Exploring Experiences of Peer Campus Sexual Violence Educators Through

Participatory Photography

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the issue of campus sexual violence and whether peer campus sexual violence educators view and interpret their work as contributing to the overall shift from rape culture as it operates on campus towards an informed culture of consent. Furthermore, consideration of whether participants experiences support the idea of rape culture as informing sexual violence prevention strategies employed on campus. Using a participatory photography approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative at Saint Mary's University (Halifax, NS). Based on the research and findings post-thematic analysis, it is concluded that the peer campus sexual violence educators in this study understand their work as having direct result on campus culture change, with acknowledgement of rape culture as informing practice.

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Lastly, I would like to thank the participants of my research study, members of the Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative at Saint Mary's University. Without you, this thesis would not be possible. I hope you feel a sense of pride in having your experiences forever within this body of work.

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Introduction

Sexual violence is a pervasive problem facing university and college campuses across the country. Universities and colleges are intended to be safe spaces that educate young minds by providing them a cohesive sense of community and fostering academic growth and success, but unfortunately in doing so, they create environments that place students at risk of sexual violence from the moment they step foot on campus (Canadian Federation of Students 2015). In effort to minimize the risk of sexual violence faced by students on campus, many institutions have implemented various preventative measures (Karjane, Fisher, and Cullen 2005). These preventative measures include but are not limited to: pledges and public shows of support, designated sexual violence awareness weeks, keynote speakers and conferences, academic courses on the subject of sexual violence, consent education programming, and various training workshops such as bystander intervention, which will be of specific focus in the coming sections. Behind each of these preventative measures are faulty, students, and staff alike, working together to create programs that engage their campus communities in open dialogue about sexual violence and make their campuses saf(er)[1] spaces.

Proudly, over the course of my four years as a student at Saint Mary's University, I have held four student employment positions in the field of sexual violence, as well as have sat on various boards and committees. Playing such a large part in sexual violence prevention on Saint Mary's University campus has provided me not only great insight and tactical experience in the

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[1] Use of the term 'saf(er) spaces' is found in the Nova Scotia Provincial Bystander and Community Intervention Training Program provided by the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association (2018). Use of the term 'saf(er) spaces' as opposed to 'safe spaces' is an attempt at taking a harm-reduction approach to sexual violence prevention and education. When dealing with the issue of campus sexual violence, there is always risk involved due to an inclement of factors unique to campus communities. Therefore, claiming to make spaces safe for students is unrealistic.

field of sexual violence but also the opportunity to dig deep, as they say, into the existing body of literature.

This body of literature has demonstrated a gap. The gap lies in the personal experiences of those students acting as prosocial agents of change on campus (i.e. peer campus sexual violence educators). Students such as those selected as participants in my research study (i.e. members of the Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative) have extensive knowledge and experience in the field of sexual violence, acquired through completion of countless training courses, regular interaction with campus and community resources, hosts of various events and awareness weeks, and as facilitators of bystander intervention training. The existing body of literature on sexual violence prevention and education programming is filled with studies looking at the effectiveness of these prevention efforts for students and campus bodies who have taken part in the programming but fail to consider the rich experiences and perspectives of those responsible for providing these efforts.

In response to this gap, my research explores how peer campus sexual violence educators view and interpret culture change on campus. At its core, campus culture change is not about implementation of programming. Campus culture change is about various arenas on campus coming together in pursuit of a singular goal: generating the shift from campus rape culture to a campus culture of consent, where sexual violence is not accepted nor tolerated. My research demonstrates how the shift from campus rape culture to an informed campus culture of consent is in part a result of the work put forth by peer campus sexual violence educators, because it is their relatability to the student body that allows them to impact campus life in a way that is representative of the student experience.

In the coming sections, I discuss the field of feminist criminology and how it serves as a framework for research on campus sexual violence. Feminist criminology concerns itself with the concept of rape culture (as will be defined in the section, *Feminist Criminology and Rape Culture*) and how it lies at the foundation of campus sexual violence. In addition to exploring how my participants view and interpret culture change on campus, I reflect on whether the participants experiences support the idea of rape culture as informing the sexual violence prevention strategies they are responsible for employing on campus.

The guiding questions for this research were:

a) How are peer campus sexual violence educators viewing 'culture change' on campus?

b) Do the experiences of peer sexual violence educators support the idea of rape culture, as framed in feminist criminology, as informing sexual violence prevention strategies employed on campus?

Participants in this research exhibit an understanding of campus culture change through relating their direct experiences and perspectives to their involvement in acting as prosocial agents of change on campus. Participants' knowledge in the field of sexual violence prevention and education suggests they recognize the preventative measures they employ on campus (largely bystander intervention training), as aligning with the conceptualization of rape culture.

Background and Literature Review

The issue of campus sexual violence bears little weight until there exists information about how it operates, its prevalence, and its consequences. The process of gathering statistical information on campus sexual violence is challenging, as there are many institutional barriers that discourage victims from reporting (Karjane et al. 2005). These barriers include policies that restrict victims from making informed choices moving forward, concerns of confidentiality, fear of disclosing and no action being taken, and experiences of victim-blaming that infer they, the victim, somehow facilitated the sexual assault against them (Karjane et al. 2005). In addition to these institutional barriers, there are many personal and contextual barriers such as social and political climate, personal ideology, religion, culture, previous experiences of assault, access to support services, and more. Therefore, the crime of sexual assault remains vastly underreported (Karjane et al. 2005).

Considering these challenges, extensive research has been conducted on the prevalence of sexual violence. Koss, Gidycz, and Wisneiwksi (1987) are among the first sexual violence statistical researchers, providing the commonly cited "1 in 4" statistic – a shocking one in four [26%] of women enrolled in college at the time of study had been sexually assaulted since the age of 14. Since Koss, Gidycz, and Wisneiwksi's time, many researchers (e.g., McMahon and Banyard 2012; Senn and Forrest 2016; Banyard, Moynihan, and Crossman 2009) have continued the work of gathering a statistical profile on sexual violence, with specific focus on vulnerable populations and contexts such as students on university and college campuses.

Canadian crime statistics suggest women make up 80% of reported victims of sexual assault and men make up 94% of perpetrators of sexual assault (Johnson and Colpitts 2013). One in four women will experience sexual assault during her time as a post-secondary student, majority

of which will occur in the first eight weeks of the academic school year, commonly known as the "red zone" (Kimble et al. 2008). An elevated risk exists for trans and non-conforming gender identifying students, research placing estimates at one in three (Johnson and Colpitts 2013). Unfortunately, there are no defined statistics for men on campus, but research estimates one in six men will experience sexual assault before the age of 18 (Johnson and Colpitts 2013).

The above statistics are alarming, as victims of sexual assault are at risk of experiencing both short-term and long-term health effects. These effects have been shown to include increased poor mental health, decline in academic performance, substance dependency, and inability to regain stability and control (Perkins and Warner 2017; Karjane et al. 2005; Becker 1982) as well as physical injury, sexually transmitted infection, and chronic illness (Campbell, Sefl, Ahrens, and Stone 2003). In response, growing attention is being paid to the development, implementation, and evaluation of prevention strategies to address sexual violence on campus.

Institutional Responses to Sexual Violence

Just as there are studies examining how widespread an issue sexual violence on campus remains, there are studies (e.g., Karjane et al. 2005; Perkins and Warner 2017; Krause, Miedema, Woofter, and Yount 2017) examining how campuses are responding to sexual violence, whether that response be increased access to resources or program implementation.

A promising practice in response to campus sexual violence is increased access and ease of referral to victim support services. Offering victim support services to students is about forming partnership between the student, the institution, and the community. The channels through which institutions refer victims to support services differ but their intent is the same, to provide students access to a coordinated network of service providers whether they be medical, psychological, advocacy related, legal, or safety based (Karjane et al. 2005).

Policy and legislation are other key areas which some institutions are attempting to improve in response to campus sexual violence (Perkins and Warner 2017). Furthermore, the inclusion of students in the creation of said policy and legislation yields positive results. A study conducted by Tamborra and Narchet (2011) indicates that when students are given a platform to have their unique perspectives and opinions on the failures and successes of current practices heard and considered, educational offerings relating to sexual violence directly improve as a result.

While policy and legislation are important aspects of an institution's response to sexual violence, they alone are not enough. Studies indicate there are major concerns with policy and legislation such as lack of clarity and inconsistency, unintended consequence, lack of inclusion, and failure to account for campus context (Perkins and Warner 2017).

The implementation of peer advocacy programs is another leading practice in institutional response to campus sexual violence. American program *Campus Peer Advocates* (Krause et al. 2017) is an example of such programming. Campus Peer Advocates is an undergraduate student-led peer advocacy program that aims to promote a survivor-supportive campus where students who disclose they have been sexually assaulted are met with messages of empowerment and non-judgemental support. In addition to the responsibility of the peer advocates to provide support to victims, they also facilitate trainings to the wider campus community which include educational components on victim shaming, rape myths and facts, reporting and policy, and resources offered by their individual campuses and communities alike (Krause et al. 2017).

The Bystander Approach

Possibly one of the most documented responses to campus sexual violence is implementation of the third-party bystander approach. The bystander approach typically includes some form of peer-facilitated training workshops where participants are taught how to effectively interrupt situations that could lead to sexual assault either during or before it happens, speaking out against social norms that support sexual violence, and the skills to be an effective and supportive ally to survivors (Banyard, Moynihan, and Plante 2007.) Often, and more recently, programs include educational components on sexual consent and rape culture (Black 2018). The theme of consent and how to effectively communicate it with your partner(s) is present throughout bystander intervention training, along with how societal rape culture perpetuates and allows for the continuation of this violence. The inclusion of such educational components contributes to the participants overall understanding of campus sexual violence, and just how complex of an issue it remains.

The current day bystander approach is widely based on the foundations of Latané and Darley's (1970) "Situated Model of The Unresponsive Bystander". The situational model outlines the stages of engaging as a bystander, which include: noticing the event, identifying it as intervention-appropriate, feeling responsibility to intervene, deciding how best to provide that intervention, and acting to intervene (Latané and Darley 1970.) This situated model was one of, if not the first, concrete theory developed after the murder of Kitty Genovese.

In brief summary, Kitty Genovese was a young woman brutally murdered outside of her apartment building in Queens, New York, in plain sight of thirty-eight nearby residents, none of which took it upon themselves to intervene or contact emergency services until it was too late (Kassin 2017). The case fascinated social scientists of the time, leaving them to consider why, if

that many residents witnessed the event, did no single one of them feel the personal responsibility to come to the aid of Ms. Genovese. Interestingly, studies suggested each of the residents who witnessed the murder was either under the assumption that surely someone else would have called for help by the time it had come to their attention, or that they did not believe they possessed the necessary skills to be a proactive interventionist (Latané and Darley 1970). The unresponsiveness of residents informed intervention programming on the basis that individuals need to feel confident in their abilities to successfully intervene before they will take on the responsibility and action personally. This concept, commonly known as the "Bystander Effect" or "Diffusion of Responsibility" (Latané and Darley 1968) has greatly informed many of the bystander approaches we take to sexual violence prevention today.

Theoretical Framework

To my knowledge, there is no sole theoretical framework that encompasses all the facets and teachings of current day bystander intervention. Therefore, by pulling and compiling concepts from previously existing scholarship that has attempted to theorize bystander intervention as a prevention strategy, I present an integrated theory of sorts.

Routine Activities Theory (Tewksbury and Mustaine 2003) suggests that criminality is a result of the following: the presence of a vulnerable victim, a motivated offender, and the absence of capable guardianship. This theory employs bystanders specifically in the third act, the absence of capable guardianship. In instances where sexual violence has or has the potential to take place, the presence of a vulnerable victim can range from anything from a lone student walking home from the library, to an overly intoxicated woman at a party. The presence of a motivated offender is just that, an individual who has the propensity and/or desire to sexually take advantage of another. The lack of capable guardianship is key in terms of this theory's relation to bystander

intervention, where bystanders act as guardians. Lack of capable guardianship in situations of sexual violence can range from anything from a lit street light on the students walk home to a designated party-goer whose responsibility is remaining cognisant of the surroundings, engagements, and potential dangers of those around them. Bystander intervention training provides capable guardians with the adequate knowledge and skills to intervene, whether it be how to prevent an incident of sexual violence from occurring, to stop one in the process, or how to be any ally after the fact.

Rational Choice Theory (Bachman, Paternoster, and Ward 1992) is another theory which scholars use in the development of bystander intervention educational programming. Rational Choice Theory would suggest that offender motivation, as discussed as the second point above in Routine Activities Theory, is key in the reduction of incidents of sexual violence (Bachman, Paternoster, and Ward 1992). If we provide individuals with knowledge of how rape culture operates on campus, how to engage in healthy consensual sexual encounters, and knowledge of the grave impact sexual violence has on the lives of victims, then individuals will choose to disengage with potentially non-consensual sexual acts.

Lastly, *Self-Determination Theory* (Deci and Ryan 2011) provides insight into human motivation. Self-Determination Theory assumes that humans have evolved to become inherently active and intrinsically motivated (Deci and Ryan 2011) – active motivation being key in bystander intervention. Overarchingly, Self-Determination Theory focuses on the influence social environment (e.g., campus) has on attitudes, values, motivations, and behaviours. Self-Determination Theory would suggest acting as a prosocial bystander in instances of sexual violence is a role that comes naturally to us as humans, should we possess the necessary skills and competence, which can be obtained through participation in bystander intervention training.

Bystander Intervention on Campus

Bystander intervention programs are rooted in desire to engage campus communities in helping work towards the reduction of sexual violence. Bystander intervention teaches participants that they and we as a collective community all have a role to play. The key component in this prevention strategy is the role of the third-party bystander.

Earlier models of sexual violence prevention excluded the role of environment (e.g., campuses) and potentially helpful third parties (e.g., bystanders) (Burn 2009). Additionally, many earlier programs were problematic because messaging suggested it is the responsibility of the victim to ensure they do not fall prey, whether that be through providing women pepper spray and whistles, warning them to limit their alcohol consumption, avoid casual sexual encounters, or all-together steer clear of well-known high-risk environments such as nightclubs and fraternity houses (Fisher, Daigle, and Cullen 2009). Similarly to how earlier models marketed women as victims in need of protection, marketing towards men suggested the main thing men need take away from these prevention efforts are that they are not to rape (Burn 2009). Rape is just the extreme manifestation of rape culture – it is the sexist commentary, the acceptance of rape myths, institutional discrimination, hazing, and the hypermasculine personalities that are an everyday part of our lives, all which require the efforts of men.

Effectiveness of Bystander Intervention

A number of studies (e.g., Banyard et al. 2007; McMahon and Banyard 2012; Fenton, Mott, McCarton, and Rumney 2016; Senn and Forest 2016) look at the effectiveness of bystander intervention programs implemented in post-secondary institutions. Many of these studies note the difficulty in gathering such statistics due to institutional barriers victims face in terms of reporting (as previously outlined) and presumably, knowing how to determine what constitutes

effectiveness. Overall, studies looking at the success of bystander intervention on campuses which administer the program suggest lower rates of unwanted sexual victimization, a reduction in tolerance for lay forms of sexual violence, and an increase in prosocial bystander behaviour (Coker et al. 2016; Banyard et al. 2007) all which are positive outcomes.

One major benefit of bystander intervention training is that it addresses all stages of prevention – primary, secondary, and tertiary (McMahon and Banyard 2012). Primary intervention refers to the prevention of sexual violence prior to the occurrence of any act (McMahon and Banyard 2012). Primary prevention is addressed through providing participants the necessary skills to be able to spot and name problematic and predatory behaviour, and provision of knowledge about how these behaviours are an extension of rape culture. Secondary prevention refers to the actions of the bystander in the moments during or leading up to the act (McMahon and Banyard 2012) whether that be when you see a group of men step in a little too close for comfort with an intoxicated woman at a bar, or when someone physically lays a hand on another. Tertiary prevention refers to prevention subsequent to an event (McMahon and Banyard 2012). Tertiary prevention is addressed through familiarizing students with local and institutional resources available to victims of sexual violence should they ever need to refer or utilize them themselves. Bystander intervention also educates students on proper terminology and ways to express support and belief in those who self-identify as victims or survivors. It teaches that we must believe those coming forward and do everything reasonable within our power to make their process of healing a valuable one.

Bystander intervention is a strategy to combat sexual violence that is largely noncontroversial, at least in terms of risk of traumatization, is gender neutral, and provides students hope that they can be positive agents of change on their campuses and communities. The bystander

approach is not about calling someone a bad person, it is about diffusing potential instances of sexual violence through partnership. Bystander intervention training introduces the concept of the third-party bystander as key in reducing instances of sexual violence. Focus on the third-party bystander is ultimately what sets the bystander intervention strategy apart from other sexual violence prevention and education programming. Most importantly, bystander intervention lays the groundwork for a larger cultural shift (Coker et al. 2016), which remains the overall focus of this research. Bystander intervention by no means claims to be a one-size-fits-all model. Bystander intervention is not a cookie cutter solution, but if executed correctly, can be a step in the right direction towards the reduction of sexual violence on campus. Through its educational components, participation in bystander intervention training leads to creation of new community norms, increased sense of responsibility for intervening, feelings of competence, and models proactive behaviour (Fenton et al. 2016).

Critiques of Bystander Intervention

While many institutions across North America have reported success in their implementation of bystander intervention training, many offer critique or suggestion for improvement. Critiques include how bystander intervention training applies in the absence of a bystander, the program's failure to address the root cause of sexual violence, and individual failure to actively intervene despite participation in the program.

Not every instance of sexual violence has a warning sign, nor a present bystander (Burn 2009; Berkowitz 2009). The foundation of bystander intervention training relies on the necessity that there is a third-party bystander present to the misconduct. The approach also relies on one's ability to 'read the room' or at least be able to spot overtly problematic behaviour so they can intervene to stop it. While these are useful skills to possess, it is problematic because sexual

violence commonly takes place behind closed doors between only those involved – the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s). Additionally, perpetrators are often in close trusting relationships with their victims, giving bystanders no reason to closely observe their engagements.

The bystander approach does not address the root cause of sexual violence (Shaw and Janulis 2016). Intervention may be successful in short-term (i.e. immediate) response to sexual violence but will fail long-term if the culture that supports this violence (i.e., institutional sexism, heteronormativity, and hypermasculinity) is not adequately addressed (Shaw and Janulis 2016). While having the skills to intervene will always be helpful, critics suggest that the educational components of sexual violence prevention efforts are what make the biggest impact (Burn 2009). Some of these educational components include education on what enthusiastic consent looks like, how to effectively communicate with your partners, and how campus rape culture perpetuates and allows for the continuation of this violence.

Failure to actively intervene (Berkowitz 2009; Karakashian, Walter, Christopher, and Lucas 2006; Elk and Devereaux 2014; Burn 2009). When an individual is trained in bystander intervention, that does not guarantee they will be able to accurately identify risk nor feel a sense of personal responsibility to act – whether that be due to a lack of confidence, skills deficit, or the individual's perception of the victim's worthiness to be cared for (Burn 2009). Similarly, students have reported feelings of uncertainty when it comes to determining whether intervention is appropriate. Students find themselves questioning if they will be supported in their deeming of a situation as misconduct requiring action (Carlson 2008).

Another critique which warrants further attention is that bystander intervention training may not always be as effective for one demographic as it is for another. Brown, Banyard, and Moynihan (2014) conducted a study looking at the effectiveness of bystander intervention training

among various genders, races, and years of study. The results suggested that women reported greater bystander intentions of intervention than did men, but not by too significant of a difference (Brown et al. 2014). The study also indicated that black students reported greater bystander behaviours than white students (Brown et al. 2014). When looking at peer norms among each of the classifications – race, gender, and year of study – ultimately, they interacted with each other in complex but intriguing ways.

Feminist Criminology

The issue of campus sexual violence can be viewed and thereby understood, through a feminist criminological lens. Feminist theory has expanded past its initial origins in Women's Studies (Simpson 1989). Feminist theory has penetrated a variety of academic fields, notably criminology. Feminist criminology developed alongside major waves of the women's movement of the 1960's (Daly and Chesney-Lind 1988) and attempted to account for the general disregard of women in the study of crime. Historically, criminology has been a male dominated profession, therefore producing criminological theories of male existence (Simpson 1989). It was evident that women[2] were left out of conversation regarding crime and criminality. Feminists of the time observed the disregard of women in criminology and were concerned, given that women were (and still are) primary victims of a large number of crimes, especially crimes of a sexual nature (Simpson 1989; Fisher, Cullen, and Turner 2000). Currently, feminist criminology is thriving as an academic discipline and its focus has expanded to a wider array of issues. Feminist criminologists concern themselves with criminal behaviour as it pertains to women, whether that be women's path to offending, women's experiences within and against the criminal justice system, or women's overrepresentation in statistics of victimization.

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[2] women *and* genders of all sorts, though that was not an acknowledgement made in the 1960's-1970's

A common debate among feminist criminology scholars is whether a singular 'feminist criminology' exists or if what we are referring to is a multitude of feminist perspective(s) in criminology (Maidment 2006). If instead of spending time compiling a singular understanding of feminist criminology, we shift the focus toward an examination of the broader fundamentals of feminist thought and how they can be incorporated into criminological understanding, we further develop our understanding of women in and at the crossroads of criminality (Maidment 2006).

A central component of feminist criminology is the placing of gender at the centre of inquiry and analysis (Maidment 2006). It is in part this focus on gender that has allowed for the success of feminist criminology as a discipline, as it is a capitalization on traditional (i.e. male) studies of criminology that exhibit gender-blindness (Maidment 2006). We have shifted from an understanding that women were being left out and/or treated differently within the criminal justice system, to an understanding that gender is one of the most important aspects to consider when attempting to describe or explain the human experience and the social world in which we are governed.

From the various feminist perspectives that exist – liberal, Marxist, radical, socialist, postmodern, and standpoint (Maidment 2006) – we learn that there is no singular feminist identity, just as there is no singular feminist criminology. For that reason, criminological scholars must conduct their work in a way that allows for the inclusion of feminist perspective(s) which in turn, allows us to push beyond the boundaries of criminology as a male dominated discipline. This pushing of boundaries allows us to better understand the social, economic, political, and cultural institutions that contribute to the construction and thereby upholding of gender roles (Maidment 2006).

Feminist Criminology and Rape Culture

Acknowledgment that the inclusion of feminist perspective(s) in criminology contributes to our overall understanding of the human experience and social world, allows researchers to explore issues such as sexual violence while keeping the foundation of feminist thought (i.e., gender) at the forefront. Campus sexual violence in particular, is framed by feminist criminologists as systemic and patriarchal (Fisher et al. 2000).

In a study on fraternities and rape on campus, feminist criminologists Martin and Hummer (1989) note the importance of considering university and college campuses as prime rape prone contexts when conducting research on campus sexual violence. They suggest that group structures and processes that are unique to university and college campuses are what directly impact the disproportionate rate at which female students are at risk of sexual violence. The conditions which contribute to this risk as a result of group structure and process include excessive alcohol use, isolation from external monitoring, treatment of women as vulnerable prey, excessive access to pornography and other over-sexualized forms of media, a systematic approval of violence, and overconcern with competition (Martin and Hummer 1989).

The intent of the study by Martin and Hummer (1989) was to examine the role which male fraternity houses on campus play in the occurrence of rape and sexual assault against female students. The information provided by the study, if shifted outside the bounds of fraternity houses, highlights valuable lessons about campus culture and how rape culture lies at its foundation. For example, the standard of masculinity for student athletes and the brotherhood mentality that exists among them, silences those who witness sexual violence, regardless of whether they disapprove. The use of alcohol as a weapon is another mechanism that contributes to the existence of rape culture on campus, as alcohol is used to 'overcome' sexual reluctance. Moreover, the use of

excessive violence and physical force that is exhibited by young maturing bodies – a signifier of maleless and masculinity, which is preferred over femaleness and femininity, as they are signifiers of vulnerability and weakness (Martin and Hummer 1989). This overemphasis on the value of maleness and masculinity elevates the status of men and lowers the status of women. In turn, women are viewed and treated as bait and sexual prey. Sexual coercion of women, which is a felony offence, becomes no more than a sport, a contest, a game.

A major concern for feminist criminologists is that university and college campuses are home to many vulnerable women, embedded in a sexist environment overconcerned with masculinist goals, practices, and values (Martin and Hummer 1989) – all of which in some form, violate women and women's bodies, making female students disproportionately at risk of sexual violence. Feminist criminologists suggest that until these intuitional structures undergo reform, sexual violence will continue to occur on campuses and frankly, we should not be surprised about it (Martin and Hummer 1989).

Authors Garcia and Vemuri (2017) credit the term "rape culture" to feminist Susan Brownmiller. In 1975, Brownmiller published *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. The book was a cultural awakening to the normalization and acceptance of sexual assault in wider society. *Against Our Will* continues to serve as an educational tool for many academics and feminist activists, providing context into how the objectification of women, the rigidity of gender roles, and the organization of wider society and the institutions that exist within it, act as a cycle in which lay attitudes, norms, and practices normalize, excuse, or encourage sexual violence (Garcia and Vemuri 2017).

Since Brownmiller's time, the term "rape culture" has expanded. Authors Emilie Buchwald, Pamela Fletcher, and Martha Roth (1993) offer a comprehensive definition of the term:

[Rape culture] is a complex set 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 as the norm (Preamble to Transforming a Rape Culture, XI)

As a feminist criminology student and campus educator for sexual violence, I have witnessed the impact that an understanding of the existence of women living in a rape culture has had on my own campus. Rape culture exists within the feminist literature I study, the resistance of gendered assumptions and expectations placed on women that govern my body, and within the everyday narrative of close friends and colleagues. This understanding of rape culture translates directly into prevention strategies employed on campuses across North America in response to sexual violence, many of which were discussed in the previous section.

Purpose and Research Questions

In this section, I will further discuss the guiding research questions and the methodology and research design used in this thesis. As well, I have included a section which highlights the methodological advantages and disadvantages of my chosen method of data collection, participatory photography.

Research Questions

The two questions which guide my research are as follows:

a. How are peer sexual violence educators viewing 'culture change' on campus?

b. Do the experiences of peer sexual violence educators support the idea of rape culture, as framed in feminist criminology, as informing sexual violence prevention strategies employed on campus?

The first research question listed above aims to address the ultimate goal of sexual violence prevention efforts on campus, the shift from existing rape culture to an informed culture of consent. I was interested in viewing how peer campus sexual violence educators interpret culture change, and what specifically on campus is probing such change. The second question aimed to bring about discussion on participants' understanding of rape culture as it exists on campus, and reflection on how the concept of rape culture is reflected in the prevention strategies they are directly responsible for employing on campus.

Methodology and Research Design

The chosen research method for my thesis is participatory photography, commonly referred to as Photovoice. The reason I chose Photovoice as my research method was because it supports participants in expressing their unique experiences and perspectives creatively, while staying true to the foundation of qualitative data collection.

Qualitative Research

A qualitative research approach is ideal for research projects where the aim is to develop an in-depth understanding of the topic at hand. When using a qualitative research approach, researchers are able to use purposeful sampling to allow for greater insight and expansion on discussion of concepts that contribute to their overall research goal(s).

Within qualitative research, is the focus on understanding and capturing the essence of experience (Crewsell 2013). My study is based on the concept of experience, therefore I was able to construct my methodology y in a way that allowed for those who share common experiences to

offer personal insight during their interviews which would then post-data analysis, highlight symbolic relationship(s) and potentially result in a more nuanced understanding of the impact participants have made on Saint Mary's University campus. My goal for this research was not to evaluate prevention strategies on campus, but to explore how the individual experiences and perspectives of the participants involved support the idea of rape culture as informing prevention strategies, and with that, how the participants view and interpret campus culture change as a result.

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Photovoice as a Research Method

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Photovoice asks participants to represent their experience, point of view, or opinion by photographing scenes relevant to the research question(s) (Rutgers, n.d). Photovoice is an alternative to traditional forms of qualitative data collection where researchers and participants engage with open-ended questions through verbal discussion based on their experience or position in a given group. Photovoice gives participants an opportunity to express these experiences alternatively, through visual representation (Rutgers, n.d). Photovoice is about storytelling and how images can act as signifiers of something larger than themselves.

Methodological Advantages of Photovoice

The method of participatory photography bears many advantages, many of which influenced my decision to utilize this method. These advantages include, but are not limited to:

Enhanced form of expression: Participatory photography allows participants to present their experiences, perspectives, and opinions, in an artistically expressive manner (Rutgers, n.d). Photovoice is an excellent method for those who are abstract thinkers, such as many of those working in the field of prevention and education are.

Empowers participants to guide the research: Considering the photo gathering process occurs at the participants' discretion, they have the ability to guide the research. As the researcher,

I have the ability to structure the interviews in a way that assures the data addresses the research question at hand, but it is ultimately the contributions of participants that guide discussion and findings.

Exclusive data set: Participatory photography presents an exclusive data set for the researcher. The photographs participants presented and chose to discuss during their interviews, will remain exclusive to this thesis. It is assumed that the content discussed in the interviews will also remain exclusive, as it directly concerns the photographs only relevant to this study.

Offers a visual representation of the direct world view of the participants: Participatory photography allows for a direct visual representation of what the participants consider key components of culture change. While all photographs were in some way relevant, all differed. Photographs will also serve as a direct representation of current day, for those potentially looking back on the research in the future.

Methodological Disadvantages and Limitations of Photovoice

Though the participatory photography method bears many advantages, it is not without limitations. As the researcher, I took the appropriate steps to combat or at least minimize the potential of such limitations obstructing the research process. Some of these limitations include:

Misinterpretation of the research question/aim: Participants are left to complete the task of photo gathering at their discretion, over an agreed upon period of time (in this case, approximately two weeks). This means that there exists potential for participants to misinterpret or all together forget the aim of the research. To address this concern, I provided participants handouts outlining all necessary information.

Misrepresentation of a situation: While photo taking, participants may capture a scene that does not depict the reality of the situation. If the photographs were to include third parties,

there would be no way for the participant to be certain the involvement of said third party matches the participants assumption. In consideration of this, participants were provided strict guidelines in terms of what was appropriate to include in the photographs.

Ethical considerations: There are ethical considerations concerning whom/what are the subjects of the participants photography. Ethical considerations also concern the wellbeing of participants, where they are instructed to photograph scenes that center upon the concepts rape culture and sexual violence. One of the guiding principles presented to participants was to assure they only photograph at times where they are not attracting unwanted attention or risking harassment. It was made explicitly clear to participants that they were not to photograph instances of harm.

Research Process

Initially, the five participants and I met as a collective in the form of a focus group. During this meeting, I went over all required information such as purpose of the study, guiding research questions, details regarding requirements of participation, and informed consent documents. During this focus group, I informed participants of the origins, aims, and goals of participatory photography (i.e. Photovoice) as a research method. Participants were assigned their task and from there, scheduled times to reconvene for one-on-one interviews where we would then discuss the significance of the photographs they provided.

The follow-up interviews were centred upon a pre-determined open-ended, qualitative set of questions. These interview questions were broken down into two parts – A and B. Part A involved standard questions concerning the participants position as a recognized campus peer sexual violence educator. Part B involved more specific questions relevant to the participants presented photographs. The questions in part B included but were not limited to:

1. Is there a story behind why you chose to photograph this scene?

2. What does this photograph say about your experience as a peer campus sexual violence educator?

3. How does this photograph address the research question at hand?

Photograph's presented by the participants were used as the basis for discussion in each of the interviews about the participants perception of campus culture change, and whether their experiences reflect the concept of rape culture as informing sexual violence prevention strategies on campus. As taking a peer-to-peer approach has been identified as an important element of sexual violence program development and implementation (Banyard et al. 2009), I aimed to highlight both the strengths and successes of the programming participants are involved in, as well as the issues and concerns.

Data analysis for studies using qualitative methods of data collection such as Photovoice, require researchers to take an active role in developing an understanding of the topic of study. As the sole researcher on this project, I played a critical role in interpreting the realities presented by participants during interviews.

Upon reviewing transcripts of each interview, I conducted a thematic analysis. I chose not to traditionally analyze each of the individual photographs for two reasons: concerns of revealing identifying information about the participants, and consideration that my main interest was what significance participants assigned to the photographs, as opposed to how the photographs were taken. I chose to thematically analyze the data because while conducting the interviews, I began to notice patterns in participant responses. The patterns were not necessarily in regard to exact instances or specifics of programming (though some were) but in the way participants were able to connect, relate, and interpret their contributions. This observation appeared to align itself

with the primary goal of thematic analysis - to identify and relate reoccurring patterns (themes) present within the data. My role in the thematic analysis was to organize, condense, and interpret the data in a way that yields insight into my research objectives.

Research Findings

Themes extracted from the data include isolation, ineffective measures and false security, sexual violence prevention and education being not being a priority on campus, accomplishments, and questions of "what if?".

Theme 1: Isolation

Isolation appeared as a popular theme in the research findings. Participants identified isolation in terms of sexual violence prevention and education being inherently difficult to do in isolation and physically isolating locations on campus.

The idea of 'it takes a village' in respect to sexual violence prevention and education was brought up a few times during interviews, largely during Part A of the interview where participants discussed various aspects of their experience being a recognized peer campus sexual violence educator on campus. Multiple participants discussed the importance of conducting this work as a team and having others to lean on for support. Often when individuals are placed in roles that require a great amount of responsibility, there is pressure placed on the individual to perform at a high standard. The participants I interviewed demonstrated awareness of the considerable impact their work has (or at least has to potential to have) on Saint Mary's University campus, and thereby the negative consequences a mistake on their behalf could result in – this feeling appears isolating, until you embrace having a team ready and willing to support you.

One participant chose to discuss physically isolating locations on campus, and how the presence of these locations place those who inhabit them at an increased risk of sexual violence.

Photo #1 shows a partial view of Saint Mary's University's largest parking facility. This parking facility is the nearest to the campus bar, the Gorsebrook. The Gorsebrook is a campus-owned alcoholic establishment that runs late, long past when many of the academic buildings close. The participant suggested this implies students who frequent the Gorsebrook and choose to drive home (or have a taxi pick them up) afterwards, likely head in this direction upon leaving. The participant pointed out isolating factors attributed to this parking facility such as the lack of lighting, many trees and objects which obstruct the view of potential third-party bystanders, and its location being on the outskirt of campus, meaning beyond the parking facility is simply residential area.

Photo #2 as provided by one participant is of a 'hidden' area on campus where what appears to be a fuel tank is stored. This area is not intended to be inhabited by students but the participant acknowledged that in consideration of the fact that a realistic aspect of campus culture is excessive alcohol and drug use, casual sexual encounters, and isolation from external monitoring (not stated in those exact words), hidden areas where security is not obligated to circuit, serve as potentially dangerous locations as they allow behaviour

to continue uninterrupted. The unfortunate reality is that isolated locations on campus, no matter their appearance or function, result in an elevated risk of sexual violence for those who inhabit them.

Theme 2: Ineffective Measures and False Security

The theme of ineffective measures and false security was another present in the data. One participant when detailing a violent incident that occurred while they were a staffed member of the Student Centre Information Desk (visible in photo #3), highlighted various safety measures in place that proved ineffective, and how each contributed to the participants feeling of false security.

The participant detailing the incident that occurred at the information desk shared that there was a panic button in place for staff members should they ever feel threatened and
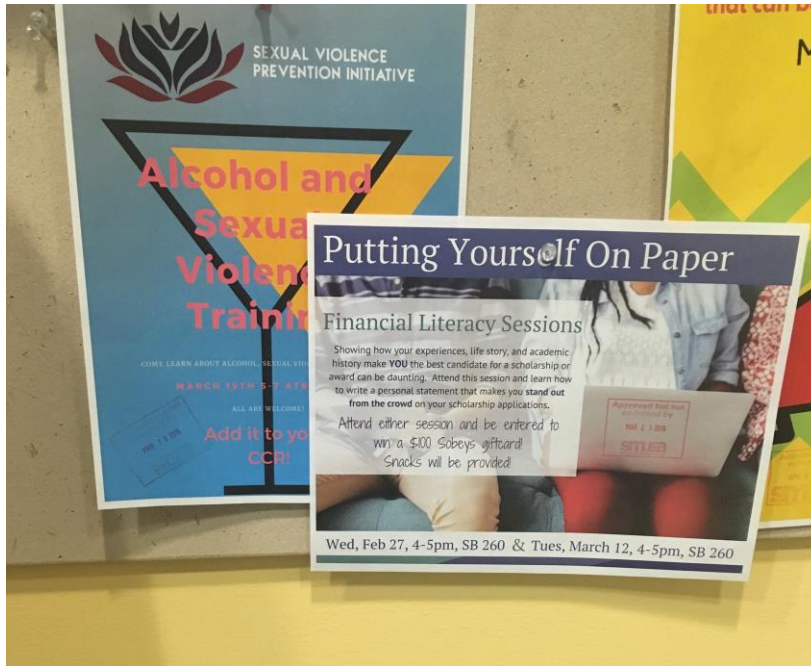
require immediate assistance. This incident certainly qualified as requiring assistance, but due to the placement of the panic button feet away from the desk, the participant was unable to utilize it. Should the participant have opted to press the panic button, that would have required them stepping feet away which if witnessed by the individuals posing threat, could result in escalated aggression and violence. In the moment, the participant recalls having to "just bear down and take it".

Another ineffective measure discussed was the security camera just around the corner from the information desk, as visible in photo #4. The participant describes the security camera as their last perceived "pillar of hope" during the incident. They mentioned that despite being alone, physically isolated from the rest of campus, and unable to call for help via the panic button, they knew that when the incident would inevitably come to an end, there would be video footage. After the incident, the participant was informed that the security camera was in fact not turned on. This means that the very thing providing the participant's sense of security, was nothing more than an ornament. The participant quotes, they "felt violated, let down. It was like I was punched in the gut when I found out the camera wasn't even on". Since this incident, the panic button has been placed within reasonable distance. The participant quotes feeling "most proud of the fact that [they] used [their] experience to create change to something that wasn't appropriate on campus and because of it, other students might feel more comfortable and safer".

Theme 3: Not a Priority

The next theme that emerged from the data was sexual violence prevention and education being a non-prioritized concern on campus. To illustrate this, one participant chose to photograph (#5) a bulletin board in the Saint Mary's Sobey School of Business foyer. The bulletin board shows a promotional poster for SVPI's second module of bystander intervention training which focuses on the relationship between alcohol and sexual violence. If you look at the bulletin board, you will notice that a quarter of the SVPI training poster is covered with another promoting a financial literacy workshop hosted by the Sobey School of Business. To the average eye, one poster being placed over top of another is nothing more than a mere inconvenience. To the participant, it signifies something much greater – that the poster on top is perceived to be of most importance. While the participant was gathering photographs for this research project, they noticed various other bulletin boards around campus showcasing the same, SVPI's poster being covered by just about anything else.

The participant chose to photograph this particular bulletin board because they wished to highlight the relationship between sexual violence and the Sobey School of Business as a male-dominated department from which there are many allegations of sexual assault. Women tend to be underrepresented in business school, thereby fostering an environment prone to violence and

discrimination against women. The participant recounts feeling "defeated and upset", saying "the university puts money towards our team to be able to do these trainings which shows they value us at least a bit. For us to do all this work and have something like a managing money poster put on top of it shows while some people value our work, others clearly do not".

In line with sexual violence prevention and education being non-prioritized in particular departments of the university, one participant was able to demonstrate the importance of having student governance committed to the cause. Photo #6 illustrates the main doors to the McNally Theatre Auditorium, where the annual student presidential debate is held. The participant notes that for members of SVPI and other organizations on campus involved in sexual violence prevention and education, this year's presidential debate (run for 2019-2020) was disheartening. Each of the presidential candidates are given time to present their presidential platform, highlighting all aspects of campus life they support and pledge themselves to improving or expanding during their term as student president. Following, there is ample time set aside for audience members to pose questions to either specific candidates or the wider group. This year, none of the candidates mentioned sexual violence or violence against women generally in their presidential platforms. The participant felt that not only was it made clear sexual violence was not a priority for those running, but felt the response of one

candidate to a question posed by an audience member regarding campus sexual violence, was distressing.

The participant shared that most memorably, when asked what on-going sexual violence work each of the candidates were aware of on campus, one candidate responded "Safe@SMU"[3]. During their interview, the participant noted that Safe@SMU has not been offered at Saint Mary's University for years, suggesting the presidential candidate presented a false claim. Likely unaware to the candidate, mentioning Safe@SMU felt like a "slap in the face" to the participant because as a member of SVPI, they were given a run-through of the Safe@SMU program during their initial stage of training and the participant notes that not only was it ill-formed, but offensive. The participant goes on to recount that one of the first accomplishments of SVPI was their ability to come together, write a report, and talk to university administration about the ways the Safe@SMU program overwhelmingly excused the behaviour of perpetrators and placed blame directly on victims.

In addition to the mentioning of Safe@SMU, harmful comments were made regarding there needing to be a 'time and place' for consent education. The participant discussed one comment in particular which was stated as a response to an audience members question regarding what prioritization will be given to consent education programming on campus. The participant recollects the first ever bystander intervention training facilitated by members of SVPI – a training for 'pack-leaders'[4].The comment made by the presidential candidate was regarding their

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[3] Safe@SMU is a past sexual violence awareness training workshop offered to Saint Mary's University students. The workshop was most commonly offered during the first few weeks of the semester (the "red zone" as previously mentioned).

[4] 'Pack-leader' is the title given to student volunteers responsible for engaging and involving new students during September and January Welcome Week activities and events.

assumption that pack-leaders "do not feel like sitting down and learning about consent" at the end of a fun weekend spent at training camp.

The next presented photograph (#7) captures an empty classroom with a running PowerPoint presentation screen. The classroom was scheduled to be used for an SVPI facilitated

bystander intervention training workshop. The participant shared their preference for this specific room, as the training they underwent as staff informed them that best results are yielded in settings that are welcoming, well-lit, easily visible, and facilitate conversation. As the photo suggests, no students showed up to the training. The participant said they felt discouraged after preparing and being ready to share this information but having no one to share it with. The participant went on to detail the disconnect they notice between facilitators being willing to do this work (and having the university's support) and students not knowing these trainings are available and of benefit to them. The participant and I explored this idea further, questioning whether this instance was a result of students not knowing the training was happening, not being interested, or being interested but unable to attend.

As highlighted in this section, sexual violence is a pervasive problem faced by university campuses, but a problem existing in the background for many. As one participant suggests, "sexual violence has always been there, and it is always going to be there"

Theme 4: Accomplishments

On a more positive note, a strongly emerged theme from the data was accomplishments. Accomplishments were first presented in terms of participants self-growth and leadership capability as a result of being involved in sexual violence prevention and education on campus. Accomplishments next appeared in the data as actual successes of the Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative, from which participants garnered a sense of pride.

One participant defined a good leader as "someone who has a vision and can model the way". The participant goes on to share how being a member of SVPI has allowed them to 'model the way' through being given the responsibility of educating their peers on issues so critical to campus life, and in turn contributing to the ultimate shift from existing rape culture to an informed culture of consent on campus.

Another participant quotes, "before joining this team, I knew some of the stat[istic]s and things about sexual violence but I would never dream I would be an authority on it or have the confidence and information to share with people". This participant demonstrated immense self-growth in their ability to reflect on how their experience as a member of SVPI has allowed them to view campus culture alternatively. The participant detailed how they are now able to notice the small scale "micro-aggressions" exhibited on campus pertaining to sexual violence.

One participant, upon reflection of the positive impact they have made on campus, proudly quotes,

> "I give myself a lot of credit for being one of a very small amount of people who are actually committed to working on sexual violence prevention and education. I come in every day prepared to talk to students, faculty, university administration, coworkers about

anything in research, in the news, wherever you can find it. I see myself as being one of very few people on campus who are able to do that".

In terms of institutionally situated accomplishments of SVPI, the most commonly noted among was the creation of a new sexual violence resource card. Photo #8 shows the newly published resource card alongside various others from organizations on campus such as the counselling centre, student health clinic, and mental health support teams. The participant captured this photograph because they view the creation of this new resource card as a direct result of the push from SVPI to create an updated and edited version of the existing copy

Photo #9, as provided by another participant, shows the previous version of the resource card. The previous version, in large bold font, states, "If you *believe* you have been sexually assaulted …". The word 'believe' was of much concern to the participant (and the wider team) because "[at the time SVPI was shown the card] we had just spent the summer being trained, trying to understand appropriate phrasing, actions, and behaviours to employ when people choose to disclose sexual violence experiences to us. We do not say things like 'do you *believe* you have been assaulted?' because that directly discredits and invalidates the victims experience".

Another participant when mentioning the newly updated resource card said,

"I take pride in SVPI making that happen, and pride in the fact that it is out there with all these other pamphlets. [Sexual violence] is a growing issue that students are asking about, need information about, and need to know how to respond to. So, I like that it is next to the regular pamphlets about general health, counselling, and whatever other services. It really ties in the idea that they are all equal."

Other accomplishments noted by participants are the events and activities SVPI hosted as part of various awareness weeks on campus, such as Saint Mary's University twice annual Sexual Violence Awareness Week. Alongside these events and activities are SVPI's facilitation of Module 1: Bystander Intervention Training and towards the end of the year, the follow-up facilitated training Module 2: Alcohol and Sexual Violence. These sorts of events and awareness activities are what largely push forward the agenda of shifting from existing campus rape culture to an informed culture of consent.

One participant chose to note they are proud of their contribution to SVPI's establishment of partnership with various campus and community resources. These partnerships were formed both during the initial stage of SVPI staff training, and through continuous outreach performed throughout the year. Some of the organizations the participant listed for partnership were those amongst the pile in photo #8 as well as the university's sexual assault nurse examiner (S.A.N.E), Nova Scotia criminal justice system representatives, Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, South House Gender Resource Centre, and Nova Scotia Independent Legal Aid Program representatives.

Continuing with the theme of partnership but more closely aligned with campus culture change, one participant noted they witnessed expansion of sexual violence awareness and education and contributed it to the work put forth by peer campus sexual violence educators.

The participant quotes, "people around me saw that it was important work and we need students to consider it, and the [other] workplaces I have been in, have adapted to it and decided – yeah, let's get people working on it".

An example of campus partnership is with the Saint Mary's peer support workers, another student-staffed resource on campus available to students to discuss whatever is bothering them, whether that be academic stress and anxiety, mental health, or other. One participant says they were contacted by a campus peer support worker looking to be given the new sexual violence resource card, suggesting peer support workers care about providing students who disclose to them the most appropriate resources. According to the participant, having the peer support worker take the first step in reaching out for access to sexual violence resources showed that even in conversations of general and/or mental health, sexual violence is recognized as playing an integral role.

Theme 5: "What If?"

The last theme extracted from the data is participants questioning of 'what if?' as applied to various points of discussion. Participants ability to critically examine their situatedness in their work and reflect on their experiences, allowed them to consider how alternative modes of action may have led to an entirely different result.

Some of the 'what if' questions posed by participants during interviews were:

- What if more men were included in conversations of campus sexual violence? Would we progress further? How would we 'go about' this?

o Photo #10 was provided to illustrate this question. The image shows two men sitting across from one another (presumably speaking) in the Women's Centre at Saint Mary's University. The participant who provided this photograph identifies as male and is involved in various feminist organizations on campus, therefore has experience in being one of the few men involved in conversations of campus sexual violence.

- What if those involved in student governance shared our mutual passion for sexual violence prevention and education? How would this impact Saint Mary's University campus next year, or years following?

- What if the identified physically isolating locations on campus were improved? What if we rallied together and demanded these locations be given increased security presence at night, presence of undercover staff on busy nights of the week or throughout exam season, increased lighting, or structural changes that would increase a potential bystanders' scope of view?

- What if the incident faced by the participant at the information desk would have escalated to physical violence? What if the information desk had more than one staffed member on duty at a time? What if the panic button would have been nearby? What if the camera was operating, as it should have been?

- What if SVPI as a team would have "pushed the envelope" as one participant calls it, a little bit further? What if we (metaphorically) talked a bit louder, or pushed a bit harder?

Would we then have seen as many obstacles along this path as we did, or would we yield the same results?

Analysis and Discussion

The objective of this research was to gain an in-depth understanding of how students acting as prosocial agents of change on campus – in this case, members of the Sexual Violence Prevention Initiative at Saint Mary's University – view and interpret culture change on campus. Furthermore, reflection on whether the experiences of those involved in the research support the idea of rape culture, as framed in feminist criminology, as informing prevention strategies they directly engage with on campus.

Through analysis of the research findings as presented in the above section, we see the ways in which participants illustrate the shift on Saint Mary's University campus from that of existing rape culture to an informed culture of consent. Participants captured scenes relevant to the research question(s) and through assigning and discussing significance, highlighted the relationship between experiences and on-going prevention strategies such as facilitation of bystander intervention training and hosting of events and awareness weeks. Participants were further able to detect what aspects of campus culture work to foster vulnerable and/or sexually violent environments, showcasing their understanding of rape culture as informing these practices. Many participants referred back to trainings they received as staff members of SVPI, and how these trainings are responsible for their enhanced understanding of campus sexual violence and what role they as peer campus sexual violence educators play in pushing forth the agenda of campus culture change.

As participants detailed in their interviews, there have been setbacks and limitations along the way, but that should not take away from the fact that an accomplishment is an

accomplishment, no matter the size. As one participant discussed, SVPI has the support of the university and governing administration, which allows sexual violence prevention and education to occur on campus, and to occur effectively as funding is put towards staffing teams such as SVPI and initiatives such as bystander intervention training.

The knowledge participants exhibited along with the information they shared suggests they understand rape culture as informing not only the prevention strategies they employ on campus, but its contribution to the overall culture sexual violence exists within, the immediate attention it requires, how to appropriately address it, and the impact a university being invested in prevention and education can have.

Data analysis yielded five overarching themes and within the breakdown of each, exists examples of participants understanding of rape culture as informing practice. For example, the participant who provided the photograph of the empty classroom where bystander intervention training was set to take place, went on to speak of the value of offering bystander intervention training to students on campus. Discussion (not presented above as it was irrelevant to the theme) included bits of information the participant has learned along the way, in relation to their understanding of the impact sexual violence has on campus, and its presence in the trainings they now facilitate. The participant discussed the disconnect they feel between being willing and able to do this work (i.e. sexual violence prevention and education) and not always being given the opportunity. Mentioning this disconnect suggests the participant views their understanding of rape culture as it exists on campus, as valuable enough to work towards instilling in students willing to engage with this work.

As presented in the beginning of this thesis, culture change is not about implementation of programming, but about the how those responsible for the implementation of programming

operate in coming together in pursuit of a singular goal: the shift from rape culture to an informed culture of consent. The participant who chose to illustrate and discuss the connections SVPI has made with other organizations on campus such as peer support workers, confirms this understanding. The participant who chose to illustrate and discuss the importance of student governance being committed to sexual violence prevention and education, also confirms this understanding. The participant who chose to discuss the implications of campuses not prioritizing sexual violence prevention and education, illustrated by the bulletin board in the Sobey School of Business, was able to inform this research on the basis of consequence. In this case, the consequence is fostering of an environment where particular groups of people (e.g., women) are placed at an increased risk of harm (e.g., sexual violence).

Conclusion and Significance

Going into this project, I assumed that participants would exhibit a nuanced understanding of campus sexual violence but what came as a surprise, was the participants' ability to critically reflect on their contributions to campus – both in consideration of successes and shortcomings – and recognize it is these contributions, when partnered with those of their peers, that push forth the agenda of shifting from existing rape culture to an informed culture of consent.

The information I gathered while researching sexual violence prevention and education and the concept of rape culture, delightedly aligned with the data collected. I owe much of the success to my chosen qualitative research method, participatory photography. Providing participants the ability to illustrate their point of view alternatively, allowed for findings and contributions that may not have been made otherwise.

In terms of connecting the research findings to the initial presentation of the theoretical framework in which this thesis exists, I posit that indeed, peer campus sexual violence educators understand their contributions as having direct result on culture change on Saint Mary's University campus, with acknowledgement of rape culture as informing practice.

Implications and suggestions for future research

It is my hope that this research is a relevant resource for those working as agents of change on campus, regardless of whether in the field of sexual violence. The information as provided in the theoretical framework and discussion on feminist criminology as it applies to campus sexual violence, showcases the critical step in integrating scholarship into the practice of teaching (e.g., facilitation). Contributions made by the participants in this study further inform sexual violence prevention and education strategies on Saint Mary's University campus, and hopefully in its creation on campuses alike.

Further research on the role of peer educators working within the field of campus sexual violence should further expand on the direct experiences and perspectives of those involved. Further research should shift its focus towards other aspects of experience, such as how peers performing sexual violence prevention and education interpret their direct experiences as shaping their knowledge, as opposed to their knowledge shaping their direct experiences. During interviews, relevant examples were presented but due the limited scope of my research in exploring the concept of campus culture change and rape culture as informing practice, the offerings were irrelevant. Further research also has potential to contribute to the academic field of campus sexual violence by illustrating and expanding on the ways performing sexual violence prevention and education work has cognitive impact (both positive and negative) on those who perform it.

If I were given opportunity to expand on this research project in the future, I would make a number of changes. First, I would increase the number of participants, as to provide ample information and aid in the emergence of additional themes and relationships. Second, I would narrow the scope of interest to simply that of the participants understanding of rape culture as framed in feminist criminology, and how its conceptualization lies at the foundation of preventative measures employed on campus. The results of this research project yielded great insight into how participants view culture change on campus but much of the forming connection between participants understanding of rape culture as informing practice, was left to the researcher to infer.

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