

# Discussion and Conclusion

## Discussion

### Substitution of Partying

One potential caveat to these results is that the decreases of alcohol and sexual assault shown in the Daily Crime Logs are being displaced to potentially riskier areas. For instance, while campus-wide alcohol is decreasing, it may be that fraternity members and other students are substituting their behaviors on-campus to off-campus areas that are less regulated. If this is true, a moratorium may cause more harm than the perceived benefits shown in this paper. Unfortunately, there does not exist a sufficient data source to explore such mechanism directly; the NIBRS data only reliably<sup>1</sup> covers 36% of the sample universities' neighboring police department and includes alcohol arrests rather than all incidences. Hence, it remains difficult to estimate spillover effects onto nearby areas.

As an indirect test, I analyze the CSS data in Appendix ???. This data, while similar to the Daily Crime Logs, features all violations of liquor, drug, and sexual assaults that occur in a calendar-year, aggregated to the yearly level. Since the data is aggregated yearly, and moratoriums can last for as few as 6 days, the analysis should be taken only as speculative, not causal. Despite these shortcomings, there is evidence that moratoriums significantly move drinking from fraternity houses to residence halls. Residence halls show a 25% *increase* in alcohol offenses relative to the mean when a proportion of a calendar-year is in a moratorium. This is accompanied by a large 85% *decrease* from the mean in residence hall sexual assaults. These results point to the possibility that moratoriums cause a substitution effect of partying behavior; students substitute drinking from fraternity houses to residence halls. Since residence halls are far more regulated than fraternity houses, problematic alcoholic behavior is intervened (e.g., the increases in alcohol violations) before it can become dangerous to others (e.g., the decreases in sexual assaults).

### Policy Implications

Although the results show that moratoriums are effective in temporarily reducing alcohol violations and sexual assaults, it is unclear whether moratoriums should continue as active policy. On one hand, moratoriums may move college partying behavior to safer areas (residence halls) as speculated above whereby risky behavior can be intervened more quickly. On the other hand, moratoriums do not change student behavior, and while moratoriums have large effects during enforcement, moratoriums are an unproductive policy to systematically reduce college partying behavior. Hence, school administrators should understand that moratoriums are a transient solution and should therefore look for other methods to substantiate long-term change. However, there is a lack of research in such methods. For instance, several universities have implemented restrictions on recruitment strategies in their students' first semester. In particular, Duke University has implemented a deferred recruitment system in which students may not join fraternities until their sophomore year. Yet, as of this writing, there are only two studies that evaluate such policy and these papers focus on academic benefits rather than crime [de\_donato\_effects\_2017; even\_greek\_2020]. Moreover, another understudied policy is the barring of specific misbehaving fraternity chapters from universities rather than IFC moratoriums. Although this policy alleviates the criticism that moratoriums are punishing even well-behaving fraternities, it is unclear whether this truly propagates behavior change—members of a poor

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<sup>1</sup>In this case, I consider a data source to be reliable if reporting of crime is consistent in the sample period. NIBRS features only 14 schools that continually report data without large missing periods.

behaving fraternity may choose to substitute to a new fraternity and thereby negatively influence its members.

Similar to @lindo\_college\_2018, this paper contributes to policy discussions by providing evidence that college partying is a main contributor to risky behaviors. Interestingly, while @lindo\_college\_2018 show that *increases* in partying (football games) lead to a 28% increase in daily reports of rape, this paper shows that *decreases* in college partying lead to 26% percent decreases in reports of sexual assaults on the weekends. Hence, school administrators should be aware that increasing *or* decreasing partying may have substantial effects on the prevalence of sexual assault in their university. This is creates a challenge for school administrators and future researchers; fraternities bring positive benefits to campus culture in the form of community and philanthropy, but new policy should focus on tools that can help create a safer environment when they host large alcohol-fueled social events. While the substitution effects found above are speculative, they provide evidence that investing in more regulation or oversight at fraternity social events could provide a safer environment for students.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I estimate the causal effect of temporary restrictions of fraternity social events with alcohol (moratoriums) on campus-wide reports of alcohol offenses and sexual assaults across 38 universities in the US. I construct a novel dataset which includes daily-level incidence reports from each university-specific police department. Using these data, I compare academic calendar days with a moratorium to academic calendar days without a moratorium while controlling for expected differences in the days of the week, holidays, semesters (spring/fall), academic years, and universities. I find that moratoriums decrease the average incidence of alcohol offenses on a given academic calendar day by approximately 27%. This result is most prominent on the weekends when partying is most frequent (29% reduction) while nonexistent on the weekdays. Moreover, I find weaker evidence of decreases in sexual assaults on the weekends with a 26% reduction from the mean, although only significant at the 10% level. Notably, the moratoriums show no lasting effects; including an indicator for the week before and week after a moratorium shows a significant dip during the moratorium, but immediate returns to previous levels after the moratorium is lifted. These results demonstrate that moratoriums are only effective when in place; despite the motivation that moratoriums allow time for members to reevaluate and change their systematic behavior, the effects do not persist.

Taken together, these results support the notion that moratoriums are effective policy procedures in temporarily reducing campus-wide alcohol offenses provided that the moratoriums contain at least a month's worth of academic calendar days. However, moratoriums do not substantiate permanent behavior changes. The results show that fraternity and campus behavior returns to prior levels immediately after a moratorium has been lifted.

It is important to understand that this paper does not provide evidence advocating for the removal of fraternity life. Within this study, none of the universities removed fraternity life, only restricted one component: social events with alcohol. Hence, this paper does not provide support for national movements such as "Abolish Greek Life"; recall that prior research has linked membership to beneficial outcomes such as increased income, higher graduation rates, and more hours spent in volunteering and community service. However, this study *does* quantify the effects that fraternities have on university-wide partying behavior. More specifically, this paper is the first to show the causal effect of temporarily restricting alcohol from fraternity social events which significantly reduces alcohol offenses and sexual assaults campus-wide.