 2011; Fedina et al., 2018; Spencer et al., 2023; Sweeney, 2011; Zinzow & Thompson, 2015).

Aim of This Study

Overall, sexual violence remains a prevalent issue among college students, and the high rate of sexual aggressive behaviors have been correlated with significant individual and situational risk factors. Among these are: antisocial personality traits, a history of sexual and non-sexual criminal behavior, and a substantial engagement in college party culture - behaviors that portray the college experience – linked with normalization of peer's violent behavior, the encouragement of alcohol and substances use and the pressure to engage in hook-up culture. Accordingly, this study aims to understand the interaction of these risk markers and their significance on sexual violent conduct among college students, especially expanding an insight on the Portuguese college context.

Firstly, procuring to examine the prevalence of youth offending in sexual offending during college, our hypothesis expects that H1: a history of delinquent behavior in youth will be a significant predictor of sexual aggression in university. Addressing the literature's suggestion of a discrepancy between non-sexual and sexual histories in youth regarding the continuity of offending, this study will test their predicting value separately - 1.1 a general history of offending in youth and 1.2 a sexual history of offending in youth as predictors of sexual aggression in college.

Secondly, this study seeks to examine the interaction of both individual factors and situational factors of college context since literature connects them as substantial predictors of sexual violence in university. Our hypothesis expects that H2: antisocial attitudes will moderate the predicting value of college party culture on sexual aggressive behaviors in college.

Method

Participants

A convenience sampling method was used to obtain a sample of 1,113 participants. Inclusion criteria consisted in being adult (18 years or older) and the current attendance of a Portuguese University; thus 28 participants were excluded (7 non-students, 16 underage and 5 who did not identify their age). As stated by Bennett (2001), a large number of missing values can negatively influence results, therefore more than 10% missing values is used as a point of reference; as a result, 524 participants were removed from the study due to having more than 10% missing values in any of the included scales. Considering participations with unreliable answers (e.g., internet trolls), 4 participants were also removed. Our scope mainly covers students between the ages of 18 and 29, thus to ensure a more homogenous sample, we excluded 33 outliers that comprehended higher ages.

The final sample consisted of 524 participants, 60.5% of which are women and 39.5% are men, with a mean age of 20.8 years. Most individuals were undergraduate students (64.7%), followed by Master's students (30.9%), and lastly doctoral candidates (4.4%). Regarding relationship status, our sample is mainly organized in people who are in committed relationships (47.9%) and people who are single (50.8%), with fewer numbers (1.3%) concerning other situations, such as *situationships* – colloquial term referring to a romantic or sexual relationship that lacks clear boundaries, commitment, or exclusivity. Furthermore, 57.6% of the sample are heterosexual, 10.9% are homosexual, 23.9% are bisexual, and 5.7% had another sexual orientation. To see the sample's characteristics consult Table 1.

Table 1

Sample Characteristics (n = 524)

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Age (<i>M/SD</i>)	20.8	2.61
Sex		
Female	317	60.5
Male	207	39.5
Relationship Status		
Committed	251	47.9
Single	266	50.8
Situashionship	7	1.3
Education		
Undergraduates	339	64.7
Masters students	162	30.9
Doctoral students	23	4.4
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	302	57.6
Homosexual	57	10.9
Bisexual	124	23.9
Other	30	5.7
Did not disclose	11	2.1
Living Situation		
Alone	58	11.1
With colleagues	140	26.7
With family	326	62.2

Measures

Sexually Aggressive Behaviors Scale (SABS)

The SABS is a self-report scale originally developed to assess women's sexually aggressive behaviors towards men (Anderson, 1996). It is composed of 26 items, 10 of which are critical and 16 are filling items. This scale measures the lifelong frequency of attempted aggressive sexual interaction (i.e., sexual coercion, sexual abuse, and physical force). It has been validated for the Portuguese population, with both male and female college student samples with good psychometric properties (Moreira et al., 2022; Rosa et al., 2022). In this study, we have adapted the questionnaire, using neutral language throughout (e.g., "How many times have you tried to have sexual contact with someone by pressuring them with verbal arguments"). Originally, responses were given in a dichotomous format (0=No; 1=Yes). To comply with the objectives of the present study, we have adapted the response format in a way that each item was responded accordingly as the behavior had or had not occurred, before

enrolling in university as well as during university attendance. In result, this version of SABS scale was later divided into SABS occurring pre-college or during attendance in college. The current study revealed a KR-20 value of .41 for the SABS pre-college .39 SABS during attendance.

Antisocial Attitudes Scale (AA scale)

The AA scale assesses the participant's long-term antisocial potential, the key construct of the ICAP Theory (Farrington, 2005). It was originally developed by West and Farrington (1977) and, later revised by Farrington and McGee (2017). The Portuguese version of this scale (Gomes et al., 2023) is composed of 24 items, evaluated in a 4-point response format varying between *definitely true* and *definitely false*. This self-report scale encompasses two dimensions: anti-establishment attitudes (e.g. "The police are always roughing people up") and aggressive antisocial attitudes (e.g. "If someone does me dirty, I always try to get my own back") with 11 and 13 items each, respectively. High mean scores on the AA scale correspond to high antisocial attitudes. The Portuguese adaptation of this scale showed good psychometric priorities, such as a high internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$) (Gomes et al., 2023). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was also satisfactory with .74 (Marôco et al., 2018).

International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISR3)

The ISR3 is a widely used tool in criminological research that gathers self-reported data to assess adolescent delinquent behavior (Enzmann et al., 2010). This study used the Portuguese translation of this measure (Martins et al., 2019) to assess participants' general history of offending and delinquent behavior along 12 questions (i.e. vandalism, shoplifting, burglary, bicycle theft, car theft, stealing from a car, stealing from a person, carrying a weapon, robbery, group fight, assault, and drug sales). In the current study, participants were asked to answer these items based on their behavior prior to university attendance. Response format for prior university prevalence offending was (0) meaning it never happened and (1) meaning it had occurred at least once. Participant's answers were summed to calculate a pre-university variety of delinquency score. The present work showed an internal consistency KR-20 value of .63.

College Party Culture Scale (CPC)

This self-report measure was constructed as part of this study, to assess student's involvement in college party culture. The items development was based on literature's suggestion of three major domains regarding the cultural experience in university, that have been previously linked with sexual aggression perpetration in this context. These domains are: 1) frequency of party attendance; 2) drug and alcohol consumption; and 3) frequency of hook-ups/ casual sexual encounters. We sustained a total of 12 items regarding these themes, most of which were answered on a 5-point or 6-point scale, varying from *Never* to *Always* and *Never* to *Everyday*, respectively. Three items on this scale had a different response format, such as item number 2 (*Which option best describes your party outings: I go out alone; I go out with 1 or 2 friends - I go out with a group of 3 or more friends*), item number 7 (*How many sexual partners have you had in the last 12 months?*) and item number 8 (*In the last 12 months, how many casual sexual contacts have you engaged in? [such as kisses and touches]*), the last two having an open-ended response format.

To measure the level of College Party Culture participation, the answers to each item were dichotomized, with (0) meaning a non-CPC risk, or a low involvement, and (1) referring to a significant involvement in CPC. To establish cut points for each item we utilized the 50th percentile. We have also resorted to an arbitrary choice of cut points for some of the items that we did not see represented by this value, choosing a cut point according to our literature review and our interpretation of "party culture". Also concerning this reason, a third point (0.5) was later added to distribute the answers of items number 2, 7 and 8, previously mentioned, due to its more fluid content.

The total score of CPC was measured by the sum of 10 of the 12 items. Two questions of the questionnaire were merely informative, and therefore were left out of the quotation process – these were respectively 6.1 (*Mark all the options that apply: Marijuana; MDMA; Hashish; Ecstasy; Cocaine; Heroin; It doesn't apply; Other – Indicate which*) and 10.1 (*Mark all the options that apply: Sexual stimulation with hands; Oral sex; Vaginal sex; Anal sex; It doesn't apply; Other – Indicate which*). Subsequently, the total score of this scale ranges from 0 to 10 maximum points, with ascending numbers regarding a higher involvement in CPC. This scale attained a satisfactory value of reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .77 (Marôco et al., 2018).

The CPC scale, as well as the cut point distribution for each item, are described in Appendix A and B.

Procedure

The research protocol of this study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of Porto University in 2023. Data was collected through an online survey developed in *Qualtrics* (2023), entitled “Sexuality and Party Culture in University”. Distribution was attained by online group chats and through institutional mailing lists. Consent was required and participation was voluntary. Information about confidentiality of responses, theme sensitivity and time required (approximately 10 minutes) was disclosed. There was no compensation consequent to participation.

To test our hypotheses, we resorted to the analysis of two linear regressions, using the general history of offending pre-college and a history of sexually offending pre-college as predictors of sexual aggression in university. Model 1 of PROCESS extension for SPSS (Hayes, 2013) was used to test the moderating effect of antisocial attitudes on the relation between college party culture and sexually aggression in college (with 5000 bootstraps and 95% confidence intervals). In addition, regarding sample’s descriptive analysis we used t-test (for quantitative variables) and chi-square (for dichotomous and ordinal variables).

The analyses were conducted on IBM SPSS Statistics 29. This study considered statistical significance when the p value was under .05 and when confidence levels did not include zero.

Results

In summary, our sample’s descriptive analyses about the prevalence of offending before college enrollment showed that 16.4% of the participants reported having a history of sexual offending and 42.6% a general history of offending. As for sexual aggression perpetrated during college, most participants reported not engaging in these behaviors, with only 12.2% (n = 64) reporting at least one type of sexual aggressive behavior during college. Upon closer examination, it is evident that the majority of sexual offenders in our study are male, accounting for 60.9% of this group. However, female offenders are also significantly represented, comprising 39.1% of this group of sexual offenders. In terms of relationship

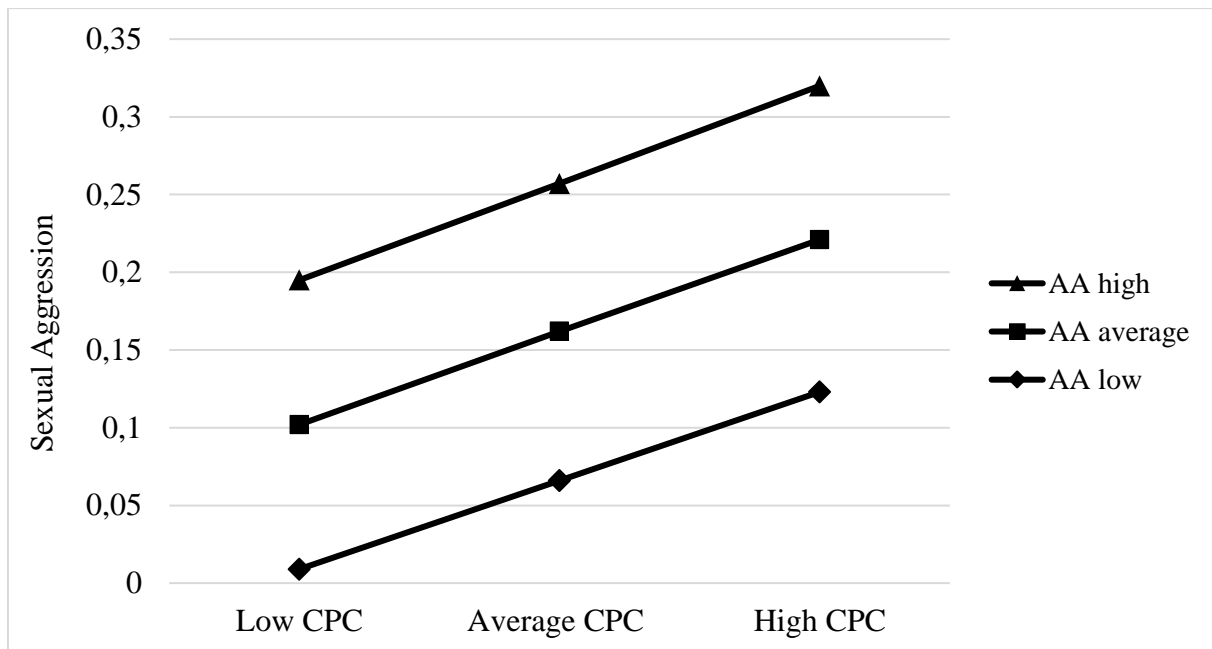
status, 34.4% of sexual offenders are currently in a romantic relationship, whereas a slightly larger proportion, 62.5%, are single. Additionally, 48.4% identify as heterosexual, 32.8% as bisexual, with fewer distributions across other sexual orientations. Despite being numerically disproportionate groups, the sexual offending group scored higher on all our variables, including a higher mean score of antisocial attitudes ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.30$) and college party culture involvement ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 2.35$) than the non-offender group ($M = 1.83$, $SD = 0.26$ and $M = 2.88$, $SD = 2.12$, respectively). For detailed descriptive distributions and comparisons between groups, see Table 2.

To test H1.1 a linear regression was conducted to evaluate the predicting value of a general history of offending on sexual aggression in university. A significant association was found, showing that a general history of offending pre-college predicts sexual aggressive behaviors in university ($B = 0.09$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [0.050; 0.119], $R^2 = .04$). In a similar lens when testing H1.2 the predicting value of a sexual history of offending during adolescence on sexual aggression in college, a significant link was found. Therefore, having a history of sexual offending pre-college predicts sexual aggression during attendance ($B = 0.16$, $SE = 0.36$, 95% CI [0.085; 0.226], $R^2 = .03$).

When testing H2 a moderation model was used to determine if antisocial attitudes are a moderator in the relation between college party culture and sexual aggression in college. College party culture showed a statistically significant effect on sexual aggression in college ($B = 0.03$, $SE = 0.01$; 95% CI [0.008; 0.046]). A positive and statistically significant relation was also found for antisocial attitudes on sexual aggression ($B = 0.36$, $SE = 0.08$; 95% CI [0.201; 0.513]). However, results did not show a moderating effect of antisocial attitudes ($B = .01$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI [-0.064; 0.074], $R^2 = .06$). This suggests that the predicting value of college party culture on sexual aggression in college does not vary as a function of different levels of individual's antisocial attitudes.

Figure 1

Hypothesis 2 - Moderation effect of Antisocial Attitudes



Note: CPC = College Party Culture ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 2.19$); AA = Antisocial Attitudes ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.27$).

Table 2

Offenders and Non-Offenders Descriptives

Variable	Offenders ($n = 64$)		Non-Offenders ($n = 460$)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Age	21.70	2.30	20.72	2.63	- 2.84	.005
Antisocial Attitudes	2.00	0.30	1.83	0.26	- 4.89	< .001
CPC Involvement	4.19	2.35	2.88	2.12	- 4.55	< .001
	n	%	n	%	X^2	p
Sex						
Female	25	39.1	292	63.5	14.01	< .001
Male	39	60.9	168	36.5		
Sexual History Offenders	25	39.1	61	12.2	35.16	< .001
General History Offenders	40	62.5	183	39.8	29.51	< .001
Relationship Status						
Committed relationship	22	34.4	221	48.0	1.07	.59
Single	40	62.5	232	50.4		
Other (situationship)	2	3.1	7	1.5		
Sexual Orientation						
Heterosexual	31	48.4	271	58.9	5.39	.25
Homosexual	8	12.5	49	10.7		
Bisexual	21	32.8	103	22.4		
Other	4	6.3	26	5.7		

Did not disclose	0	0	11	2.4		
Living Situation						
Alone	11	17.2	47	10.2	3.13	.21
With colleagues	14	21.9	126	27.4		
With family	39	60.9	287	62.4		

Discussion

The expression of sexually aggressive behaviors on college campuses is a significant phenomenon that extends multiculturally (Fedina et al., 2018; Spencer et al., 2023) impacting the health and safety of college students (Black et al., 2011). For this reason, there is significant value regarding investigations that further explore it, promoting a better understanding and identification of risk and protective markers to keep young adults alerted and safe (Zinzow & Tompson, 2015).

This study focuses on potentiators of sexual violence in university, exploring individual's factors such as antisocial potential and a previous history of sexual or general offending, as well as situational factors known as a part of the college cultural experience. These behaviors, as previously discussed, include the cultural norms expected of college students (Sweeney, 2011) to frequently participate in parties, engage in over-consumption of alcohol or other substances, and attend to the expectation of casual sexual encounters as a result (Spencer et al., 2023). The objectives of this study were to enhance the understanding of the influence of these potentiators in predicting sexual violence, and to gain a deeper insight into their interactions. Additionally, the study aimed to expand knowledge on sexual aggression within the Portuguese university context.

Based on our data analysis, the majority of our sample did not report sexual aggressive behaviors in college (87.8%), which was expected given that we are studying a non-criminal demographic. However, the 12.2% prevalence rate of sexual aggression among our college sample is still notable for several reasons. Firstly, even a seemingly small percentage translates to a considerable number of individual cases when applied to a larger university population, underscoring the pervasive nature of this problem. Secondly, these findings align with previous research indicating the potential contribution of repeated offenders for a substantial portion of sexually aggressive behaviors (Zinzow & Tompson, 2015). This phenomenon could help explain the commonly observed reporting gap between perpetration

and victimization rates found in literature (Zinzow & Tompson, 2015). Looking into our offending group (n =64) we find higher rates in all variables compared to non-offenders, namely a higher antisocial potential, correlating positively with higher histories of both general (62.5%) and sexual offending (39.1%). There was a higher involvement in college party culture, aligning with previous studies regarding the propensity of sexual aggressors in university, to engage in risky behaviors, acceptance of hook-up culture and using parties as a mean to predispose these behaviors (Abbey & McAuslan, 2004; Sweeney, 2011; Spencer et al., 2023; Zinzow & Tompson, 2015).

As hypothesized, and consistent with literature findings, the results indicate a modest, but positive relationship of both a general, and a sexual history of offending, on sexual aggression perpetrated in college. We verified that a general history of offending prior to college enrollment had a slightly superior predictive value on sexual aggression during college, when compared to a sexual history of offending. Although this was confirmed, this difference could be attributed to the fact that almost half of our sample reported a general history of offending (42.6%) when contrasted with the sexual history of offending reported (16.4%.) The significance of a previous history of general offending in our non-criminal sample, may align with Moffitt's (1993) concept of adolescence-limited delinquency, predicting a spike of offenses during this time. Given that most university students typically begin higher education around the age of 18, they are still in proximity to their adolescent period which could explain the observed patterns within this cohort. The distinction between general and sexual offending histories in our sample may be attributed to the fact that specialization in offending is a relatively uncommon phenomenon. Consequently, our convenience sample offers a broader representation of deviant behaviors. Nonetheless, the proportion of individuals with a history of sexual offenses is slightly higher than the reported rates of sexual aggression in college, suggesting that sexual aggression in youth may diminish over time rather than follow a continuous pattern, as suggested by previous studies (McCann & Lussier, 2008; Lussier & Blokland, 2014).

Therefore, the confirmation of this hypothesis supports the notion that general and sexual youth offenders share more similarities than differences. This emphasizes that a history of offending is a significant risk factor for the persistence of sexual aggression and potentially other types of crimes (Lussier et al., 2024). Furthermore, these findings are consistent with

criminal theories, particularly the concept that most offending behaviors are generalized rather than specialized (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Our second hypothesis, that tested the moderating effect of antisocial attitudes on the relationship between college party culture and sexual aggression in college, was not supported by our results. However, both antisocial attitudes and college party culture were found to significantly predict sexual aggressive perpetration in college. This is supported by previous research, as formerly stated, that reinforces the impact of both individual and environmental factors on sexual aggression (Abbey et al., 2001; Malamuth et al., 1995; Testa & Livingston, 2009). Nonetheless, despite the significant direct effects of both variables on sexual aggression, the expected interaction effect did not emerge. Therefore, our findings suggest that the influence of college party culture on sexual aggression is independent of individual's level of antisocial attitudes.

This contrasts with literature proposing that individual dispositions can moderate the impact of environmental factors (Farrington, 2005; Lussier et al., 2005). As suggested by Farrington (2005) in the *Integrated Cognitive Antisocial Potential Theory* (ICAP), it would be expected that a higher antisocial potential would enhance the prevalence of sexual aggression when interacting with potentiators of the environment, such as college party culture. Although both participant's antisocial attitudes and college party culture involvement predicted sexual aggression, the proposed interaction was not substantiated.

One reason that could explain the absence of this interaction is that the environmental factors associated with college party culture are robust predictors of sexual aggression on their own, and their impact does not significantly interact with individual dispositional factors (Abbey, 2002). However, antisocial attitudes showed a higher predicting value on sexual aggression, resulting in a possible overshadow of college party culture's predicting role for a moderating effect to occur. Moreover, the lack of interaction found might also be the consequence of our non-criminal and convenience sample. Because we are evaluating such small offending group a possible relation between these significant risk markers would not be found.

Limitations

Although our study contributes valuable insights to the broader understanding of sexual violence in universities, particularly within a Portuguese college context, it has several

limitations. For instance, our study's methodology does not allow us to clearly identify the possible presence of late-onset offenders (Zara & Farrington, 2009), as we only have access to a limited period of participant's lives. Moreover, our methodology also constraints the elaboration of hypothesis on where this timeframe could be an initial period for continuity of offending. Because of this factor, it is also unclear whether the onset of sexual offending in college could lead to general or specialized adult offending. Previous investigations, such as the study by Zinzow and Thompson (2015), which spanned over four years of college attendance, demonstrated that the recurrence of sexual offenses during this period was associated with individual risk traits. As formerly discussed, experimentalizing periods in adolescence into adulthood exponentiate the risk for criminal behavior. However, this specific transitional context could provide valuable insights into lifelong offenders, their individual risk traits, and the factors that distinguish them from limited offenders,

Therefore, future research should consider lifelong longitudinal studies as a way to further investigate this theory, and thereby identify patterns of offending more accurately. By isolating the phenomenon of college sexual offending, we could better grasp its specific circumstances and shed light on why sexual aggression is so prevalent in university settings, as well as the extent of this issue on criminal persistence.

Another limitation of our study was due to the absence of collected data on sexual victimization rates. Although self-reported rates of sexual aggression perpetration are 10 to 15 times higher than those documented (Koss et al., 1987), these rates often tend to be lower than the actual number of victimization experiences reported (Zinzow & Tompson, 2015). Hence, having this information could provide deeper insights into perpetrators and further explore the possibility of repeat offenders (Zinzow & Tompson, 2015).

Along these lines, analyzing other types of deviant behavior perpetrated in college would be a valuable addition. Our study did not collect this information, although including it could help better comprehend offending patterns among individuals in this context and serve as an important informative source for exploring fewer substantial groups that persist on sexual offending through life. In addition, it could provide better insights into the variation of typologies of offending through life and draw attention to other prominent deviant behaviors in university settings. This approach would also allow for the identification of minor specialized offenders and their prevalence within university samples.

In this investigation we chose to identify offenders regardless of gender, although a more thorough investigation on queer and women's sexual perpetration would be an important add to literature. Because of the differential fraction between the sexes regarding sexual offending, there is a higher focus of scientific research on male sexual offending and female victimization experiences, resulting in a gray area that should be researched about the female or queer sexual offending and male/ queer victimization experiences (Zinzow & Tompson, 2015). However, the substantial percentage of women in our offending group highlights women's sexual aggressive perpetration as a prominent problem among university settings, undermining common expectations on mainly male sexual aggressive conduct.

An important aspect to note is that our data is susceptible to reporting bias, since all measures utilized in this study relied on self-reporting (Gomes et al., 2019). Because of social desirability, underreporting of sexual aggressive perpetration could have taken place, explaining the lower percentage of sexual offenders in our sample. Further, studies have shown that questionnaire respondents may be more willing to report antisocial behavior occurring in the distant past compared to behavior over a recent time frame (Gomes et al., 2023), which might explain the higher proportion of self-reported sexual offenders before college compared to sexual offenders during university.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes valuable insights into the complex phenomenon of sexual aggression in university settings, particularly within the context of a Portuguese college sample. Through our analysis, we have identified prominent information on histories of offending prior to college enrolment that, significantly predict sexual aggression during university attendance.

Our findings also support the significant influence of college party culture and antisocial attitudes as potential risk factors for sexual aggressive perpetration among college students. It provides a new measure that assembles major themes associated with the cultural experience of college, which can provide valuable contribution for future studies on this phenomenon. Lastly, the present study acknowledges its limitations and highlights further investigation on this subject, as well the importance of addressing comprehensive strategies that target both individual attitudes and broader cultural contexts to effectively mitigate sexual aggression in college settings.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

College Party Culture Scale

Item	Answer
1. Com que frequência sai à noite/ vai a festas? How frequently do you go out/ attend parties?	Nunca; 1 vez por mês; 2 a 3 vezes por mês; 1 vez por semana; 2 a 3 vezes por semana; Todos os dias Never; Once a month; 2 or 3 times a month; Once a week; 2 or 3 times a week; Everyday
2. Qual das opções melhor descreve as suas saídas à noite. Which option best describes your party outings?	Saio sozinho; Saio com um ou dois amigos; Saio com um grupo de mais de 3 amigos I go out alone; I go out with 1 or 2 friends; I go out with a group of 3 or more friends
3. No seu dia a dia, com que frequência consome bebidas alcoólicas? Generally, how frequently do you consume alcoholic beverages?	Nunca; 1 vez por mês; 2 a 3 vezes por mês; 1 vez por semana; 2 a 3 vezes por semana; Todos os dias Never; Once a month; 2 or 3 times a month; Once a week; 2 or 3 times a week; Everyday
4. Quando sai à noite/ vai a festas, com que frequência consome bebidas alcoólicas? When you go out/ attend parties, how frequently do you consume alcoholic beverages?	Nunca; Raramente; Ocasionalmente; Frequentemente; Sempre Never, Rarely, Occasionally; Frequently; Always
5. Quando sai à noite/ vai a festas, com que frequência bebe cinco ou mais bebidas numa única ocasião? When you go out/ attend parties, how frequently do you consume five or more alcoholic beverages in that occasion?	Nunca; Raramente; Ocasionalmente; Frequentemente; Sempre Never, Rarely, Occasionally; Frequently; Always
6. Quando sai à noite/ vai a festas, com que frequência consome drogas?	Nunca; Raramente; Ocasionalmente; Frequentemente; Sempre

When you go out/ attend parties, how frequently do you consume drugs?

Never, Rarely, Occasionally; Frequently; Always

6.1 Assinale as opções que se aplicam.

Cannabis; MDMA; Haxixe; Ecstasy; Cocaína; Heroína; Não se aplica; Outro – Indique qual

Mark all the options that apply.

Marijuana; MDMA; Hashish; Ecstasy; Cocaine; Heroin; It doesn't apply; Other – Indicate which

7. Quantos parceiros sexuais teve nos últimos 12 meses?

Resposta de texto

How many sexual partners have you had in the last 12 months?

Writing answer

8. Nos últimos 12 meses, quantas vezes teve contactos sexuais casuais, como beijos ou toques?

Resposta de texto

How many sexual contacts, such as kisses or touches, have you had in the last 12 months?

Writing answer

9. Quando sai à noite/ vai a festas, qual das opções melhor descreve a frequência do seu envolvimento em contactos sexuais casuais (beijos, toques)?

Nunca; Raramente; Ocasionalmente; Frequentemente; Sempre

How frequently do you enroll in casual sexual contacts (such as kisses or touches), when you go out/ attend parties?

Never, Rarely, Occasionally; Frequently; Always

10. Quão frequentemente uma saída à noite / festa levou ao seu envolvimento em contactos sexuais casuais?

Nunca; Raramente; Ocasionalmente; Frequentemente; Sempre

How frequently have you enrolled in other casual sexual contacts when you went out/ attended parties?

Never, Rarely, Occasionally; Frequently; Always

10.1 Assinale as opções que se aplicam.

Estimulação sexual com as mãos; Sexo oral; Sexo vaginal; Sexo anal; Não se aplica; Outro – Indique qual

Mark all the options that apply.

Sexual stimulation with hands; Oral sex; Vaginal sex; Anal sex; It doesn't apply; Other – Indicate which

Appendix B

College Party Culture Scale – cut point distribution.

Item	0	0.5	1
1. Com que frequência sai à noite/ vai a festas?	Nunca 1 vez por mês 2 a 3 vezes por mês		1 vez por semana 2 a 3 vezes por semana Todos os dias
2. Qual das opções melhor descreve as suas saídas à noite.	Sair sozinho	Sair com 1 ou 2 amigos	Sair com um grupo de mais de 3 amigos
3. No seu dia a dia, com que frequência consome bebidas alcoólicas?	Nunca 1 vez por mês 2 a 3 vezes por mês		1 vez por semana 2 a 3 vezes por semana Todos os dias
4. Quando sai à noite/ vai a festas, com que frequência consome bebidas alcoólicas?	Nunca Raramente Ocasionalmente		Frequentemente Sempre
5. Quando sai à noite/ vai a festas, com que frequência bebe cinco ou mais bebidas numa única ocasião?	Nunca Raramente		Ocasionalmente Frequentemente Sempre
6. Quando sai à noite/ vai a festas, com que frequência consome drogas?	Nunca Raramente		Ocasionalmente Frequentemente Sempre
7. Quantos parceiros sexuais teve nos últimos 12 meses?	0 a 2 parceiros	3 e 4 parceiros	5 ou mais parceiros
8. Nos últimos 12 meses, quantas vezes teve contactos sexuais casuais, como beijos ou toques?	0 ou 1 contacto casual	2 e 3 contactos casuais	4 ou mais contatos casuais
9. Quando sai à noite/ vai a festas, qual das opções descreve a frequência do seu envolvimento em contactos sexuais casuais (beijos, toques)?	Nunca Raramente		Ocasionalmente Frequentemente Sempre
10. Quão frequentemente uma saída à noite /festa levou ao seu envolvimento em contactos sexuais casuais?	Nunca Raramente		Ocasionalmente Frequentemente Sempre

