

# **Racial-Ethnic Differences in Rape and Sexual Assault Victimization: A Pooled Analysis of NCVS Data, 1994-2010**

Ph.D. Dissertation

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## Abstract

There are only a handful of studies of racial and ethnic differences in rape victimization at the national level, and many important questions remain unanswered. The current study responds to existing gaps in knowledge and uses pooled data from the National Crime Victimization Survey for 1994-2010 to answer the following five research questions for the three mutually exclusive racial-ethnic subcategories of women in the United States, including Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic/Latina females: 1) What is the general productivity of NCVS screener questions relevant with respect to rape and sexual assault? 2) Do females from some racial-ethnic categories need more cues to volunteer information on rape/sexual assault experiences relative to women from other racial- ethnic categories? 3) Are there racial-ethnic differences in the distribution of rape and sexual assault by race and ethnicity and in the way certain characteristics of rape/sexual assault incidents are distributed between the three racial-ethnic categories (including the ratios of completed and attempted rape and sexual assault, repeat and series sexual victimization, injury or serious injury, the presence of a weapon, and victim-offender relationship)? 4) Is membership in a certain racial-ethnic group a significant predictor for the risk of the rape/sexual assault victimization, and in what ways is this relationship affected by such factors, as place of residence, marital status, age, poverty, and other violent victimization? 5) Are there racial-ethnic differences in the effects and effect patterns of the named sociodemographic variables on the risk of rape/sexual assault victimization?

The findings indicate that race and ethnicity is an important predictor for sexual victimization, and there are meaningful racial-ethnic differences in the effects of the predictor factors on the risk of rape and sexual assault. The contextual factors mediate some of the racial-ethnic differences in sexual victimization, and the underlying mechanisms are explained. White females show highest levels of risk compared to Non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic/Latina women, when the sociodemographic factors are controlled for. However, even controlling for the aforementioned factors, racial-ethnic categories still remain statistically significant. This means there are additional effects, not measured by included predictors. Theoretical, policy and methodological implications are addressed.