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Men, Masculinity and Perceptions of Higher Education Sexual Violence

Programming: A Qualitative Analysis

Merry Snyder

**An Honors Thesis submitted for partial fulfillment of the requirements for
graduation with honors in Sociology from Hamline University**

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Abstract

Research suggests that sexual assault on college campuses is very prevalent. Although institutions are taking measures towards prevention, social norms have left the role of men in addressing sexual violence under-examined. Through my two-part research, I examined the relationship between men and these systems. I first conducted interviews with Higher Education Professionals in the Upper Midwest to explore how the dominant forms of masculinity have played a role in campus programming. This research was concerned with how schools are engaging men on campus and addressing harmful forms of masculinity. The themes that emerged through these interviews provided the basis for the questions asked of participants in the next phase of my research, where I conducted several focus groups with men from the same Midwestern campus. Each of the men also shared the common identity of being part of the same sports team in each focus group to highlight aspects of masculine performance among peers. I focused on four categories of questions: male engagement, messaging on masculinity, attitudes on sexual violence, and perceptions in sexual violence focused spaces. These groups provided deeper insights on male-identified student's perceptions of how concepts of masculinity play a role in one particular campus culture. Themes such as cognitive dissonance, entitlement, distancing and the role of influencers were key findings from these focus groups. These two discrete pieces of qualitative research extend research on cultures of masculinities and sexual violence, as well as inform best practices for healthy and safe higher education campus communities.

Keywords: Sexual Violence Prevention, Men, Masculinity, College

Introduction

Data suggest that twenty-five percent of women and fifteen percent of men experience sexual assault while in college (Cullen, Fisher, & Turner; National Sexual Violence Resource Center 2018). Data gathered on my college campus suggests that one in four students have experienced sexual assault (Morgan, Anderson and Mapel Bloomberg 2016). Through these statistics it is shown that sexual violence is a serious issue especially when taken into account the fact that these are not accurate representations of the number of assaults that happen on college campuses due to high rates of under-reporting (Harding 2015). Stigma associated with victimization and a culture of victim-blaming are likely to play a substantial role in this problem of under-reporting. Many scholars have discussed potential causations for the prevalent number of assaults that happen to college students during their years in higher education (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005; Friedman and Valenti 2008; Harding 2015; Martin and Hummer 1989; Murnen and Kohlman 2007; Martin 2016; Melnik 1992, Nixon 1997, Smith & Stewart 2003).

This has lead to many books and documentaries like *The Hunting Ground* and *Missoula*, which has prompted many students to take a stand on college campuses with how cases are handled¹. There has also been an increase in students speaking out, victim/survivors² coming forward, and many movements that have gotten much

¹ The last few years projects like the Emma Sulkowics' Carry That Mattress performance piece from Columbia University have gained a lot of media attention. Emma's piece was a performance piece where they would carry the mattress that their sexual assault took place on until their rapist was expelled from the institution or until they graduated. They graduated in May 2015 (Sulkowics 2015).

² I am a volunteer sexual assault advocate through an organization within our community and so I will use the term victim/survivor to be inclusive of all experiences and journeys towards healing.

attention in this past year. For instance, the *Me Too Movement* was created in 2006 to help victim/survivors find a pathway to healing as well as creating solidarity through the use of social media to publicly highlight the impact of sexual violence in communities (Me Too). There also has been a large number of high profile men in different domains that are now facing consequences for their sexual misconduct³. This is a new phenomenon that started while I was in the midst of conducting my research. These recent cases have sparked new movements where we are seeing victim/survivors come forward and high profile men being held accountable. Movements like the *Times Up Movement*, where the focus is on ending sexual harassment and inequality within the workforce, specifically focusing in the entertainment industry (Times Up 2017). The *Times Up Movement* was prompted after allegations against Harvey Weinstein came forward as well as the *Me Too Movement*.

Lastly, there also has been a push to incorporate what is called the Inclusion Rider, or an inclusion clause that “A list” actors negotiate, so that there is more equal representation on screens if it does not conflict with the main plot (Dwyer 2018). These different movements that have sparked just within the last six months or so have made it so sexual violence and sexual harassment are permeating people’s media. Along with the extra media attention through activism, there has also been more political action with the changes to *Title IX*, *Campus SaVE Act* and *Violence Against Women Act* as well as higher education institutions taking more measures to try and prevent sexual assaults from occurring on campus. This is a very pivotal moment for the sexual

³ Cases like the allegations against Garrison Keillor, Al Franken, Roy Moore, Shaun White, and Harvey Weinstein to name a few.

violence movement. People are very aware of what is occurring and there is a lot of momentum behind these different movements that are all working towards ending gender inequality.

I have been very fortunate to have been actively involved in the Sexual Violence Movement in my community. I work as a volunteer sexual assault advocate as well as in a shelter that helps people who have experienced intimate partner violence. I also have lead much of the prevention efforts on my campus for most of my undergraduate career and served on the Sexual Violence Prevention Task Force, where we have examined the policy to ensure we are doing best practices and making our campus safer. From all of these sexual violence spheres that I not only work in, but have had the opportunity to observe, I recognized that women were predominantly doing the work and that men were not included in these conversations.

Unfortunately, the role of men in the conversation and activism has been largely under-examined from the conversation surrounding sexual violence and sexual violence work (Katz 2006). This could be partly due to sexual violence being framed as a women's issue in United States society. When sexual violence is framed as a women's issue, men may not feel like they need to be part of the conversation. This is problematic because it leaves the role of men and the harmful nature that rape culture has on all genders out of the equation. It also invalidates male-identified victim/survivors' experiences (Harding 2015), who are statistically underreported.

Since the role of men has been under examined, I sought to gain a deeper understanding of men's perspectives on programming as well as wanting to examine

the role that masculinity plays in current day through the use of focus groups. The specific questions that this honors thesis sought to explore were: How are higher education institutions engaging men in Sexual Violence work? Are preventative efforts addressing harmful forms of masculinity? What dominant forms of masculinity are present among college men? How do college men perceive current day Sexual Violence prevention efforts? To help guide the questions that would be used in the focus groups, I first conducted interviews with Higher Education Professionals on their masculinity programming and how, if they were, engaging men in sexual violence work on their campus. From these interviews, it was shown that the most successful programming contained collaboration, peer to peer mentoring, and a framework that sees student athletes as student leaders in stopping sexual violence.

Through the focus groups, I was able to also examine group dynamics that emerged since each group shared more than one common identity, i.e. they were part of the same social group; sports team, organization, club, fraternity. It has been shown that young men seek out like minded men on campuses; it has been shown that those like minded groups that hold individuals who are more likely to accept assault as a societal norm are among men who are in fraternities or athletics (Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997 and Kanin). There have also been studies that show that men who are involved in athletics can be more sexually aggressive than men who are not involved due to athletics promoting domination and aggression (Miller 2009). These are all factors that were taken into consideration with my focus groups.

Scholars have established a clear link between modern normative expressions of masculinity and *Rape Culture*. *Rape Culture* is an idea that is of central importance to this research and will be referred to throughout this paper. Rape culture refers to a culture or environment that promotes and normalizes sexual violence. In a rape culture, there are many layers and many potential causes. Gender theory, which mostly focuses on the environmental impacts that shape individuals, has been an important tool that theorists have used to help explain the rape culture we currently have (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005; Kimmel 2017). Through gender theory, the predominant focus is on how individuals are socialized and how their behaviors are shared through the socialization into their assigned gender roles. This includes aspects of how to act within the parameters of societal norms through the gender binary, i.e. man and woman. There is a misconception that gender norms only shape the behavior of women, when gender norms shape the behaviors of all genders that are influenced by these norms. Men through behavioral norms are taught to reject femininity within themselves as well as in others. Through gender theory, there is also a hierarchical system that is based on other social positions that intersect with one's gender identity that structures their experiences in meaningful ways (Crenshaw 1991).

In feminist theory, aspects of *toxic masculinity* and *aggrieved entitlement* have been said to be contributors to rape culture. Building off of the works of Michael Kimmel (2017) and R.W. Connell (2005), it has been shown that masculinity can be performed in ways that are damaging not only to men, but all individuals. Through this, men are seen as being entitled to women's bodies as well as entitled to power (Kimmel

2017). If denied or power-threatened, male-identified people may react in aggressive or threatening manners towards whoever is causing the humiliation or threat to power.

The entitlement that men hold has also been a contributor to removing men from the conversation around sexual violence. They are not forced to see any other perspectives other than theirs because they do not have to actively think about their privilege or about sexual violence as an issue. Men also utilize the entitlement they have to remain silent when it comes to sexual violence because it may not be interpreted as an issue that affects them.

The different aspects of masculine behavior has lead to different approaches for sexual violence programming. Many sexual violence prevention programs have shifted their focus away from a more shameful type of approach, where men leave feeling a sense of shame for being a man because it has a strong emphasis on self reflection on one's own behaviors (Messner 2016). This approach also has been portrayed as being anti-male and has caused backlash to the feminist movement due to the cognitive dissonance that men may face when being asked to confront their oppressive behaviors that they have been socialized to perform. Programming has been recast to focus on men's actions with everyday approaches to addressing the patriarchal lens all while giving strategies to address other men's actions in an attempt to stop sexual assaults. This has also been exemplified through the prevention work I have helped coordinate as well as the influx of bystander intervention trainings most schools have started to

implement such as Green Dot or Step UP!. These are more focused on the bystander approach, which aids in strategies for interrupting power based personal violence⁴.

Lastly, many theorists discuss that there is a uniqueness of college culture (Kimmel 2015, Boswell and Spade 1996, Martin 2016). It has been shown that there are distinct differences among a more traditional four year institution compared to a community college or a two year college. Just as there are differences between the different distinguishers of colleges, there are also studies that show that some perpetrators perpetrate while they are attending a four year institution, but their trajectory of perpetration decreases as they get later into their college years and life. Due to the unique nature of college campuses, I decided to focus strictly on one college campus for my focus group populations and many four year college campuses for my interviews.

Although this project is being used for a Departmental Honors Thesis, the objective of this project transcends a successful defense. Due to my prior experience working in the community, I wanted to do something that worked towards bettering the society I live in. Through this project I hope to shed light on not only the current climate we have based on my experience as a prevention coordinator and a sexual assault advocate, but I also hope to give clearer insights into some of the underlying issues that can help inform best practices for prevention programming and engaging men in the topic of sexual violence. This is an issue that affects everyone and without men at the table, we will never be able to transform the culture that we have.

⁴ Power based personal violence refers to a more inclusive type of violence that encompasses dating violence, stalking, and sexual violence.

Literature Review

When examining my project, previous research has focused on the social construction of gender and different behaviors that people are socialized into according to their gender role. Research suggests dominant masculinity can take different forms and can present themselves to be harmful and toxic to society (Connell 2005; Connell 2003; Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005). This toxicity is what many research suggests contributes to rape culture (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005; Friedman and Valenti 2008; Harding 2015). To understand masculinity in the context of a college campus, it is important to understand the group dynamics where that harmful masculinity could present itself as well as the culture that surrounds the group. Research has shown that issues of peer pressure and social capital are strong components into the interpersonal relationships of young men and how they choose to present their masculinity (Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997). Research also suggests specific cultural aspects that contribute to higher levels of rape culture on four year institutions.

Lastly, my study examines not just the masculine performativity that is present that speaks to the larger college culture, but it also gives rich data on the perceptions that current day young men have to the sexual violence programming that is happening. Prior research suggests that there are two main prevention approaches and that perceptions on Social Justice education among young men has been shown to increase the likelihood of cognitive dissonance (Harmon-Jones and Mills 1999; Wagner 2015).

I have divided my project into a few categories to help organize the complex pedagogy of masculinity, sexuality, and rape culture. To start, I give an introduction into socialization for base understanding because many of the behaviors that I am examining will be based on previous socializations that are held among current day American culture. We will look at theories that touch on personal identity development such as *The Looking Glass Self*, which is the concept where people act the way they are treated, as well as, group membership and how that affects one's identity (Cooley 1902). These will be very important when examining my focus groups because it will help to explain the sense of identity and group membership that is present among the men.

Then I move into explaining the concept of *Rape Culture*. Through the explanation of rape culture, I draw substantially from the works of *Transforming A Rape Culture* by Buchwald et al (2005). I also will be utilizing Pascoe's (2007) *Dude You're A Fag* throughout this honors thesis because it is a core text in understanding the complex nature of heterosexual violence in young men playing a role within masculinity. I also call upon the works of Michael Kimmel and C.W. Connell to understand masculinity. To aid in the understanding of masculine entitlement, I also draw from personal narratives from men in *Transforming A Rape Culture*. Lastly, to understand the current climate, I call upon studies that have been published that focus on campus cultures, sexual violence prevention and the education system.

Gender and Social Theories

Throughout history, the long standing debate has been focused between nature (biological influence explanation for who we are) and nurture (environmental explanation for who we are). Sociologists privilege or emphasize the nurture part of the continuum (Newman 2018). Through my project, I am examining behaviors that are part of the larger culture of an institution, which includes understanding how individuals have been socialized within this culture. As Newman (2018 p 109) explains, “The fundamental task of any society is to reproduce itself-to create members whose behaviors, desires, and goals correspond to those that are deemed appropriate and desirable by the particular society. Through the powerful and ubiquitous process of socialization the needs of society become the needs of the individual.”

In this context of socialization from society, society teaches the individual how to behave. With socialization, it also forms the lens we see the world through and is a continuous process throughout our life. Anytime we have any new life-changing experience, we have to adapt to new norms and circumstances. Resocialization can happen anytime someone is put into groups of individuals with a more structured atmosphere and cut off from the broader society, i.e. total institution. People adapt to new beliefs and behaviors that serve the group rather than themselves or what they had previously been socialized to know. This leads the individuals to hold an identity and ideology with the total institution. When people are put into new total institutions and cut off from what they know, they lose their personalities and can be influenced into

forming new behaviors and habits. When examining the socialization of individuals, the family is the most influential agent of socialization with education being the next most influential ((Newman 2018).

A plethora of studies and theories have been developed on the male-identified gender role of masculinity (Connell 2003; Connell 2005; Kimmel 2015; Kimmel 2017; Lorber & Farrell 1991; Pascoe 2011). Specifically the studies of queer, feminist and Sociological theory have all focused on different aspects of masculinity (Pascoe 2011). Feminist and Queer theory are interdisciplinary, where they call upon multiple different disciplines to help understand social issues, whereas Sociological theory focuses on using a sociological lens to understand social issues. To understand the theories that went into this project, I am starting with feminist theory that highlights the association between masculinity and violence against women and then move into social theory.

There is much feminist and Sociological literature that explains the role of gender (Lorber and Farrell 1991; Connell 2003). The concept of differing is used as a control mechanism to maintain the oppression of marginalized groups (Said 1978). *Othering* refers to “a term created by Cultural theorist Edward W. Said – is a commonly used agenda that seeks to ‘other’ a minority group on the basis that their culture and beliefs are fundamentally different (and deemed as a threat) to the rest of society (Said 1978; De Beauvoir 2014). By deliberately creating the idea of an alien ‘other’, it reinforces difference and promotes social and political dominance over the group deemed as being ‘the other’” (Habib, Sadia. n.d). The idea of differing also is related to understanding group dynamics.

In order to understand how concepts of group dynamics work, we must first examine how the sense of self is formed. When examining how social identity forms and how we form a sense of self, the sense of self is created to distinguish oneself from others. The sense of self is also created through the Sociological term, *the looking glass self* (Cooley 1902). That is, if people treat someone a certain way and tell them they are a certain way, they will start to believe and act that they are that certain way. This is one aspect of how the identity of self is created.

The sense of identity is also formed through people's group membership, whether it is within a marginalized group or a dominant group identity in the U.S. based social stratification system (Given 2008). The sense of self can also be examined through the *Social Identity Theory*. The *Social Identity Theory* explains that one's concepts of who they are align with their group membership which can be associated with their group membership within gender. One's social identities can also be formed based on who they consistently interact with. Within these categorizations, people learn to identify in the ingroup or the outgroup and learn of the aspects of othering those who are not within the ingroup.

Gender itself is a part of the *Social Stratification* system within the United States (Lorber and Farrell 1991). Gender is a social identity that one holds and the sense of self and identity is also formed through people's social identities. Social identities are based on the way individuals and groups internalize the societal social stratification system. This stratification system that is in place creates a ranking system based on social identities such as race, class, gender, ability, and more. The dominant

categories and identities are the hegemonic ideals, i.e. white, upper class men, that are used to uphold the dominant groups through everyday type of behaviors. This ranking system creates a hierarchical social structure where white men's actions and values are put at a higher esteem than those of women or feminine identified individuals (Lorber and Farrell 1991).

Within these group memberships, people are much more likely to conform to the norms that have been established within that group (Newman 2018). These norms are usually pressured on people to conform to the group's values and if one strays from those norms, other members will pressure the individual who strayed to conform. These groups will use a process called *Groupthink*, where pressures are set in place to gain a united agreement that then is used to "overwhelm individual members' motivation to weigh in alternatives realistically" (Newman 2018, p 221). Groupthink is theorized to occur when groups are tight knit, when there is the presence of a group leader or someone who holds substantial social capital and when those who promote the opposite of the group norms are counteracted.

The rejection and opposition to femininity is used to other those who identify as feminine and maintain the social stratification structure of U.S. Society (Lorber and Farrell 1991). "Masculinity is defined in opposition to femininity, which is devalued and seen as less desirable" (Berkowitz 2002). This opposition is due to the patriarchal structure that our society has, so the role that masculinity plays is to reject and deny feminine characteristics in themselves to fully be considered a man socially. This leads to the devaluation and dehumanization of women.

Through this, the focus is on the social construction of gender. As Judith Lorber (1991) describes a more Sociological outlook of masculinity in *The Social Construction of Gender*, gender is reinforced from the time people are born and starts with the assignment to a sex category based on the sexual organs at birth. It is a way that humans are able to organize their life and creates membership into certain categories. This suggests that not only is gender based on the socialization of people, but it also creates that group membership. Under Group Conflict Theory, groups are under competition with each other for scarce resources, which can lead to the marginalization of the “outgroup” (Campbell 1965). In the case of gender, femininity or anything perceived as feminine is the outgroup and is seen as being in competition with masculinity. Due to the perceived competition, this not only leads to the othering of femininity, it further perpetuates marginalizing and rejecting anything feminine. This feeds into the social hierarchy and maintains the patriarchal structure. People learn, see, act and react in ways that reinforce what is expected of them to maintain the status quo of the patriarchy (Lorber and Farrell 1991). This concept of otherness is how societal social stratification is upheld, maintaining the oppression of marginalized groups of people.

Rape Culture

Through my project, I am examining aspects of individual behavioral norms of men as well as examining the prevalence that gender has on our larger society. The effects of gender on the larger society correlate with the high rates of sexual violence

that is normalized within society, which is more broadly understood as rape culture. In order to aid in understanding rape culture, the most common definition used is from the well renowned *Transforming A Rape Culture* by Buchwald et al (2005). Buchwald explains, a rape culture is,

“A complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women and presents it as the norm...Both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life.”

Through this detailed definition, it suggests that rape culture permeates Western society and is a normalized aspect of people's everyday lives.

As scholars have developed an understanding of the phenomenon, the understanding of rape culture has varied. A core component of the way that the concept is understood today is exemplified in Pascoe's (2007) work, *Dude Youre A Fag*, that heterosexual violence plays a defining role in masculinity. Everything ranging from conversations about sex to horseplay, i.e. playing roughly in the hallways in high school. With the normalizing of sexual violence, the definitions of what is and is not rape has been debated for years. In current day, there is a broader understanding of rape, where clear examples of non-consensual acts are seen as assault, but other experiences are contested as being labeled as uncomfortable experiences. These uncomfortable experiences have been placed into a category that is seen as a cloudy

area. “This definitional murkiness allows for the mobilization of rape as a symbol with no clear referent, such that men can engage in sexual assault and simultaneously distance themselves from it discursively in ways that not only reinforce over women but, importantly, also over other men” (Pascoe and Hollander 2016, p70-71). Through the unclear definition of what is constituted as rape and what is not, it reaffirms the normative understandings of masculine dominance.

Masculinity

One aspect of my project focuses on the performative nature of masculinity. Scholars suggest that the presence of such a rape culture is in part due to the role that masculinity plays within our society (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005; Friedman and Valenti 2008; Harding 2015). For the scope of this project, I am focusing on modern day masculinity in male-identified individuals. Women may hold forms of masculinity as well, but due to the scope, I am only exploring masculinity in male-identified individuals. When discussing masculinity in these contexts, I am referring to masculinity, like all gender roles, as a social construct that is done through gender performativity, which includes daily acts that are performed and interpreted by others to fit into multiple masculinities (Connell 2005). There are many types and aspects of masculinity just as Pascoe (2007) states;

“Hegemonic masculinity, the type of gender practice that, in a given space and time, supports gender inequality, is at the top of this hierarchy. Complicit masculinity describes men who benefit from hegemonic masculinity but do not enact it; subordinated masculinity describes men who are oppressed by definitions of hegemonic masculinity,

primarily gay men; marginalized masculinity describes men who may be positioned powerfully in terms of gender but not in terms of class or race [...]. Very few men, if any, are actually hegemonically masculine, but all men do benefit, to different extents, from this sort of definition of masculinity.”

Masculinity is constituted by practices and discourses that happen among male identified individuals. Based on the various experiences and identities, the form and performance of masculinities vary among men. When discussing masculinities it is important to clarify that the dominant masculinity that appears is not the same as the toxic and hegemonic masculinity that is said to perpetuate rape culture. Toxic and hegemonic masculinity are part of the dominant masculinity, but the dominant masculinity that is in current day is not just made up of the toxic type of performances. As R.W. Connell (1987), who first used hegemonic masculinity, states, “Hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women” (Connell 2003).

When examining masculinity, research suggests that masculinity in itself is not destructive but the larger social structure of being constituted within the patriarchal structure is harmful. It becomes harmful when it is situated within the places and circumstances that reinforce a social hierarchy that subordinates a group.

Messerschmidt’s, another well renowned Sociologist, defines hegemonic masculinity as, “the culturally idealized form, of masculinity in a given historical and social setting,” which includes, “social structural dominance over women as well as over other men” (Messerschmidt 2004). In this context, hegemonic and dominant masculinity is a form of dominance (Pascoe 2011) as well as taking the form of

opposing femininity. When discussing masculinity in opposition to femininity, it is important to note that this includes avoiding supposedly feminine traits such as showing emotion, compassion, and vulnerability (Wagner 2015). When viewing gender as performative and creational, it explains that violence is a dominant form of masculinity that can take on a toxic form (Madfis 2014). Violence is seen as synonymous with toxic masculinity because under the concepts of dominant masculinity, men are encouraged to be dominant and violence is based and rooted in dominance. This masculinity that is situated within the patriarchy, is one type of masculinity that taking form in current day and is suggested to be contributing to the current day rape culture that persists.

What lies within these ideals is the sense of *aggrieved entitlement* that men, specifically white men, have been socialized to hold. In *aggrieved entitlement*, whiteness is centered as normative, just as maleness is. *aggrieved entitlement* is one form of masculinity that can be harmful and contributing to the rape culture that we have. Aggrieved entitlement as Michael Kimmel explains is “that sense that those benefits to which you believed yourself entitled have been snatched away from you by unseen forces larger and more powerful.” This sense of entitlement is rooted in the belief that The American Dream of success and good fortune is achieved through hard work and determination. Men were raised on the notion that they would accomplish The American Dream⁵, but with the economic crisis and globalization of downsizing, outsourcing and foreclosing service-sector jobs, they feel as though they have been

⁵ In this context, The American Dream is the ideal that everyone within the United States should be privy to achieve success through hard work and determination. The American Dream is often times criticized because it is not inclusive of those who do not hold privilege within our society.

unfairly disadvantaged. This spreads into the work and educational sphere as though any sense of equality feels like a win for those who have been traditionally marginalized and a loss for white men, which is exactly what is shown through Cramer's (2016) *Zero Sum Theory*. In Cramer's (2016) study, it suggests that this loss, like with aggrieved entitlement, is perceived in rural areas in comparison to the cities. For my project, this "lose" focuses on men and so men sense the loss as something being taken away from them, which then can lead to misdirected anger towards those who they feel are benefitting (Kimmel 2017). The exertion of masculinity in the forms of violence is about power, specifically the entitlement to power (Harding 2015; Kimmel 2017). Dominant masculinity is shown when a male-identified individual's power is put into question. A man's masculinity can be put into question through many different ways. When a man deviates from masculine norms, they may experience humiliation or violence from others in an attempt to get them to conform to masculine norms.

The aggrieved entitlement men feel towards women's bodies is exemplified through this quote from Angry White Men, "Men thinking they're entitled to grope women who are moving their bodies, or wearing revealing clothing, or simply existing in a bar or club. Men knowing they can get away with it, because yes, the broader culture supports-or at least, does precious little to discourage- this behavior" (Harding 2015). The entitlement that men have can also play into the response a woman may receive if she turns down a man. The rejection can be perceived as a threat to the man's power and denying him something to which he is entitled. This perceived threat enables

the man to retaliate whether it is getting physically violent or eliciting fear in the woman. It is also this entitlement that leads one to believe they are entitled to use violence as restoration. If a man's power that they feel entitled to is threatened or breaking down, they may react through the escalation of violence. This violence is not only about entitlement to power over the individual, but it is also used as a social mechanism of domination to keep women in place within the patriarchy. The backlash women experience is shown through focus groups Frith and Kitzinger facilitated that was highlighted in *Asking For It*, "young women characterized explicit refusals of sex as having negative implications for them" (Harding 2015). The aggression that men use in response to the entitlement they hold over women is also shown as being intentional through Kathryn Graham's study *Sexual Aggression and Barroom Culture*, where "about one-third of incidents involving male aggressors and female targets were rated as 'intentional aggression' and the remaining two-thirds were rated as 'probably intentional'" (Harding 2015).

Masculine entitlement also has been a way that men have distanced themselves from the Sexual Violence Movement. As Richard Orton explains of his own personal account with coming to recognize entitlement as he got involved in a rape crisis center, he explains that male entitlement kept him from seeing a complete view of the world because it does not include women's perspectives and experiences. Without seeing or acknowledging women's perspectives, it has kept him from seeing sexual violence as an issue because he did not know any personal accounts with it being an issue (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005). Terrence Crowley reinforces the idea of men

seeing only their experiences as truth in his piece where he discusses his entitlement, “my sense of entitlement insulated and isolated me from threats of any kind. I had no reason to be aware of my privilege” (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005). Crowley extends the meanings of entitlement to include not only distancing from sexual violence as an issue, but actively choosing to remain silent and control the dominant narrative. This distancing can also be explained as the toxic masculine norm of not expressing compassion. If men are taught not to be compassionate, then they are able to further distance themselves from seeing the larger picture of the effects of sexual violence (Wagner 2015).

The distancing that masculine entitlement reinforces has also been an issue with common day prevention efforts. Critiques of the framework of the good man, bystander approach to sexual violence prevention programming has included men distancing themselves from the role they personally play in perpetuating rape culture and upholding the patriarchal structure. The emphasis on only “good guys” takes the emphasis away from the fact that the men in the room could be upholding aspects of rape culture through their everyday behaviors and does not have them self reflect on their behaviors. Along with not having that self reflective aspect, the “good man, bystander approach” is critiqued due to focus of not recognizing that men who perpetrate could be in the audience. It aids in men distancing their own actions from the problem as well as further perpetuates the myth that perpetrators are strangers (Messner 2016).

Just as masculinity is a social construct, so is sexuality. In U.S. society, sexuality is expressed through a gendered prism where men's sexuality is policed in opposition to that of women. The single act of rape is truly about power and control. Rape is used as power over women as well as over some men.

Recent work suggests that with the current fluidity of the relationship between masculinity and sexual violence, the way men are engaging with sexual violence is changing. Pascoe and Hollander (2016) explain that there is now a *hybrid masculinity* present where men can situate themselves between speaking out against sexual violence while engaging with sexual assault to maintain dominance within the patriarchy (Pascoe and Hollander 2016). Through this fluidity, men are “mobilizing rape” as a masculinity resource that supports the hierarchal systems that maintain gender inequality. Mobilizing rape is a way of doing gender that includes other avenues of reinforcing rape culture, “sexual assault is not simply an individual incident but a wide-ranging constellation of behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and talk that work to produce and reproduce gendered dominance in everyday interaction”(Pascoe and Hollander 2016).

Lastly, there is a new formation of masculine ideologies that have presented themselves. On an interview with Michael Kimmel on Signs with Lisa Wade, he explains that a new understanding of masculinity has started to form in young men, where they see qualities of a good person as being gendered (Kimmel and Wade 2018).

Group Dynamics

Through the examination of masculinity, group dynamics plays an instrumental role in how the men from my focus group perform masculinity due to them being among their peers. Many aspects of how masculinity is performed can be influenced by which peers are around them. It is discussed among theorists that the role of group dynamics plays a large role within sexual assaults. With young people, it has been shown that they are deeply concerned with their peers (Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997). This in-group type of dynamic can be seen through the bond and unity among their peers, which helps them make their transition into a powerful manhood (Sanday 1992). During that transition, some groups bond over the conquest of anything that is perceived as weak, i.e. femininity and queer individuals (Murnen and Kohlman 2007; Sanday 1992). These types of groups celebrate their manhood through rituals that exert their power over anyone deemed stereotypically feminine.

When examining the group dynamics that go into sexual assaults, many look towards athletics and fraternity culture (Murnen and Kohlman 2007; Sanday 1992; Boswell and Spade 1996; Forbes et al 2006; Crosset et al 1996; Martin and Hummer 1989; Martin 2016; Caron et al 1997; Melnik 1992, Nixon 1997, Smith & Stewart 2003). Through Boswell and Spade's (1996) article, it discusses the different aspects that go into "high risk" and "low risk" fraternity cultures at one specific institution. The high risk fraternities were shown to be degrading to women, unequal numbers of gender ratio as well as loud music, high alcohol consumption, and no place to sit. Through this, it exemplifies that men seek out like minded individuals because those

who are involved in the high risk fraternities held similar degradation of women and expectations to conform (Boswell and Spade 1996). This study did show that both fraternities had an expectation to conform and be accepted by their peers.

There also have been studies that show men tend to seek out like minded men. Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1997) and the Kanin Reference Group theory, shows that abusive men and men who have been or want to be more sexually aggressive seek other men who are abusive and develop an attachment to them (Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997 and Kanin). These friends develop a loyalty to each other and encourage and legitimize sexually aggressive behaviors (Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997 and Kanin). “Research suggests spending a large amount of time with male friends increases the probability of sexual assault, especially in settings where alcohol consumption and patriarchal practices and discourses are routine activities, such as fraternities” (Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997). This male peer support and how it leads to violence against women can be shown through the Male Peer Support Model.

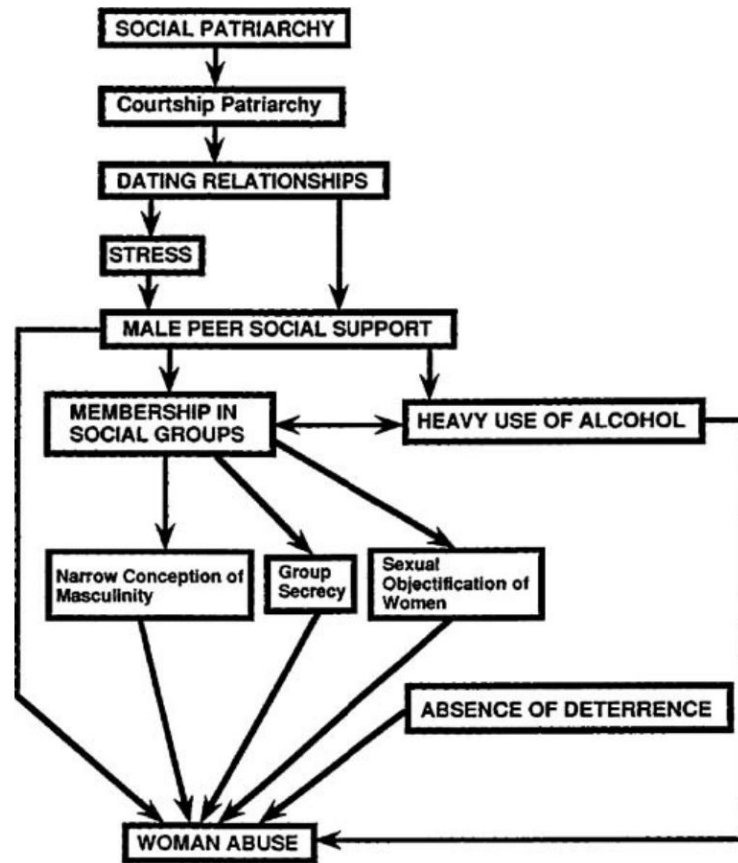


Figure: Schwartz. and DeKeseredy 1997

Among groups of young men, there is also a repertoire that forms. This repertoire is linguistically an acceptable use of phrases that the men learn to accept and use. “These all male alliances provide what Sociologists have often termed a *vocabulary of adjustment*. Those men who might be feeling guilty, conflicted, or stressed learn a vocabulary that defines victims in such a way as to identify them as legitimate objects for abuse” (Kanin 1967; Schwartz. and DeKeseredy 1997). This can be seen when boys are little where they will adopt language as insults to maintain

higher status among other boys, specifically drawing on insults that highlight the powerful pedagogy of sexuality, power, and domination like “you suck”, “blow me”, and “fuck you.” This also can be seen when groups of men adopt vocabulary that the group deems acceptable and because they do not want to go against the group norm, they adapt to language that perpetuates the patriarchal structure (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth 2005).

Social Capital

Social Capital is a large contributor among the men due to the power that is within Social Capital. The concept of *Social Capital* is one that plays a large role throughout my study. From the works of Pierre Bourdieu who theorizes about social capital, social capital is:

“The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition-or in other words to membership in a group- which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word... The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent [individual]... depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural, or symbolid) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected” (Bourdieu 1986; Dillon 2009).”

Through this quote, it explains that Social Capital refers to an individual's' social network and the connections that connect them to more informal and formal

opportunities and directions that enhances their various forms of capital. Social Capital is also a form of power from those connections that can be mobilized when called upon unlike other forms of capital like wealth.

Previous research has shown that social capital plays a large role in the influence of young men. Katz (2012) explains that a possible solution to stopping perpetrators is to associate negative behaviors with a loss of social capital. As Millar explains, “when you laugh along to get their approval, you give them yours. You tell them that the social license to operate is in force; that you’ll go along with the pact to turn your eyes away from the evidence; to make excuses for them; to assume it’s a mistake, or a confusing situation. You’re telling them that they’re low risk” (Millar 2009). It is suggested that if more men spoke up before, during, or after incidents of violence by their peers, the culture would change because abuse would become stigmatized. This would cause men to lose status among their peers and aid in changing the culture (Harding 2015). The lens of getting men to actively oppose sexual violence even among peers extends the education on sexual violence.

When examining the influence of Social Capital within college aged individuals, it is important to note the Social Capital that I hold. I am a well known figure on campus who is specifically known for sexual and domestic violence work as well as a student leader. Due to the difficult recruitment process and with the use of my social capital, I was able to reach out to connections I had at the institution to seek help in recruitment. The most influential connections were those who held more social

capital than me to get male-identified people to participate. Although, I hold Social Capital in some regards, when conducting my focus groups, I did not hold the most Social Capital due to the ingroup dynamics that were at play as well as my gender identity of being a woman.

Influencers

Research suggests that coaches play a large role in the socialization of men who participate in athletics, more specifically in the socialization of masculinity (Stenfeldt et al 2011). It has been shown that coaches socialize young men to see being a man as being accountable and responsible as well as reframing emotions as being emotionally in control. Coaches also have been shown to encourage aggressiveness and violence on the field, but expect the young men to “flip the switch” when they are off the field (Stenfeldt et al 2011). This can lead to *Cultural Spillover Theory* (Boeringer 1996; Brown et al 2002), where there is a spillover effect of the aggressiveness from the field that impedes into their everyday lives of men who participate in athletics.

There have been some preventative efforts that bring in the role of the coaches.

Coaches, similar to those who hold high social capital, can have a large influence on men. In Miller et al (2013) they trained adolescent coaches on bystander intervention. The coaches then communicated those techniques into their sports teams and players. After three to twelve months of follow up, there was a decrease in negative bystander intervention behaviors as well as an increase in recognizing abusive behaviors and intervening. This study highlights the role and influence that coaches have in young

men and can show a more effective way of preventing sexual violence long term.

College Culture

Through my study, the aspect of college culture is examined. The men who participated were part of a distinct college culture. To better understand the dynamics that were at play, prior research on college cultures had to be examined before examining the specific culture that these men were participating in. Many studies, specifically campus climate surveys, have emerged examining the high rates of sexual violence on college campuses (Morgan, Anderson and Mapel Bloomberg 2016; The United States Department of Justice Archives 2016). Some of these studies show a uniqueness about four year higher education institutions (Kimmel 2015, Boswell and Spade 1996, Martin 2016). Scholars like Michael Kimmel describe characteristics that reinforce a culture more susceptible to sexual assault. It has been shown that there are distinct differences among a more traditional four year institutions compared to community college or a two year college.

One aspect that plays into higher rates of sexual assaults is whether the institution is a four year institution. At four year institutions, schools tend to get more traditional students who go onto higher education right after highschool. With four year institutions populations having people that are younger and more traditional, it also leads into having a student population that is less mature and can be less focused on getting their degree. Four year institutions tend to be highly residential as well. With higher amounts of residential students and higher amounts of traditional students,

students are spending not just more time on campus, but more time in closer quarters, where aspects like alcohol and partying are more likely to take place (Kimmel 2015, Boswell and Spade 1996, Martin 2016).

It has also been shown that college campuses that have more off-campus residential areas, i.e. school apartments, houses, non-dormitories and more off campus gatherings are more likely to have higher rates of sexual violence. Whereas when events take place on campus, there is more residential life supervision, which is shown to be more effective in preventing sexual assault (Kimmel 2015).

Another contributor to a culture that promotes sexual assault is shown through Lisak (2002), where if a campus has a culture of silence. If a campus has a culture of silence around the issue of sexual violence, than perpetrators know they are more likely to get away with assault.

Just as there are differences between characteristics that make colleges more susceptible to sexual assaults, there are also studies that show the trajectory of perpetrators (Swartout, Koss, White, Thompson, Abbey, and Bellis 2015). For instance, in Swartout et al's (2015) piece, the authors suggest that most perpetrators that were surveyed assaulted individuals during and before college. This study also showed that perpetrators who assaulted people in college were less likely to reoffend as college continued, i.e. they had a decreasing trajectory. Through this study, it also showed that the perpetrators who offended before college were not the same offenders who assaulted people in college (Swartout, Koss, White, Thompson, Abbey, and Bellis 2015). This discovery goes against the dominant narrative that there is a small group of

assailants who are serial rapists (Lisak and Miller 2002). With the finding that there was a decrease in the trajectory of perpetration, this study emphasizes that there is a distinct culture to before and during college years for some perpetrators (Swartout, Koss, White, Thompson, Abbey, and Bellis 2015).

When examining the role that masculinity plays within sexual violence, many researchers turn towards athletics and fraternity culture. Athletics is seen as a large contributor to toxic masculinity due to the aggressiveness that athletics promotes (Miller 2009). Toxic masculinity is an expression of male identified individuals practices that promote dominance and suppressing all emotions except for anger. Toxic masculinity is seen as being particularly harmful to everyone. It has been shown through studies that athletes have a much higher level of risk taking and dominance. Men who participate in athletics are at a greater pressure to conform to masculine norms in U.S. society.

Research suggests that there are significant relationships between athletics and sexual aggression (Forbes et al 2006). This also has been shown through studies where hypermasculinity, which can lead to increases in sexual violence are higher among male athletes (Murnen and Kohlman 2007, Crosset et al 1996). Michael Messner points to four factors that lead up to gang rapes that happen among sports teams: “Competitive, homophobic, and misogynistic talk and joking; a group practice of voyeurism, where boys can watch their friends have sex with girls and sometimes join in; suppression of empathy toward others, especially toward the girls; a culture of silence among peers, in families, and in the community” (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth

2005). The strong correlation is rooted in the fact that these men are part of organizational cultures that practice and reward aggression, domination, control, competition, aggressiveness and the sexual exploitation of women (Martin and Hummer 1989; Murnen and Kohlman 2007; Martin 2016; Melnik 1992, Nixon 1997, Smith & Stewart 2003). Athletes that are homogeneous are further drawn into this culture through encouragement to keep segregated from the rest of campus activities and criticizes femininity and women (Curry 1991; McCray 2015; Martin 2016). The homosocial boundaries that are set are said to promote sexual aggression among the members of the group (Lee 2004). They are encouraged to house with athletes and loyalty as well as serecracy are promoted amongst the group. They also “are told to keep negative comments to themselves lest they harm the program by casting it in a bad light or risk losing their athletic scholarship status or position on the team” (Martin 2016).

Men who participate in athletics also gain and maintain a higher status among their peers if they are successful in athletics. This higher status that men who participate and do better in athletics creates a culture of entitlement, where the men who are good at athletics, get special treatment than those who are not part of athletics (Dick 2015, Martin 2016). Problems with male athlete perpetrators have also been an issue specifically within colleges due to the institutions giving lighter sentencing or ignoring sexual assaults that are due to athlete perpetrators. This is because of the conflicting priorities institutions have because athletes draw in more money and if a star athlete is benched or expelled from the institution, those sports enthusiasts who value the success

of athletics over academics might withdraw money (Dick 2015; Martin 2016). The culture of privileging athletes also can extend beyond the institution into the surrounding sphere of criminal justice, where “police officers, district attorneys, and even judges may resist lodging criminal charges against star athletes” (Martin 2016). Research suggests the higher status of male athletes that is facilitated among the specific college’s cultures suggests that it can further facilitate sexual aggression (Koss & Gaines 1993), which demonstrates that the capital that people may have can extend further if the men are involved in highly praised type of activities like athletics and fraternities.

Sexual Violence Prevention

Although, aspects of sexual violence prevention was not the main focus, it is important to touch on some of the work that has been done surrounding sexual violence prevention in order to better understand where the men who participated in my focus groups were at with their perceptions of sexual violence programming.

Within sexual violence prevention work, there have been two main approaches that have been used. The first approach has more of a focus on reflecting on personal behaviors, which leads to a feeling of guilt among participants. The current day sexual violence prevention approach is the *Good Man, Bystander Approach* (Messner 2016). This approach focuses on bystander intervention and teaching men to intervene when they see a potential sexual assault. *The Good Man, Bystander Approach* also is the approach that we have used in my sexual violence prevention work as well as at the

institution the focus groups were conducted at. Both approaches to prevention frames are critiqued for different reasons. The first one was part of the antirape movement and was the first to focus on prevention efforts, where men were expected to reject dominant masculinity in attempts to change the power relations that exists within the patriarchy. The second one, although effective because it teaches men to have skills to intervene, enables men to distance themselves from the problem of rape culture. It is framed in a way that does not recognize that perpetrators could be in the room and reinforces the myth that perpetrators are people “out there” (Messner 2015).

Many theorists have different aspects of solutions to create a rape free environment (Harding 2015; Katz 2006; Katz 2012; Friedman & Valenti 2008). The current day focus is moving away from how to protect women and moving towards how can men and the culture we live in be transformed. Messaging is one suggestion that scholars have focused on. Various messaging discusses what makes a “real” victim. There is also a culture that promotes the rejection of all things queer or feminine as well as grants higher social capital to those who possess many semi-anonymous sexual encounters. Theorists explain that we need to work on resocializing young men and teaching them to reject this type of culture and police other men to help in transforming the current culture we have (Katz 2012).

Education plays a large role in resocializing individuals, specifically education on the concept of consent. As Harding points out, “If nothing else, it {educating on consent} sends the message that we take every individual’s bodily autonomy seriously and that we really do believe rape is an abhorrent crime” (Harding 2015). Harding also

continues on to explain that when adolescents are taught consent over a long period of time, it is shown to be more effective in helping people learn about what is consent in the hopes of preventing more assaults from occurring.

However, there have been studies of college men that have focused on diversity education (Wagner 2015). Through these studies, it has been shown that men are under represented at education sessions that focuses on diversity and that they choose not to attend. When examining the facilitation of sessions that focus on diversity, it is encouraged to have a balance of emotional and cognitive components of thought because emotions within Social Justice education can be transforming (Adams and Bell 2016). The balance of emotional and cognitive goes against what most men have been socialized to act. They have been socialized to act in opposition to femininity, which emotion and vulnerability is seen as feminine. So, going into a space that encourages more feminine characteristics can be uncomfortable where men can go through a form of cognitive dissonance.

Cognitive dissonance is where exposure to new information can be contradictory to their previous socialized beliefs (Harmon-Jones and Mills 1999). This cognitive dissonance can create an effect where men reject new information all together and actively choose to avoid situations that will put them into a mental discomfort. Through Rachel Wagner's study, she attempts to explore how men who engage in diversity education understand and perform masculinity (Wagner 2015). Through Social Justice education, ways to help men process the cognitive dissonance that can come from diversity programming have been established. The initial focus

should be on men's experiences of how they have been harmed and disempowered by social demands of being a man. Through this approach, it invites the dissonance that many often feel to be examined through the socialization of gender frame. This then opens up to a more theoretical frame, where men are able to understand the effects masculinity has on everyone. This in turn works to build empathy. Through the development of empathy, it aids in men living their lives more intentionally because the socialization process depends on people being complacent and passive (Wagner 2015).

Lastly, Berkowitz (2002) discusses the responsibility of men in sexual violence programming. Through this he emphasizes many aspects that should be incorporated within sexual violence programming for men including having separate gendered sessions. Berkowitz has a comprehensive list of elements that prevention programming needs to incorporate for men including: sexual activity as a choice, education on heteronormativity, male victimization, recognition of fear of false allegations, challenge rape myths, explore sexism in facilitating sexual assault, victim empathy education, exploring the range of coercive behaviors men are socialized to embody and many more. These highlight important aspects that should be incorporated within sexual violence programming for men based on previous literature to help develop healthier masculinity (Berkowitz 2002).

Data/Methodology

The primary focus of this project is the second phase of a two-phase research program undertaken over the last academic year. Both phase one and phase two of my

project focused on qualitative research. I choose to do a qualitative approach to give more robust data that goes beyond statistical analysis. My positionality as a prevention coordinator and sexual assault advocate in the community also aids in creating an understanding of the culture surrounding this project since I have been so ingrained in sexual violence prevention efforts.

These small samples of men who participated in my focus groups can give deeper insight into some of the reasoning to the lack of male engagement in these programs comparatively to the high number of women that attend. The aspects of masculine performance in groups and the perceptions of sexual violence focused spaces and culture can be difficult to quantify but are still socially relevant to understanding social issues. Additionally, the masculine behaviors that presented themselves among the peers is key to this study and focus groups. The group dynamics that emerged could not be obtained through alternative methods of research.

Through these focus groups, I tried to use best practices for facilitation of focus groups. I have extensive background in facilitating Social Justice education and that aided me in my ability to facilitate focus groups. I specifically choose to use the set questions approach, where I had open ended questions that guided the groups to be more conversational. The focus groups were semi-structured and I would use my previous skills facilitating to help inform the pathway of the conversation. It has been shown that starting with more surface level questions aids in the comfortability of the participants. It also helps to establish a rapport so that participants feel more

comfortable answering, which I did using various surface level get to know you questions (Stewart 1990; Weiss 1995).

When going into the focus groups, I couldn't help but take into account my positionality with my gender expression. I am a cisgender woman who was facilitating focus groups with all men. Research suggests that with woman interviewers, men will give more critical answers, which was exemplified through some of the responses I got, but research also suggests that men sometimes will maintain polite conversation especially on prominent topics (Catania, Binson, Canchola, Pollack, Hauck and Coates 1996). Men maintaining that surface level type of talk was specifically exemplified through the last group who was significantly more defensive, I speculate, due to the recent consequences that men in power who committed sexual violence were facing in the media, i.e. Harvey Weinstein, Al Franken, ect.

I also have positionality of being a student leader on my campus which was known at the institution the participants attended along with being an advocate in the community. These positions, not only served as aspects I needed to take into consideration with this project, but it also gave me a significantly deeper understanding of this project and sexual violence as a whole because I have worked in each different avenue of sexual violence work.

Phase one is where I conducted interviews with different Midwest Higher Education Institutions on what prevention programming they were conducting that focused on toxic masculinity as well as how, if they were, were they engaging men on their campus. In phase two, I conducted focus groups with men from a liberal arts

college within the Midwest where I explored their perceptions on masculinity as well as sexual violence programming. The questions for my focus groups in phase two were divided into four categories that were based on themes that emerged from my Summer Collaborative interviews: male engagement, messaging on masculinity, attitudes on sexual violence, and sexual violence focused spaces. The semi-structure of these questions can be seen in Appendix A. The focus groups consisted of four to ten men from one institution who shared another group identity of being part of the same athletic team. The full demographics of the groups can be found in Appendix B. For both phase one and phase two, a qualitative approach was the best due to the difficulty of measuring culture. When measuring a campus culture to see if there is a rape culture present, a quantitative climate survey as well as qualitative interviews are the best ways to measure a specific campus culture (Klune 2017). Many institutions are now enacting climate surveys to get a more accurate assessment of numbers of sexual assaults and numbers of sexual assault victim/survivors on their campuses and so to accurately measure the culture at this campus, in depth qualitative interviews needed to be conducted. I chose to do focus groups because it allowed me to do more interviews than individuals interviews as well as helped me observe the masculinities that were being practiced in groups.

So to take the qualitative approach to help gain a deeper understanding of culture, I needed to interview people within the culture. Qualitative approaches were the best strategies for my research due to the in depth information that qualitative research yields as well as the difficulty of understanding current climates and gender

roles. The themes of masculinity that emerged were due to the group dynamics that were at play that only focus groups could measure. For phase one of my project that focused on the exploration of men's and masculinity programming and how campuses were engaging men, it was best to conduct one on one interviews with higher education professionals within the Midwest who knew their programming and their campus culture. This helped to gain a deeper understanding of sexual violence as a whole and the effects and approaches different institutions were taking due to the current climate and new enactments of laws within the last ten years. For higher education professionals who did not think they could offer perspectives on men's and masculinity programming, I invited them to still interview with me on their campus culture. This helped to give me a better sense of themes that all institutions were facing.

For phase one of my research project with permission through signed consent forms (Appendix C) from participants, I was able to voice record the interviews, which I was then able to listen back to for further analysis. These were recorded on my cellular phone and then later saved onto a password protected computer and backed up onto a personal hard drive.

For phase two of my project, it was not plausible to conduct one on one interviews due to the time it would take, but it also would not focus or expand on the Social Identity Theory that appears in groups dynamics that was key to understanding the role of peers and masculinity within college men. For the second phase of my project, I conducted focus groups with all men from the same Midwest institution. I decided to focus on one particular four year higher educational institution due to the

influential powers that education has on the socialization of individuals as well as the uniqueness of four year higher education institutions and rape culture. The focus was on men due to the complex relationship between social identity and how masculinity presents in groups.

A key component to the success of the one on one interviews and the focus groups was the role of confidentiality. The confidentiality agreements can be found at Appendix C and D. With the agreement of complete confidentiality, there was a rapport that was able to be built with both the participants from phase I and phase II and myself. This protected participants from anything that could be defaming their institution and allowed for more candid responses. This was especially key to the focus groups due to athletics being continuously placed under a microscope. The intention is not to make claims on any specific sports teams, but to utilize this data to gain a deeper understanding of what influences college men, many of whom are involved in athletics, to participate in sexual violence programming and ways to improve sexual violence programming to address harmful forms of masculinity.

Phase one of my research informed the questions that I used for my focus groups. I had four sections that my questions were made up of; basic information on the men that were participating, messaging and socialization, masculinity and the male gender role on campus, and sexual violence programming and perceptions. I started out with basic information of the men to gain a deeper understanding of how involved they were in their campus community and culture. I also used this, like many focus group facilitators, to help the men get comfortable with me as a facilitator. I then transitioned

into questions on messaging and socialization. This was to primarily focus on where they first heard messages of masculinity and if those were influential. This also led into a broader conversation about messaging that the institution enforces. The next steps were how that messaging changed when they got to college, what messages they heard at their institution on what it means to be a man, and the expectations of them at their institution. Lastly, I transitioned into the potentially more sensitive topic that focused on sexual violence.

For the second phase of my project, for each focus group I would set up two video recording cameras, so that if one for whatever reason stopped working, I would always have one viable video. Audio as well as body language was recorded with the video recording cameras. These tapes, I later hand transcribed and put into NVivo, a qualitative analysis program to further analyze.

There was a total of three focus groups. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form outlining that this was a voluntary study on campus culture and agreeing to allow me to use their quotes within my final paper. Each group shared more than one common identity. Each group were all men and shared another identity of either being a teammate or part of the same club/organization on their campus. The extra identity gave an extra level of comfort with talking about what is considered societally as a sensitive topic and a topic they might not be used to discussing. Along with the other shared identity, each focus group was conducted in the same room that was situated more off the beaten path in the later evenings on their campus to aid in privacy and

comfortability. To also help reinforce the confidentiality and privacy of the focus groups, a testing sign was put on the door so no one would interrupt.

For both phase one and phase two of my project, I had to obtain Institutional Review Board approval since I was working with human participants. With proper consent forms for both phase one and phase two, and explaining and emphasizing the voluntary nature of the project, I was able to conduct my research within ethical confidence.

Findings

Through these robust qualitative focus groups, richer data were obtained from which multiple themes emerged. While a multitude of themes emerged, for the scope of this paper, only some of the themes will be discussed. The themes that emerged prominently will be highlighted through the findings section and will include the role of influencers and social capital, entitlement and distancing, myths, masculine performances, and cognitive dissonance. To illustrate the emerging themes, quotations will be used from the focus groups.

Influencer & Social Capital

The role of an influencer on peers was prominent within male engagement. An influencer, for these purposes, is someone who holds high respect amongst young men. The influencers esteem can sway young men to attending activities or guiding them on beliefs. The influencer also holds an aspect of Social Capital. Social Capital refers to an

individual's social connections that grants them increased opportunities as well as social power amongst their peers. The prominence of the role influencer was shown throughout all of the interviews. It was shown from the initial recruitment process, where coaches and captains were called upon to aid in recruitment. The Social Capital that I held with some of the coaches and captains also aided in the difficult recruitment process.

According to the focus groups, the role of influencers was key in encouraging attendance to programming on serious, often uncomfortable topics, like sexual violence. Male peers also acted as an influential role in getting the men to participate in programming. This expands the role of the influencer to highlight the social capital one holds as well as the group dynamics of these tight knit groups. The role of male peers in influencing each other was demonstrated through the discussion on the decision making process of which events to attend. Daniel Thompson, a senior explains how he got involved in a club or organization, "I would say friends. Like I mean, I was on the board of (Club or Organization at Institution) and the only reason was because a friend of mine asked if I would." The role of male peer influence is also seen through Mason Anderson's answer, "Well, uh, where my boys go, I go pretty much" as well as Jonathan Nelson's experience, "if your buddies are going to go you're much more likely to go." Jonathan continues, explaining that the mere fact of knowing someone who is involved in the event could influence if they attend, "um if I know someone's involved in it then I'm more likely to go." These quotes exemplify a peer to peer influence that can be used to increase male engagement and attendance.

The influencer role of male peers also extends to policing each other. Male peers would police other men into roles and behaviors perceived as acceptable within the team and group. The idea of policing also reinforces aspects of *Groupthink* to gain a unified norm of the group. Groupthink refers to pressures from other individuals in the group to conform to group norms to gain a consensus. This appeared to be reflected when one group went into a discussion about sexual violence contributors. One of the older members, Daniel Thompson, stated, “Just wrong place, wrong time. Stupid action, stupid thought, I mean, everyone, I mean everyone makes mistakes. There is a time and place for forgiveness, I mean.” In response to the Daniel Thompson, one of the younger members, Thomas Williams, disagreed and appeared to challenge Thompson by saying,

“I know, but that’s just something else, I mean. If you were to sexually assault somebody, I’m sorry I am not going to look at you the same ever again. It’s not because I am a judgemental or a bad person, it’s because that morals and values that I think we all hold are higher than we revered being merciful or forgiven or being forgivable. I don’t know, it’s just something that it’s a big deal to me so.”

Thompson in response, appeared flustered and started to conform to what Williams was saying. Thomas Williams and Joseph Erickson explained that if someone was deliberately sexually assaulting someone, they would not be accepted and could not be friends with them. This example suggests that sexual violence was not accepted among the group and further exemplifies young men policing each other into acceptable norms. This develops the role of the influencer in shaping the behaviors and beliefs of young men.

The role of social capital and power that each person held was evident throughout the focus groups. A distinction was observable in the amount of power that each man could call upon among their peers. Social capital was observable based on the body language of the group. It was exemplified in Team 1's group dynamics, where the younger players: Joseph Erickson, Thomas Williams, and Nathan Lee would consistently look towards Daniel Thompson, Andrew Meyer and Jack Jones for approval of acceptable norms. This was very evident in Teams 1 and 2. Additionally, the individuals who held the most social capital would demonstrate acceptable behaviors and model how to act. This was shown through Team 2, where Jonathan Nelson would model accepted behavior and the others would follow. The younger members would then mimic Jonathan Nelson's demeanor, body language and thoughtfulness. The distinction of power was also exemplified when Team 1 was asked to discuss the most dominant masculine place on campus. Many of the men mentioned the locker room. When prompted to elaborate the types of behaviors observed, the men got quiet and turned towards Jack Jones who appeared to possess the most social capital and legitimized power. The behavior observed in the last example, highlights the loyalty, secrecy, and policed norms that the group holds. Each member can be an influencer, but their individual social capital predicts the extent of the effect on the norms of the group.

Another key influence among the young men was their coach. The coach was highlighted as a key influencer for persuading the men to attend events. This was shown through Joseph Erickson's account of discussing his coach, "We respect

everything our coach says, so because he says something about it, we own into it.”

Jonathan Nelson discussed the power the coach possesses in getting men to participate in events, “Trying to get like a bunch of people to go to a maybe potentially uncomfortable thing like if it comes from the coach I think it's probably the most effective way.” This demonstrates that the coach possesses immense influence on their male athletes. The influence of the coach thus appears to be a key element in engaging male athletes.

The role of the coach extends the influencer role past participation in events. The coach as well as those who possess individual social capital influence the beliefs and norms that are held among the teams. This is discussed by Jack Jones in the conversation about what messaging they get from their coaches,

“I put it this way, like you come to college is normal, a college student, you don't have a coach. And at (School's Name), our coach is pretty demanding of us to do all the things these guys have said. So if I were to come to (School's Name) just a student, I would probably, might miss a class here and there because I didn't have somebody telling me I had to go to class...we have somebody who always like a boss in a way like in the real world that is. Someone who is looking out for us to have those morals- those values that a normal college student might not have.”

Through this quote, the men are discussing how the role of the coach acts as a guiding mentor that extends beyond athletics. When discussing the role of their coach, the men also discussed morals that the coach promotes as well as doing well academically. The coach is explained in having the highest influence over these young men, which would differ for college students who do not participate in athletics.

Entitlement and Distancing

The behaviors of distancing and entitlement emerged in many aspects. Many of the men struggled with seeing sexual violence as an issue. Some of the men like Eric Hanson, would deny seeing sexual violence as an issue and believed that the issue of sexual violence was being exaggerated,

“There was, I think it was at, it was at one of the two presentations at the beginning of the year for sports, it was in (Location at School). I think it was a little exasperated, a little amplified, like yeah it is serious, but I don’t think it is as out of control as you think.”

Despite being aware of sexual violence as an issue due to prevention programming, several men struggled with solidifying that it was an issue. Many of the men continuously referenced that they and the men they surrounded themselves with were the honorable men. They also would reference that their institution was a reputable community. With the emphasis on having commendable people around them, the men struggled to articulate that sexual violence was an issue. The men also referenced not knowing people who were personally affected by sexual violence, which further complicated their understanding of sexual violence as an issue.

Another theme that emerged was men distancing themselves from their role within sexual violence. The aspect of men distancing themselves from their role within sexual violence is a large critique of the “Good Man Bystander” approach that most bystander intervention trainings have established. The role of distancing is shown through the failure of men to recognize that perpetrators could be in the trainings. The lack of self reflection on their own harmful behaviors that perpetuate the patriarchal

structure also is not incorporated into the “Good Man Bystander” approach, which emerged through the focus groups as well. The failure to recognize that they were in community with perpetrators or those who perpetuate the patriarchal structure was expressed through their discussion of the media. Several men mentioned that in media, only a small percentage of men are concentrated on. When expressing how the media narrows in on a small percentage of men who commit sexual violence in athletics, the men also would distance themselves from those men and act as though they were not part of the team or culture of athletics. This can be seen through Jonathan Nelson’s explanation of the media narrowing in on a small percentage of athletes,

“Well it’s hard because you may have (Team Number of Players) guys who are awesome but then you might have (Lower Number of Players) that make the news, not make the news but make an issue that’s known then you just get grouped with the whole (Team Number of Players).”

This man’s experience exemplifies that they under the microscope, as well as highlights the distance that he sees between those who commit sexual violence and the other athletes. Thomas Williams expresses that they are honorable men,

“Because we have values and because we have characteristics that we all abide by we wouldn’t typically see it in our setting because we are a little bit more of a closed off community being on the (Specific Sports Team Named) team but I mean so I guess I can’t attest to other people that maybe aren’t on the team and going out partying and stuff like that but I... I’ve been here longer and I haven’t seen it anything of the sort.”

Williams continues, which later in the focus group revealed that someone on their team had an allegation against them, which was claimed to be false,

“That I can say with complete trust that every single man in this room and every man on the (Specific Sport Mentioned) team if they were to see it they would put a stop to it or they would do what they could do to put a stop to it.”

Here, it seems that this man’s experience of being surrounded by men who he deems honorable influences his outlook on recognizing that perpetrators could be among the group. This glorified outlook of his teammates remained constant even after it was revealed that someone on their team had an allegation against them. Due to the group dynamics that were at work, Daniel Thompson and Andrew Meyer convinced him that the allegation was false and it further exemplifies how the group dynamics of policing can normalize violence. This shows how among groups, men can excuse other men’s behaviors because of the status they hold to that individual and group. This type of group dynamics helps create a culture of not believing that sexual assault happens on their campus.

James Smith discusses his struggle of seeing an honorable community, yet knowing it is an issue everywhere due to the programming,

“When I go out and hang out with people like in a group setting I feel like-I feel people like like at (School’s Name) we kind of look out for each other. I feel like there hasn’t-I haven’t seen anything cause I feel like-I feel like people will look out for each other you know if people are not in the right mind set people will be like alright its time for you to go home or something like that. We like watch out for each other here and so I feel like obviously like what (Name of Teammate) said it’s an issue everywhere but I think that, you know.”

This demonstrates that the men do not see sexual assault happening at their campus, yet know of sexual violence as an issue as a result of the prevention

programming. Many experienced a struggle of addressing whether or not sexual violence was an issue given the lack of personal knowledge or connection to those affected.

On the other hand, the aspect of distancing was expanded in this quote to also normalize and deflect sexual violence as happening everywhere. While it is good that the men recognize that sexual violence is an issue everywhere, the normalization and deflection of sexual violence happening at their institution aids in the distancing and may further perpetuate the underrepresentation of men in programs aimed at addressing sexual violence.

The aspects of entitlement extend beyond just the individual men. Comments from several of the men suggested the presence of a culture of entitlement on their campus. This culture of entitlement was discussed as being reinforced by professors and other staff on their campus. Some of the men could name specific instances where professors made exceptions for them or gave them more attention due to their status of being an athlete. Mason Anderson discusses:

“I had a paper due the other week and uh, my teacher was like uh, you practice late on Wednesday right? And it’s due Thursday. And I’m like, yeah and she’s like just turn it in to me on Friday and I’m like okay!”

Jacob Olson adds,

“Then I had a teacher and I didn’t do very well on my first test . Then he wrote a note to see him after class and then I, he’s like what happened. I go well it was kinda hard because I had to stay up late and then get up early for lifts and he was like Oh well how about you come in sometime and we can help fix your study schedule and I went in then and he helped point out when would be best to study and

plan around football and stuff. Then I did a lot better and he goes, Hey Jacob *thumbs up*”

In the context in which both of these experiences were discussed, it shows the reinforcing of a culture of entitlement. The context of these quotes were discussed during the section on special treatment. Due to the context of discussing special and fair treatment, it suggests that even though this could be interpreted as not being specialized treatment but instead a product of a smaller institution, the players insinuated that there was special treatment. Joseph Erickson describes his interactions with professors in a different perspective,

“I would say when it comes to (School Name) professors in class, I would say they don’t treat us any differently than anybody else from my experience. I mean what they do is they respect the time that you we have as far as you know practices, games, they are in really good communication with us in regards to that but at the same time we’re still students in their class they don’t just look at us as “Oh, they’re the athletes.”

This quote highlights aspects of working around schedules of athletes, where students who do not participate in athletics, do not have professors navigating their schedules in the same context. This highlights an aspect of a culture of entitlement that is being promoted. This also highlights a higher status that athletes are being placed in and an entitlement that is embodied. The aspect of entitlement expands past just treatment of professors. This quote highlights that there is an entitlement among some athletes to preferred treatment by professors. This entitlement could be expanded to explain entitlement in other avenues of their lives like potential entitlement to women’s

bodies and entitlement to be free from criticism among their peers on harassment, abuse and assault of others.

Myths

When examining the themes that emerged within the focus groups, there was only one sexual violence myth that surfaced multiple times. There are many myths when it comes to sexual violence, but the myth regarding the rate of false allegations against men was strongly believed and feared among the men. According to statistics, only two to ten percent of cases are false reports of sexual assault (National Sexual Violence Resource Center 2018). The myth of high rates of false allegations is a tactic that is used to discredit victim/survivors and aid in perpetrators being exempt from ramifications. Andrew Meyer explained that even if you are practicing consensual tactics, there is still a risk of someone making a false allegation, “Like maybe you are doing everything you can to be the right person, but like somehow it is still on you just being in this situation.” Joseph Erickson adds that no matter the circumstance, the man will be labeled as the rapist over the woman,

“In this case, you could be with the wrong person at the wrong time and you know you could get thrown under the bus for something you know you really didn’t do but everyone is going to believe this person and there you are (throws arms up). You’re the rapist basically. So...”

Matthew Carlson was even able to explain that his middle school taught him to be cautious of false accusations,

“There are, there are easy examples of... uh, well when I was in middle school we had a talk with our principle. He sat down with all of the seventh grade guys and just told us what could happen to us like if we get put in a bad situation and there are cameras in hallways and a girl could say one thing and it’s all game over from there. You know you can be trialed with sexual harassment. Oh he said this, he said that. They’re not going to believe what you have to say cause if they see you on camera hugging this girl and they don’t see your hands, you know what are those hands doing. They can’t see it. They don’t know what is going on. So we were taught when we hug a girl, we were to hug over the top and show our hands, so like I would hug a girls neck area and I would show my hands at all times. So then if anything were to happen, like a girl was to say something that could be a negative perspective.”

Carlson continues discussing false accusations,

“Oh yeah, no easily. There is a lot of compulsive liars in today's society. It is easier to do that for attention and I mean once you say something, it’s forever out there. It’s like posting on the internet. Once you say one thing, it can be the end of you. It can take- I saw a video on Twitter the other day of a guy tossing a cat onto the street, but he was like fully throwing it and it was like rumored that police went and arrested him for animal cruelty based off a video off of Twitter.”

This suggests that the socialization of this myth is rooted in previous schooling for some of the men which suggests that existing programs are not taking sufficient time to dispel that myth. The second quote also highlights a new era of technology and the immediate effects of technology. This could be a potential amplifier of the myth. If the men are seeing more immediate ramifications through the use of technology, the more it grows and the more they believe in the myth. The use of technology was also briefly mentioned by Eric

Hanson who discussed false accusations, “Someone says something on social media, and whether it is true or not, it’s like well my reputation is kind of tarnished a little bit. So I don’t know... I think you just have to be careful.” This suggests that there could be an increase in this type of myth with the increased use of technology with the younger generations.

Just as the men mentioned technology, there reference to knowing someone who had a false accusation against them. As Daniel Thompson explains, “I-ah it was insane, but there was one of one of his buddies in this fraternity was falsely accused of raping a woman.” Alexander Larson mentions knowing someone as well,

There was a football player who plays for (NFL team) who, ironically enough, is his mother’s roommate of one of my mother’s friends and that’s cool, but he, you know who I am talking about, (NFL team). He was targeted by a woman that he knew and she apparently said there were rape charges, sexual harassment, luckily he didn’t end up getting charged with any of that, but he got suspended for I think it was six months...

This suggests that college men not only believe that false reports happen significantly more than what is taught, but they also believe that they are at risk of being accused. The issue of false allegations myth is a fundamental way to undermine those who claim United State’s Society has a serious social issue when it comes to sexual violence. Due to the myth of false allegations undermining sexual violence being recognized as a serious issue, it also aids in the evading of difficult conversations around sexual violence that work towards structural changes.

Masculine Performances

Another prominent theme that emerged from the focus groups was the notion of how the men perceived masculinity. Within the men's sense of identity development and masculine performance, there is the role of habitus. *Habitus* as theorized by Pierre Bourdieu, is when actions are based on habits and practices that are socially shaped (Bourdieu 1986; Dillon 2009). So the different masculine habits that emerged were similar to the aspect of Habitus, where they have been socially constructed. They did discuss the traditionally masculine roles like being the protector and being a leader, but masculinity was overall more fluidly interpreted. They discussed the various pressures they received. Many of the pressures were focused on when they were younger. They also discussed a transition of messaging to being more themselves as they got older. This transition is explained through Mason Anderson's experience,

“I remember when I was younger like these different commercials that were like toughen up like, like be a man, drive a truck (in a masculine/lower voice)...drink beer!...Throw darts and now-and now, and now it's all about like-like when I was younger it was like being tough physically now its like being tough like emotionally. Allow yourself to be vulnerable.”

Matthew Carlson reflects on his own upbringing and how that has influenced his concept of being a man,

“I think it is easy to depict a man as being a leader, but I think I grew up in a household that was more of the fact that it's not about being a leader as much as it is being reliable just being there when you're needed. Whenever you're like called upon, you're ready to do what it takes to get the situation done and you're willing got take on

whatever job is called for. And I think that's kind of what it is."

Carlson continues,

"I would just say there are just things that are believed like being a leader like you don't have to be a leader. It's whatever you choose it to be. Like if you're a follower, you're a follower. Like I think it's just whatever gets the job done. Having the composure in the moment and being able to do what it takes."

Through this individual's experience, we can see that men are also receiving stronger messages at home about having masculinity being more fluid. That the emphasis is on being reliable and that the nuclear household is still a strong indicator of the men's personal socialization.

Another aspect of their masculine socialization was their higher education institution. They specifically discuss how the institution they attend has influenced their perception of being a man. This is shown through Jonathan Nelson's answer of what it means to be a man,

"Er, uh, like (Name of Teammate) was saying with being yourself. It's not like a cookie cutter school where like everyone's the same and all this is what it is to be like – everyone can be whatever they want – not that they don't care everyone's fairly judge free compared to other places so what it means to be a man like its more fluidly interpreted here than other places I would say."

Through this quote, it is shown the immense role that systems, specifically their higher education institution influences their lives. The institution, similar to other systems in the young men's lives, influences their attitudes, behaviors and beliefs. This

highlights the importance in systemic change in creating a cultural shift in young people needed to affect the incidence of sexual violence.

Many discussed masculinity in the context of chivalry, which is part of the dominant expectations of masculine performance, but they also discussed being someone others could respect, being a good human being, taking pride in what you do, being reliable, trustworthy, accountable and dependable. These perceptions of masculinity is consistent with what Michael Kimmel has discussed in recent interviews; characteristics of the social definition of what a good person is are being seen through a gendered lens (Kimmel and Wade, 2018).

With respect to the men's described masculine performance, they also frequently discussed that they need to represent their team and their sport in a positive manner. This was discussed in the context of taking pride of their team and being held to higher standards because they are leaders, but it was also discussed in the aspects of saving face, maintaining an image, and being placed under a microscope within society. This can be seen through Thomas Williams's experience,

“Because we're involved in athletics we are also set to a higher standard because anything that we do, um, if it reflects poorly on (School Name), uh not only does it reflect poorly on your entire sport, but the whole school, so um if we were to make a stupid decision what we talked about today is accountability....”

Daniel Thompson adds to the experience,

“if it's just a student you might hear about and say oh well that student really messed up, but if you hear that a (Sport they play) player did it, there's kinda this blanket over- my gosh look at what the (School name and sport name) player did and it's kinda brought on to the whole team and then

therefore the whole program and (School name) athletics overall.”

These quotes demonstrate the need to meet higher standards since they are representing their team but also due to the risk of athletics being analyzed by the media through a microscope.

Cognitive Dissonance

Although, positive and more fluid aspects of masculine performance are shown, aspects of maintaining an emotional toughness were also prevalent. The consistent theme of having to be emotionally stable shows that men are still being socialized to not show or learn how to process emotions. This is consistent with dominant and harmful forms of masculinity. Several men also expressed discomfort with attending sexual violence programming. This discomfort can be interpreted as Cognitive Dissonance. Cognitive Dissonance is when exposure to new information contradicts previously held and socialized beliefs (Harmon-Jones and Mills 1999). Cognitive Dissonance can create an effect of rejecting new information and avoiding situations that lead to this feeling of Cognitive Dissonance (Wagner 2015). This was exemplified through the many men who expressed much discomfort with going to any sexual violence programming, but from Jack Jones’ experience, he seemed to express the discomfort the most,

“To be honest if I wasn’t told to go, that- I probably wouldn’t go there cause I just I honestly don’t really like having conversations about it (sexual violence). Like it’s something that I don’t like being apart of because I know that if I get involved with it, it’s like here’s something bad

that happened to someone I know or... Um I-I just don't want to be in that situation.”

This quote suggests that most of the men from the group who are experiencing that mental discomfort and that difficulty processing new information are actively trying to avoid those feelings of discomfort and so choose to opt out of the sexual violence prevention programming when not required by their institution or coach. This also highlights that men have not been taught the skills to process and recognize emotions, which is resulting in further discomfort from programming. Just as most men expressed the discomfort of the programming, Jonathan Nelson highlighted that the programming was necessary despite the discomfort,

“But it's like if you can deal going through those talks and learning something from it and putting up with any (motions quotes with his fingers) any discomfort like the end goal is good. Yeah, yeah I can't say how it feels to be in someone else's shoes and how the talks feel for them but like if that's what we're complaining about it's like alright yeah we like are pretty sensitive generation if we're so bothered by something that is uncomfortable to talk about then we complain about it.”

This quote suggests that he has experienced the same dissonance that many others articulated, but he has learned to navigate that dissonance because he has started to understand the connections the programming has to the larger structural issues.

The feeling of discomfort and dissonance are increased with small amounts of targeting that the men experience from the programming. This was shown through many of the experiences of the men. There were more examples of targeting with Team 2. This can be seen through James Smith's experience, “It goes back to the earlier question where like (Specific Sport Athletes), you know, so its kinda got that different

tone you know. It's not directed at you, but it is in a way...It's a wink." Ethan Peterson expressed the heteronormative lens that programming still emphasizes, "Its focus was like on everyone, but like what people think about Title IX is man to woman. It's kind of intimidating, demeaning to men a little bit." This suggests that even though programs try to be inclusive, the framing is still being interpreted in a heteronormative, male perpetrator focused lens, which reinforces the discomfort that men experiences.

Additionally, the men expressed attracting attention or negative expectations of showing up to sexual violence programming. These first two quotes highlight attracting more unnecessary attention as well as questioning of their authenticity at programming. Liam Johnson states, "It's just not another person attending, it's like Oh you're a male athlete, a male athlete showed up, but like when you walk into certain events, it's almost as if you like- all eyes are on you. That's one of them. Why are you here?." This suggests that they feel like they not only stand out at programming, but that their authenticity is put to question. This surprise response to men showing up is also exemplified through Jonathan Nelson's quote, "I feel like they want athletes, men, male athletes, there but when they're there they're almost surprised and don't know how, not like they don't know how, not like-like they're not prepared um... are used to like the whole (Athletic Team) showing up." This type of messaging is also a contributor to why men are less likely to engage.

Although the framing and reactions that many of the men have experienced were negative, positive aspects of prevention were also highlighted. One aspect of prevention that was seen as a positive was the different strategies that the institution

offered in potentially harmful situations. The men expressed that they were very effective and helpful. The statistics of sexual violence that were mentioned throughout the programs were also seen as helpful to the men in their understanding of sexual violence as an issue. These were the most effective ways that engaged the men because it focused on them being able to take action against sexual violence instead of just focusing on sexual violence as an issue. At the institution they attend, the prevention programmers also use a poster campaign to increase sexual violence awareness, this was also a common prevention technique that the men strongly emphasized.

Discussion and Conclusion

This qualitative research gives deeper insight into how masculinity is being performed by young men in contemporary society. It also highlights young men's perceptions on one particular campus culture's sexual violence programming. The themes that emerged can then be applied to other campus cultures to improve all sexual violence programming and further engage men in the conversation. When examining masculinity through this study, men are seeing qualities of being a good person as gendered. They also described the role of masculinity as being more fluidly interpreted as they have gotten older. My findings are consistent with the perspective outlined in Mickael Kimmel's recent interview; one where he discusses this fluidity (Kimmel and Wade 2018). It suggests that masculinity is being more fluidly interpreted and taught in some of the nuclear families and subcultures. Although much of what the men described were more fluid and qualities that are perceived as healthy, the men also

described aspects of stunting emotions and being emotionally tough. Aspects of not showing emotions are seen as being part of toxic masculinity which is harmful to them and the community.

This study also gives deeper insight into one campus culture and how that culture's programming is being interpreted. The men mentioned many positive prevention aspects like posters being on walls as well as tools for stepping in when they see a potentially harmful situation. The men also mentioned special treatment that they received from faculty and staff. The special treatment that they received from faculty and staff suggests that entitlement is being encouraged within the culture of that university. Further investigation on transforming cultures of entitlement is needed, specifically around sports and athletic culture to a healthy culture that is not reinforcing entitlement in young men.

Entitlement also showed up in the way men discussed sexual violence. The men were still distancing themselves from sexual violence as an issue. This was shown through how they discussed other men who were perpetrators as well as how the struggle they encountered with answering if they saw sexual violence as an issue. The men also continuously mentioned they did not know anyone personally affected and without that personal and emotional connection, they were not able to connect with the social problem of sexual violence as an issue. This begs programming to address more victim/survivor empathy as well as self reflection on everyday behaviors that perpetuate the patriarchal structure.

The men also expressed forms of cognitive dissonance. The cognitive dissonance they were experiencing served not only as a tremendous barrier to them coming to programming, but it also shows a larger societal issue at hand. Men are being socialized or have been socialized previously to be emotionally tough, i.e. not to show emotions, be very stable in their emotions and be in complete control over their emotions. If men are taught to not express emotions and be continuously in control, when they experience such things as cognitive dissonance, they have not been taught the skills on how to process these intense emotions. This suggests that men are not learning emotional processing at home or in the educational institution, which is stunting them and those they interact with.

When examining this through the art of rhetoric persuasion and the rhetorical triangle, ethos (ethics), pathos (emotion) and logos (logic), all aspects need to be engaged to be successful in persuasion and/or learning (Louisiana State University 2009). Education needs to engage the ethos, pathos and logos in order to create a complete understanding of social issues and this suggests that not only is the pathos and emotional connection missing, but men also are not being taught on how to process those emotions. This suggests that within education, there needs to be an outlet where men can learn to process and breakdown harmful forms of masculinity in order to create healthier aspects of masculinity and fully engage the reflective process of their own behaviors that contribute to the patriarchy. This will also help in the distancing and removing themselves from their own actions that might be contributing to the issue of

sexual violence. The aspects of helping to break down unhealthy forms of masculinity are shown to be most effective in same gender programming.

As Berkowitz (2002), discusses, the needs of women and men in sexual violence programming differs due to the different lens they bring. This also brings into questions programming that would be for individuals who are non-binary or do not identify as man or woman. Non-binary programming and women's programming would need further research to make a claim on what could be effective.

Through phase I of my research, I know that when looking towards programming in the future, the programming needs to be peer, male led and contain aspects of mentorship to help process emotions. Tools such as, We Believe You: Survivors of Campus Sexual Assault Speak Out that share victim/survivors experiences should also be incorporated to help build that victim/survivor empathy, which will aid in the distancing as well as the myth of false allegations. Programming should also work towards addressing the fear men have of false allegations. Through the validation of that fear and work towards processing that emotion of fear, then transformative learning can happen to move beyond the myth of false allegations.

If men are given the tools to process emotions better as they mature so that cognitive dissonance is not as intense, then we might be able to see an increase in men attending programs that focus on sexual violence as an issue. This will also help to shift the frame of sexual violence being seen as a women's issue to being seen as everyone's issue since everyone would be showing up to programming and there would be less distancing.

My research also highlighted aspects of social capital and the role of influencers in male engagement. Male engagement would increase as well if we were able to get those who play the role of the influencer to participate more. This was also exemplified through some of the discussions from Phase I of my project. The role of the influencers can also be very beneficial in teaching skills that can help to form healthier masculinity, bystander training as well as influence the role of entitlement and engagement. If those who serve in roles as an influencer, i.e. coaches were more intentional and brought intentionality to what they discussed with players, then there could be a shift in behaviors and attitudes.

Finally, programming should emphasize male victimization and programmers should anticipate male engagement. This will help to transition from a heteronormative lens and ensure that men feel included in these spaces and their authenticity not put into question.

Limitations

Although my research was an extensive, multi-stage research project, it is not without limitations. One limitation that I encountered was the difficulty with recruitment for my study. I was only able to get participants through social capital that I held and the role of influencers who were willing to help. I did have incentives, but that was not a large draw for men to participate. If I was able to expand this project and able to obtain increased recruitment, then my sample would be a stronger representation of society.

Another limitation was that the diversity within sample size. The majority of the men were white and so some masculinities were not as present due to them being part of the dominant population and more likely to hold dominant forms of masculinity due to the social stratification system. I also was not able to get a group of men that did not share the identity of being part of the same sports team. I was not able to get a group that was not part of the same sports team because I was not able to get enough male-identified participants to participate in my focus groups.

Another important limitation was that many potential participants were familiar with the work I do on my campus, specifically leadership positions I hold. One man in particular pointed out that I had the authority to potentially get them in trouble for discussing the use of underage alcohol consumption with me and did not feel comfortable disclosing anymore information. This highlights that the men could have been filtering themselves more due to my positionality.

Another limitation was due to the high profile of recent cases that were in the media. Along with victim/survivors coming forward, there were also repercussions being enacted for sexually harassing women specifically within the entertainment industry. Many of these cases came to light while conducting my focus groups. This could have primed my participants and should be taken into account with the interpretation of my data.

Lastly, due to my gender identity as a woman, the male participants in my study's responses were informed by that identification. This was shown through the use of vague terms to describe practices of their masculinity like, "man things" or "stupid

teenage idiots.” Even when prompted to go deeper, there was a sense of secrecy. One group in particular went completely silent and looked directly to the captain of the team to answer. Due to the vagueness, I did not find evidence of explicitly harmful masculinities. The vagueness, I speculate, was due to the my gender identity as well as my positionality within sexual violence work.

Future Research

Although fairly comprehensive, future research can be examined to better understand current day sexual violence efforts and harmful masculinities. One area of future research would be to expand to other institutions. The expansion of doing this at multiple institutions would extend the application beyond four year institutions to more institutions for a better more comprehensive understanding of the current day. The expansion should also include fraternities and non-club/organization membership. Fraternities should be explored due to the unique subculture of fraternities. I was unable to get fraternity involvement due to lack of responses. Just as non-club or organization membership should be explored to gain an understanding why those subcategories are not as involved as well.

Additionally, it would be useful to explore masculine performance and perceptions of sexual violence programming through a racial lens. There are different embodiments of masculinity based on race and the approach to programming could vary based on racial identity and masculine performance.

Masculinity among non-binary and queer individuals should also be examined. With the frequency of younger generations coming forward identifying outside of the gender binary,

more research should be conducted on best sexual violence programming to suit their needs especially because the queer community is at higher rates of being targeted.

Another area that could be explored is exploring women's perceptions of sexual violence programming. Because women can embody masculinity, it would be important to explore their perceptions as well as their performances of masculinity. If a study was conducted with women athletes, entitlement could be examined to see if it extends to women who embody masculinity.

Lastly, it would be useful to create sexual violence prevention programming that focused on harmful forms of masculinity and test the effectiveness. This would include peer and male to male led mentorships as well as intentional programming with influencers that worked towards resocializing men into healthier forms of masculinity. It would also incorporate aspects of self reflecting on their own harmful behaviors that perpetuate the patriarchy and an emphasis on victim/survivor empathy. This programming should be tested for effectiveness (changes in attitudes, behaviors and culture) over a longer period of time to see if it is truly effective in changing the current climate.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Focus Group Questions

1. Please say your name, area of study, year, and if there is anything you really like about your institution.
2. What activities are you involved in?
3. When coming to (school's name), how did you choose what activities to get involved in and what influenced your choices?
4. How do you choose which events you attend on campus?
5. Every group has perceptions about them. What do you think are the perceptions of the (sports team name) team?
6. When thinking about (school's name) as a whole, how would you describe your environment?
7. If you could pick one main message that your institution promotes, what would that message and focus be?
8. What type of messages do you receive from the upper administration on campus on how you need to behave?
9. From your experience, what does it mean to be a man at your institution?
10. What are the perceptions that your campus has about being a man?
11. Think back to all the different places and experiences you have had at your institution. Where would you say, you have observed more masculine behaviors on campus?
12. What messages did you receive at home about what it means to be a man?
13. What did the media tell you about being a man?
14. What messages do you get from your coaches on how to act?
15. If you could tell or promote one thing about (school's name) athletics, what message would you want others to know?
16. Do you see sexual violence as an issue on your campus?
17. What has your experience been with those who do sexual violence work?
18. What type of messaging have you received from those who do sexual violence work in the different prevention programming?
 - a. How does that messaging make you feel?
19. Do you think upper administration treats men fairly when it comes to sexual violence
20. How do you feel going into spaces that focus on sexual violence?
21. Do you feel as though spaces that are focused on sexual violence are made for you or people like you?
22. From your experience as a student, what do you think contributes to sexual violence?
23. What attitudes do you observe around victim/survivors on campus?
24. Some have suggested that there is a connection between the national political environment and the rates of sexual violence, do you agree with that suggestion?
25. Is there anything that you feel we should discuss that has not already been discussed?

Appendix B: Demographics of Focus Groups

1. Jonathan Nelson- White, Male Athlete, Captain of Sports Team, Senior, Obtaining a Bachelors of Science and Bachelor of Arts Degree, Team 2
2. Liam Johnson- White, Male Athlete, Senior, Obtaining a Bachelors of Business Administration Degree, Team 2
3. Mason Anderson- White, Male Athlete, First Year, Obtaining a Bachelors of Arts Degree, Team 2
4. Jacob Olson- White, Male Athlete, First Year, Undecided Degree, Team 2
5. Ethan Peterson- White, Male Athlete, Sophomore, Obtaining a Bachelor of Business Administration, Team 2
6. James Smith- White, Male Athlete, First Year, Obtaining a Bachelor of Science Degree, Team 2

7. Alexander Larson- Black Man of Color, Male Athlete, First Year, Obtaining a Bachelor of Science Degree, Team 3
8. Michael Miller- Man of Color, International Student, Male Athlete, First Year, Obtaining a Bachelor of Arts Degree, Team 3
9. Matthew Carlson- White, Male Athlete, First Year, Obtaining a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts Degree, Team 3
10. Eric Hanson- White, Male Athlete, Transfer Student, Junior, Older Brother Attended Institution, Obtaining a Bachelor of Arts Degree, Team 3

11. Joseph Erickson- Black Man of Color, Male Athlete, Sophomore, Obtaining a Bachelor of Business Administration, Team 1
12. Daniel Thompson- White, Male Athlete, Senior, Obtaining a Bachelor of Science, Team 1
13. Thomas Williams- White, Male Athlete, First Year, Obtaining a Bachelor of Arts Degree, Team 1
14. Jack Jones- White, Male Athlete, Junior, Captain of Sports Team, Obtaining a Bachelor of Business Administration, Team 1
15. Nathan Lee- Racially Ambiguous, Male Athlete, Sophomore, Obtaining a Bachelor of Science, Team 1
16. Andrew Meyer- White, Male Athlete, Senior, Obtaining a Bachelor of Science, Team 1

Appendix C: Consent Form for Phase I; Interviews with Higher Education Professionals

Summer Collaborative Research: Healing A Rape Culture

You are invited to participate in a study that focuses on men's programming in Minnesota. You were selected as a possible subject because of the work you do on masculinity and/or men's programs and education. Please read this consent form and ask any questions before agreeing to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by Merry Snyder, a senior at Hamline University studying Social Justice and Sociology who is being supervised by Professor Ryan LeCount and funded through the Hamline University Summer Collaborative Research in Sustainability Grant.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate at least sixty minutes of an interview that focuses on the work that you and your organization has done to educate and focus on men and masculinity. With permission, I will be taking notes and recording the interview with a voice recorder.

MONETARY COMPENSATION

There is no monetary compensation for this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records of this study will be kept confidential, unless required by law. All data will be kept on a password-protected computer that is only accessible to the researcher. The results may be published in a professional journal, book or at local, regional, national, or international conference via an oral presentation. In any form of publication, information that would hinder confidentiality or put the identities of those participating at risk will not be included. If granted permission for the use of direct quotes, a pseudonym may be used and all other identifying information will be changed to protect your identity. Despite these precautions, absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed due to the nature of interviewing.

RISKS AND BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY

Participation is completely voluntary and though your participation is greatly valued, you may discontinue participation at any time for any reason. During the course of our interview, you may be asked about personal experiences you've had in this field, and it is possible that some of those experiences may be discomfoting. During the interview, you can choose not to answer any questions or talk about any experiences. If during the course of this interview, you experience discomfort, every effort will be made to help connect said person to counseling resources.

Benefits include helping to develop a better understanding of men's and masculinity programming and how it relates to rape culture prevention.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY

Your decision about whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Hamline University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any questions in the interview or withdraw from the study at any time.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

You may ask any questions throughout the duration of the interview, as well as before or after the interview. If you have questions later, you may contact me, Merry Snyder, by email at msnyder06@hamline.edu or my advisor, Ryan LeCount, at rlecount01@hamline.edu.

Upon request, you will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read the above information or have had it read to me. I have received answers to questions asked. I consent to participate in the study.

Subject Printed Name _____

Subject Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator Printed Name _____

Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

I consent to allow use of my anonymous and confidential direct quotations

Subject Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D: Consent form for Phase II; Focus groups with male identified individuals

Departmental Honors Research Project: Campus Culture at Hamline

You are invited to participate in a study that focuses on campus culture at Hamline University. Please read this consent form and ask any questions before agreeing to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by Merry Snyder, a senior at Hamline University studying Social Justice and Sociology who is being supervised by Professor Ryan LeCount and supported by the Sociology Department.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a sixty minute focus group with other Hamline students that will focus on your experience at Hamline. With permission, I will be taking notes, voice recording and videotaping the interview.

INCENTIVE

If you choose to participate in this study, you have the option of putting your name into a raffle for a \$20 giftcard to Target as well as receiving Hamline Housing points for housing selection.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records of this study will be kept confidential, unless required by law. All data will be kept on a password-protected computer that is only accessible to the researcher. While the results of this research may be published in a professional journal, book or at local, regional, national, or international conference via an oral presentation, no individually identifying information will be retained or distributed. In any form of publication, information that would hinder confidentiality or put the identities of those participating at risk will not be included. If granted permission for the use of direct quotes, a pseudonym will be used and all other identifying information will be changed to protect your identity. Despite these precautions, absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed due to the nature of the focus groups.

RISKS AND BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY

Participation is completely voluntary and though your participation is greatly valued, you may discontinue participation at any time for any reason. During the course of our interview, you may be asked about personal experiences you've had, and it is possible that some of those experiences may be discomforting. During the interview, you can choose not to answer any questions or talk about any experiences. If during the course of this interview, you experience discomfort, every effort will be made to help connect said person to counseling resources.

If you feel that any personal familiarity with or relationship to the researcher might influence, limit or in any other way substantially shape your participation, you are welcome to decline participation.

If you are under 18 years of age, you are not allowed to consent to participation in this study. Benefits include helping to develop a better understanding of Hamline's campus and how it relates to improvements of campus climate.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY

Your decision about whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Hamline University. While your full participation is appreciated, you may discontinue your participation at any time for any reason.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

You may ask any questions throughout the duration of the focus groups, as well as before or after the focus groups. If you have questions later, you may contact me, Merry Snyder, by email at msnyder06@hamline.edu or my advisor, Ryan LeCount, at rlecount01@hamline.edu.

Upon request, you will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read the above information or have had it read to me. I have received answers to questions asked. I consent to participate in the study.

Subject Printed Name _____
Subject Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator Printed Name _____
Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

I consent to allow use of my anonymous and confidential direct quotations

Subject Signature _____ Date _____