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Résumé de l'article

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Abstract

This exploratory study investigates the expertise of committee members tasked with constructing sexual violence policies within a post-secondary institution (PSI) and the constraints under which they complete this work. Our findings indicate that allocated committees prioritize institutional risk management, normalize confusion, and most members have little or no understanding of the intersectionality of violence. These findings contextualize PSI's failure to address structural violence. Our recommendations urge PSIs to include subject experts, consult with existing service providers, and integrate research on the intersectionality of sexualized violence within their policy and program construction.

Keywords: gendered violence, sexual assault, sexual violence policy, post-secondary institutions

Introduction

In 2017, a student group analyzed a dozen post-secondary institutions[1] (PSIs) across Ontario and assigned their sexual assault policies a C- grade; indicating a high level of dissatisfaction (Salvino et al., 2017). Another study found a substantial undercounting of sexual assaults by PSIs, but an increase in reporting by 44% during the audit period, indicating that policymakers and administrators underestimate the actual severity and needs of their students while presenting a low-risk public face (Yung, 2015). Thus, it is not surprising that many Canadian post-secondary institutions (PSIs), such as the University of Manitoba, Brandon University, Brock University, Dalhousie University, University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, and York University have made news for their (mis)handling of sexual violence cases (Anderson, 2016; Browne, 2014; Dehaas, 2014; Drouin, 2018; Laychuk, 2016; Munguia, 2015; Rotstein, 2014; Sawa & Ward, 2015, 2016; Senn et al., 2014; Shen, 2017; Valenti, 2014; Xing, 2017).

Canadian PSIs public failures implore us to investigate how institutional policies on sexualized violence are constructed and to question who is tasked to create such policies. (Daigle et al., 2009; Xing, 2017). There is scant information about committees tasked with creating institutional policies, their understanding of sexualized violence, and how their employment position within the PSI affects the policy creation process. Adopting a Canadian university as our case study, we investigated who gets tasked with creating sexual violence policy, what considerations they make in these policy deliberations, and the structural constraints under which they complete such work. Our findings illuminate the barriers in place for constructing meaningful policies on campuses.

Canadian and American statistics indicate that approximately 20-25% of college women have experienced sexual assault during their lifetime, and 1 in 5 have experienced sexual assault during their post-secondary education (Benoit et al., 2015; Cantalupo, 2011; Conry & Canter, 2017; Fisher et al., 2000; Holland & Cortina, 2017; Karjane et al., 2002; Krebs et al., 2007; Tjaden & Thoeness, 2000;

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[1] In this paper, post-secondary institutions (PSIs) refer to any undergraduate or graduate degree granting institution of higher education.

United States Department of Justice, 2005). More than 90% of PSI students do not report their assault to school authorities (Fisher et al., 2000; Krebs et al., 2007, 2016). This lack of reporting is consistent with Canadian statistics that indicate only 1 in 10 assaults is reported to police (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2017). Similarly, in the United States, rape is the most under-reported crime (Butler et al., 2019; Department of Justice, 2017; RAINN, 2020).

The under-reporting of sexual violence within PSIs is due to myriad factors. For many PSI students, sexual assaults happen within the first eight weeks of school, which some authors have termed the 'red zone' (Flack et al., 2008; Kimble et al., 2008). As new students, they may be unaware of the on-campus services and the reporting processes (Krebs et al., 2016; Senn et al., 2014). Others may fear repercussions from the assailant or peers, victim-blaming, or maybe apprehensive about their loss of confidentiality (Fisher et al., 2000).

While anyone can be subjected to sexual violence, in Canada, and at PSIs, we see higher rates of sexual violence towards those who identify as women (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Approximately 1 in 3 Canadian women has experienced sexual violence (Benoit et al., 2015), compared to 1 in 7 men (Conroy & Canter, 2017). Violence against those situated within multiple intersections of oppression is even more pronounced. In Canada, Indigenous women, women with disabilities, senior women, and young girls are more likely to be victims of sexual assault (Benoit et al., 2015) than their counterparts. In the United States, almost half (49.5%) of multiracial women and over 45% of Indigenous women were subjected to some form of sexual violence in their lifetime (Smith et al., 2017). Overall, women with precarious citizenship status, women experiencing homelessness, women with disabilities, racialized women, and women sex workers, as well as non-binary and transgender persons have a two to three times higher rate of sexual violence than their counterparts (Benoit et al., 2015; Cantor et al., 2015; Griner et al., 2017; Hox-meier et al., 2018; Martin-Storey et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2017). The intersectionality of class, gender, race, citizenship, sexuality, and disability collude to increase the likelihood of victimization, which may influence a person's decision to report the assault to authorities and how they are received by authorities and society (Martin-Storey et al., 2018). Elevated risk for those who embody intersectional identities can make post-secondary campuses precarious environments.

Due to institutional discrepancies in recording incidences of sexual violence, Canadian PSIs are unable to provide accurate prevalence rates. Canada's lack of federal legislation directed at PSIs may be one of the many reasons that most Canadian PSIs do not gather and/or disclose statistics on sexual violence (Sawa & Ward, 2015). However, some provinces have developed action plans and legislation that mandates reporting. Ontario's Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Action Plan Act (2016) requires all Ontario PSIs to have a stand-alone policy on sexual violence and that statistics are to be collected. Other provinces have similar legislation, which at least provides an acknowledgment of the importance of stand-alone policies and protocols.

But how sexual violence is understood within PSIs continues to present barriers for a meaningful victim-centered response. For instance, Dr. Sara Ahmed (2015), who left her tenured position at the Goldsmiths University of London because of their unwillingness to deal with structural and systemic causes of sexual harassment and assault, has critiqued PSIs for their narrow understanding of sexual violence. PSIs conceptualize sexual violence around the body of the harasser/perpetrator of violence. Thus, their solution is to expel that individual from the campus but leave the institutional culture, policies, and practices that facilitate such violence intact and unaddressed (Ahmed, 2015). An iteration of such an individualized response was evident in the University of British Columbia's response to sexual violence by increasing lighting and security measures (Tamburri & Samson, 2014 as cited in Magnussen & Shankar, 2019). PSIs with mandatory reporting take control away from survivors and are centered on protecting the university (Perkins & Warner, 2017). With such individualized reactions, it is not surprising that PSIs such as the University of Toronto, with zero suspensions, expulsions, or disciplinary measures in 2014-15 despite 137 complaints of sexual violence, are more effective at sanctioning plagiarisers than perpetrators of sexual violence (Desai, 2016 as cited in Magnussen & Shankar, 2019). The creation and adherence to such individualized practices speak to PSIs' prioritization of risk-mitigation and self-protection.

The materiality of PSIs' history is highly visible in these public institutional failings. As explained by Ahmed (2012) and Puwar (2004), spaces are constituted by the needs, values, and interests of its original occupants. In other words, since PSIs were created for privileged white men, it is not surprising

that the policies and practices continue to protect the institutional leaders, which have remained disproportionately privileged white men (Henry et al., 2017). While we understand this theoretically, we need to investigate how these institutional priorities get realized within committees tasked to do meaningful and responsive work on campus. Specifically, this study examined who gets tasked to create institutional policies and their understanding of sexual violence.

Methodology

In this qualitative study, we used a Western Canadian undergraduate university as our case study to investigate how individuals get selected for policy creation, their understanding of sexual violence, and the parameters within which they do their work. We investigated how those in charge of making policies and administering services understand their roles, the larger issue of sexual violence, and the PSI's responsibility towards its students. We asked what forms of information are considered in creating and administering policies and services, what obstacles policymakers and service providers encounter, and how they negotiate such barriers.

Qualitative methodology permits researchers to analyze participants' understanding of specific issues or experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). Specifically, the qualitative methodology's open-ended and inductive framework allowed us to examine the contradictions and nuances that inform the policymakers' and service providers' understandings and responses to sexual violence. Furthermore, we selected a university as our case study because this method allows for an intensive study of a given issue at one point in time (Adler & Clark, 2017). Case studies often focus on a specific issue or topic, such as policy creation and sexual violence. Through this method, researchers study the background, current status, interactions, and outcomes of the issue under examination (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012). Accordingly, our case study design allowed for an in-depth exploration of both the case in question (policy creation and who creates policy) and the overall issue (sexual violence). Ethics approval was obtained from this institution's Human Research Ethics Committee before data collection.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study were collected in the Fall of 2016 and Winter of 2017. The hour-long semi-structured interviews were conducted by three different faculty researchers, who asked about the participants' overall background, training and expertise, experiences working within the field of sexual violence, and their experiences in providing services or implementing policies about sexual violence at a Canadian university. The semi-structured interview guide prioritized a collaborative conversation interview (Davies & Francis, 2011). Due to the iterative nature of semi-structured interviews, the researchers met regularly to revise the semi-structured interview guide to investigate the emerging themes and issues identified by the participants. The data collection and analysis occurred concurrently.

We interviewed members of the sexual violence policy committee and other service providers on campus. In total, 16 people were interviewed for this study. This study's participants were program administrators, policy constructors, directors, managers, and service providers throughout the campus whose portfolio or directive centred on sexual violence, human rights, student affairs, and legal. Our recruitment of participants involved an email invitation that identified our study's purpose and objectives, and a consent form.

In cleaned transcripts and data dissemination, we have utilized numbers instead of pseudonyms to avoid matching the name to someone who may move into these positions since there are frequent staff changes. The semi-structured interview transcripts were analyzed through N-Vivo software which allowed for a systematic line by line procedure to analyze and synthesize the qualitative data. The analysis allowed us to identify theoretical patterns and construction of conceptual categories (Charmaz, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This was followed by an intersectional analysis of the emerging themes, which we reflected upon regularly to identify any biases and oversights. The researchers met and discussed periodically emerging themes to ensure inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability is the extent to which two or more raters (researchers) agree with what is generated from the data (Kreutzer et al., 2011).

The qualitative data were coded with careful attention to how various informal and formal gendered, racialized, heteronormative, and ableist understandings of sexualized violence frame policymakers' position. Moreover, this framework was used to examine how the participants' location (both physi-

cally and in terms of disciplinary ownership) within the institution allowed or constrained their ability to enact meaningful changes. The intersectional framework allowed us to identify three significant findings centered around participants' discussions on intentions, confusion, and complexity.

Researcher Positionality

Our research question, overall framework, and analysis were informed by Intersectionality theory. Intersectionality theory emphasizes the impact of multiple and intersecting grounds of identity (such as citizenship status, disability, sexuality, class, race, gender, and oppression) on increased violence rates against marginalized people. Therefore, we began with a clear recognition of the gendered and racialized aspect of sexual violence (Benoit et al., 2015; Cantor et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2017). Moreover, we understand that sexual violence is under-reported (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008; Fisher et al., 2000; Krebs et al., 2016; Statistics Canada, 2017) and that Queer, disabled, Indigenous, Black, and racialized students are disproportionately disenfranchised when they seek support or are involved in a formal complaint process (Martin-Storey et al., 2018).

As a theoretical framework, intersectionality was utilized by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) in her study of the gendered and racialized workplace discrimination faced by Black women. She went on to use this framework in her research on intimate partner violence and sexual violence, where she urged for a structural, political, and representational intersectional analysis of violence (Crenshaw, 1991). Amongst the broad application of an intersectionality framework, there are concerns about its oversimplification and reductive quantification through checkboxes and as buzz words in policies and services that result in a superficial impression of inclusiveness (Bilge, 2020; Nash, 2008; Tomlinson, 2013a, 2013b). Such superficial utilization of intersectionality precludes a structural understanding of how students situated within intersections of oppression are excluded from institutional policies and services.

In our interviews and analysis, we paid attention to the committee member's understanding of and attempts to address the intersectionality of violence within their work. As explained by Crenshaw (1991), often the most immediate act of violence experienced by racialized and marginalized persons "… interacts with pre-existing vulnerabilities to create yet another dimension of disempowerment" (p. 1249). For instance, PSIs need to consider the disproportionate effect of economic discrimination, housing barriers, politically sanctioned violence, homophobia, transphobia, and ongoing colonialism experienced by Indigenous and people of colour. Thus, the design and implementation of sexual violence policies and services require careful consideration of how structural barriers (such as transphobia, funding constraints, precarious citizenship status) may hinder students' ability to report sexual violence or access existing services.

Study Limitations

This exploratory study examines PSI policy construction using a single undergraduate university as a case study. As such, it cannot be generalized to other PSIs. Within Canada, PSIs have diverse institutional cultures that facilitates different understandings/approaches to addressing sexual violence, are mandated by different sets of provincial legislations, and have different funding provisions. Thus, the findings from this institution may not apply to other PSIs. We should note that qualitative research does not aim to provide generalizable data. Instead, the focus of such research is to examine an issue closely to reveal emerging themes. The themes discussed here are consistent with other studies, as indicated in the finding and discussion section.

Findings

This study examined the expertise and understandings of people tasked to create sexual violence policies on campus and the constraints within which they completed this work. The effectiveness of the resulting policies and services is contingent upon the expertise and membership of such committees. Thus, it is essential to examine the people and the committees who complete this work, as well as their mandates and understanding. Using an undergraduate university as our case study, we interviewed people tasked with creating a sexual violence policy at this campus to understand who gets assigned to such committees and what expertise they bring to the table.

"Good People with Good Intentions"

At this PSI, administrators from different departments were tasked by the senior administrators (such as officials from the provost office) with constructing the university's sexual violence policy and protocol. The committee included academic administrators and staff from health services, the human rights office, legal services, the office of student conduct, and security services. Faculty and researchers of sexualized violence or community experts were not invited or included on the committee. Several faculty experts who repeatedly asked to be included in the committee were rebuffed, which is consistent with Perkins & Warner's (2017) findings of relevant stakeholders being omitted from the policy-making process. The committee represented themselves and was described by others as uniquely qualified due to their understanding of policy, law, and institutional risk.

> *It is a brand-new process with A [name removed] and B [name removed], and I have ultimate faith in their expertise, their compassion, their intention, so these are all good people who have strong intentions, who have really strong knowledge around the system. (Participant 2485)*

> *...I think the committee is good for being able to understand the needs of the victim, and so that is, you know, that is positive. (Participant 842B)*

Participants described their committee as composed of people with "good intentions" and who are uniquely qualified because of some level of "goodness," along with their expertise on law and knowledge of the university and its legal system. These qualities were invoked as essential characteristics.

> *That is complex because you get a group of individuals with good skill sets around the table, but they don't have the information necessary to make the judgment ...(Participant 842B)*

While some participants (such as participant 842B) recognized the shortcoming of such exclusionary practices, others (such as participant A572) completely dismissed the possibility of including students in the policymaking process.

> *We have people at universities who are specifically trained in this area, who are often lawyers, who understand the burden of evidence that has to be brought forward, and what people who are engaging in this process have to bring to the table and what they have to do. The idea of a twenty-year-old involved in the establishment of the policy when it is a criminal matter, I think is just frank amateurism. (Participant A572)*

As seen above, expertise and training in sexualized and gendered violence was not mentioned as an essential or desirable selection criterion for committee membership. There was an absence of training for the committee on the intersectionality of violence, the gendered nature of sexualized violence, or the structural causes of societal violence against marginalized bodies (such as colonialism, racial inequality, gendered oppression, discrimination, homophobia, and transphobia). Perhaps the lack of their inclusion is related to the committee's overt (sole) interest to construct policies that mitigate legal risk to the institution.

Mitigating Institutional Risk

Sexual violence is often presented and understood as constituting a risk to the PSI, thereby rendering the risk of sexual violence to individual students, staff, and faculty invisible (Iverson, 2015; Potter et al., 2000). Similarly, in our study, we saw an urgency to create an institutional policy capable of mitigating any litigation risk and one that will protect institutional reputation. This was presented as the main reason for including legal experts on the committee.

> *I think because it has been sent to the [group's name removed] as a top risk, you know if you are not investing in something that is a big risk for the university... (Participant 3Y5X)*

At some level, I imagine what will end up happening is that the person on the other side of the accusation will hire a lawyer who will rip the institution and me to shreds because they will find a whole bunch of holes. That is why it is really important to have someone who knows what they are doing. (Participant A572)

The desire to protect the university remained a lingering narrative within the interviews. It was discussed outright as requiring an immediate attention, while at other times, the risk to the institution was presented as the underlying reason behind certain decisions. For instance, this participant was asked about institutional data on sexualized violence and why such data has not been disseminated?

There are so many different reasons and needs around what and how data is collected. One of the things I think has been a consideration is if we are going to be collecting things, let's make sure we are on the same page as other post-secondaries in the province and across Canada, so at least when these numbers are reported publicly, they all mean the same thing. This school over there might include sexual harassment and stalking in their numbers, [in] this one it might just be things that are considered sexual assault; this one might include disclosures and formal reports, and this one doesn't, so what are we talking about here, and why are we collecting, like what are we doing with this information? Is it useful? Is it about informing future practice, or is it, you know, count for the sake of counting? So…. I think there is lots more discussion around that piece of it. (Participant 3Y5X)

Participant 3Y5X appears to be more concerned about the potential for detrimental comparison rather than how such institutional data can address the needs of those affected by sexual violence. Indeed, public disclosure of such statistics can impact a PSI's reputation and dissuade potential students. But the lack of available data also allows PSIs to feign ignorance and invoke deniability (Shankar, 2017). Instead of a data-fuelled and evidence-based policy creation process, PSI policy development appears to be centred upon the "good intentions" of those involved. In this case study, committee members were genuinely committed to creating sound institutional policy, and they brought tremendous legal and institutional knowledge to the table. However, they also lacked any intersectional and structural understandings of violence. This deficit could have been remedied by the inclusion of faculty, researchers, and student experts.

"We Don't Know What We Don't Know:" Confusion Abounds

We interviewed people who were tasked with constructing a stand-alone policy on sexual violence at their PSI. It was disconcerting that this group was confused about institutional data on sexual violence, existing protocols, and on-campus services for victims of sexual violence at their university.

We don't know what we don't know and that is the scary thing for me as a [person's title], hearing stats of one in three students are experiencing sexual violence and we are just not seeing it, or I am just not hearing about it and that is…that is the part that I am passionate - that brings my passion out - to help educate students on just what can be done and what supports are here. (Participant 723W)

Interviewer: So, and in that time, you have only seen three cases?
Only three. Which doesn't mesh at all with the survey results, obviously, but it does mesh with society…. so, we met with counselling two weeks ago and talked about numbers and again, the numbers are nowhere close to each other, right? (Participant A572)

Without access to centralized campus statistics, some respondents were understandably confused about prevalence rates. Their confusion also extended to response and reporting protocols and the availability of on-campus services.

[Speaking about services for victims of sexualized violence] *...Beyond counselling, I don't know of any, honestly, I don't know if there is an area that specializes in this or...I don't know. Maybe, I would know if I had an assault and they had disclosed it to me, but I don't have any knowledge of that personally. (Participant CEF9)*

But even that, for me, has been an eye-opener in ... that I actually ... Counselling [person's name] office, but beyond that, I don't really have a good, you know, what to do next or, you know, if I, as [administrator] need to move people how do I deal with that? We don't have a lot of protocols kind of worked out to make the afters as easy as possible. (Participant D678)

As seen above, participants were unclear on prevalence, where to send victims, and the protocol for information sharing, collaboration, and support. This institution was in the process of creating its first stand-alone sexual violence policy; thus, some of the confusion is warranted. Participants were sympathetic to the process of policy development but expressed concerns about what this prevailing confusion means for those seeking assistance for sexual violence in the meantime.

Dealing with reporting, and by that, I mean if the institution becomes aware of an alleged event and the alleged victim does not want to report that - what are the institution's obligations to proceed with an investigation? I feel there is no clarity around, and when we go to Legal Services, we get a million different ways of approaching that ... inconsistent. (Participant 842B)

So, since there is no policy and there is no protocol, I think the response is pretty terrible, to be completely honest with you! Yeah, I ... there seems to be a lack of consistency, I think, again, because it seems to be all up in the air. (Participant CDZ4)

To reiterate, these participants were particularly concerned about what the lack of consistency means for the victim. Without clear protocols, the suitability and quality of services hinge upon the knowledge, ability, and goodwill of the service seeker's first point of contact. Some service providers may be more willing or able to connect the service seeker to appropriate on-campus resources than others. This prevailing confusion is further compromised by the siloing prevalent on campus.

"Lots of siloing": Working in Isolation

I know, like, we had some disclosures here, and not this year but that doesn't mean they haven't happened; they just haven't felt that they need to talk to us about it, I guess. (Participant CEF9)

There is confusion regarding prevalence rates of sexual violence, and part of the confusion stems from the lack of information sharing due to concerns of student privacy and confidentiality being compromised by such disclosures. However, there are ways to share information without compromising confidentiality, such as a centralized system that holds anonymized data. As seen in the quote above, service providers find themselves reliant upon other departments for information. The lack of information sharing can compromise these service providers' ability to adequately plan for, respond to, and assist victims of sexual violence.

Yeah. There was lots of pushback initially, like lots of pushback, but the more we talked, the more things ... there was lots of ... there was lots of siloing at first, 'Now you guys are crossing into our world,' and we kind of just stayed firm on the fact of, No, this isn't your world. These are the needs of these people... (Participant BA72)

So, we have to consult with people [lists different groups] and then go to that process. So, it is not that there are so many obstacles in our way as trying to get people together to have

some of the conversations … it is just making sure everyone is okay with what is suggested
in the procedure … (Participant 3Y5X)

Part of the lack of information sharing is due to confusion regarding jurisdiction, as different departments are tasked with roles that are not clearly defined or communicated. For instance, if a student wants to change course sections (because their attacker is in the same class), this will require approval from several different departments and individuals (such as the registrar, the chair of the department, the instructor, as well as supporting documentation from counselling). Thus, the situation requires intervention from several different departments with very different mandates, which can take time to accomplish and which is not victim centered.

We would be happy to support any initiative that we could work on as long as the funding
was there to support; anything on top of what we already do, it is overwhelming what we do.
(Participant 2485)

The other obstacle to collaborating is lack of time. Service providers are under budget constraints, leaving them with fewer resources and insufficient staff to meet the needs of the ever-increasing student population. With accumulating cuts to PSIs, siloing and lack of collaboration will only increase. Unfortunately, the effects of these budget cuts will be felt by those most in need of services and timely assistance.

"There is a Lot of Complexity There": Complexity as a Barrier
Participants consistently invoked the notion of "complexity" as a barrier to developing meaningful and responsive policies on sexual violence. In other words, the prevailing institutional confusion is because sexual violence is a complex issue that requires thoughtful action and response. The complexity can be overwhelming and may lead to service providers feeling unprepared or ill-equipped. Service providers want comprehensive measures to assist victims and are frustrated with inadequate programs and services.

There is a lot of complexity there. I feel like the institution kind of flies by the seat of its pants
for each case; each case is different, and we are fairly unprepared to deal with those cases
every time it comes up, which is very ludicrous, isn't it? (Participant 842B)

Interestingly, the intersectionality of violence was presented as one of the main causes of this complexity.

The other piece and this is something that everyone across the country is struggling with and
has identified as an issue but hasn't come up with how to address it, and it is something I will
be looking for with this C [name removed] is addressing intersections of identities related to
sexual violence. So that will be a big thing. How do we support different populations in the
way they need to be supported around this topic because not everyone has the same cultural
and societal norm. (Participant 3Y5X)

In the quote above, the intersectionality of violence is presented as an overly complex matter that "everyone across the country is struggling with." This rhetoric: (a) normalizes institutional confusion and lack of intersectional analysis within policy deliberations as a matter that "everyone" is challenged by; (b) subtly presents the different "populations" and "identities" as being the source of confusion, and (c) places people of "different populations" and "identities" as others who need to be served by the resulting policy as opposed to those who can also inform and shape the policy. There are significant consequences to such rhetoric: (a) it attributes institutional inaction (or lack of sufficient action) on sexual violence to the 'complexity' of intersectional identities; and (b) it exempts policymakers from addressing the needs of those bodies situated within these 'complex' intersectional positionalities.
In the absence of intersectional policies and services, rhetoric-infused public messages, which are

incapable of addressing the structural basis of sexualized violence, become instituted.

> *It is sort of a photo op by a 'we believe you' thing ... we seem to fixate on the flavor of the month ... (Participant A572)*

> *... But I think just - sexual assault right now is very topical, and sometimes topical things fall off the radar when other things present themselves, but it would be really great if that was - if it continued to be a conversation that we have every year ... (Participant D678)*

Furthermore, these rhetoric-infused public messages are designed to project an image of a responsive institution (that is "doing" something about sexualized violence). Unfortunately, the public image of "doing" something is prioritized over the actual development of meaningful policies and protocols that address violence and its causes and consequences (Ahmed, 2012).

Discussion and Conclusion

Our findings indicate that those tasked to complete this work are genuinely invested in doing the right thing and creating sound policies and services. However, the task force is usually composed of administrators that lack adequate training on sexual violence. Their position and training centres on risk management. The absence of sexual violence experts on policymaking committees is a disconcerting finding from this study. While most PSIs have faculty with expertise and students who want to participate in policy creation, they are seldom invited to the table or deemed qualified to participate in processes that involve institutional reputation and liability (Shankar, 2017).

Prioritization of Administrators and Risk Mitigators on Committees

A committee's understanding of sexual violence informs resulting policies, protocols, and services. In other words, an institution's response to sexual violence is contingent on how the policymakers understand that violence. It follows that the inclusion of legal and institutional expertise, as well as the exclusion of faculty, staff, and students who have expertise in sexualized violence, will shape the resulting policies and services.

While policymakers are good people with good intentions, their lack of training and expertise on sexualized violence makes them ill-equipped to construct meaningful policies. Moreover, their work is constrained by the larger institution that is often preoccupied with image maintenance and risk management. PSI administrator roles are to strengthen the institution's reputation, mitigate risk, and protect it from litigation (D'Enbeau, 2019; Moylan, 2017; Moylan & Javorka, 2018). Consequently, the creation and implementation of institutional centred policies (such as the University of Brandon's non-disclosure agreements) are not surprising. Perhaps, as indicated in our case study, such protocols are due to the composition of committees that are administrator-dominated, include untrained members, omit subject experts, and are constructed around the needs of the university and not a victim or student-centred. This is demonstrated in this PSI's hesitance to release statistics on sexual violence. PSIs' dissemination of sexual violence rates involving their students, with a clear explanation of which acts of violence are included or excluded in such figures, may lead to a shift from the current fear-based protectionist mentality (which contributes to the prevailing silence surrounding sexual violence) towards an inclusive and advocacy-based culture (Shankar, 2017). However, the prioritization of PSI's reputation and risk mitigation overrides such discussions.

Unfortunately, what we see in PSI policy development is the "normative enshrinement of certain definitions of violence" (Jiwani, 2006, p. 6), whereby risk management is prioritized. For example, the University of British Columbia spent $750,000 on lighting and landscaping to create safer walking routes (Dhillon, 2018), and "pledged an additional $250,000 for education and awareness-building programs, to explore CCTV options, or the development of communication tools" (Dhillon, 2018, para. 11). Such actions are in line with most PSI policies that represent sexualized violence as an act committed by a stranger and which do nothing to address its structural causes, myths, stigma, and shame surrounding sexualized violence experienced by men and women. This narrow understanding also leads to policies that fail to address violence enacted by people in power (such as faculty and staff onto students), and

people who are known to each other (such as dating partners or classmates).

Collaboration and Research

A meaningful response to sexualized violence requires collaborative action from all PSI departments, bodies, and service providers. However, in the current neoliberal era of austerity and precarious funding of PSIs, participants are afraid to share information and resources. Some departments want to collaborate on policymaking, but they find themselves constrained by funding. The collaboration is further hampered by an underlying fear that the sharing of resources will result in their work being taken over by other departments, making their positions or the departments redundant. Thus, those tasked to complete PSI policy work find themselves working in silos within a culture of fear. The precarious government funding consistent and continuing budget cuts makes them unable to collaborate with the other departments within their campus to create a meaningful and responsive set of policies that will address the differing needs of people seeking assistance. PSIs need sustained and secure funding to provide a safe learning space for students and a safe working environment for their staff and faculty.

PSIs also need to invite experts to the table, consult with existing community service providers, and integrate the abundance of research on the intersectionality of sexualized violence. The continued exclusion of experts is a lingering reminder that PSIs are constituted for privileged bodies and, as such, sexual violence experts and researchers continue to be seen as 'space invaders' or 'others' whose expertise is dismissed (Puwar, 2004). However, without these experts at the table, PSIs will continue to be unsafe spaces for those who do not adhere to the somatic norm and who are situated within the margins of intersectionality.

Absence of Intersectionality of Violence Understandings and Expertise

Without adequate training and collaboration with other members, committee members find themselves unable to address the complexity of sexual violence fully. The intersectionality of violence is presented as an overly confusing issue that institutions cannot fully address. This leaves those affected by sexual violence without adequate policies and protection. For instance, in this study, the participants recognized the importance of an intersectionality framework in addressing sexual violence but did not feel equipped to create policies that address the higher incidence of violence against marginalized groups. This is concerning because these are the same groups of people most at risk: Indigenous women; people with precarious citizenship status; those encountering homelessness; people with disabilities; racialized or transgender people; and sex workers are more likely to experience sexual violence (Benoit et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2017).

While the issues surrounding sexual violence are undoubtedly complex, there is extensive research on the subject. As pointed out by Shankar (2017), PSIs house decades of research and hire faculty and researcher experts on gendered and sexual violence. Yet, committees remain overwhelmed by the complexity of the issue. This prevailing confusion can be decreased through access to readily available scholarship on the issue and with meaningful inclusion of faculty and researchers in the policy creation work. To reiterate, this normalization of complexity and the absence of an intersectional understanding of violence within such committees are unwarranted because PSIs have libraries filled with research about the intersectional nature of sexualized violence and have faculty and researchers who can be consulted or included in the policy development process. The persistent normalization of complexity and absence of inclusion speaks to how "marginalized bodies are continually silenced and rendered invisible …" (Monture, 2010, p. 23) within PSIs, whereby positional privilege is centred, and all others are 'othered' as being too complex to be considered. The discourse of complexity is part of cyclical reasoning that does not have an out. This rhetoric of complexity is conveniently invoked time and again to justify the prevailing confusion about sexual violence policy and protocol creation. Thus, it is not surprising that the resulting policies and services are superficial and are not victim-centered. These may generate publicity for the PSI, but they do not meaningfully address the intersections of sexualized violence

In conclusion, with the continued absence of experts on these committees, those assigned to create such policies are often employees hired to protect the risk and reputation of PSIs. Consequently, the resulting policies and services are not victim-centered and do not address the intersectionality of violence. In consideration of these findings, it is frustrating but not surprising that PSI policies are failing

to address the needs of our diverse student population, which leads to racialized (and non-racialized) students remaining distrustful of institutional policies and practices (Kingkade, 2015). Committees need to include the expert faculty, staff, and students at the PSI to create robust, inclusive, and responsive policies.

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