Rape Culture and Institutional Response: Perspectives from Men in Greek Life

Alana Farkas
SESP Honors Thesis
Rape Culture

Social attitudes, beliefs, and values that normalize and perpetuate sexual violence. (Boswell & Spade, 1996)

1 in 5 women experienced sexual assault since entering college.

Fraternity men are 3x more likely to commit rape than other men.

85% of the Fortune 500 executives belonged to a Greek fraternity. (National Sexual Violence resource Center, 2018; Cornell College, 2019)
Sexual Assault Prevention

"...evidence exists that the lifetime prevalence of sexual victimization among women has remained unchanged over the past 30 years" (Basile, Chen, Black, & Saltzman, 2007; Casey & Nurius, 2006)
Why does rape culture exist in fraternities?

How can institutions better prevent sexual assault?
Background

“One of Us”
In-group identity

- White, socioeconomically privileged
- Rush and hazing

(Jozkowski et al., 2017; Foubert, Garner & Thaxter, 2006)

“Macho Man”
Masculinity & Hookup Culture

- Proving manliness

(Currier, 2013)
Denying Rape but Endorsing Forceful Intercourse
(Edwards, Bradshaw, & Hinsz, 2014)

“That’s Not Me” Mentality
Why does rape culture exist in fraternities?

How can institutions better prevent sexual assault?
## Research Method

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Students</strong></th>
<th><strong>Administrators</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the benefits/challenges of being in a fraternity?</td>
<td>Describe ______ workshop to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is hookup culture like?</td>
<td>Why are these topics important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the role of masculinity?</td>
<td>How do you measure whether students are learning?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part One
- 12 current and former students in 8 fraternities at Kennedy

### Part Two
- 2 administrators, 2 student facilitators

**Grounded Theory:**
Data Collection → Hypotheses → Conclusions
Findings 1: Perpetuating Rape Culture

Why does rape culture exist in fraternities?

“Being Cool”: Emphasizing Image

“It’s about getting fucked up all the time and just appearing as though you’re having a lot of fun. You want to seem cool in the eyes of others.” - Charlie

“If I didn’t want to do all the activities that my friends were doing, which was a lot of heavy drinking and saying mean things about girls, then I was kind of lame or weak or just excluded.” - Lucas
Findings 1: Perpetuating Rape Culture

Why does rape culture exist in fraternities?

**Hypermasculinity and Hooking Up**

“There’s a mentality of like, I’m a masculine guy, I drink beer, I can get girls, then I’m automatically cooler which means I’m part of a higher tier.” - Oliver

“Masculinity plays a role in hookup culture. Guys think it’s manly to get a lot of girls and talk about [women] in degrading ways and objectify them. Guys try to hook up with as many girls as they can.” - Ryan

“There’s a lot of bragging about the number of girls you can get. Guys will go to a bar and see a girl and pursue her and not really treat her like a human being after that.” - Nick
Findings 1: Perpetuating Rape Culture

Why does rape culture exist in fraternities?

1) **Lack of awareness**

“If you don’t think you’ve done anything bad, you’re positive you’re not a bad guy.” - Lucas

2) **Ignorance**

“People would prioritize having a good party over everyone’s comfort and safety in general.” - Ryan

3) **Deterrence of emotions**

“If I’m having sex with this girl, I can tell all my brothers after. Maybe if she’s a little hesitant at first, you’re not gonna stop and consider her feelings.” - Lucas

“I would feel like, oh it’s just a quick thing. We met at a bar and I don’t need to think about that. She knew what she was getting into.” - Nick
# Findings 2: Sexual Assault Prevention

*How can institutions better prevent sexual assault?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Foundational Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Masculinity</td>
<td>● Modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Discussion-Focused: Fostering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Outside Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caveat</strong></td>
<td><strong>Caveat</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greek system relies on the very processes these workshops aim to deconstruct.</td>
<td>● Men deterred from showing emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Further sexploitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSIONS