The Silenced Borderland:
A Dialogue Between The University of Michigan's Sexual
Assault Prevention and Awareness Center and the Campus
Community

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2009

An Honors Thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology in
partial fulfillment of the Honors Program
University of Michigan

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Acknowledgements

To my concentration advisor Dr. Beth Reed (School of Social Work), who took my project on with enthusiasm and dedication despite the fact that I was not a student in the School of Social Work. Dr. Reed, thank you so much for your guidance, thoughtful critique, and infecting passion for social change.

To my seminar advisors, Dr. Gillian Feeley-Harnik (Anthropology) and Dr. Erik Mueggler (Anthropology) thank you for your continual support and input throughout the year. Your warmth, humor, and passion for anthropology made a three-hour seminar fun.

To Dr. Lillian Back (English, retired), thank you for your unfailing faith in me.

To Donna Ainsworth (Women's Studies), thank you for helping a frazzled and pathetic anthropology major who was in desperate need for a thesis advisor.

Many thanks also to the University of Michigan's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) for allowing me complete and total access for my thesis. Particular thanks to Amy Burandt and to the student volunteers whom I have worked with these past years: your enthusiastic support, dedication to social justice, and optimism continue to inspire me. I am so proud to be amongst such strong men and women.

To the students whom I interviewed: thank you so much for your honesty, support, and thoughtful insights. I can only hope this thesis does each and every one of you justice.

Thank you to my classmates in 399. Your advice and comments were so helpful throughout this process.

For my own community of friends who let me bounce ideas off of them as well as edit my many messy manuscripts: thank you.

Finally, this thesis is for my mother and father. Thank you for allowing me to grow up in a household where I never thought it would be necessary to research topics like sexual violence. I know it's not a boat, but I hope that this begins my return on investment.

Abstract

My thesis focuses on the dialogue surrounding sexual assault in the campus community at the University of Michigan. By exploring how student volunteers at the University of Michigan's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) and how the students who make up the campus community talk about sexual assault, I hope to understand the complex dialogue that is in constant creation within the University. Aiming my focus at SAPAC and the boundaries it attempts to create for the campus in contrast to the established boundaries that many in the campus community believe exist, I seek to understand how these social and personal boundaries are created and crossed, the spaces they in turn make, and the behaviors, opinions, and beliefs that are supported by these realms. Through interviews with both students affiliated with SAPAC and students with no affiliation to the organization, I investigate how these complicated social and personal landscapes are being created at the University. I contend that these created spaces affect the dialogue surrounding sexual assault. Moreover, by reviewing the complex history of sexual assault and the feminist movement in America, I hope to see how these legacies have impacted these boundaries and spaces within the campus community. With this study on the boundaries that form both social and personal space as well as the metaphorical use of the "borderland," I attempt to shed light on the problems that not only face the University of Michigan campus community, but also of the challenges that the anti-sexual violence movement and American society confront.

Introduction   SAPAC, The Divided Campus, and the Attempt to Create an Open Forum for Dialogue

This past December I was sitting in a coffee shop when my friend looked up at me from his computer and said, "Zeller, you've got to take a look at this." Turning his computer around he showed me an article that he was reading from the University of Michigan's student publication, *The Michigan Daily*. Peering at the screen I saw what he was pointing to: "University professor, law student plead no contest in sex case". In the article an associate professor from the University of Michigan faced charges of soliciting sex with a 22-year-old law school student. The student, who had advertised her sexual services on the website Craigslist, agreed to meet the professor at a hotel for $300. While this was interesting and full of the sordid details that I relish, what really caught my attention is what happened next: she charged him with assault. Shortly after her encounter with the professor the University of Michigan student went to the police to press assault charges. Telling police that after she had reluctantly consented to be spanked with a belt the professor then proceeded to slap her with the belt twice – so hard that the next day she had vision problems. Although the article did not go into detail about what exactly happened between the girl and the professor, it was evident that the student believed what had occurred was more than what she had agreed to.

While I am not taking sides to this story (I in fact have had a class with this particular professor in the past), what interests me about this is the quick reaction that it caused amongst the online community. The Ann Arbor Police particularly struck a chord with their behavior towards the student. While commenting on the fact that the student was a sex worker who reported the assault to the police, Detective Sgt. Richard Kinsey's statement to the newspapers, "Perhaps she should have cracked a legal textbook before coming in to the police station to talk

about this,"[1] had many online feminists ringing with indignation about his insensitivity towards

the student. Feminist-based blogs such as the prominent *Feministe* and *Jezebel* went on the

defensive denouncing the remark as chauvinist and full of the patriarchal opinions that are wrong

with our society.[2] Even within the University of Michigan community, students and faculty alike

began to post comments on *The Daily* website. Comments ranged from,

> "What is she gaining from this situation (if she is lying)?"

> Hmm, how about getting off a prostitution rap, avoiding expulsion from school, etc.
> Another reason for her to file a false report would be revenge, extortion, etc, against the
> man. Women [who] use the police and justice system do this all the time to men they have
> a grudge against.

> The police bend over backwards and do back flips when it comes to women crying
> "assault," "rape," etc., especially in feminist PC places like Ann Arbor so if the police had
> trouble taking her seriously the [sic] must have had a *really* good reason to doubt her.
> This makes her story even more suspicious.

To,

> I don't understand the insensitivity portrayed in these comments. In the end it doesn't
> come down to whether it was his "personal life" or the fact that she did solicit sexual acts
> on the internet. The bottom line is that [this professor] assaulted this U of M student.
> Seeing that the police failed in their civic duty, it's the University's job to take action
> now…

> …. Please, let's come together and support our fellow student that has unfortunately been
> assaulted by a faculty member. Assault can happen to anyone.

Although the above comments may not be indicative of the entire student body, I nonetheless

believe that these comments do reveal a real division amongst the campus community. Of the 36

comments left on the site, 23 were clearly for or against the girl who pressed charges: 11

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[1] 'U-M professor, student involved in sex case.' *Ann Arbor News*, December 12 2008, viewed on January 5 2009, <www.mlive.com/news/annarbornews/index.ssf?/base/news-30/ 122909652054010.xml&coll=2 - 27k>.
[2] 'Dear Ann Arbor Police, Sgt. Detective Richard Kinsey, the University of Michigan, and Yaron Eliav.' *Feministe,* December 12 2008, viewed on January 5 2009, <www.feministe.us/blog/archives/2008/12/.../dear-ann-arbor-police-sgt-richard -kinsey-university-of-michigan-and-yaron-eliav>.

supported her, 12 were against her.[3] This deep-seated disagreement, I believe, stems from the

fact that the scenario between the professor and the 22-year-old student does not necessarily fit

in with what many have been taught to view as sexual violence. As one student wrote,

> Show me a REAL assault victim and I'll stand on the highest hill and defend them against
> whatever comes, but let's treat this womn [sic] as what she is – a fraud. She is a fraud and
> NOTHING MORE. I hope she gets expelled so she no longer darkens this school's halls.

The gift to differentiate between a "real assault victim" as opposed to a "fraud" is something that

many tried to battle out on both sides of the aisle. Those who claimed to know that she was a

fraud and those who claimed to know that she was a survivor butted heads with one another with

the same stubborn determination.

As an activist with experience on both the local and national level within the anti-sexual

violence movement, this divide is something that I have noticed almost since the day I began my

work on campus. For over two years now I have been a volunteer for the University of

Michigan's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC), and throughout my time

I have been keenly aware of this conflicted space around the topic of sexual assault. It's a

touchy situation that brings about strong reactions: when the Department of Justice estimates that

during the span of five years at a university a woman has a one in five chance of experiencing

some sort of sexual violence,[4] people have the tendency to react negatively. This negative

reaction is only compounded by the fact that within this study researchers also found that instead

of dark alleys and abandoned streets at night, almost 60% of all completed on-campus rapes

occurred in the victim's residences and 10.3% occurred in fraternities. People don't like to hear

about sexual assault in any context, but particularly in a college campus setting where "the bad

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[3] The other 13 statements, although one can make an easy assumption about how they feel, I did not wish to make
that assumption. I only counted those comments that were entirely explicit in their opinion.
[4] Department of Justice, 2000.

guy" isn't the stranger popping out of the bushes but is instead one of our peers or someone we trust.

This is but one statistic in a compilation of many that have been gathered by the government and academia. The National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that one out of every six women have been the victims of an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime.[5] The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS),[6] which is considered to be the nation's largest and most reliable victimization survey, reported that in 2007 alone there were 248,300 victims of rape, attempted, rape, and assault over the age of 12. Moreover, the National Crime Victimization Survey continues to publish findings year after year indicating that there is a trend where many people do not report their rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault to the police. For instance, in 2003 the NCVS found that only 53.7% of rape survivors[7] report to the police (Menard 2005: 3). Furthermore, in a recent study conducted nationally on 4,446 female college students, researchers found that fewer than 5% of the students who were assaulted reported it to the police or to other sources of authority such as resident advisors or crises services (Fisher et al., 2000).

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[5] The National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women Survey,* 1998.

[6] The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is one of two national sources of information on sexual victimization in the United States (the other source is the Uniform Crime Reports by the FBI). While the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) provides a compilation of all police reports on violent crime, the NCVS focuses on 100,000 randomly selected participants every six months for three years and ask them to list any violent experiences they have had, even if they did not report them. Because of this, the NCVS is considered to be a more reliable source of information regarding sexual assault because of the data showing that many people in fact do not report their experiences with sexual violence to the police (Menard 2005: 1-4).

[7] Although the debate revolving around the proper term to call a person who has been raped will be explored later, throughout the course of this paper I will rely on "survivor" instead of "victim" as my preferred term. However, because many of these statistics include women who were also murdered in addition to being raped, I will use "victim" when the outcome of the person's fate is left unknown.

Yet the United States is not alone with this problem. In Canada, for instance, the Canadian National Survey (CNS)[8] found that 45.1% of all the female respondents stated that they had been sexually assaulted since leaving high school (Schwartz and DeKeseredy 1997: 15). With the median age for women responding to this survey being 20 and the median age for men being 21, the young age of these respondents reflects the same problem that many American students face on college campuses: sexual assault is a very real and prevalent problem.

Despite these upsetting numbers – particularly regarding the university scene in North America – I have noticed a great deal of skepticism and doubt from people when there is a dialogue about sexual assault in the campus community. While many people I have talked to throughout the years generally agree that sexual violence is bad, there tends to be conflicts with recognizing both its' high rate and the various manifestations it can take on. Exemplified by the outrage on both sides that "The hooker and the professor thing"[9] caused, the debate over what sexual assault is and who gets assaulted is an issue that SAPAC tries to combat head-on. As a SAPAC volunteer I know that this is an uphill battle with one very steep hill. Ranging from problems with students struggling to grasp SAPAC's (and thereby the University of Michigan's) position on sexual assault to the sheer fact that many students simply don't know what SAPAC is or that it exists, we have problems that I believe many at the University simply don't understand or wish to ignore. SAPAC as an institution is large and powerful and yet it is small and unknown; it is unified and yet it is riddled with conflict, illustrating the many internal and external problems that the anti-sexual violence movement faces. Different opinions on feminism

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[8] The Canadian National Survey (CNS) is a national sample survey that was taken in 1992 on community college and university students in 95 undergraduate institutions from British Columbia to the Atlantic Canada. The research team administered two questionnaires to men and women (in both French and English) to 1,835 women and 1,307 men. With less than 1% of the participants refusing to answer, this is considered to be one of Canada's most successful federally sponsored representative sample surveys on sexual assault and college students in Canada (Schwartz and Dekeseredy 1997: 14-20).

[9] As my friend who first discovered the online article called it.

and how feminist tenants fit into the anti-sexual violence movement are clearly illustrated by both the student volunteers at SAPAC and the students whom SAPAC wants to reach out to and educate.

Aiming my focus at SAPAC and the boundaries it attempts to create for the campus in contrast to the established boundaries that many students who make up the campus community believe exist, I hope to understand how these social and personal boundaries are created and crossed, the spaces they in turn make, and the behaviors, opinions, and beliefs that are supported by these realms. Through interviews with both students affiliated with SAPAC and students with no affiliation to the organization, I hope to explore the complicated social and personal landscapes that are being created at the University which affect the dialogue surrounding sexual assault. By exploring the boundaries that form both social and personal space, I wish to attempt to shed light on the problems that not only face the University of Michigan campus community, but also of the challenges that the anti-sexual violence movement and American society confront.

In Chapter One I will explore the historical legacies of feminism in the anti-sexual violence movement and how it impacts the ongoing dialogue surrounding sexual assault today. Moreover, I will begin to look at the social implications of the creation and establishment of boundaries in communities with an emphasis on the metaphorical borderland and its affect on the transmission of ideas between communities. Here I will also lay out both my methodological foundations as well as a detailed analysis of my informants. In Chapter Two I will delve into the formation of micro-communities through friendships and how these communities respond to the macro-level community at the University, which I will argue reflects their response to SAPAC and its message. Chapter Three will contain an in-depth analysis of the complexities of SAPAC and its volunteer base within the context of the campus community. Chapter Four will bring the

campus community and SAPAC together by exploring the very different reactions and opinions people have revolving around the concept of *consent*. By exploring the responses that I received during my interviews, I hope to show not only how the complexities of the social structure at this University reflect the vastly different opinions about *consent*, but also how these responses create the space that we find ourselves living in today. In my Concluding Remarks I hope to expound upon these observations and delve into their implications.

**Chapter One   Sexual Assault on Campus: The Feminist Legacy,
                          Anthropology, and the Creation of Social Boundaries**

In order to fully grasp the space that is in constant creation in the campus community regarding

the dialogue on sexual violence, it is important to understand the context where the dialogue

surrounding sexual assault sprouted from in American society. By exploring the historical

legacies of sexual violence and the implications of second and third wave feminism, I hope to

provide a framework for the dialogue revolving around sexual assault in both SAPAC as well as

the campus community.

Furthermore, by understanding the past studies that have been conducted in feminist

anthropology on women, sexual violence, and personal autonomy, I intend to bridge the research

conducted on sexual assault to the research conducted on boundaries and borders, which I

believe by nature are related to one another. Although anthropology has been a bit lacking in the

conversation on sexual assault, I believe that anthropology provides all the tools necessary for an

interesting and insightful dialogue. By employing the use of the anthropological term

"borderland" I hope to provide a methodological basis that allows for a unique and worthwhile

critique on the dialogue surrounding sexual assault here at the University of Michigan.

Finally, through my methodology, I intend to bring together both the history and

literature of American feminism and anthropological theories in order to begin a concise and

clear analysis of the campus community's dialogue on sexual violence.

Deconstructing the Puzzle: American Feminism and the Anti-Sexual Violence Movement

It was during second wave feminism when sexual assault was first addressed as not only a form

of violence against women, but also as a form of repression stemming from the long and

dominant history of patriarchy. While for much of Western human history rape was considered

to be a matter of property (women were property of either their husbands or of their family), and

it was often thought of as an affront to the family rather than as a personal one, feminists during

the second wave wished to reverse this course and argued that reform was long overdue. With

ancient Babylonian codes and Roman statutes that would serve as models for much of the

Western legal system, rape was only considered a crime if the family thought it was a crime

(Jordan 2004: 21-22). The woman who was assaulted was never legally allowed to make that

choice. By state sanctioned law her opinion was ignored. Furthermore, in Biblical Judeo-

Christian texts only certain types of rape were acknowledged, allowing for a dichotomous view

of what constitutes as sexual assault to perpetuate. On one hand if a young girl was taken

forcefully and "seized" when she was alone, it was considered rape and the man could be

punished to death.[10] On the other hand, time and time again God in the Pentateuch[11] said that

men were allowed to take women as "booty" and as the "spoils" of war.[12] Anything that did not

fit this strict and confining box was often not considered rape. The impact that both Classical

Rome and Biblical texts had on Western society was enormous: from poetry to military ethics,

these two worlds left a lasting legacy on a society where up until the last hundred or so years,

women have had little agency within their lives – particularly within their sexual lives. For

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[10] "But if the man meets the engaged woman in the open country, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. You shall do nothing to the young woman; the young woman has not committed an offense punishable by death, because this case is like that of someone who attacks and murders a neighbor," (Deuteronomy 22:25-26).

[11] The Pentateuch is the first half of what is called The Old Testament, which in Biblical traditions is said to have been written by Moses himself. In part because of this legacy the Pentateuch is considered to be the section of the Bible where the laws of those who follow it have been laid out, such as through the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Numbers.

[12] E.g., "When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace. If it accepts your terms of peace and surrenders to you, then all the people in it shall serve you as forced labor. If it does not submit to you peacefully, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it; and when the Lord your God gives it to your hand, you shall put all its males to the sword. You may, however, take as your booty the women, the children, the livestock, and everything else in the town, all its spoil. You may enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which the Lord your God has given you," (Deuteronomy 20:10-14).

centuries survivors of sexual assault in America were burdened by laws and mores that were limiting and oftentimes, nonsensical.

By the time second wave feminism began, starting in the early 1960s and lasting through the late 1980s, radical feminists launched sexual assault onto their agenda. Although no different from first wave feminism (starting around the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth century) in that it addressed political activism and social reform, second wave feminism is nonetheless an important piece of the puzzle that makes up the anti-sexual violence movement. The legacy of second wave feminism has had a huge impact due to its accomplishments, scope, and internal tensions that have transferred over to the anti-sexual violence movement. Furthermore, with the internal debates that second wave feminism produced and faced, these debates aided in the creation of the so-called[13] third wave that has continued to shape the anti-sexual violence movement that we see today. The past that the anti-sexual violence movement has inherited is one that continues to shape SAPAC, its volunteers, and the students whom they try to reach out to on the campus community.

In what is now a cornerstone for feminist literature, Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* (1963) represented, "the problem that had no name" (Friedan, 1963: 11-27) by pointing out that while women had gained suffrage and access to a strong education thanks to the efforts of those women in the first wave, they had no outlet to fulfill these roles because they were still under the constraints imposed by the separate sphere as housewife and primary caregiver. During the

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[13] Traditionally speaking, American feminism is defined in periods of waves: first wave, second wave, and third wave. While the term "wave" allows for a clean, clear-cut image of when these periods of feminism began, ended, and what they stood for, the reality on the ground is that these terms exist mainly out of necessity for scholars, activists, and students. The period of time and often what these waves stand for are messy and conflicted. However, by employing this metaphor of the wave, it helps to clarify basic themes and contrasts between the various movements (Geller and Stockett 2006: 3).

1960's the lives of American women were still much the same as they had been for so long.[14]

Women during this time argued for equal rights in the workplace, reproductive rights, and for

more freedom within their personal lives. As prominent activist Carol Hanisch said during this

period, "The Personal is Political" (1969).

Yet however unified feminists seemed to be in the beginning of this movement with calls

for Universal Sisterhood and Adrienne Rich's (1977) evocative, *The Dream of a Common

Language*, the movement quickly became a divided one. Grumblings of a homogenized

movement that ignored issues such as class, race, and discrimination began sprouting up. Black

feminism versus white feminism started to take hold and liberals versus radicals began to butt

heads. While "liberal" feminists argued for a more mainstream approach where women would

work within the system to change it, "radical" feminists argued for an overhaul of the entire

social system to initiate this change. Within this mess were feminists who refused to work with

each other: coalitions fell apart, new coalitions were made to compete with past coalitions, and

groups of feminists actively competed for the same resources.

In the midst of these at times strained relationships, radical feminists in the second wave

movement began to focus their energies on what would become the anti-sexual violence

movement. As Maria Bevacqua writes,

> Radical feminists were far less concerned with maintaining a reputation of respectability,
> were likely to flout convention when conducting their often flamboyant actions, and were
> thus far better suited to breaking the taboo surrounding rape than were liberals (Bevacqua
> 2001: 166).

Whether or not this characterization is true or faithful is debatable: what is important, however,

is that this basic perception of these women is a rather uniform one. Radical feminists were

portrayed as throwing convention to the wind, militant, and demanding for a change in the

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[14] For instance, it wasn't until 1971 that the Supreme Court ruled that differential treatment based on one's sex was illegal in *Reed v. Reed* (Weitz 2003: 8).

patriarchal society that they saw as the root of all the problems that the feminist movement faced. Because of this image, radical feminists were able to push for reforms in a sticky area that most did not wish to address. The New York Radical Feminists (NYRF) were at the forefront of this politicization in the early 1970s where, "Rape became an issue when women began to compare their experiences as children, teen-agers, students, workers, and wives and to realize that sexual assault, in one for or another, was common" (Connell and Wilson, 1974: 3). The more they began to push, the more they were heard by both activists and academics. In 1972 the first two Rape Crisis Centers (also known as RCC's) would open in Washington DC and Philadelphia[15] with the goal to "abolish rape in our lifetimes" (Bevacqua, 2001: 167). Although there were still worries that this was indeed a homogenized effort – even the meeting notes of the Crisis Center in DC express the concern that mainly white women worked in an RCC that served mainly black women (Bevacqua 2001: 170) – real movement had begun in America. Within seven years of the DC opening over 1,000 RCC's would sprout up throughout the United States. By opening centers for protection and advocacy, feminists would carve their way through the American legal system and guarantee better protection for women against sexual violence.[16]

As activists were working hard to help the American woman, academics were working hard to change the society that the American woman lived in. In 1975 Susan Brownmiller

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[15] There is some debate whether it was DC or Philadelphia that was the first city to open a RCC. Because of the different dates that have been reported for both and for the limited details that I could find, I have settled to say that these were the first two RCC's ever opened in America.

[16] However, it ought to be noted that because rape laws were connected to the original property laws that they derived from, this activist movement was often segmented from state to state. Each state has their own laws and interpretations of sexual assault and the state sanctioned laws that go along with it. For most of this paper, because of the focus on the University of Michigan, I will mainly rely on Michigan laws. The University of Michigan sits in a unique position: situated in the city of Ann Arbor, this was a hotbed for feminist activism starting with the Women's Crisis Center (WCC) in the early 1970's. In fact, many women who were active with the WCC in Ann Arbor started the Michigan Women's Task Force on Rape (MWTFR), which was the coalition that advocated for protective laws revolving around sexual violence (Bevacqua 2001: 168-9). Local Ann Arbor resident and attorney, Virginia Cecile Blomer Nordby, became the chief drafter of the landmark Michigan Criminal Sexual Conduct Act. The Michigan Criminal Sexual Conduct Act (See Appendix C) became one of the first state laws in America to ever label rape as a violent in crime. This is a heritage that the University of Michigan ought to be proud of.

published her revolutionary book *Against Our Will* which was the first real academic piece focusing on sexual assault in America. Controversial for her time, Brownmiller argued that rape was an action that had been defined by men rather than women, allowing for men to perpetuate their patriarchal dominance through the fear of rape. Following this publication that became the foundation for all future endeavors, feminist academics began to jump on board actively publishing an extensive literature. From the definition of rape (Bourque 1989; Box 1983; Katz and Mazur 1979; Kelly 1988; Los 1994) to the debate around the question of whether or not rape is a sexual act (Bell 1991; Brownmiller 1975; Cahill 2001; Donat and D'Emilio 1992; Griffin 1975; Howe 1988; Los 1994; Muehlenhard et al. 1992), all angles regarding this topic began to be hashed out. By opening up a vigorous dialogue feminist scholars were not only able to change the public's view about sexual assault but were also able to make such groundbreaking change that as a student today when I look back at what they battled with – such as the fact that it took until 1993 to criminalize marital rape in all 50 states[17] – seem archaic to me.

It was during this time and its open dialogue that aided in the transition from second wave feminism to the creation of third wave feminism. Beginning around the late 1980s and early 1990s, third wave feminism led to many new debates within the anti-sexual violence movement. Third wave feminism fully realized that the male-female binary was too restrictive and argued for a difference between the terms *sex* and *gender*. No longer were men and women determined and defined solely by their reproductive organs. Although this argument began in the late 1970s (Unger 1979), there seems to be a consensus that the gender-sex difference wasn't fully employed and understood until third wave feminists began pushing for a more diverse

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[17] South Dakota was the first to criminalize marital rape in 1975 (Bergen 1999:2), but it took until 1993 for this to be uniform throughout the United States. Despite this advance, as of 1999 33 states consider marital rape to a lesser crime than it would be if the crime had been perpetrated by a person the survivor was not legally married to (Bergen 1999: 2). Moreover, although 1975 kick-started this criminalization, it wasn't until 1984 that *any man* in *any state* was successfully convicted for raping his wife whom he still legally resided with (Weitz 2003: 8).

understanding of the variability in human sexuality. Gender refers not only to the cultural categories that make up the female-male identity, but also to a person's self-identity and how they associate with a masculine or feminine identity. Sex refers to the person's biological makeup.

This emphasis on diversity within feminism also allowed for more agency and a voice for women of color in both activism and scholarship. After law professor and civil rights activist Kimberlé Crenshaw famously coined the term *intersectionality* in 1989, the idea that one's race and gender along with other factors such as class and religion all influenced one another became particularly important in feminist scholarship. Intersectionality argues that, "All facets of identity are integral, interlocking parts of a whole…In other words, you cannot understand what it means to have a certain gender/sex without examining these other identities simultaneously," (DeFrancisco & Palcezewski 2007: 8).

All of these concepts played into the scholarship regarding sexual violence with women: from LBGT issues to race, from class to persons with disability, these branches began to be debated and analyzed in the realm of rape and sexual assault. In addition, with the third wave's emphasis on storytelling and narration as an outlet for the voice of women, new forms of writing – such as Eve Ensler's *Vagina Monologues* – began to take hold both inside and outside the realm of academia. These new debates in third wave feminism are reflective of the internal development currently in the anti-sexual violence movement. From concerns that the anti-sexual violence movement still tends to be a favorite cause of middleclass white women to the idea that storytelling and narrative are not only useful as part of the healing process for survivors but also as a way to publicize the silence surrounding sexual violence, third wave feminism has had a dramatic impact on the movement. Yet this impact has not come without its struggle: in much of

the anti-sexual violence movement questions regarding how much second and third wave

feminism ought to play out are often at the center of the internal division with many even

questioning if feminism fits into the current movement. This history and its legacy is something

that the volunteers at SAPAC grapple with everyday, both inside of SAPAC and outside of

SAPAC with the campus community.

Feminist Anthropology and the Silenced Dialogue

After sifting through such a rich history of literature regarding sexual assault in many academic

quarters, I was surprised that when I began my research for my thesis I couldn't find a single

book in the library on sexual assault in anthropology. With feminist thought breaking into

anthropology through the publications of *Woman, Culture, and Society* (Rosaldo & Lamphere

1974) and *Toward an Anthropology of Woman* (Reiter 1975), feminism quickly gained

acceptance and won a firm position amongst the various theories employed in anthropology. It

only made sense to me that anthropology would have a wide breadth of literature on sexual

assault. After all, as Louise Lamphere notes, "Feminist anthropology has always been about

critique" (Lamphere 2006: x). Despite the extensive literature that makes up feminist

anthropology, ranging from ideas regarding the division of social life for women into separate

spheres (Rosaldo 1974), class and race (e.g., Anglin 2002; Stack 1974), to the effects of

multinational commerce on women (e.g., Constable, 2003; Freeman 2000), there is very little on

sexual assault in anthropological literature. While scholars have perhaps focused their attentions

on this subject indirectly (via poverty, positions of power, human trafficking, etc.), the topic of

sexual assault tends to be the territory of sociologists, psychologists, criminologists, public

policy, social work, and the all-encompassing term, "women's studies". A few of the exceptions

tend to focus mainly on domestic violence and the agency of the American woman within marriage – Barbara Burton (2000) is a fine example of this with her ethnographies on domestic violence. However, very few ethnographies and studies have been written on sexual assault, particularly on sexual assault in America. One of the few anthropologists actively studying sexual assault I could find is Peggy Reeves Sanday, who, for instance, has written on rape as an act institutionalized by college fraternities as well as what she calls "rape-free vs. rape prone societies" (Sanday 1983, 1990, 1996). For the most part, however, there tends to be a deafening silence in the field regarding rape. Sanday herself even comments on this strange paradox: "Indeed, with a few exceptions, anthropologists have been strangely silent on the metaphorical and political uses of sexual assault," (1993: 283). While I am cognizant that many feminist anthropologists have touched upon the subject as a *part* of their analysis (e.g., Behar, 1993; Rubin, 1975), very few have focused solely on sexual assault (e.g., Burton, 2000; Mulla, 2008; Sanday, 1983, 1990, 1996).

The irony is not lost on me: anthropology, a field known for pushing boundaries and for searching all angles of a topic, tends to compartmentalize sexual assault within the box of "women's issues" or "violence" and receives very little attention other than a brief mentioning of its existence, usually to illustrate the response to another deeper, seemingly more important cause that the anthropologist is studying. Perhaps this is too strong to say – yet generally speaking, sexual assault is usually only one part to a multifaceted analysis, rarely receiving the prestige of deserving its own analysis. Why is it that there has yet to be a true compilation of ethnographies and case studies on sexual assault? Despite the sensitivity and empathy that anthropology has shown in regards to women, we as students and scholars are only adding to the destructive cycle where women like the survivors I know feel that they have no stage upon which

they can speak of the utter brutality that they have lived through. Why, of all the fields in academia, have *we* been the ones to ignore their voices?

However, despite the disheartening finds, it is important to note that feminist thought in anthropology has had a great impact in the feminist dialogue, albeit in different areas of feminist thought. For instance, anthropologists have spent a great deal focusing on personhood and autonomy, particularly in regards to the debate surrounding abortion. Faye D. Ginsberg, for example, has written about the abortion debate in North Dakota, highlighting the problems of autonomy and personhood (1998). Other anthropologists have been active focusing on theories of personal autonomy (e.g., Cuypers 2002), creating a large breadth of work that can easily be read in connection to second and third wave feminist thought on independence and liberation. Although this literature is not exactly a direct connection to the debate surrounding sexual assault, the key theories such as what it means to be autonomous and one's own person are surely tools that are necessary within the anti-sexual violence debates today.

Boundaries, Border Crossing, and the Silenced Borderland

Unlike sexual assault, but much like autonomy and personhood, cultural boundaries and the processes of maintaining these boundaries in order to understand identity formation and expression have long been a concern for anthropologists. As Georg Simmel has noted, a boundary is "not a spatial fact with sociological effects, but a sociological fact which forms space (1908: 623). Boundaries and borders are not determined by the space itself – rather, the culture that the boundary exists in determines the boundary and the space it provides. Indeed,

> The territorial boundary is a secondary thing, however: it provides the physical symbol differentiating one natural unit from another, but its construction occurs in socio-cultural space. In this sense the boundary can exist only for as long as that which it bounds continues to construct it (Mewett 1986: 83).

The way a group of people view the world in relation to their surroundings determines how they will form the limits of both their individual space and of what composes the society that they live in. The placement of boundaries is reflective of not only a person's sense of self but also of a common identity within the community.

However, once these boundaries are in place either by historical forces or other modes of power and identity-making devices they often operate as identity markers themselves. Established boundaries serve as mechanisms that separate the "'home' from the 'foreign'" (Donnan & Wilson 1994: 3) and are employed in communities as a way to distinguish people, places, and ideas. These boundaries further the sense of self not only for individuals but also for the community as a whole, in fact giving them that marker of "community" and to identify "us" from "them." For instance, Anthony Cohen writes about how small communities within Great Britain could create a distinctive sense of who they were despite outsiders not necessarily being able to tell a difference between these communities and their other (Cohen 1985, 1986, 1987). Although not always detectable to an outside observer, those within the communities are able to tell who "they" are.

With the advent of migration and multinational commerce along with the aftermath of colonial policies from much of the West, however, anthropologists have spent a great deal time researching "people who do not fit neatly into spatial and cultural categories" (Bourque 1997: 153). When groups of people are constantly on the move it is difficult to give them a sense of a common history and story, allowing for them to be considered "them." Communities are not static: rather, they are fluid, dynamic groups of people with a variety of beliefs and ideas. Many anthropologists have noted the lack of correspondence between these boundaries, specifically between symbolic and structural ones (e.g., Cohen 1985).

Today, the ideas of borders and boundaries as social constructs have been applied from cultural identity in different communities and ethnic groups to state borders and nationalism. Particularly in the United States, an extensive literature has grown on border crossing with Mexico (e.g., Anzaldua 1987; Behar 1993) with an emphasis on the idea of the borderland, a place where two different borders meet at one point. According to Gloria Anzaldua, a borderland is "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition," (1987: 3). Where two borders meet ideas and other cultural commodities are transferred back and forth. Although Anzaldua and many others (e.g., Berdahl 1999) focus on borderlands as more or less physical entities (Anzaldua writes about the Mexico-United States border and Berdahl focuses her attention on a town called Kella that is on the border of former East and West Germany), I believe that borderlands can also be used metaphorically when cultural borders and boundaries meet. This idea of the borderland exemplifies the very real problem that is in the campus community at the University of Michigan – and, perhaps, for many universities. Institutions like large universities contain a variety of people with a variety of opinions and a variety of backgrounds. Indeed, what constitutes as their personal and social boundaries are often at odds with each other. For instance, in the United States the idea of personal autonomy and individualism is a powerful and deep-rooted belief. The concept of personhood is important and is not only reflective of the boundaries that we create around the human body but its influence can also be traced to our laws, literature, and art. Yet how "we" in the United States view personhood and autonomy is not necessarily uniform, nor is it indicative of the entire world. Different opinions on the importance of personal autonomy to what even *constitutes* as personal autonomy and appropriate behavior towards another's person differ on personal and cultural levels. Universities, as institutions where the

world can come together in one place, often face a diverse set of boundaries that are often

meeting one another for the very first time and create a sort of borderland – and in my opinion, a

multitude of borderlands on a multitude of levels.

Moreover, because of the nature of the American university's fluid and multifaceted

atmosphere, boundaries are often difficult to establish. This is particularly the case at the

University of Michigan. While students are united in a cohesive group as the "campus" of the

University, they are also divided on many levels and may not necessarily feel connected to one,

solid community. On one hand students are tied by the sense of community through not only

their commonality as students and the history of their University (heightened through devices

such as varsity sports, *The Michigan Fight Song*, and university clubs), but are also tied together

by the cultural landscape of the University of Michigan and Ann Arbor. On the other hand

students are divided: the campus community is made up of over 26,000 undergraduate students

alone causing most students I know to build their own community of friends on the micro-level.

Although students mingle with others in class and at places of social gatherings such as bars and

parties, students are nonetheless usually confined to a specific set – or sets – of friends. The

common observation by many is that most students tend to spend their time with friends who

many claim share their similar views and interests.

In addition, the temporality of those who make up the waves of people in the community

only further complicates this campus community by constantly having people leave and by

bringing new people in. Any promise of stability is wiped away when the next generation of

freshmen walks into orientation. New opinions, ideas, and experiences are constantly brought in

year after year, making it difficult to say that there is a common consensus within the campus

community.

On top of all of this, complaints abound that the university has no true forum for the so-called student voice.   With many (including my informants) shunning the school newspaper, *The Michigan Daily,* many students have told me that they feel that there is no "solid" voice for the campus community.   Although there is diversity within the campus that makes it hard for these forums to exist, even when there are forums for specific voices they hardly interact with other smaller forums.

In my own experience, while I tend to think that I have a diverse group of friends, even I must admit that my micro-level communities are not necessarily fluid or united. With my group of friends since freshmen year, while we range from males and females and are very different in regards to race, religion, political beliefs, and even majors, we are nonetheless united by a common history: we were all hallmates our freshmen and sophomore years. Amongst this community of friends I am called "Zeller," my last name. At the same time, however, I have another group of friends – another community, if you will – my SAPAC friends who I volunteer with. While we also vary in our backgrounds we are nonetheless united by our activism. The volunteers at SAPAC are incredibly close and often spend much of their college lives together. Here I go by "Megan." None of my friends between these groups "hang out" with one another. In truth, I separate my time from my SAPAC friends from my other community and rarely force the two groups to mingle with one another. One could even argue that I have a different identity between these two groups even though I don't act differently in either community of friends. However, these two communities within the larger community of the campus rarely come together aside from a significant few to allow for a transfer of words, conversation, laughs, and ideas.

I believe that this example is indicative of the dichotomous space within the campus community. Moreover, this divided space, I believe, exemplifies the many conflicts that I often observe in my activist efforts revolving around the dialogue over sexual violence. People have different views on sexual assault: this depends on whether they are educated on the subject (which still doesn't necessarily allow for total agreement, as exemplified by the very conflicts within American feminism), have different cultural views, are misinformed, or are simply unaware of the matter. Due to these diverse opinions, what constitutes as personal and social boundaries and what don't are often at odds with one another. Moreover, because of the size of the campus community, the complex formation of micro-communities, and the lack of an accepted and well-respected open forum for the student voice, there is no true open transmission of ideas between communities regarding sexual assault. By definition a college campus ought to be a sort of borderland where ideas are fluid and transferable, yet when it comes to sexual assault here within the campus community this is not necessarily the case. Although anthropologists have written about how borderlands are places where ideas and knowledge transfer back and forth and cross the boundaries that separate the spaces between them, here at the University of Michigan in regards to sexual assault this is a borderland that has little dialogue and transfer, causing for a distinctive divide within the campus community. Rather, this is a silenced borderland where there is little communication back and forth between the campus community, SAPAC, and the various University resources. The spaces we create are riddled with conflict: communities are more likely to butt heads with one another over issues such as "the professor and the hooker thing" instead of inviting an open discussion where sexual assault can be explored on a variety of terms. Although SAPAC tries to reach out and to educate the student body, the complicated web that SAPAC is a part of and helps to create makes it difficult for

SAPAC to get its message out. By interviewing students who are both volunteers for the Sexual

Assault Prevention and Awareness Center as well as students who are non-volunteers I hoped to

shed light on a pattern that after years of working with this community, I believe exists.

Methodology

The primary research that I conducted was through interviews with students at the University of

Michigan, both from SAPAC and those not affiliated with the organization. To keep in line with

the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements, all of the students were at least

18 years old and freely volunteered to be interviewed. Interviews were conducted in public

spaces, ranging from coffee shops to the SAPAC office and lasted anywhere from 20 minutes to

55 minutes. All interviews were taped with an audio recorder. There were two forms of

interviews: those for SAPAC volunteers and those for non-SAPAC students. Through these

interviews I was able to obtain a basic sense of how my respondents viewed SAPAC and sexual

assault.

I was able to obtain interviews with SAPAC volunteers by sending out a mass email to

volunteers asking if they would like to be interviewed for my thesis. Responses to the email

were private and between the person whom I interviewed: very few at SAPAC knew whom I did

and did not interview unless the informants mentioned it themselves. I was quite protective of

this information in fear that volunteers might feel coerced or pressured to interview.

SAPAC interviews consisted of questions regarding a common vocabulary used in

SAPAC such as *consent*, *survivor*, *power and control*, and *rape culture*[18] to their opinions about

how SAPAC works and how they believe the public views SAPAC. Basic information was

[18] These terms will be further explored in later chapters. To see all of their definitions and more, please refer to
Appendix A.

taken from all volunteers interviewed: name,[19] which volunteer group they were involved in

(NPA, PE, or MA),[20] age, sex and gender, race and ethnicity, any religious affiliation, region of

the country they were from (North, South, East, West, or Midwest), their hometown (rural, small

town, large town, suburb, small city, or large city), the amount of time through semesters that

they have volunteered for SAPAC, and their majors. For confidentiality reasons I decided not to

include their specific grade. SAPAC is a rather small organization and while it is difficult to

place names and voices with ages and majors since this isn't always known, it isn't as difficult to

do so when there are relatively well known identity markers such as "senior" or "sophomore"

attached to them. The following chart shows the demographics of these SAPAC volunteers:

(Figure 1)

	Volunteer Group	Age	Sex	Race & Ethnicity	Religion	Region	Home Town	Number of Semesters	Major(s)
Ava	NPA	19	F	Caucasian	None	North	Suburb	2	Communications, English
Elizabeth	PE	20	F	Caucasian	None	East	Large City	2	Nursing
Isabel	PE	19	F	Latina	None	Mid-West	Small City	2	Latino Studies, Women's Studies
Jack	MA	23	M	Caucasian	Jewish	South	Suburb	1	Classical Philology
Jane	PE	20	F	Asian	Atheist	Mid-West	Suburb	3	Engineer
Julia	PE	19	F	Caucasian	Catholic	Mid-West	Small City	2	Economics, Organizational Studies
Kassidy	NPA	20	F	Caucasian	Catholic	Mid-West	Small City	1	Psychology, Spanish
Nikita	NPA	21	F	Indian	None	Mid-West	Suburb	8	Psychology, Neuroscience, Film Minor
Rebecca	PE, Co-Cord	20	F	Caucasian	Jewish	Mid-West	Small City	6	Psychology, Women's Studies

While the majority of my research with SAPAC volunteers is based on these interviews, I

nonetheless rely on my past experiences in the organization. As a volunteer in SAPAC for over

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[19] All names have been changed to ensure anonymity.
[20] These volunteer groups will be explored more in depth in Chapter Three.

two years I have been fully indoctrinated into the SAPAC culture and have intensely close

friendships with many of my fellow volunteers. Although I do not disclose any personal

information about the volunteers with my own stories, I nonetheless rely on these experiences

and notes that I have taken to give a broader and more complete picture. Furthermore, all

information I give regarding the SAPAC volunteers is information that they freely relayed to me

during their interviews. For instance, in Chapter Three, I discuss how many involved in the anti-

sexual violence movement tend to either be survivors of assault or know someone who is a

survivor. Although I know many volunteers who do fit into this observation, I only discuss the

volunteers who gave me this information during their interview without any prompting and I

never go into the specifics of their stories and experiences. Such information is extremely

personal and quite sensitive in nature – the stories that I know from my experiences at SAPAC

are highly guarded and I would never breach such confidence or the privacy of people who are

not only my subjects and informants, but also more importantly, my friends. Amanda Coffey

(1999) writes about the problems one faces when studying and writing about a subject group

who are considered friends by the scholar. While she argues that as an anthropologist the

researcher will always be an outsider to those who they study despite the close ties they develop,

I find myself at odds with this contention, particularly since I started at SAPAC as a volunteer

before I became involved in this research. Although I understand that there is a fine balancing

act here between scholarship and confidentiality, I have striven to do the best that I can.

The other set of my interviews were conducted on undergraduate students at the

University of Michigan who are not affiliated with SAPAC. While these interviews were a bit

more difficult to obtain and forced me to rely mainly on word-of-mouth which often resulted

with me interviewing friends-of-friends, I nevertheless do believe that they are insightful and

worth analyzing. The trouble that I faced trying to get people to talk about sexual assault I believe not only highlights the sensitivity of the issue but also, perhaps more importantly, the unwillingness to talk about it. Here with the interviews I tried to gain an idea of how a variety of students view both SAPAC and sexual assault in general. While some are activists within the campus community, others consider themselves to be totally separate from any sort of movement on campus. Although interviews varied from person to person, every student interviewed was asked about what SAPAC did, where SAPAC was located, what they thought about SAPAC and other activist movements on campus, what they thought sexual assault was, and how they defined what consent was. Basic information to paint a more complete picture of the student was obtained in every interview regarding their name,[21] age, sex and gender, race and ethnicity, religious affiliation, region of the country (North, South, East, West, or Midwest) or world they were from, their hometown (rural, small town, large town, suburb, small city, or large city), major, if they had ever attended their mandatory SAPAC freshmen workshop, and any other forms of identification that they offered. The following chart shows the demographics of these students:

(Figure 2)

	Age	Sex	Race & Ethnicity	Religion	Home Town	Region	Work Shop	Major	Other Forms of ID
Henry	22	M	Caucasian	Christian	Suburb	South	Yes	Engineer	Friend Of Survivors
Joni	22	F	Caucasian	None	Suburb	Mid-West	No	Engineer	
Maya	19	F	Indian	None	Large City	International SEA	No (Did Not Know)	Engineer, French Minor	Feminist
Naafil	20	M	Biracial: (White-Arab American)	Muslim	None	Mid-West, East	No	Arabic/ Islamic Studies, Political	

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[21] All names have been changed in order to ensure anonymity.

								Science	
Rachel	21	F	Asian	None	Suburb	Mid-West	No	Women's Studies	Feminist
Rose	18	F	Caucasian	Jewish	Suburb	Mid-West	Yes	Un-declared	Sorority Sister

Through these interviews I obtained a diverse array of opinions and responses on

SAPAC, activism, and sexual assault within the context of the University of Michigan

undergraduate student body and campus.

After analyzing these sets of interviews, I began to recognize a pattern revolving around

the very different opinions and beliefs about sexual assault and SAPAC's role at the University.

In order to contextualize these interviews better, I re-interviewed Elizabeth, Isabel, Joni,

Kassidy, Naafil, Rachel, Rebecca, and Rose, making the group four SAPAC volunteers and four

students not affiliated with the organization. Although this is a rather small pool these students

are nonetheless very different from on another and have a variety of opinions that I believe are

reflective of some of the patterns that I have witnessed throughout my years at the University of

Michigan. Here my questions focused on their communities of friends, how their friendships and

communities worked, and how they felt about the campus community at the University of

Michigan.

Finally, it should be noted that although I understand that sexual assault and violence is a

problem that people across the genders experience (assault in the LBGT community has begun to

receive serious attention and the Justice Department states that approximately 10% of all sexual

assault survivors are men),[22] the main emphasis with anti-sexual violence programs tends to be

heteronormative in nature. While SAPAC does strive to have an all-encompassing and diverse

view of sexual assault and openly discusses these problems in a rather frank manner, the majority

of students at the University of Michigan tend to view sexual assault as a male-on-female offense

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[22] US Department of Justice, 2000.

and victimization. In truth, sexual assault *is* more often than not a gendered crime – after all, nine out of ten assault survivors are women.[23] It is because of this heteronormative space and the traditional views about gender and sex within the university that I will investigate the dialogue, opinions, and boundaries of sexual assault where women are the survivors of an assault by a male perpetrator.

Conclusion

The legacies of second and third wave feminism, although colorful and diverse, nonetheless have left a lasting mark on the lives of American women, particularly through the creation of legal, social, and personal boundaries. This feminist heritage from which the anti-sexual violence movement derives from has created the framework that SAPAC and its volunteers negotiate on a daily basis. This negotiation occurs both internally with the organization and externally with the campus community, making it important to understand both SAPAC as an institution as well as the community that they work with.

Furthermore, these boundaries that the feminist movement has set up provide a unique link with the anthropological theories surrounding boundary making and borderlands. Although anthropologists may have overlooked sexual assault as a topic of interest in feminist anthropology, the foundations set by the analysis of women and their personal autonomy as well as the anthropological theories revolving around boundaries provides an insightful analysis to the space for dialogue that is currently being created in the campus community.

The campus community, in all of its many complexities, is worth understanding in order to fully comprehend the space for dialogue surrounding sexual assault that is being created at the

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[23] See previous footnote.

University of Michigan. With its large size and diverse community, how the campus community

organizes and communicates is reflective of how social dialogue and action develops. In the

next chapter, I will explore how this community develops and how this community views itself.

Chapter Two   Will You Be My Friend? The Implications of Social Boundaries and Micro-Organization in the Campus Community

"It was my idea of what a university should be. It was…the testing ground for all my prejudices, my beliefs and my ignorance, and it helped to lay out the boundaries of my life."
        -Arthur Miller on the University of Michigan

Ranked as not only one of the largest but also one of the most prestigious universities in the world, the University of Michigan is difficult to describe for both its scope and range of accomplishments. From the steps of the Union the Peace Corps was born, from the Big House[24] President Johnson first proposed the Great Society, and from the moon the University of Michigan is the only institution to fly its flag proudly next to the American flag. It is a place that offers endless possibilities for all who come here. As world-famous alumnus Arthur Miller once said, it is a university that allows students to not only test out their beliefs and knowledge, but it also, more importantly, lays out the boundaries of their current and future opinions, behaviors, and concerns. How these boundaries are both developed and maintained are a key piece in the puzzle in understanding the context of how dialogue for social change – specifically for the purpose of my research, sexual assault – is set up.

Through my interviews I discovered that while students believe there is a strong campus community that unites on large-scale and oftentimes uncontroversial occasions such as varsity football games, because of the large size and diversity on campus, students feel more connected to their communities of friends whom they have made on the micro-level. It is within these micro-level communities where student form their boundaries, spaces for dialogue, and opinions. However, because students feel that there is no true forum for the voice of the campus

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[24] This is the nickname for the Michigan Football Stadium.

community, bringing these micro-communities together and opening up a space for dialogue amongst these communities can be challenging. Although the potential for borderland transmission exists, the established skepticism caused by a mistrust in the macro-forum makes this transmission of information amongst communities difficult. Furthermore, because of this disconnect that many students feel exists, institutions like SAPAC seem to have a difficult time reaching out to the campus community. During my interviews with both volunteers from SAPAC and with the students, problems revolving around SAPAC's message, how the campus views SAPAC, and even what SAPAC is were expressed. I believe that by exploring the patterns of micro-community formation within the context of the campus community, it will shed light on the lack of student response towards SAPAC that many have both felt and witnessed.

The Social Landscape of the University of Michigan

The summer before my freshmen year at the University of Michigan, the Michigan Alumni Association of the Greater Detroit Area held a luncheon for all of the incoming freshmen in the Wayne County area. I remember my best friend and I on the drive over there were debating why the Association was holding the luncheon as a picnic in the height of the August humidity. When we arrived we understood: from Wayne County alone there were hundreds upon hundreds of students (including around 50 students from our own high school) who were going to be in our entering class. A facility with enough room for the entire group would be hard to come by. While the two of us were used to large schools and classes (our high school was part of a three high school complex with over 5,000 students), we were nonetheless a little taken aback. As we were walking through the blur of students, I remember my friend whispering to me, "Is U of M seriously *this big?"*

By the time freshmen welcome week rolled around, we would know that yes, the University of Michigan seriously is that big. Consisting of twenty schools in the Ann Arbor campus alone the university complex is colossal in both scope and size. With 26,038 undergraduates and 14,959 graduate and professional students reported in 2007[25] the Department of Education ranked the University of Michigan in 2008[26] as the fourteenth largest university in the nation. Through its Fast Facts page aimed at prospective students, the student body at the University comes from all 50 states and 120 countries. While 66% of the undergraduates are in-state residents, a quick calculation will show that about 11,457 students are still from other states and regions of the country. Approximately 6,510[27] students are minorities, and the ratio of male-to-female undergraduates is 50-50. Offering over 900 different student organizations, the University of Michigan at least in theory attempts to create a place that embraces the diversity that is in its student body.

Situated in the cozy city of Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan boasts a dynamic atmosphere where intellectualism and fierce school spirit come together. Painting a picture of the campus community here at the University of Michigan is a difficult task: with two large campuses connected by an ever-colorful bus system, the heart of the campus nonetheless seems to be at the Diag on Central Campus. The Diag, a large open space next to Angell Hall, is a place where all points of the campus comes together: between the Graduate Library and Rackham Graduate Auditorium, it has intersecting sidewalks coming from the two main streets that dominate the campus community, South University Street and State Street. Indeed, the Diag

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[25] 'Office of Undergraduate Admissions: About Michigan.' *University of Michigan*, viewed on March 1, 2009. <http://www.admissions.umich.edu/about/>.

[26] 'Common Data Set Initiative.' *Department of Education*, viewed on March 1, 2009. <http://www.commondataset.org/>.

[27] Approximately 25% of the undergraduate students are minorities. 'Office of Undergraduate Admissions: About Michigan.' *University of Michigan*, viewed on March 1, 2009. <http://www.admissions.umich.edu/about/>.

becomes the very physical representation of the campus community on a macro-level. Student

organizations often pass out flyers here, sports rallies in the fall and spring take place here, and at

least once a week the Diag is home to a protest

The peaceful and yet bustling feel of the streets through the campus and Ann Arbor only

further this macro-community feeling with its strong school pride. This is a University that is

famous for the school spirit that pervades every inch of this campus. Indeed, it is a school spirit

that is not merely attached to the locale: after spending summers in New Haven, Connecticut and

Washington, DC, I never could quite get over how quickly I could make friends with Michigan

alumni by simply jogging in a Michigan t-shirt. The intense school spirit witnessed during

varsity sports events, particularly with the football season, can further exemplify this fervent

macro-community. During University of Michigan football games, the city of Ann Arbor bursts

in size: streets are packed with fans of all ages and sizes, hotels are booked, and parking is nigh

impossible. This explosion of school pride during game day unites students on campus despite

whatever differences the large population may have. During our interview Rose noted,

> *This school spirit exists on campus when we all unite under one team. The level of school*
> *spirit is unbelievable and is a great way of uniting all the different people on campus.*

While this unification may be "unbelievable," Elizabeth noted that students unite under only very

specific scenarios.

> *I believe that students are united on a macro-level in "us versus them" scenarios, like*
> *football games, or any time the students are wearing maize and blue.*

Despite the sense of community on the macro-level during major sports events, I began to

wonder if students found that there were other forums or places where students at Michigan felt

that there was strong macro-community. Did students feel that there was a place for everyone to

express their opinions and ideas at the macro-level here at the University?

The Voice of the Campus Community

Overwhelmingly, students felt that there was no open forum for a student voice when asked, "Do

you believe there is a forum where all students can express their opinions for everyone to hear?

If so, where/what?" In fact, Isabel, Kassidy and Naafil all replied with a flat, "No." What is

interesting is here is that both SAPAC volunteers and a student who has no affiliation and a great

deal of disdain for SAPAC are all united in the fact that they believe students simply don't have

a place where they can truly express their opinions. Two very different groups of people both

agree that this opportunity simply doesn't exist. One of the problems that Rebecca told me was

that she noticed that many University institutions and organizations like the student government

at Michigan, the Michigan Student Assembly (MSA), don't actively reach out to the students.

> *I don't really think there is a forum for all students on this campus to express their own*
> *opinions. MSA really doesn't reach everyone and other advisory groups don't reach out*
> *to campus communities to see what their needs are.*

Even at the highest levels for students' voices such as the official student government, there is a

feeling amongst the students whom I talked to that there is very little effort or action to reach out

to the campus community. Whether or not this is lack of concern on the University's part is

perhaps debatable, but as Elizabeth told me,

> *I think that there are forums for students to express their opinions for everyone to hear –*
> *the problem is finding a forum where everyone will listen. You would need a forum large*
> *enough for everyone – like the Diag or the stadium. And, how many organizations have*
> *you seen on the Diag passing out fliers, doing back flips, singing and dancing...but there*
> *are still countless students that ignore them and walk right by.*

Perhaps this disconnect is not intentional – rather, it is because of the sheer size and diversity of

the campus community. However, one would think that even with a diverse group of voices

there would still be a place where these voices could be taken seriously and recognized. While

Elizabeth talks about the Diag as a place where students tend to converge as a place to see and

hear what is going on campus, this is still a rather informal setting for the campus community.

For many, including myself, I believe the assumption is that the student newspaper

provides a forum for the voices of the student body. With a historical legacy that includes Arthur

Miller himself as an editor for *The Daily* as well as *The Daily* being the only newspaper to be

singled out in 1952 by the Soviet Delegate in the United Nations as the embodiment of

"American warmongering," *The Daily* has a history of respected reporting on critical issues.[28]

Yet with the student responses to my question "What is your opinion of *The Michigan Daily*?"

the responses tended to be overwhelmingly negative, with Naafil's memorable response,

> *I honestly don't know why people read it, other than the fact that it's free and available.*
> [My girlfriend][29] *says it's not even good shitting reading material.*

Time and time again, from liberal to conservative, feminist to non-activist, students shared the

opinion that *The Daily* is not a credible source of information. As Elizabeth told me,

> *I like* The Daily *because it can be quite funny. I think that when reading it you should take*
> *the articles with a grain of salt, however. I don't like knowing even before I read*
> *something that there is a chance that it may not be credible.*

Even when students do happen to enjoy reading *The Daily* it is not necessarily because they

believe the newspaper expresses credible opinions or that the newspaper's opinions are reflective

of their audience. Rather, it is a form of entertainment. Although having entertaining pieces for

the campus community to read is important, I find it a bit alarming that a newspaper, which

advertises itself as a reliable source of information for the campus community, is seen as a joke

by most. Some even go so far as Naafil and Rebecca, with Rebecca simply responding, "I hate

The Daily."

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[28] See *The Michigan Daily*'s wesbite for this history. < www.michigandaily.com/>
[29] This name has been taken out to ensure anonymity.

Perhaps even more worrisome is the case of Rose. Rose, as an eighteen-year-old, is a newcomer to the campus community and is still soaking up what it means to be a part of this University. When asked about *The Daily*, she responded,

> *I don't personally read The Michigan Daily, but I guess it's always good to have a school newspaper? I honestly have no idea what to say about the Michigan Daily, I have zero stance on it* [laughs]. *I just don't read it.*

Although she is not staunchly against *The Daily* the way Naafil and Rebecca seem to be, Rose is nonetheless apathetic towards the school newspaper. Rather than at least attempting to engage herself in some sort of campus dialogue, Rose is completely detached from this forum. When I asked her where and through what form students could express their views in a place where their peers could hear them, she replied,

> *I mean, I know that the campus is a very liberal campus and everyone is encouraged to voice their opinions, but I'm not personally sure about how someone may go about doing so. I guess there are these student elections currently going on where people want to make changes and make the campus a better place. I guess there are clubs and organizations people go to in order to bond and share opinions and feel comfortable in how they feel.*

Instead of students reaching out to the macro-level community to express themselves, Rose's response shows me that even as a newcomer to the campus community, she believes that one of the few ways for people to express their opinions and beliefs on this campus community is through a micro-level community.

Moreover, during my interviews I found that many students believed that *because* of the diversity within the campus community, it was difficult for *The Daily* to ever truly be representative of everyone. Perhaps this is reflective of Rachel's opinion about *The Daily*. During our interview she told me that,

> *Lots of people have different views…with no predominant opinion. I think this is why their editorial just doesn't really matter. I really don't know who is on the editorial board, and why their opinions matter* [or] *how in touch they are with the student body.*

While Rachel cited the editorials as never having anything important to say to the overall community, during my interview with Isabel she told me that, "The paper seems really conservative." Is it because of their seemingly conservative stance, or is it because of this diversity on campus that makes it had for both the campus community and *The Daily* to connect to one another? Or is it because *The Daily* has set precedence where many students feel that they cannot trust what the newspaper publishes?[30]

With these interviews, I believe it is evident that at least with this group of students that there is a consensus that there is no truly unified forum for students with diverse opinions to vocalize their concerns, beliefs, and needs. Even when there is an attempt to create a forum like *The Daily*, students tend to view it as an unreliable source and either treat it as a joke or simply ignore it, mainly because there is unfortunately a history of *The Michigan Daily* printing either plagiarized or factually incorrect articles. Furthermore, even when students do try to reach out to the campus community through vehicles other than *The Daily,* such as the Diag, students often seem apathetic and treat the events and people with indifference. On a macro-level, the students I interviewed told me that they usually do not feel like one, unified community. As Naafil told me,

> *I'm not sure there is any unified voice for the students at all. I don't think the students really think of themselves as a 'polity' as it were. Certainly our student government representatives have next to no popular legitimacy. U of M is the size of a small city and it shows from the lack of camaraderie students feel towards each other. I think students organize themselves into smaller groups in order to feel like they belong, like ethnic pride groups, feminazi groups, frats, etc.*

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[30] Since 2004 the Michigan Daily has been caught plagiarizing three times. During the third incident, *The Michigan Daily* was found to have plagiarized four articles from September 2006 to February 2007. For *The Michigan Daily's* response to this plagiarism: <http://www.michigandaily.com/content/editors-note-preventing-plagiarism>. For *The Harvard Crimson's* response to *The Michigan Daily* plagiarizing one of their articles: <http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=517253>.

Like Naafil, many students told me that they felt that on an average basis, there was very little

"community" feel to the campus. Rather, this community feel came about during special events,

particularly with football games as many like Elizabeth cited.

> *There is a mixture of micro and macro community organizing. I believe the students are united on a macro level in "us versus them" scenarios – i.e. football games or any time the students are wearing maize and blue. However, I think that when it comes down to unifying the students by anything other than that we all go to U of M it is more difficult.*

Even Rose, a student who during these questions tended to take a more positive and upbeat

attitude about this situation, cited football games and events with school spirit as her example of

a unified student body. Moreover, Rose cited the election as an event that unified the campus.

When I asked her if she saw a mixture of the macro and micro-level communities and when she

saw them, she told me that,

> *I think there is definitely a mix of micro and macro on this campus. I see many people with very tight groups of friends and that is definitely a necessity…especially in such a large university that you might feel a little lost, but there are also greater ideas and groups and ideas that unite the campus on a macro level. The election proved a huge macro community on campus – it was incredible seeing so many people unite under one idea and although there were two candidates, I saw so many people in support of Obama. It was unbelievable how one person could unite so many people.*

For Rose, despite the diversity in the campus community, she sees a legitimate unity under

certain circumstances for the campus community. Yet many of the students I interviewed

nonetheless disagreed with her, with Kassidy's response perhaps exemplifying the overall

opinion that "This campus is too diverse to have a unified voice." Rather, the unity that students

felt seemed to be more within their micro-organizations of friends that they had made. Yet

where were these friendships made and how did they impact the students who were a part of

these communities?

Forming Friendships and Micro-Communities in the Campus Community

One of the questions I became interested in was how a person became friends with their fellow

students and with whom they were close to. I believe that how and where people form their

friendships reflects upon how communities in the overall campus community are formed and

maintained. Understanding these communities, I argue, is key to understand how boundaries and

spaces for community dialogue are created and maintained for issues that the campus community

faces, including issues like sexual assault.

When I asked "Do you have a close group or groups of friends that you hang out with on

a regular basis, or do you believe that you really have no micro-level community on this

campus?" every single person responded that they did indeed have a tight knit group or groups of

friends. As Naafil told me,

> *Absolutely I have a close group of friends. The vast majority of the time I hang out with*
> *same eight to ten people.*

Naafil's response is not unique from the responses that I received. In fact, everyone told me that

they relied on a group or a few groups of friends on a regular basis. No one I interviewed felt

that they were without a community of friends or were a floater who did not have a base of

friends to rely upon.

Moreover, there seems to be an overwhelming pattern to where these groups and

communities of friends were made. Communities of friends were made either through living

arrangements or through social organizations. For instance, Rose told me that,

> *I have a few groups of friends on campus that I'm really close to…I met these girls*
> *through my sorority and by living in the hall with these people. I've also made a few*
> *friends through classes, but those friends I might hang out with from time to time I mainly*
> *hang out with people in my sorority or in my hall.*

Everyone I spoke to fell into this pattern. Of the two groups that I interviewed, both SAPAC volunteers and students not affiliated with SAPAC told me that their friends were people that they met in their halls or their social organizations. Very few actually made friends outside of this. In fact, the only people who told me that they met their close group of friends from class were Kassidy, Elizabeth, and Joni. However, it should be noted that their situations were distinctive compared to most classes offered for undergraduates at the University. Kassidy told me that she had two groups of close friends where,

> *A lot of these people* [in my close group of friends] *are people who lived in* [my hall]*[31] last year; the guys lived a floor below, and all of my close girl friends were all my neighbors in my hall or across the hall. Some of my other close friends I met through a class…we went to Scotland for two weeks, so it was more than just a classroom experience.*

Here Kassidy even admits that her situation "was more than just a classroom experience" where she was not only attending class with her peers, but also was living and traveling with them, causing her experience to be much more intimate than most classroom experiences.

Elizabeth also told me that she has made a close group of friends from class. However, much like Kassidy she admits that this scenario is unique and not necessarily the classroom experience of every student at the university of Michigan,

> *Because we spend so much time together on a daily basis, the Nursing School became its own small community where I have made a ton of friends.*

The Nursing School in comparison to many of the other undergraduate schools here at the University is relatively small.[32] Moreover, students in the Nursing School not only go to class together but many of them also work together in the University hospital system to gain hands-on experience as part of their required education. This is a small group of students with similar interests who are constantly together because of their education. This is not necessarily the case

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[31] The name of Kassidy's residential hall has been omitted for anonymity.
[32] According to the School of Nursing, the undergraduate program is made up of 620 students. This is much smaller in comparison to the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, which has 18,482 enrolled undergraduates.

for the majority of undergraduate students at Michigan who are enrolled in the College of

Literature Science and Arts. Furthermore, Elizabeth still fits the pattern that I saw with my

interviews,

> *I met my two best friends at U of M in the two most cliché places on can meet a best friend. The first person I met lived two doors down from me in my dorm freshmen year. The other person I met when I rushed a sorority – she and I didn't end up joining a sorority but we remained friends and our friendship has grown immensely since then…I have also made good friends through SAPAC.*

Here Elizabeth shows that while she has friends in the Nursing School, she also met her friends

in the "most cliché places" – her hall and a sorority that she rushed. By also mentioning

SAPAC, Elizabeth shows that she has made groups of friends by either living with them or by

joining organizations (and in her case a specialized school) where the people that she met all

shared many of her common interests and goals.

  Joni's case is quite similar to Elizabeth's. Because Joni is one of the few female students

in the School of Engineering,[33] Joni has also developed meaningful friendships with both her

hallmates from the dorms as well as a group of girls in the School of Engineering.

> *I met my two groups of closest friends in two places. The first group which I chose I to live with for several years and consider many of them family, I met in the dorms my first or second year of college. After living in close quarters with those people I felt I grew very to close to them. The second group of people I met through classes in engineering. I found a group of people who had similar work ethics to mine and stayed with a small group of mainly girls through college.*

Like Elizabeth, Joni's friends from class are a unique compared to most experiences here at the

University. The School of Engineering is a small college situated apart from the rest of the

University on its own campus, North Campus. Furthermore, as a woman in this college, Joni is

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[33] Although not quite as small as the School of Nursing, the College of Engineering is still rather small with 5,120 undergraduates currently enrolled in it. Furthermore, the College of Engineering is a notoriously male-majority College. In 1995, for example, in response to the fact that only 5% of the faculty and 11% of the doctoral students were female, the College of Engineering began the program Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) to address the needs of the small minority of women in the College and to emphasize a need to the administration to bring more women into this College. For more information, visit the WISE website, <http://www.engin.umich.edu/wie/> or go to <http://www.ns.umich.edu/htdocs/releases/story.php?id=872>.

one of a tiny minority: with such small numbers the feeling of camaraderie amongst the female

students seems to be strong and cohesive.

Elizabeth is an interesting case because she not only made friends with her hallmates and

students in special classroom circumstances, but also, Elizabeth developed a community of

friends within SAPAC.   As if to reflect this pattern, many SAPAC volunteers told me that they

included SAPAC volunteers in their communities of friends. Rebecca's response particularly

caught my attention:

> *I do have a close group of friends that I hang out with on a regular basis. In fact, I would
> say that I have two separate, but close groups of friends who I hang out with…One of my
> close groups of friends is from SAPAC. Of the people I have met while being at college,
> my best friends are in SAPAC. My other close group of friends is my roommates, two of
> whom I have known since high school. Through them, I have created new friends with
> other people in the Michigan Community.*

Rebecca felt that she had two very distinctive groups of friends between SAPAC and her friends

outside of SAPAC. Although not entirely like my own situation, it nonetheless struck me that a

SAPAC volunteer noticed the distinction between her "separate" groups of friends. Indeed, the

word "separate" could imply the very real problem that her micro-communities do not spend

time together or exchange ideas with one another.

Even Rose and Naafil, while not members of SAPAC, both cited different clubs and

organizations as places where they met their friends. For Rose, this was her sorority. For Naafil,

when he listed the various places he met his friends, he referred to a university club he was a

member of. Although Naafil's group of friends in particular are not necessarily all from his hall

or all from his club, all of the people he spends time with on a regular basis seem to be

interconnected to each other, where he met people through friends of friends and the like.

I believe that all of these interviews parallel an ongoing cycle that nearly every member

in the campus community experiences. Students usually enter the university in their freshmen or

sophomore year and engage with students whom they live with and with whom they share

similar interests with them. Through these groups of friends students are able to create their own

community that they feel connected to and look to for advice. Recall that during Joni's interview

she stated that,

> *The first group which I chose I to live with for several years and consider many of them*
> *family, I met in the dorms my first or second year of college. After living in close quarters*
> *with those people I felt I grew very to close to them.*

This group of friends was not just Joni's friends – they were her "family." I think that choosing

to use the word "family" is an important sign to how Joni views her community of friends.

While people differ with how open they are or how close they become to others, I do think that

there is a chance in college where people become extraordinarily close to their friends. I know

that while growing up, my father's closest friends were his classmates from West Point.

Although the United States Military Academy is very different from the University of Michigan,

I nevertheless believe that there are key parallels here. Students who survive the military

academies are united by their mission, small size, as well as through the tough and rigorous

training that they undergo. While the University of Michigan is nowhere near this extreme,

situations like Joni's and Elizabeth's small group of friends who are united in small, cohesive

colleges are similar to the academies in that everyone in, say the School of Nursing, for instance,

are all dedicated to this certain field and mission. Furthermore, because many students like the

volunteers at SAPAC are united by the SAPAC mission that at times can be quite difficult in an

often-combative campus, this shared experience also causes a sort of camaraderie that the

academies have. Finally, through the micro-community of friends that students make, by relying

on these small groups and even going so far as to live with them like Joni for her entire time at

college, these groups of friends become tightly knit due to their proximity and shared

experiences. It is within these close groups of friends that students at the University of Michigan seem to develop very close and life-changing bonds with people whom they rely upon for their duration of their college experience, and perhaps like my father, for the duration of their life.

Despite these close, oftentimes familial relationships, how do these friends influence one another? How do these friendships help shape the boundaries and opinions held within the spaces that the boundaries create for those within a specific micro-community here at Michigan? For instance, many research studies on the role of male peer support[34] have found that men who abuse women are often in friends with others who provide resources to these abusive men. As Schwartz and DeKeseredy write, "These resources (such as verbal and emotional support for engaging in woman abuse) may both encourage and legitimate the abuse of current or former intimate female partners," (1997: 32). Furthermore, E.J. Kanin (1957), perhaps the first North American sociologist to tackle how "(all-male) groups make sexual abuse in courtship legitimate to their members" (32) found that men who were abusive tended to make friends who were similarly abusive and likeminded during their college years.

Within my own interviews, I found that this male-peer support model did not exist in many of the friendships. However, the students I interviewed tended to be in either mixed-gendered communities of friends or were friends with all girls. Because of the limitations in my interviews, I do not know if the contentions made by so many like Schwartz and DeKeseredy are valid. However, while they may not necessarily be reflective of my own findings or the context

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[34] The male-peer support model, as argued by Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1997) and in relation to various social support theories, contends that in male-and-male social interactions, specific behaviors will be reinforced through social support. The model that they have developed attempts to explain how the various factors (such as relationship stress, familial and courtship patriarchy, alcohol consumption, etc) play roles within social groups where men seek their abusive behavior to be recognized as valid and just by other male members within their groups. In their argument, the crucial point "is that the resources provided by male colleagues may under certain conditions encourage and justify the physical, psychological, and sexual abuse of women" (1997: 44-53).

of such findings, they are nonetheless important background information to understanding what I was told during my interviews with these students.

Joni's interviews were particularly insightful here. As a member of a community of friends who were of mixed genders, when I asked Joni "Do you believe that your group or groups of friends share a common set of beliefs? Or do all of you differ in your opinions?" she replied,

> *I believe that we have a common set of beliefs in the sense that we are loyal to each other and the other people we care about. My closer group of friends wouldn't hesitate to help their family or friends who were in need, they're generally – I am about to use a terribly vague generality – good people. However each of us is independent and have our own belief system of how to handle any situation.*

In many of the interviews I conducted, people shared similar sentiments. Even Rachel, an ardent feminist who has a close group of friends within her feminist community told me that their "opinions often differ." This is fact reflective of the members within SAPAC, which is explored later in Chapter Three. For now, however, it is enough to note that while friends tend to be close – even going so far as to say that they are a "family" – the people within these friendships nonetheless maintain their own "independent" identity.

Despite these separate identities, I did, however, find that students *do* influence each other, albeit in more indirect ways. For instance, when I asked Joni,

> *Do you talk about these beliefs, opinions, and ideas with your friends? If so, do you think there is an open dialogue where people feel comfortable expressing themselves? Have you ever noticed a time where people changed their opinions or behaviors because of something someone in your group of friends talked about?*

She replied,

> *I feel that my friends do have a fairly open communication about anything we want to share. I can't say that I have ever noticed anyone ever drastically change their stance on an issue due to conversations we've had. People might have become more aware of the other side of a particular issue but I can't think of a time where they pulled a 180. I think they may have simply been more tolerant.*

Although no one changes drastically or "pull[ed] a 180," after an open dialogue with their

friends, Joni's interview indicates that within her group of friends people become "more aware"

and become "more tolerant" to the different views and opinions that their friends have. The

simple creation of an awareness of a variety of issues that breeds more tolerance within a

community is an important step. People may not agree with one another on everything, but if

they learn to respect other people's opinions, it creates a space where, while the boundaries are

stable, the boundaries nonetheless have a fluidity that creates a respectful and tolerant dialogue.

Furthermore, During Rachel's interview, when asked the same question, she told me that,

> *Yes, I have seen people change their beliefs and behaviors because of something someone said.*

These responses reflect the many scenes that people talked to me about during their interviews.

For instance, Rose told me that she "personally get[s] really offended by the gay and retarded

comments" when people misuse the word "retarded" in the phrase, "That's so retarded" or the

word "gay" in a similar vein. She told me that she often told her friends not to use "gay" or

"retarded" in offensive contexts and that in many cases, her friends stopped because they

realized how much they affected her. Another example is the word "rape" with Rebecca, a

SAPAC volunteer.   During our interview she told me,

> *My friends don't say, "That test raped me" anymore. And if someone else says it, my roommate says, "You know, sexual assault's really not a joke" and I'm so proud of her, because that's such a big step and that's something anyone can do.*

As reflected in Rebecca's comment, by merely changing the language of people, such as using

the phrase, "That test raped me" or "That's so gay," friends are able to change the behaviors of

their friends. Although these are not enormous, earth-shattering changes, by allowing for an

open dialogue amongst their friends, the students I interviewed showed a community that was

creating a space for a dialogue that while despite the differences of the many people involved, was a tolerant, open space. Furthermore, this space through the easy and open communication amongst friends did allow for small steps in the direction of change because of friends becoming aware of how certain actions and words affected the members in their community. Although standard mores are never set up, a tolerance and awareness that dictates what is appropriate and what is not is nonetheless set up out of respect for those in their micro-communities.

Micro-Community Responses to External Dialogue and SAPAC

While these micro-communities allow for people to feel comfortable to discuss their opinions and beliefs with their friends, because there is no established forum for people to discuss their opinion on the macro-level at the university, it is difficult for these micro-communities to come together. Communities on the micro-level may increase the awareness and tolerance of their members, but there is no way for these communities to come together. Although there are forums on the micro-levels at the University, as Rachel told me,

> *There are forums (plural). I think students have to do some navigating in order to discover these forums.*

A difficult situation then arises from this pattern. While students have a forum that, as the great Arthur Miller wrote, is a "testing ground" for all their "prejudices…believes and…ignorance," these forums are nonetheless limited in their scope because they tend to be within their micro-communities. What is discussed within these communities could in fact be limited. For instance, before I joined SAPAC my group of friends from my hall never once discussed sexual violence. It simply wasn't something that we talked about on any open level. It was only until I joined SAPAC and brought it up that people began to talk about sexual violence. Because of

this, what a person learns on a micro-level may in fact be limited in nature and not as complete as it could be if communities interacted together.

This is in fact reflective of what many in SAPAC told me. Throughout the course of my interviews SAPAC volunteers told me that one of the reasons why they think they encountered so much hostility from students when they conducted workshops or tabled events about SAPAC was because sexual violence just isn't something that everyone talks about, either openly or on a daily basis. During our interview Rebecca made a good point:

> *It's* [sexual assault] *so private. What it is – we have this problem a lot in workshops where with women, we often get a lot more resistance from a group of women than we do by men. Because with a group of women, they want to keep it very much as the other, like this can never happen to me because I wouldn't put myself in this position, it can only happen to that person. It's such a scary idea that people don't want to have to think about it. People want to keep it private as possible, which is why what we're doing is so amazing, because we're talking about it and we're bringing it out to talk about because that's how we're going to make it okay for survivors to speak out and make it unacceptable for people to perpetrate this violence.*

For many the easiest way to avoid an issue is by not talking about it. Through the silence it is easier for many to cope. After all, with silence it can often be interpreted that something simply doesn't exist. I'll never forget last Christmas when my grandfather asked me why I would want to conduct my research on the topic of sexual violence, because as he told me, "It's too hard to talk about. Why would you want to talk about it when it's easier to not think about it?" I'm hesitant to say that my grandfather's opinion is that different from many. In fact, this is something that I continue to hear from the people in my life. Most people simply don't talk about this subject, and it is easy to understand why. With the historical stigma against it, the shame that is often involved with anyone who survived, and the fact that most people including myself would rather talk about sports or the latest gossip makes sexual assault the last conversation anyone wants on the table.

The outcome of this silence in micro-communities surrounding sexual assault and the lack of an open forum for the student voice could in fact be the reason why so many people are unfamiliar with SAPAC. This was something that not only volunteers complained about to me but was also something that became clearly evident throughout my interviews with non-SAPAC students. From Ava who told me that,

> *A lot of times when I introduce myself and people ask me what clubs or groups I'm in I'll say SAPAC and they'll say, "What is SAPAC? What does that stand for?" I feel like we're this huge organization and yet I still get "What's SAPAC?"*

To Nikita, who noted,

> *Most of the campus doesn't know much about SAPAC minus the forced freshmen workshops, and it just seems like a pretty ignored part of the campus resources. Like for instance, most people know what CAPS is and even the legal student services office, but SAPAC itself doesn't seem to have as big a presence.*

A major problem that SAPAC seems has yet to combat is that many students are simply unaware of SAPAC as a resource on campus. Nikita, who has been a volunteer for four years, told me that she noticed this has been a problem since she started at SAPAC. To test this out, in my interviews I asked people what they knew about SAPAC, where SAPAC was located, and asked the same for CAPS.[35]

The results are quite fascinating. No one knew where SAPAC was located – not even the two feminists knew where SAPAC was located. Most guessed that it would either be in the Student Activities Building or Student Union. However, while no one knew where SAPAC was, a few did know where either CAPS or the LBGT office was located. For instance, during my interview with Maya:

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[35] CAPS is the University of Michigan's Counseling and Psychological Services. Located in Room 3100 of the Michigan Union, any student currently enrolled at Michigan can utilize its services.

Me: Where's SAPAC located?

Maya: No clue.

Me: Where's CAPS located?

Maya: In the Union.

Me: Where's the LBGT office located?

Maya: In the Union – third floor, right?

While it is disturbing that many of the students had absolutely no idea where many of the student resources were, it is interesting that SAPAC was a resource that no one knew where to find. Even students who were active feminists like Maya only knew where the CAPS or LBGT Office were located.

Furthermore, students had an incredibly hard time trying to explain what SAPAC is. The two self-proclaimed feminists in the group, Maya and Rachel, both knew what SAPAC's job was and could explain it well. As Maya told me, the main message of SAPAC is,

> *To tell women that there's a safe place for them and that they can talk about their problems in a safe environment*

However, for the majority of the students who were not activists, explaining what SAPAC's role was in the campus community was a difficult question for many to answer. For instance, when I asked Naafil, "Do you know what SAPAC does?" he replied with,

> *Umm, tells people not to sexually harass their fellow classmates.*

Although SAPAC does focus on sexual harassment, sexual harassment is only one aspect to the overall mission of SAPAC's goal to eradicate sexual violence. The fact that Naafil did not know the full scope of SAPAC's work is troubling. Naafil did not go to his SAPAC workshop because, as he told me while laughing, "I didn't give a shit," showing that it was a dialogue that

he was not interested in. When I asked him what SAPAC was doing wrong with their attempt to

reach out to students like him, Naafil told me,

> *I think they don't have the brains to reach out. Like, no amount of resources is going to make the government's anti-drug campaign reach anyone. I mean they could blanket the airwaves with that stuff and no one's going to pay any attention to it. I think it's kind of that way. And I mean, I don't have any suggestions for a way to make fighting sexual harassment cool, you know. Nothing springs to mind. But as it stands, 90% of guys are going to hear the words, "combating sexual harassment" and will just go, "Whatever, I don't care, I'm going to go play video games." You know?*

Naafil, who during the interview told me that he didn't think sexual assault was a problem at the

University of Michigan because he's never met anyone who has been assaulted, reveals an

important point. Because in his micro-community of friends he has never engaged in a

conversation with someone who has been affected by sexual violence, it doesn't matter to him.

In another example, Rose, who had recently attended her SAPAC workshop, after saying,

"I don't know" told me that,

> *Isn't SAPAC like a resource you go to if you've undergone some kind of – if you need help with some sort of sexual or whatever` problem – like it's another health resource. SAPAC always go in that box: UHS, SAPAC, like different resources you to go for help.*

Although she had gone to the SAPAC workshop, even Rose was hesitant to tell me what she

thought SAPAC did. Moreover, later during the interview she admitted that the information she

remembered about SAPAC was from a test that she had to take to rush her sorority and was not

from the workshop she attended.

There seems to be a pattern here where macro-level attempts to reach students, such as

through the freshmen workshops, aren't necessarily the way to connect to students. There are

many internal problems with freshmen workshops that might account for part of the problem.

Very few students actually attend their workshop, despite the University declaring that it is

mandatory. In fact, during my interviews I found that only two of the six non-SAPAC students I

interviewed attended their workshop. Admittedly, even I didn't go to my workshop my freshmen year. Although Residential Advisors (RA's) can tell their students that the workshop is mandatory, by housing regulations an RA can do very little to punish a student for not attending a housing event. However, while this might be the case, most students I interviewed told me that either their RA told them that it "wasn't a big deal" or others, such as in the case of Maya, were never even told by their RA that such a workshop existed. There seems to be a problem where many RA's do not take these workshops seriously, which many SAPAC Peer Educators (the PE's), who run the workshops, have complained to me about.

Despite these problems, however, I believe that this information reveals another issue regarding boundaries within the University. Because most forums within the macro-community are either ineffective (exemplified through the disdain for *The Daily*) or non-existent according to most I interviewed, other forms of macro-level attempts to reach out to the community such as with SAPAC often find themselves stuck in this maze of complications. Inter-micro-communication seems to be much more effective within these communities, whereas intra-micro-communication that can reach a macro-level seem to fall short. Communities of students seem more comfortable and willing to discuss issues within their friends, but bringing communities together to discuss them often result in little change, causing this silenced borderland within the University. Rather, small-scale reach out through members of their own community, such as through Rose's sorority, seem to be a way that students retain information. Moreover, because many communities of friends do not necessarily discuss topics like sexual violence, once the topic is breached from an outsider it is often dealt with in either a hostile or apathetic manner. Although it is mere speculation on my part, I believe that Naafil and others like him would respond more actively if a friend of his would speak on the behalf of SAPAC.

Conclusion

It is within this highly complicated social web that SAPAC finds itself in. With a united macro-level front for the campus community only in regards to school spirit and other uncontroversial issues, creating a macro-level dialogue regarding social change and highly sensitive issues often is treated with hostility or apathy. This hostility and apathy could in fact stem from the lack of not only a united community feel during everyday occasions but also from the lack of a respectable and widely-accepted outlet for student expression in all of its multifaceted diversity. As a way to cope without these forums as well as with the sheer size of the University, many students in the campus community seem to form and rely on tightly knit micro-communities of friends. Although these communities of friends do not necessarily teach students right from wrong or shape their basic opinions, these communities do seem to teach a degree of tolerance and awareness that creates a respectful space for open communication amongst members of their community. However, because there is not a forum where these communities can come together to share opinions and ideas, each community of friends have the possibility of having a limited dialogue on various issues. This could be one of the reasons why SAPAC itself seems to be such a mystery to so many students on campus.

Yet SAPAC is an institution that is not supposed to be shrouded in mystery. In order for SAPAC and its message to be effective, SAPAC needs a campus where students at least have a basic idea of what SAPAC does. However, SAPAC is by no means simple in comparison to the campus community. In fact, the complexity of the campus community reflects the rather complicated nature of SAPAC. Although student volunteers at SAPAC are dedicated to its mission, each volunteer has their own ideas about how the mission ought to be implemented and

why. These diverse opinions in SAPAC, as we shall see, further complicates the space for

dialogue on campus regarding sexual violence by the placement and maintenance of social and

personal boundaries that are even in conflict at SAPAC.

Chapter Three   SAPAC: Friendships, Feminisms, and the Formation of Boundaries

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
        -Margaret Mead

The Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center, SAPAC, is dedicated to educate the

campus community about sexual violence and to help those who have been affected by it.

Through an ideology based on the tenants of third and second wave feminism, many SAPAC

volunteers have told me that their ultimate goal is to create a rape-free society. While to many

this may seem a bit idealistic and naïve, the volunteers at SAPAC are, in the words of Margaret

Mead, "a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens," who are determined to "change the

world." With each volunteer undergoing over 40 hours of training the student volunteers at

SAPAC commit an unusually large amount of time to a single organization, due to their passion,

conviction, and stubborn perseverance.

        Yet SAPAC as an organization is multifaceted and diverse: while volunteers who work

for SAPAC share common interests and goals, views on how these goals ought to be

implemented can differ widely. Although SAPAC volunteers share a common language through

which SAPAC attempts to change the social landscape and dialogue that the campus community

lives in and helps form, there are nonetheless heated internal debates about the very boundaries

that SAPAC attempts to create and maintain. SAPAC as an organization is based on identity

politics, which is "discourse and social activism grounded in gender, race, class, religion, sexual

orientation, nationality, or other fixed, often singular identities," (Bystydzienski and Schacht,

2001: 3). Due to its very nature, SAPAC often faces many challenges that come with

organizations that focus on identity politics. As Bystydzienski and Schacht write, there are many limitations that single identity politics can cause:

> While the desire to forge a single, unifying identity in order to challenge oppressive conditions has strong appeal and is an important strategy at the inception of a social movement, there are significant problems and omissions in advocating and conceptualizing collective action in this way. The obvious is the reality that people have more than once social group characteristic (2001: 4).

Hailing back to second wave feminist worries that those who are involved in the anti-sexual violence movement are mainly middleclass white women, single-identity politics often have a homogenizing effect on those involved. Yet single-identity politics, like the anti-sexual assault movement, are not always necessarily bad. People who are involved in these organizations often find a source of empowerment by working amongst those who share their opinions. These pros and cons of single-identity politics parallel the problems and outcomes that have developed within SAPAC. Although students at SAPAC often disagree with its methods and placement of boundaries, student volunteers have nonetheless developed a close micro-community of friends who share similar opinions.

By understanding SAPAC as an organization and the legacy that the current volunteers have inherited, I hope to show SAPAC as a complex organization that attempts to create a space for change and a dialogue in a diverse and multifaceted campus community. Furthermore, I believe that the problems within SAPAC revolving around an open dialogue for different opinions regarding the language SAPAC attempts to create and how feminism fits into the anti-sexual assault movement are reflective of the problems that SAPAC faces within the campus community. Through my interviews with volunteers, I hope to explore SAPAC in all of its complexities to see how SAPAC both shapes and reacts to the boundaries that are continuously set in place within the campus community.

The Past and Present of SAPAC

On a chilly afternoon on January 21, 1985, students launched a sit-in at the office of Henry

Johnson, the Vice-President for Student Services at the University of Michigan. The sit-in, a

form of protest that students at the university had mastered since 1966,[36] was intended to address

the safety concerns of women on campus and the need to open a rape crisis center. Today in the

SAPAC office a copy of the original poster that publicized the sit-in now hangs on the "Wall of

Fame" as many of the staff have dubbed it. On the poster is a quotation from Henry Johnson's

interview on January 1985 with *Detroit Metropolitan*:

> Rape is an issue like Alzheimer's disease or mental retardation which impacts on a small
> but sizeable population…to discuss sexual assault is to send a message to your potential
> students…that it is an unsafe campus.

Meant to rile up students across the campus, this poster helped initiate a sit-in that would attempt

to change the cultural landscape of the University and the lives of the students that make up the

campus community. Beneath Henry Johnson's remark, students challenged the campus

community by asking for their help and support with, "Let's tell the administration that it's time

they take responsibility for the safety of their women students."

Four months after the sit-in University executive officers responded to the student's

demands with the approval of $75,000 for the initiation of an anti-assault program. This amount

of money, which was quite large in comparison to similar universities,[37] reveals that University's

commitment to help alleviate concerns over the safety and health of students, faculty, and staff.

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[36] In 1966 the first set of university-wide sit-ins lead by both students and faculty began, expressing their opposition
to the Vietnam War. These sit-ins would lead to what was later coined as a "teach-in" where the sit-in was lead by
faculty and student leaders discussing the issues at stake.

[37] For instance, Michigan State University's Sexual Assault Program, while at first funded by the University also
had to seek out external funding for their program in the beginning. This is something that SAPAC did not have to
worry about with a lump sum of $75,000 for its beginning year.

One year later in February of 1986 The Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center

(SAPAC) opened, giving it, as SAPAC likes to tell the University community, the prestige of

being one of the first university supported RCC's on a college campus in the United States.[38]

Under the direction of Julie Steiner, SAPAC became a source for counseling, education, and

information to assault survivors, faculty and staff, and the campus community. Originally

located in room 3100 of the Michigan Union, SAPAC quickly grew to offer services that are

now considered to be a part of the natural framework of student living at the University of

Michigan. In 1987 SAPAC implemented SAFEWALK, the University's free nighttime walking

service and began training both campus security and housing staff on sexual assault as well as

starting the peer education volunteer program. By 1988 the first 24-hour crisis line for the

university was launched by SAPAC, and in 1990, SAPAC moved from 3100 Michigan Union to

the first floor of Winchell House in West Quad. In 1994, SAPAC helped coordinate with the

university to write the first campus sexual assault policy where departmental protocols were

developed. Throughout the years SAPAC grew to have workshops for university students,

advocates, and student volunteer groups that increased its activism efforts around campus

providing relief and support for faculty, staff, and students affiliated with the university.

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[38] Ironically enough, while SAPAC staff tells me this they have yet to provide me with any sort of accurate timeline of University RCC's and other resource center formation countrywide. After months of rather fruitless research, I have found that very little is known about the historical timeline of University and College RCC's. I am of the opinion that while this research is necessary and needs to be undertaken, I simply do not have the time to research this topic more in depth at this specific time. I believe that this is another example of the silent dialogue amongst campus RCCs and campus resources. However, it should be noted that although the University of Michigan tends to have a progressive reputation for the state of Michigan, it was not the first public university in this state to found a sexual assault program on campus. In fact, Michigan State University founded its Sexual Assault Program five years earlier during the 1979-1980 school year. Although it may be shocking to many (including myself) that Michigan State could in fact "beat" the University of Michigan (at least in my eyes that is at first how it looks), one explanation could be the fact that the city of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County offered many resources to survivors of sexual violence for many years before the creation of SAPAC. Could SAPAC's late entry be a result of the already active anti-sexual violence movement in Ann Arbor?

Yet this process wasn't entirely smooth and without its own bumps in the road. Around the ten-year anniversary of SAPAC in February of 1996, for instance, University of Michigan students greeted their morning with the headline in *The Daily*, "Accusations Slam SAPAC." During this time, Janelle White, a student leader in the Peer Educator group (the PE's), was dismissed from her position with accusations of breaching her client confidentiality pledge. This resulted in a PE-Walk Out where many of the volunteers rejected the authority of professional staff. In 2004 when SAPAC announced various changes that they were making internally, once again SAPAC headlined *The Daily* in their Viewpoint section with, "Removal of survivor services at SAPAC harms survivors." SAPAC had announced that the two counselors at SAPAC would move to the CAPS office and that the 24 hours crisis line would now be a part of Safehouse Women's Shelter. Numerous articles during this February-March period of 2004 show that there was a heated debate both within SAPAC as well as the university community, with articles such as "SAPAC volunteers defend new changes*"* often making the headlines. While sometime within 2004 SAPAC eventually switched the crisis line back to SAPAC and had professional staff in charge of the crisis line (whereas before student volunteers were often manning the lines), the counselors nonetheless stayed at CAPS.

Nearly twenty-four years after it's conception, SAPAC is still placed in a rather contentious position. Now located in an office space above the restaurant Sushi.com on North University Street,[39] SAPAC has undergone many changes and yet still, at it's heart, is doing what it always has done. Currently headed by Joanna Soet, SAPAC professional staff is made up of six highly dedicated women who focus on advocacy, crisis intervention, education, and training. Three School of Social Work interns who help with much of the administrative work assist the

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[39] Please see Appendix B

staff. Professional staff is also in charge of the 24-hour crisis line specifically for students, faculty, and staff at the University of Michigan.

Yet the center of SAPAC – the SAPAC that I know – is the SAPAC of the student volunteers. As volunteers, SAPAC relies on these students to properly inform the campus community and spread the message about what SAPAC does. They are the cheerleaders and soldiers, dutifully promoting SAPAC's services and educating the student public. Every student who volunteers for SAPAC undergoes 40 hours of training in order to fully understand basic SAPAC ideology and help assimilate them into the SAPAC community.[40] The idea behind the training is that SAPAC volunteers will walk away with a solid conceptual ground that every volunteer will be able to easily articulate and agree upon, not only giving the SAPAC community a cohesive, unified front but also allowing for SAPAC to place established boundaries within the campus community by their own peers. Rather than having University staff help form these boundaries, SAPAC relies on members of the very campus community they are trying to educate and change to initiate this change.

SAPAC Training

SAPAC training focuses on the basic definitions of sexual assault and consent to issues such as dating and domestic violence, sexual harassment, stalking, empathy, the idea of intersectionality, and sexual violence in the LBGT and minority communities. These sessions come in a variety of forms ranging from lectures, workshops, films, hands on activities, to community building exercises. The main purpose of training is to inform volunteers of the issues they will be dealing

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[40] This 40 hour training distinguishes SAPAC from many other student organizations in the fact that 40 hours is an incredibly large amount of time to ask people to dedicate to an organization. It can be likened to such initiations as fall and winter "rush" for sorority and fraternity pledges. However, with no distinctive initiation process (once the 40 hours of training has been completed anyone can become a SAPAC volunteer), SAPAC is one of the few campus organizations to ask its members to train for such a period of time.

with and to indoctrinate them into SAPAC ideology. Training happens twice a year: once in the beginning of the fall semester and once in the beginning of the winter semester. All volunteers must go through this training twice, giving each member who has been a volunteer at SAPAC for more than two semesters at least 80 hours of training and education under their belt. Professional staff, interns, student leaders, and leaders from other organizations that work with SAPAC conduct training. For instance, training every semester includes a presentation from the SPECTRUM Center[41] on sexual violence in the LBGT community.

Throughout my interviews with SAPAC volunteers I asked them how they responded to their first experience with SAPAC training. Personally, I remember training as an eye-opening event: concepts and ideas that I had never even thought of were suddenly brought to my attention, causing me to change my ideological framework that I had operated under for over 20 years. The volunteers whom I met I quickly dubbed as "SAPAC Superheroes" and "SAPAC Superstars" because of their open minds and for the breadth of their knowledge. It was important for me during interviews to see if volunteers felt that their beliefs had changed or were reaffirmed during the training. I expected most to respond that they had undergone experiences similar to mine – and indeed, a few had. Elizabeth, Jack, Julia, and Isabel all expressed similar sentiments as I had felt. As Jack told me," I think I was so unfamiliar with maybe the lexicon of sexual assault and studying it."

Yet while these ideas were new and "unfamiliar," this "lexicon" nonetheless fit in with many students' opinions, such as Julia and Isabel, for instance. During our interview, Isabel recalled that,

> *I learned a lot. I will say that sexual assault – the issues surrounding sexual assault – were really new to me and I had never learned about them. But at the same time*

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[41] The Spectrum Center is the Office of LGBT Affairs at the University of Michigan. This center is specifically for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, faculty, and staff.

everything I learned fit in very well with my mindset and previous opinions, but it was very new.

Isabel's comment perhaps best exemplifies the many positions of the students: while the concepts SAPAC taught them were new and intriguing, they nonetheless made sense to the volunteers due to previous experiences and thoughts that they had. However, it ought to be noted that while much of what SAPAC told them made sense to them, many definitions and terms they sometimes struggle and disagree with, as it will be shown later in this chapter.

Others such as Ava, Kassidy, and Rebecca told me that while training had been a breath of fresh air, they were already aware of most of the information and that they strongly agreed with it. For instance, Rebecca told me that with training,

They've [beliefs on sexual assault] *absolutely all if not been made reaffirmed have been made stronger. Certain things that were less clear in high school because they were ambiguous have really been hammered home.*

As it should be noted, Rebecca, Ava, and Kassidy all went through extensive training in other organizations before they joined SAPAC. For instance, Rebecca was a volunteer for Safehouse during high school and Ava was not only a Peer Educator at her high school but was also on the high school's Sexual Harassment Council. These volunteers already had an extensive vocabulary regarding the issues surrounding sexual violence under their belt.

Throughout training key terms and phrases that SAPAC relies on are introduced to students. How volunteers respond to these concepts often reflect how they fit into SAPAC ideology. Through this new language, SAPAC is able to build a community of volunteers who, to some degree, have a unified front. This attempt to construct a new language for volunteers stems from second wave feminists who wanted to create a language of empowerment. Many feminist scholars today will argue,

> Women experienced violence via a form of interpersonal communication. Until they could name that violence, nothing could be done about it. By coming together in small groups and developing a vocabulary that could articulate their interests, women were able to take their demands from the counterpublic to the larger public, eventually effecting legal change, giving them grounds on which to contest illegal, not just inappropriate, forms of interpersonal communication (DeFrancisco & Palcezewski 2007: 128-129).

By defining for themselves who they were and what they stood for, women started their own language to give them back a sense of agency in their lives. For instance, prior to the 1970s and legal scholar Catherine MacKinnon's unrelenting push for its recognition, the term *sexual harassment* did not exist despite the existence of the term and its consequences for women. MacKinnon in fact described it as "the first legal wrong to be defined by women (MacKinnon 2005: 111).

For movements like the anti-sexual violence movement that are historically knee-deep in the feminism, inventing and selling a message that both the public and their volunteers can understand and buy into is essential. Over the years SAPAC and other RCC's have developed a standard vocabulary that they depend upon. While much of the vocabulary is now considered a given in most activist quarters, terms nonetheless vary from place to place in part because of the different statutes from state to state. At SAPAC the terms *rape, sexual assault, consent, power and control, rape myths, rape culture, victim, survivor, empathy*, and *proactive by standing*[42] are all important in building a standard and accepted vocabulary in the campus community. This pre-packaged vocabulary of stock terms that SAPAC presents to the volunteers acts as a bridge to the campus community and is critical to the story that SAPAC is trying to tell and to the message that it is trying to sell. By indoctrinating volunteers into these terms during training, I believe SAPAC attempts to create a space and a community where this language is standard – and where this language will reflect the community's beliefs regarding sexual violence. This

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[42] Many of these terms are used throughout my third and fourth chapters. While most will be defined, I will also include a list of working definitions in Appendix A.

cohesive unity as a community after training I believe is reflective in the language that volunteers use, particularly with *rape* and *sexual assault*, and *survivor* and *victim*.

Rape and Sexual Assault

One of the most important components to training is giving volunteers a solid definition of what rape and sexual assault constitutes as. Sexual assault is the legal term for rape. Although rape is included in the offenses that sexual assault encompasses, sexual assault can also include the unwanted touching of intimate parts or some sort of sexual contact. The Michigan Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) Act in 1974 created a ladder of offenses where sexual assault can be placed in one of four levels, where if charged, sexual assault in the first degree is the highest offense and can be punished as severely as life imprisonment, where sexual assault in the fourth degree is punishable by up to two years imprisonment and/or a fine of $500.[43]

As SAPAC defines it, sexual assault is "any form of unwanted sexual contact obtained without consent and/or obtained through the use of force, threat of force, intimidation, or coercion." Because SAPAC helped write the University of Michigan Sexual Assault Policy, this is also the definition that the University abides by. After training, volunteers at SAPAC seem to have a firm grasp of this definition and everyone I interviewed looked and sounded like they felt comfortable with this definition.

Although SAPAC has not officially stated that it prefers to use one term over the other and has never made an announcement to student volunteers to use one term versus the other, SAPAC seems to rely on *sexual assault* as the term it prefers to use when describing sexual violence. Reflecting this trend, between the two terms SAPAC volunteers by an overwhelming majority

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[43] Mich. Comp. Laws ss 750.520a-750.520I. Please see Appendix C.

preferred to use the term sexual assault. Although during my interviews I purposely used the

two terms interchangeably and often relied on the term *sexual violence,* the volunteers

nonetheless seemed to stick to *sexual assault* during their discussion with me. In fact many

volunteers like Ava, Rebecca, and Nikita *only* used the word *sexual assault,* while a few like

Jack or Isabel used both but mainly relied on the term *sexual assault*. Many volunteers argued

that *sexual assault* was a more technical term and that this is why they preferred to use it. As

Elizabeth told me,

> *I use sexual assault more, I think. At least – we talk about using the word "rape" in jokes and stuff like that and how it just diminishes the value of the word and makes the act sound like it's no big deal – and I feel that sexual assault sounds like more of a broad term to describe many events as opposed to rape.*

Yet when pressed further, she went on to say,

> *I think that if someone is describing their own experiences, rape can have a more powerful impact, but I think that when describing other people's experiences I use sexual assault because it's easier to talk about using that word I think. And it's not as personal – and that's what makes it easier.*

These sentiments seemed to be a commonality amongst the group. While *rape* was seen as more

"brutal," "violent," and "wrong," as Kassidy put it, *sexual assault* could be used to describe "a

whole range of things." Kassidy's sentiments reflect Elizabeth's dead on, despite the fact that

these two are very different in their opinions with how SAPAC ought to work and stand for.[44]

Whereas Kassidy considers herself to be an activist, Elizabeth, as she told me, "Stay[s] out of all

political discussion altogether," even though she did identify herself as a Republican throughout

the interview. Although *rape* seemed to bring about a more graphic image and strong response

from the volunteers, *sexual assault* was preferred for its ease and accessibility.[45]

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[44] This will be investigated at length later in the chapter.

[45] Joan McGregor argues that, "The re-labeling of rape as 'sexual assault' may assume a position in the debate as to whether rape should be considered as a crime of sexual desire or violence," (McGregor 2005: 38). The movement to rely on *sexual assault* as the term of choice was grounded in both legality and in ideology. Feminist legal reformers

Furthermore, it ought to be noted that those who had volunteered at SAPAC longer were more unified in their use of *sexual assault*. Rebecca, who has spent six semesters as a volunteer (three full years) and Nikita a senior, who has been in SAPAC since the beginning of her freshmen year were the same in the fact that they both only used the term *sexual assault* (aside from such terms as *rape culture* and *rape myths* which use the term *rape*). This differs from Jack and Kassidy, who have both been members of SAPAC for only a semester. While Jack used *sexual assault* more than he did *rape*, *rape* was nonetheless a word that he relied on at various points in his interview. Kassidy, when asked if she preferred one term or the other, replied, "I use sexual assault" yet when going through her interview, without prompt (my questions in fact used the term that she did not use), the terms *sexual assault* and *rape* tied: she used them twice. Rather, she relied on the term *sexual violence* much more than any other phrase.

What I find interesting here is that within this SAPAC community of volunteers there tends to be a common vocabulary. With training these terms like *sexual assault* and *rape* are used as tools help form a common community that shares a common language. By giving all volunteers a sense of how a SAPAC volunteer should talk, SAPAC helps to form the image of the ideal volunteer. Moreover, by forming a SAPAC language that all volunteers employ, SAPAC helps to spread its message in a convenient, pre-packaged vocabulary that is then presented to the campus community. With this language, SAPAC volunteers help attempt to maintain and build a dialogue around the issue of sexual assault. By employing a term that hails the American legal system, SAPAC in a way aligns itself with a professional and culturally

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wished to take away the old legal baggage of "resistance and proof" that the term *rape* carried in common law by switching to *sexual assault*. Yet the question remains: is sexual assault the term that SAPAC ought to use when reaching out to the campus community? While it is broad in breadth and easy to use, it nonetheless is a bit lacking both in its shock value as well as what sorts of images it conjures up. Many volunteers have complained that because sexual assault is seen as a personal issue that most don't want to interfere with, it is neither openly discussed nor actively supported by most in the campus community. Although *rape* is considered to be a personal term, perhaps this could personalize the issue a bit more and make it more accessible for students to understand and empathize with.

accepted critique. Through *sexual assault* rather than *rape*, SAPAC could perhaps be establishing its legitimacy through a connection with the concepts of justice and the law. SAPAC volunteers attempt to create through this language a space where such a dialogue can occur, giving the dialogue its specific contours and shape. This can also be exemplified with the terms *survivor* and *victim*.

Survivor and Victim

During SAPAC training, what to call a person who has been sexually assaulted is also introduced to volunteers. The term used to describe a person who has been raped has been a topic of debate and concern for many over the years. While the American court system uses the term *victim*, many argued for the term *survivor* because it seemed to give women who survived such a brutal attack a sense of agency (e.g., Kelly, 1988; Stanko, 1985). Because of the empowerment that many activists argued survivor gave to women, the anti-sexual violence movement actively adopted this as a standard term.

SAPAC is in line with the activist movement's use of *survivor*. It is a term that is reiterated time and time again, particularly during training and at SAPAC meetings. Overwhelmingly, the volunteers I interviewed used the term *survivor*, although many told me that they never thought of using this word before training, such as Ava.

> *Prior to SAPAC I would never have considered a sexual assault "survivor" – I would have always said "victim." But now that I hear survivor I like that so much better but it's so hard to train yourself not to say victim. I still say victim a lot and I'm always like, "Oh no, survivor!" Because I like that word so much better – it just has so many better connotations.*

These connotations, as Ava would later explain to me, fall in line with much of what feminists have argued for.

> *Victim kind of takes the power out of the person who has had this horrible thing done to them. It takes more power away from them, and so much power's already being taken away from them in the situation that survivor kind of gives some of that power back. It has more positive –you feel more positive when you say survivor than saying victim.*

Despite this near consensus, however, there does seem to be an element of time involved with those who use the term. For instance, while after a year of volunteering for SAPAC, Ava nonetheless sometimes catches herself using *victim*. I think this also can be illustrated by the words chosen by Jack and Kassidy who have both been volunteers at SAPAC for only one semester. Throughout his interview Jack would often use the phrase *victim or survivor*, as if he were trying to placate both worlds that he knew – SAPAC and his life and perceptions before SAPAC (which I believe is reiterated by Ava's comments). Kassidy, on the other hand, told me that,

> *I don't really like one term more than the other, but I still think I would say victim because something wrong has happened to them.*

Both of these volunteers are strikingly different from the rest of the volunteers I interviewed. While Kassidy's choice to use *victim* over *survivor* could perhaps be a minor form of protest against the SAPAC language, I do believe that for Kassidy it is just a matter of time. Kassidy, who is very much a pro-SAPAC volunteer has never expressed disagreement with the organization in both her interview with me as well as her time volunteering for SAPAC. I think that this may be a matter of not fully being assimilated into the standard SAPAC vocabulary, particularly since our interview was conducted shortly after her training. While many SAPAC volunteers often question SAPAC's methods and reasons, everyone who actively argues with SAPAC nonetheless relied on *survivor* when describing a person who has been assaulted. Although I do believe that there is dissent within the volunteer base regarding the SAPAC language and their language is reflective of this (as it will be explored later in this chapter), even

amongst these volunteers there is a consensus with *survivor*. I believe that Kassidy and Jack are reflective of the fact that they have only recently begun to work with SAPAC and think in terms of SAPAC's boundaries and ideas.

By preferring *survivor* over *victim* SAPAC, I believe, attempts to build an image of the person who is assaulted and allows for a form of empowerment aligned with second and third wave feminist tenants. Through its endeavors to give a woman who has been assaulted power through the language, SAPAC tries to construct a social space where women who are assaulted are not seen as helpless and weak. Rather, by employing terms that reflect power and strength, SAPAC creates the image of a woman who demands for her agency and personhood, much like second and third wave feminism do. Furthermore, to outsiders who are not familiar with the anti-sexual violence movement – such as many students in the campus community – the term *survivor* conjures up an image of a person who has endured and overcome great hardship. For instance, although many students do not necessarily think that they know *sexual assault survivors*, almost anyone can name a *cancer survivor* (or someone who they hope will be a cancer *survivor* instead of *victim*). Either way, the term *survivor* often has a medical connotation to it that also brings about feelings and thoughts of hope, perseverance, and strength. With all volunteers using *survivor* as their word of choice for a person who has been sexually assaulted, SAPAC has a uniform community that wishes to actively address sexual assault. This uniformity in SAPAC vocabulary is present throughout all three volunteer groups.

The Volunteer Groups

Once training is nearly done, students choose which volunteer group they would like to be placed into. These volunteers groups are the Peer Educators, the Networking, Publicity and Activism

Group, and the Men's Activism Group. Each volunteer group is led by two student leaders

called Co-Cords who are paid by SAPAC staff and who are the bridge for communication

between professional staff and student volunteers.

The Peer Education Program, better known by those in SAPAC as PE's, was the very

first student volunteer group within SAPAC. "The Peer Education Program is a student-based

SAPAC volunteer program that works to educate the campus community on the issues of sexual

violence"[46] and focus on providing workshops for groups of all sizes. Workshops can be

facilitated for any student organization on campus: from individual sororities and fraternities to

classes and student organizations, anyone can request a workshop by the PE's. There are six

basic workshops that the PE's provide. "You Can't Touch This: A Discussion on Sexual

Assault" is their most basic workshop focusing on the definitions of coercion and consent and

how to help people who have been assaulted. "You Give Love a Bad Name" is their discussion

on dating and domestic violence, "R-E-S-P-E-C-T" focuses on sexual harassment, "Here, There,

Everywhere" focuses on "the cultural acceptance of sexual violence" where PE's address

common ideas and behaviors that trivialize and normalize sexual violence. As with any

workshop, the goal is "to better understand how to challenge these everyday images and

behaviors through media literacy and social change."[47] Their last available workshop,

"Understanding Rape" is a workshop bent towards allowing men to talk about sexual assault and

their perceptions on this issue.

The PE's also provide mandatory workshops to all incoming freshmen during the first

two months of fall semester (September and October). While these workshops are technically

mandatory, due to both the sheer size of the student population compared to the size of the PE's

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[46] From the Peer Education Program publicity brochure.
[47] From the Peer Education Program publicity brochure.

and to the lack of support within student housing (as discussed in Chapter Two) PE's often have a difficult time both reaching out to the first-year students as well as leaving a lasting impression. As of to date, in total there are 22 student volunteers in this group.

The Networking, Publicity, and Activism Program, also known as NPA's within SAPAC, "are dedicated to making a difference by raising awareness about sexual violence throughout campus and the larger community."[48] This volunteer group focuses its efforts on various projects throughout the year, including annual Speak Outs which have been going on here for 22 years now, allowing survivors of sexual violence to share their stories. Many of the survivors have never talked about their assault before, and Speak Outs become a place for people to take back something that they lost. Also in the fall is the Clothesline Project, which is where t-shirts made by survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, incest, or child abuse are displayed on a clothesline for all to see. The t-shirts, colors corresponding to the type of abuse the person underwent, allow for the survivors to creatively express their stories and memories. New to the fall agenda as of November 2007 is the Domestic Violence Awareness Month Rally. November, among other things, is the National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and to promote a more open dialogue on campus SAPAC started a daylong rally on the steps of the Hatcher Graduate Library and the Diag. In the spring the NPA's provide a Sexism in Advertising Campaign, where the volunteers rate the ten worst and ten most empowering advertisements that year, write letters to the companies, and have the university community petition the companies. The last and perhaps the largest endeavor the NPA's put on is their rEVOLUTION Art Gallery, where the gallery promotes empowering images of all genders for the university. The NPA's

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[48] From the Networking, Publicity, and Activism publicity brochure.

with their motto of "Breaking the Silence. Raising Awareness"[49] actively attempt to normalize

both the unique and varying images of gender as well as a dialogue revolving around sexual

violence. As of to date, in total there are 18 student volunteers in this group.

The Men's Activism Program, or The MA's as they're known in SAPAC, is the youngest

of all the groups after being established in 2004,[50] which allows men an opportunity to address

sexual violence from a male perspective. In order to extend an arm towards men and activism,

SAPAC purposely launched Men's Activism as a way "To spread awareness of men's role in

prevention of sexual assault across campus to other men."[51] Although it is not necessary for

volunteers to identify as male in order to be in the MA program, this is the program where most

male volunteers feel most welcome and active. The MA's often sponsor events to increase

awareness directed towards male students on campus, such as their annual root beer pong

tournament, weekly dinner discussions, lectures, and workshops conducted with the Pan-

Hellenic Council for Greek Week. With 10 members, the MA group is certainly the smallest and

often faces an uncertain future with both members who are willing to be a part of it as well as

other volunteer groups who question how productive the MA's truly are. For instance, some at

SAPAC have argued that the MA program should no longer be a program on its own but rather a

sort of caucus where any member of SAPAC can partake in it, giving SAPAC itself more fluid

boundaries between the volunteer groups. This year in particular the MA program has been

ridden with internal conflict and strife. For the past few years the MA program has been lead by

very active Co-Cord student leaders who were passionate about opening up a dialogue amongst

the men in the campus community, but this year the passion seems to be lacking. For instance,

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[49] From the Networking, Publicity, and Activism publicity brochure.

[50] SAPAC Timeline. *SAPAC,* viewed on 7 January 2009 <http://www.umich.edu/~sapac/about/timeline4.html>.

[51] From the Men's Activism publicity brochure.

one of the MA Co-Cords quit SAPAC without their two-weeks notice just seven weeks shy of

graduation. Although I do not wish to speak for this Co-Cord or anyone within SAPAC,

grumblings that this Co-Cord hadn't been dedicated to SAPAC the way that every other student

leader in the organization had been are common to hear inside small groups within SAPAC.

While the Co-Cord's actions are by no means indicative of the entire organization or program, by

quitting the Co-Cord further fueled the debate with SAPAC volunteers regarding the MA

program.

Although all three student volunteer groups are different and make their impact in a

variety of ways, they are nonetheless unified in the overarching message that SAPAC presents to

the community. Moreover, many of the volunteers have formed fiercely close and meaningful

friendships with their fellow volunteers. Meeting at least once a week for two hours, SAPAC

volunteer groups get to know each other very well. During our interview Ava told me that,

> *I always tell people when they're signing up to be volunteers that everybody knows
> everybody, and it's not some club where you leave and don't know anyone's name. We all
> know each other and do things with each other. It's not like it's this sterile thing where I
> see you and I don't know who you are.*

For many SAPAC is more than just an anti-sexual assault organization: it's a group of people

who share the same beliefs, homework sessions, and gossip. Each volunteer group often

facilitates socials and events outside of its activist and educational components as a way for

volunteers to bond and become close. SAPAC-only parties, bar crawls, and other events help

solidify these volunteer groups and to assimilate their new members. However, while the

volunteer groups individually are close, this is not necessarily true for the entire volunteer base

for SAPAC. Many of these parties, for instance, are specifically for one volunteer group as a way to solidify group cohesion. For instance, Cecilia[52] told me,

> *As a group coordinator this year I've really tried to help introduce some way to collaborate between groups. Professional staff has told me that the groups are more cohesive than in previous years, but I really don't see much difference. But I wish I did, I think this is important.*

This is an observation that many I believe have noticed in SAPAC: PE's tend to stick to PE's, NPA's stick to NPA's, and MA's stick to MA's. This year SAPAC – due in part to Cecilia's efforts – held a SAPAC-wide Thanksgiving party where everyone brought over a dish and drinks to share. While this was a welcomed change and everyone from the different volunteer groups mingled together, this one party did not change the entire face of SAPAC. Although volunteer groups will support one another's events and are friendly with others in different groups, for the most part people tend to be closer to those volunteers who are in their same group. I know that this is certainly true for me: my closest friends from SAPAC are from the NPA's, which is the volunteer group I work with (although there are a few exceptions for everyone). Each group becomes a tight-knit group of friends who eat and drink and spend a tremendous amount of time together, with the SAPAC office on North University Street, right above Sushi.com, often becoming the headquarters and base for much of their lives. People eat lunch there, drop by between classes to have a cup of tea and catch up with staff, and during finals week, it's packed 24-hours a day with late night study sessions and early morning runs to Starbucks and Espresso Royal.

The SAPAC office itself could perhaps be partially responsible for this close community feel within SAPAC: walking into the SAPAC office is unlike walking into any other university office on campus. Distinctively separate from the rest of the offices for students at the

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[52] Although Cecilia was not one of my informants in my interviews, she nonetheless was a person whom I relied on for opinions and collaboration. Her name has been changed to ensure her anonymity.

University that are on main campus and in buildings like the Student Union or Student Activities Building, the SAPAC office is in a non-University owned office building where private businesses are located.[53] It is on a commercial block surrounded by restaurants, coffee shops, and bookstores. The office itself is warm, open, and inviting. The rooms are painted in soft, feminine colors like violet and sky blue, there are couches and dark purple bean bags to relax on, and there is always enough tea and hot cocoa for anyone stopping by. There is an open reception room that leads to many of the private staff offices, a kitchen that almost always has popcorn in the microwave, as well as two meeting rooms that the student volunteers like myself have taken over, nicknaming one in particular, "the cave." It is a warm, friendly, and safe-feeling atmosphere where many volunteers including myself drop by just to relax. With streams of volunteers coming in and out of the office, it is easier for volunteers to get to know each other and to form attachments with those they work with. For many volunteers, life can easily be consumed by SAPAC.

With SAPAC volunteer groups as tightly knit groups of communities, it is interesting to see that within the cohesive unity there are grumbling of dissent within the groups. Many

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[53] Currently, the office building has three privately owned businesses on the first floor. Two are restaurants, Sushi.com and Silvio's Pizza, and one is a relatively over-priced boutique that just recently went out of business. On the upstairs floor is SAPAC and the University of Michigan's Office of Reunions and Reunion Giving. Originally, the Office of Reunions and Reunion Giving used to be the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) Office before it moved into the USB. Next to the office building a Panera Bread Restaurant just recently opened in the building that had been a bank for the last few years. While at first glance these businesses may not necessarily seem that important, the surrounding dynamic that they produce have important implications for SAPAC. For instance, when Panera Bread was under construction, the block that SAPAC is located on was relatively empty. Now, however, the area surrounding SAPAC is bustling with people. How this dynamic might influence students to use (or to not use) SAPAC's services would be an interesting study. Should SAPAC be located in a busy area that would make the person utilizing SAPAC's resources seem like just one in the crowd, or should SAPAC be in a relatively quiet area where people feel that they will not attract attention? Or would this quiet area deter students from using SAPAC because they felt because they were one of the few people in the area that they were attracting attention? Although this study has yet to be conducted, I do believe that it would be important for the University to discover how much more effective they could make SAPAC as a resource for the campus and University community. Moreover, in many of my interviews – particularly during Nikita's (who has volunteered at SAPAC by far longer than any other volunteer in the organization) – volunteers complained that because SAPAC was separated from other University resources (CAPS and the LBGT office are both located on the third floor of the Union), SAPAC was making it more difficult for students to find it and use it as a resource.

questions regarding the feminist legacy with the anti-sexual violence movement are often circulating within SAPAC. These questions, debates, and often what many argue to be a silencing of debate within SAPAC I believe influence how SAPAC presents itself to the campus community, which in turn helps form boundaries and borders within the campus.

Dissent Within SAPAC

With a volunteer base who have strong opinions and who are passionate about the work that they do, disagreements are bound to come up. While volunteers are unified in the language that they use to talk about sexual violence, many do not necessarily whole-heartedly "agree with everything that SAPAC puts out there," as Nikita told me. The root cause for these disagreements, I believe, stems from the political divide that runs through much of the campus community as well as a divide amongst the volunteers regarding the legacy of second and third wave feminism.

After two years for volunteering with SAPAC, I think it is fair to say that SAPAC tends to draw a more liberal-minded, left-leaning volunteer base. Most volunteers consider themselves to be strong feminists and pro-feminist men who are vocal activists in their community and communities. Although this is not indicative of the entire volunteer base, the majority nonetheless tends to more liberal than they are conservative. Indeed, many of the activities and discussions that are tabled at SAPAC meetings and workshops are political in nature. For instance, during every Sunday meeting with the NPA's there is a section called "Continuing Education" where each week a different volunteer brings in something related to gender or sexual assault to discuss. Many of these discussions revolve around political issues that lean more left than they do right.

Moreover, many volunteers feel strong connections with their fellow volunteers because of their shared, common experiences. In my interview with Rebecca, she noted that,

> *In terms of volunteering, I've found that the majority of volunteers – probably 90-95% of them – have some sort of personal connection with this issue* [of sexual assault] *whether or not it's a personal experience or they know someone who's been affected by this. It's not really something you just involved in. You don't really become passionate about this unless you've been touched by it.*

As a volunteer with over six semesters of volunteering for SAPAC under her belt, Rebecca has been in the organization long enough to be able to understand the patterns that occur within the volunteer groups. In addition to this, as a student leader within the organization Rebecca is often privy to information that many volunteers may not necessarily all know. Although I know most of the stories of the volunteers in SAPAC, particularly within my specific volunteer group, the NPA's, I have noticed that students who are leaders in the organization tend to have more people talk to them about SAPAC events and roles of the volunteers, particularly if there is a personal issue at stake. Whatever the case, Rebecca's observation parallels a striking pattern that I have noticed throughout the years. With this in mind, it is understandable why so many at SAPAC form fiercely tight friendships amongst those whom they volunteer with. Volunteers at SAPAC often form support groups that the survivor-volunteers may not necessarily have within their micro-community of friends. With students often sharing similar experiences with the pain and adversity that unfortunately go along with surviving a sexual assault, volunteers are able to form a community that understands the complicated emotions and triggers[54] that affect the survivor-

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[54] At SAPAC, the term "trigger" is used to discuss various actions, words, and situations that can cause survivors of sexual assault discomfort. For instance, a trigger could be a certain smell: if a survivor smells the same cologne that their perpetrator wore during their assault, this may trigger some form of PTSD (post traumatic stress syndrome). Other examples include noises, language, behaviors, and specific events. Because SAPAC volunteers are highly in tune with these situations, many volunteers know what "triggers" affect other volunteers and are hyper-aware of specific situations for specific volunteers. This I believe exemplifies the close friendships that are formed within the volunteer groups.

volunteers. With this hyper-awareness and empathy, volunteers form a very close micro-community.

Because of this observation, I became interested to see what SAPAC volunteers thought about the mission and arguments that SAPAC relies on. SAPAC volunteers are unified with their volunteer group that becomes a base for friendship and support – this is clear. SAPAC volunteers also tend to rely on a specific framework for the language that they used, as shown with the terms *survivor* and *sexual assault*. However, were volunteers necessarily unified with their understanding of this language? The volunteers understanding and use of the term power and control can perhaps show this.

Power and Control or Miscommunication?

During SAPAC training all volunteers are introduced to the *Power and Control Wheel*.[55] This wheel, developed by survivors of domestic violence in a women's shelter in Duluth Texas, has gone on to become one of the most relied upon tools in the activist movement. The *Power and Control Wheel* has been transposed to a variety of different issues, from LBGT violence to racism.

At its heart the wheel shows how the concepts of *power* and *control* lie behind all acts of violence. SAPAC tells its volunteers that all acts of sexual violence including sexual assault are caused by *power* and *control*: when assaulting their victim, the perpetrator wishes to gain power and control their victim. Sexual assault, SAPAC says, is not about sexual desire or a miscommunication between the sexes. It is, as Rebecca so succinctly phrased it,

> *It is one person choosing to take someone else's power away. There are a bunch of different reasons why that person may feel a need to take power and control away, but the root cause for all sexual assault is power and control.*

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[55] Please refer to Appendix D.

Often power and privilege dynamics go hand in hand. When discussing why rape happens,
Kassidy told me that she believed that people who rape believe that, "they won't get punished for
it or that they will get away with it" and that "they have the ability or the right to take advantage
of something without any repercussions." While all volunteers I interviewed were fully capable
of regurgitating SAPAC's message of power and control, some volunteers were hesitant to say
that this played into to every sexual assault. Although most of the volunteers were whole-
heartedly convinced of the argument's legitimacy such as Jane, Julia, Kassidy, Isabel, Nikita, and
Rebecca, there were a few who were unclear or disagreed with the message.

When I asked Ava why rape happens, she responded at first that it was "definitely about
power" and seemed confident in this. Yet as she continued to talk, she stated that,

> *And then like, just a lot of times it's unclear communication. In the cases that you want to*
> *give the benefit of the doubt – I mean because it can happen, unclear communication. But*
> *then you can say that whoever had the act perpetrated on them like once it started*
> *happening could be like "wait! This isn't what I wanted" but a lot of people surprisingly*
> *have a hard time – they don't want anger people and make them mad. So I mean it's*
> *definitely the majority of the time power and control, and less amount of time it's unclear*
> *communication or an unwillingness to speak up.*

While SAPAC specifically states that sexual assault is *not* about miscommunication in its
training, mission statement, and various materials that it publishes, after over a year of
volunteering Ava still nonetheless struggles with this definition. As a self-identified survivor of
assault who was an activist starting in her high school years, Ava portrays herself as a strong,
well-informed woman. During our NPA meetings Ava is someone who many in the group
respect – although she is an underclassmen many acknowledge that she's a girl who knows her
stuff. Yet in regards to SAPAC's message, she has a mind of her own on this particular issue.
Although at first she sticks to the SAPAC message during her opening statement, she
nonetheless verges into her own beliefs near the end.

Jack, one of the few male members of SAPAC is one of the volunteers who told me that *power and control* is an "over-generalized statement." During his interview Jack said to me,

> *I understand it* [power and control] *but I just don't think that sex and power are necessarily as intricate as fully as people would want to think. There's inevitably a power dynamic that's created when someone is somehow taking a proactive role in a precarious sexual situation in which consent isn't necessarily given, but I wouldn't say that it's an ideology more so than a result, all the time. I mean, having been privy to he literature and all the anecdotes and that we were in SAPAC training, certainly some people are interested in the power and seek out the power dynamic by way of sex, but I think that's as an over-generalized thing.*

As one of the few male members of SAPAC I believe Jack's opinions are both important and insightful. In our interview we discussed the role of miscommunication and sex in general and how this may or may not affect male perception on what rape is and how rape happens. During this time he pointed out that,

> *I think that communication is a huge issue...And I think it is a misunderstanding. I think for teenage and late adolescent male culture...sex is just a matter of fact sort of thing. Unless you're explicitly denying or it explicitly saving yourself or something like that, then you're going to participate in it. And then everything else sort of becomes tacit, and people then think that things are tacitly understood, because you're brought up into either demographic, meaning like you're going to be the ones participating in sex or you're not. And then, that tacit understanding isn't necessarily universal but people assume it is, I think. So I guess miscommunication there – and just – it's really just silence. There isn't much dialogue when you're in high school. It just sort of happens.*

The idea that communication about sex is implicit for both sexes could perhaps be a reason why many men believe that the act of gaining consent for sex is unimportant. Rather than all male perpetrators seeking to control their victim, Jack suggests that for some it may be an honest case of miscommunication where they simply don't understand what they need to do. In a similar vein, Elizabeth agreed to an extent with Jack's opinion. While she strongly agreed with the overall concept of *power and control*, she saw it as a term with many branches to it. During our conversation about power and control she told me that,

I think the really important part about it is that it's not always conscious: a lot of people think, "Well I'm taking your power and control away, I'm committing sexual assault." Obviously that doesn't happen – but the acts themselves of like coercing someone - they don't even know what coercion is or how that plays in. If you break down the whole scenario it then makes sense, but…eh, I don't know what I'm saying anymore.

Not only is Elizabeth's opinion important – but also her reaction of "eh, I don't know what I'm saying anymore" is indicative of the fact while Elizabeth has strong and full-fleshed opinions on sexual assault, because they don't fit the SAPAC paradigm she has a hard time feeling that her opinions are legitimate. Furthermore, Elizabeth did tell me that she thought miscommunication was a part of the problem because of the way women had historically been treated under a traditionally patriarchal society.

You know, "She didn't say no so I can go ahead and do this, it's fine." I think women have traditionally been put in this more passive role – they're more naïve, they're weaker, etc. And while yes, we've made many strides with the women's rights movement, they're still so many aspects in which we're not equal to men. And physically, we're not as strong as them – our anatomy is not built as such. So men are taught to be big, strong, powerful, have a beautiful women by their side always, and many men may feel the need to uphold that – and they use sexual assault to do that, in a way. They may not realize they're doing it to gain power, but men are taught that they need women and that they can do whatever they want – I mean hopefully not anymore – but in history it's always been that way. Women don't have rights to choose and they don't have the right to say no.

Admittedly, Elizabeth is a person whom throughout my analysis of her interview I have become extremely interested in. While she is a person who identifies as someone who is a full-fledged SAPAC member, she nonetheless finds herself at odds with the organization: she's a Republican, she sees sexual assault in a more complicated light than SAPAC advertises, and she often doubts herself and because of that isn't as active as other members to speak up on these issues. At the same time, however, her own opinions such as the idea of miscommunication are based within the feminist tenants that SAPAC teaches her. While Elizabeth is an open and active member within SAPAC, her own opinions and disagreement are often not vocalized.

The Impact of a Silent Dialogue Within SAPAC

During my interviews, I asked every SAPAC volunteer if they thought that the SAPAC

community allowed room for dissent. What is interesting is that those who agreed with

everything SAPAC taught them and identified themselves as "feminists" or "more liberal" all

said that dissent was allowed. Some replied with very short, and concise answers like Isabel

who told me, "I do think that, yeah" when I asked her if there was room for people to voice their

different opinions. Others like Ava told me that,

> *Amongst us in the NPA's, yes. We've even played devil's advocate and we always allow*
> *people to voice their opinions.*

Others, however, disagreed with this. Nikita, who is also an NPA volunteer like Ava gave me a

very different response. Below is a segment of our interview.

> *Me: Do you think that people are allowed to have a voice to be like, "I know the majority*
> *of you guys believe in this, but I completely disagree." Do you think volunteers feel*
> *comfortable saying that?*
>
> *Nikita: I don't think they are… it's a big fiasco if someone disagrees. And in general,*
> *because it is very polarized, it doesn't make room for other voices. And if you're not like a*
> *long-term member or have that really strong personality you're not going to speak out.*

Because SAPAC depends upon the unity of its members, dissent within the community is often

met with polarization and fiascos according to Nikita. In fact, last year in February of 2008,

because an NPA member disagreed with SAPAC she ended up leaving the organization. After a

huge blow out where many members were affected, the student left SAPAC to work with other

anti-sexual violence organizations.[56]

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[56] Although I would like to go into detail about this event and have in fact discussed it in depth with the person who left, I never officially interviewed her (our schedules never seemed to work out). Because I don't have an official interview with her, I feel uncomfortable discussing the details of this event within this context.

This polarization and silenced disagreement became even more evident during the 2008 Presidential Election. Elizabeth, a volunteer who identifies as a Republican, told me how she felt during this time.

> *I just remember one meeting where one of the co-cords was talking about the election – this was a couple of nights before the election – and everyone was like, "Oh my God, if McCain wins I swear to God, like the world's going to be over." And this one girl was talking about Sarah Palin and how she gets violently ill whenever her name gets brought up. And I'm just sitting there like, all right* [laughs], *it's fine. Like, I don't know. I had a hard time with the election. I was kind of on the cusp – I didn't know who to vote for pretty much until the day of. I had always been a republican but I had a hard time choosing. It was hard. Views were getting forced upon me in a setting where it's supposed to be about – we're all for the same thing here – and I felt kind of like, "Alright, I'm just going to be quiet," *[laughs] *so you know.*

When I asked her if she felt that she could talk openly about being a Republican and if her views would be welcomed, she replied,

> *I don't think that they're welcomed. I think that if I brought them up they would do what they're supposed to do – that they would listen because they have to and we accept everybody – but I just don't get the feeling that they are. And I'm not really into politics anyway. I don't have a lot of knowledge to back up my beliefs – I mean I know what I belief – but I don't have specifics like "Well in this debate he said this, and in this debate that happened." I'm just not as well versed on these things as everyone else is. So I wouldn't even want to bring it up. I don't even bring it up with my friends. I stay out of all political discussion altogether – I'm just not confident in my abilities to talk about it.*

Although theoretically SAPAC would have to support the views of all of their members, those who do not necessarily fit the clear-cut image of what an all-around SAPAC volunteer ought to look like do not always find their opinions welcomed. Volunteers like Elizabeth find themselves in a difficult situation, where on one hand they are incredibly close to their friends at SAPAC, on the other, are at odds with many of the people whom they are closest to.

This need to keep a common voice is also reflected in how SAPAC networks and builds coalitions with other organizations in the campus community. During my interview with Nikita

she recounted how a Republican group who met SAPAC at a Trotter House[57] event in November

of 2007 wanted to work with SAPAC.

> *And so they told us "Hey, we'd like to do something with you guys" and they* [the volunteers
> at SAPAC] *kinda like brushed it off as a joke. And one of the boys actually approached the
> front desk because I remember - I was there.   It was like about working with SAPAC on
> some event on self-defense. And like I know we don't do self-defense[58] or whatever but we
> could've at least tried to be more open and receptive to do something with their community,
> but it seemed like we just brushed it off because they wanted something that we didn't really
> agree with perfectly, which is fine. But, like we just severed ties instead of trying to
> compromise. And say if the College Dems had approached us – and I'm a Democrat – so
> like, if they had approached us, I don't think it would've been like that and I don't think
> that's very fair. Even though I can see certain ideals of the Democrats and the feminist
> ideals are automatically tied to how you should view sexual violence – in my opinion – and
> like how it should be viewed in an open sense with like empowering survivors. But you can
> also see it from a moderate view, as long as you don't get too conservative in certain
> aspects. But you can be conservative –like, you can disagree with sex before marriage and
> still be for gay marriage – even though they may seem conflicting. Yet most people aren't
> one way or the other and we're alienating people in that way.*

In this specific case, Nikita reveals how SAPAC is not only dedicated to a unified front

internally, but also, is dedicated to a unified front externally as well. Because of this at-times

narrow definition of what makes up the anti-sexual violence movement and who should be

allowed in this space along with SAPAC, SAPAC has under specific circumstances left out

certain groups from the dialogue. This is further exemplified in my interview with Kassidy.

During our interview she talked about how as a SAPAC volunteer she participated in a round

table discussion with various groups who were involved with the anti-sexual violence movement

in the campus community. She told me that the event became "pretty frustrating" because,

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[57] The Trotter House, also known as the William Monroe Trotter Multicultural Center at the University of Michigan, focuses on multiculturalism and diversity in the campus community. Located on 1443 Washtenaw Avenue, it is often the place where many student activist organizations come together for various events.

[58] As Nikita has noted, SAPAC does not "do self-defense." SAPAC argues that although people should do what they can to make themselves feel safer, self-defense is not a fail-safe guarantee that a person will not be raped. Furthermore, because SAPAC is dedicated to erasing so-called *rape myths*, SAPAC contends that the reliance of self-defense perpetuates the idea that if a woman is "good" or "does the right thing" or "is responsible" then she will not be raped. This idea stems from the myth that most rapists are strangers, whereas as I have noted earlier, most studies have shown that a person is more likely to be raped by someone they know. As a result of this study, most volunteers in SAPAC when talking about self-defense have told me that while people should do all that they can to feel safe, self-defense is usually thought of in relation to stranger rape.

It was like a feminist event, but there was a group there that was advocating self-defense. And – I was with [a volunteer][59] *– and we really had no idea why they were there. And when we were talking to them, they were talking about how if a woman is being assaulted it's her duty to not only herself but the people around her to fight back, and we really had a problem with that. And two of the PE's who were there too, and they were – we were all getting pretty into it, like, "No, that makes no sense. We don't agree with you at all."*

When I asked Kassidy if she thought networking or building a coalition with this group would

help the space for dialogue surrounding sexual assault in the campus community, she replied,

I'm not sure, because their heart definitely was in the right place – like they had an opinion against violence against women. But I think that all of us at SAPAC don't necessarily agree with that. So I think that if more people on campus saw us doing an event with them, might be like, "Oh maybe that is something I want to support." But they're not supporting us for why we want them to support us, so I think that'd be counter-intuitive.

Reflective of many whom I talked to at SAPAC, Kassidy reveals the concern that if SAPAC

aligns itself with certain organizations then the campus community will have the wrong

impression of what SAPAC as an organization stands for. As a result of this concern, SAPAC

often works by itself, despite the fact that there is an entire volunteer group dedicated to coalition

building, with the Networking, Publicity, and Activism group. Nikita, who after eight semesters

of volunteering for SAPAC, has noticed,

With networking, I feel like we kind of have slacked off. We don't really have any networking if you think about it. We just stay within our own group, and we're great at like putting on our own events and doing a lot of activism and publicity and getting out there, but, we don't really network so well with other groups on campus and we stick to our own groups. And even when we have in the past, like, it seems to be when we're such a motivated – I don't know what it is about the NPA's. But, like…we didn't work too well with Safehouse…I mean, you would assume that would be an instant connection and that would be perfect and like great with all these resources, but. But other than that, like, other campus groups, we rarely work with. Or on vague, really messy terms and then they're not long relationships at all.

The incident that Nikita is referring to is last year when SAPAC teamed up with Safehouse, the

women's shelter for Washtenaw County, for an art gallery that focused on sexuality and

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[59] The volunteer, who was not interviewed by me, has had their name taken out to ensure anonymity.

violence. Although SAPAC had developed the art gallery a few years earlier and had always been in charge of its concept which was based on reaching out to the campus community, SAPAC hoped to join forces with Safehouse in order to create a more diverse feel to the gallery. While the coalition lasted through till the opening night of the gallery, the coalition then quickly fell apart after many internal disagreements between the two organizations. For instance, Safehouse wanted the gallery to be at Eastern Michigan University's campus instead of the University of Michigan's because they felt that their constituents thought that the University of Michigan was "too snobby" for all intensive purposes. SAPAC, on the other hand, wanted the gallery to be for the University of Michigan campus community and disagreed with their demands, arguing that if the gallery was supposed to be for the University of Michigan campus community then it should be within that specific community. With both organizations strongly disagreeing with one another, by the end of the gallery many in SAPAC felt that building a coalition with Safehouse wasn't a high priority anymore.

Although building coalitions with organizations outside of the campus community could be arguably both good and bad for SAPAC, there nonetheless seems to be a pattern where SAPAC tends to work within its own volunteer base and rarely works with other organizations. While SAPAC does actively table at events sponsored by other feminist and activist organizations on campus such as the F-Word, the various productions of the *Vagina Monologues*, and events sponsored by the SPECTRUM Center, these are nonetheless organizations that share similar opinions and beliefs with SAPAC.

Conclusion

With a volunteer base that is glued together by strong friendships and oftentimes a common understanding of what it means to be a survivor in the campus community, volunteers tend to portray themselves as members of a unified organization with little internal conflict. Indeed, through the very language that volunteers employ, SAPAC presents an image of an institution grounded by a cohesive group of dedicated volunteers. Upon closer examination, however, SAPAC's strong voice of unity begins to tremble. Many volunteers do not necessarily agree with a variety of SAPAC's positions on sexual assault, and at least a few do not feel that their different opinions are welcome by this community. Moreover, with the tendency to emphasize liberal views and opinions, SAPAC begins to create a space where only specific voices may be heard, even on the internal level with their volunteer base. These internal boundaries then mirror the boundaries that SAPAC places within the context of the campus community.

The irony cannot be lost here. According to the many volunteers at SAPAC, SAPAC's mission is to reach out and to educate everyone in the campus community, not merely a select few whose ideological tenants fit nicely into SAPAC's already established dialogue. Yet both internally as well as externally, the space that SAPAC creates for a dialogue about sexual assault is nonetheless extremely confined by its boundaries based upon a framework built on second and third wave feminist arguments. On one hand SAPAC attempts to create fluid boundaries where volunteers can reach out to the campus community and begin a dialogue on sexual assault. On the other, however, SAPAC's emphasis on creating a unified organization with volunteers who share the same views on the language and causes of sexual assault impacts the space that SAPAC indirectly creates by its alienation of ideologies that do not align properly with SAPAC's.

This conflict can perhaps be exemplified by a single term, *consent*. With many debates surrounding the very definition and implementation of this word, consent embodies all of the complexities that have been noted within SAPAC, the campus community, and indeed, between SAPAC and the campus community. How these communities of students react to this word, to the different interpretations of it, and how others discuss it reveals the problems revolving around the community dialogue on sexual assault. Through consent, the complications that arise from boundary creation in a campus community that has no agreed upon forum or either macro-community dialogue or dialogue between the various micro-communities become evident.

**Chapter Four: I ♥ Consensual Sex: The Debate Surrounding
                            Informed Consent and Rape in the Campus Community**

"Each individual woman's body demands to be accepted on its own terms."
      -Gloria Steinem

For the past few years SAPAC has been distributing pins, stickers, and t-shirts with the slogans

Consent is Sexy and *I ♥ Consensual Sex* as a way to publicize the idea of consent to the campus

community. With this paraphernalia and other forms of publicity and activism SAPAC hopes to

tell the campus community that,

> Consent is when someone agrees, gives permission or says yes to sexual activity with
> someone else. At the heart of consent is the idea that every person, man or woman, has the
> right to personal sovereignty – not to be acted upon by someone else in a sexual manner
> unless he or she gives clear permission to do so. It is the responsibility of the person
> initiating the sexual activity to get this permission. Absence of clear permission means
> you can't touch someone, not that you can.[60]

Although this seems like a relatively easy and accessible definition to abide by, in reality the

understanding and application of consent proves to be much more problematic than it at first

seems. During my interviews I found that students varied widely with their opinions, definitions,

and understandings of the term consent.   Much like Gloria Steinem's argument that "Every

individual woman's body demands to be accepted on its own terms," many students I

interviewed argued that what consent was and when someone was raped was determined by how

that person reacted and felt. Although almost all the volunteers I interviewed agreed with this

interpretation, many volunteers nonetheless viewed consent as a cut and dry definition compared

to many of the non-SAPAC students.

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[60] 'Consent and Coercion.' *SAPAC*, as viewed on 1 February 2009. <http://www.umich.edu/~sapac/info/assault-consent.html>.

Moreover, throughout my interviews I noticed that when alcohol and the so-called college "hookup" were involved, the definition of consent often took on different forms than it would in other circumstances. It seemed that part of this problem stems from the question of how *far* students intend to "hookup." I know within my own group of friends we have often debated what a hookup even means – is it merely kissing, is oral sex involved, or is there some sort of penetration? No one seems to have an answer. These added external factors further complicated the definition during my interviews in ways that many at SAPAC believe they should not. While SAPAC argues that consent is consent, and no consent is no consent, many students that I interviewed – including a few SAPAC volunteers - saw a more complicated version of this where the boundaries and spaces for consent were much more fluid than SAPAC (and many in the activist movement) would perhaps like to argue for.

These problems, which in part hail back to the historical legacy that SAPAC and the anti-sexual assault movement operate under, are indicative of the divided dialogue that I have witnessed throughout my time as a SAPAC volunteer. By understanding this dialogue in the context of the complex community formation within the campus community as well as the boundaries that SAPAC attempts to place onto the community despite its own internal conflicts, I hope to use the arguments surrounding consent as a catalyst for this conversation.

The Historical Legacy of Consent

Historically speaking, consent has been a tricky subject where many feminist scholars have argued that the courts have been slow at adopting a sufficient interpretation of what consent is. For instance, up until 1975 in South Dakota, *who* needed consent was something that American feminists battled with for years. Under many statutes husbands could not be charged with rape.

This is in part due to the codes under the British Common Law that influenced the American legal system, particularly in regards to American women. According to William Blackstone, who published an encyclopedia of British legal codes in 1769,

> By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in the law; that is, the very being and legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated into that of her husband under whose wing, protection, and cover she performs everything (1904, 432).

By law women who married were an extension of their husband's own personhood. With such a law, a woman was property of her husband's and therefore had no autonomy or voice independent from her husband's. This rationale would extend toward what was seen as the inability to rape one's own property. As Sir Mathew Hale, Chief Justice of England in the seventeenth century would argue,

> The husband cannot be guilty of rape committed by himself upon his lawful wife, for by their mutual matrimonial consent and contract, the wife hath given herself in kind unto the husband which she cannot retract (Bergen 1999: 2).

With American courts abiding by these historical precedents, the American woman could not charge her husband with assault until 1975. For many courts the assumption was that once a woman married a man, there was no reason to have consent since the couple established their sexual relationship through marriage.

However, with this assumption came the problem of autonomy: how could a woman be responsible for her own person if she was not allowed to say no in any circumstance, including that of marriage? As McGregor writes,

> Consent is important because we value autonomy, and consent provides individuals with a certain kind of power over their 'territory.' In order for consent to provide a serious moral demarcation, one that protects and promotes autonomy, the requirements for what constitutes consent must be fairly stringent," (2005: 106).

With consent "provid[ing] a serious moral demarcation" over one's "territory," consent under any circumstance needed to be respected and legally recognized. After South Dakota's groundbreaking law in 1975, however, it took until 1993 for all 50 states to criminalize marital rape (Bergen 1999). Moreover, despite this criminalization many states made marital rape a less serious of a crime than in comparison to, for instance, rape by a stranger. In fact it wasn't until 1984 that a state successfully convicted a man of raping his wife with whom he still legally resided (Weitz 2003: 8). This reluctance to convict a man of raping his wife, I believe, reflects the deeply entrenched beliefs about relationships and what they mean in Western culture.

While most who make up the campus community here at the University of Michigan may not necessarily be married, I do believe that these historical legacies are indicative of how people react to consent when the survivor knows the perpetrator. Numerous studies have shown that people are more likely to excuse or doubt acquaintance rape compared to stranger rape. These studies have also revealed a pattern where people victim blame[61] when the survivor knows their perpetrator (e.g., Szymanski, 1993; Viki et al, 2004; Ward et al, 1991; Warshaw 1988). Moreover, many survivors are often more hesitant or unwilling to report their rape when they know the person who raped them. Linda S. Williams writes that one of "The major factor[s] which determines whether or not a woman will report a rape is the *circumstances* of the rape itself," (1984: 460), where "Women who are raped by men they know, at home, or in social settings, are less likely to report because they question their role and responsibility in the attack," (459). Given that the Western legal system has set a precedent where people who have physical

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[61] Victim Blaming occurs when the survivor of a sexual assault is blamed for the incident. Many times victim blaming ties in with the prevalence of *rape myths*, where people believe that a person's behavior (such as what they wore, what they were doing, who they were with, etc.) determines if they were responsible for their rape. In the activist community people argue that a survivor is never to be blamed because they did not chose to be raped. However, many laypeople such as students in the campus community argue that if a person wasn't being "responsible" as Henry told me, which included walking home alone at night or drinking, then the assault was the survivor's fault. SAPAC argues that it is never the survivor's fault and that it is always the perpetrator's fault.

relationships make a type of contractual agreement, I believe that this established historical legacy is embodied in people's unwillingness to label acquaintance rape as rape. Indeed, perhaps this is one of the reasons for the results regarding different opinions about consent that I will later investigate from my interviews.

Another historical legacy that impacts how people view consent is the idea that rape must include the threat of or use of physical force. Under many statutes "Nonconsensual sex alone is not a criminal act" where "force is also a necessary factor in the crime," (McGregor 2005: 6). In many cases today, in order for a survivor to file a successful case against her perpetrator, she must *show* that it was violent: black eyes, bite marks, and other signs of struggle are used as evidence in support of the survivor. In other words, many expect there to be *more* violence than just the assault itself in order to constitute as a real rape. As heavyweight champion Mike Tyson stated during his sentencing for rape in 1992, "I didn't hurt nobody. Nobody has a black eye or broken ribs."[62]

Indeed, this is even embodied by how survivors react to their assault. Linda S. Williams writes that,

> …the classic rape provides the victim with the evidence she needs to convince herself and others that she was indeed a true rape victim. If this evidence is lacking – if she did not experience a high level of force, was not threatened with a dangerous weapon, or not seriously injured – she is less likely to see herself as a true victim and is therefore less likely to report to the police (1984: 464).

Williams employs an important term here. The term "classic rape" is a term that many scholars and activists like to use in the anti-sexual violence movement. The "classic rape" is the rape that most people can easily envision when one asks them "What do you think rape is?" Most will argue that the classic rape is perpetrated by a stranger in circumstances that could have been

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[62] Cynthia Tucker, "Rape does Hurt Somebody,' *San Francisco Chronicle,* 6 April 1992.

preventable. Throughout my own interviews with non-SAPAC volunteers I found this to be the case, where many would tell me that when they think about rape they think about "sketchy" circumstances with dark alleys, strangers with knives, late nights, etc. No one immediately thought of an acquaintance rape where there was no added physical violence involved. This, in my opinion, reveals an important factor of how the students I interviewed interpret what consent is. This historical legacy I believe is still present today.

In addition to the physical violence that was supposed to be present in the attack, for years the American courts often demanded that a woman show that she didn't want to be raped, usually by a physical struggle. For instance, Joan McGregor writes that,

> Rather than requiring an explicit sign of consent and worrying about the circumstances in which the alleged consent was given (for example, were the circumstances threatening or implicit threats made, was the victim intimidated), the courts have interpreted silence and nonresistance as signs of consent (2005: 33).

The fact that a person did not say "no" has often been cited as a form of consent. In the mindset of many a verbal no and physical struggle are the only way to show *non-consent* – anything else will equate to the act of consent. Yet many scholars such as law professor and political pundit Susan Estrich (1987) point out that many women do not respond with physical force when they are being threatened because of the normal power difference between men and women. Estrich also argues that women have been socialized to be passive in aggressive situations and that many times when confronted with physical force, many women respond by crying rather than by struggling against the perpetrator. However, for many courts still today, there needs to be a physical manifestation of this non-consent (McGregor 2005: 6).

Furthermore, there tends to be a historical romanticization of "the chase" where men pursue women and where women often struggle and say no to a man's advances when in reality, they mean yes. Historically speaking, in Western art, literature, and music the pursuit of women

has been a popular topic where writers lament about the unattainable woman, yearn for her, and

boast of their conquests when they finally win her over. Such beliefs can be found in all sorts of

literature ranging from,

> Man is the hunter; woman is his game;
> The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
> We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;
> They love us for it, and we ride them down (Tennyson, 1861).

To,

> But who, alas! can love, and then be wise?
>   Not that remorse did not oppose temptation;
> A little still she strove, and much repented,
> And whispering 'I will ne'er consent' – consented (Byron 1824).

Alfred Tennyson (*The Princess)* and Lord Byron *(Don Juan)*, two British literary giants whom I

greatly esteem nonetheless exemplify the objectification of women as "game" who when they

whisper, "I will ne'er consent" nonetheless consent to the man's will because "They love us

[men] for it."   This romanticization of women as people who need men to push and coerce out

of them what they really want, while making for perhaps some pretty poetry, nonetheless

perpetuates the idea that women cannot think with their own heads when it comes to men,

romance, and sex. Although I by no means want to go on a tirade against Western literature or

the lives of Tennyson and Byron, I do contend that these two poets nevertheless illustrate a

commonly held belief that women, when it comes to sex, do not really know what they want.

This belief is perhaps in part responsible to the views that are now firmly planted for many in the

West that have helped shape how the term consent sounds and what it looks like.

With this historical content shaping how many people today in the campus community

view consent in terms of sexual assault, it is interesting to see how students respond to the

culture that they have been raised in versus the dialogue that SAPAC attempts to create.

SAPAC and Consent

As an organization that works in the state of Michigan, SAPAC's policies are in part dictated by how the state of Michigan interprets what consent means. The state of Michigan prescribes to a mentalist mode of consent – that it is not the women's external manifestations of agreement that is important, but rather, it is what she is thinking. For instance, even though a woman may not have physically struggled against the perpetrator, if she felt violated then that is enough for her to press charges. This is not only a fairly advanced notion of consent but is also one that is unique compared to many states. Although critics have argued that this could lead to a rise in false reporting, there has yet to be any report published stating that since 1978 (when the Michigan Criminal Sexual Conduct Act was first established) there has been a rise in false reports for rape in the state of Michigan. Moreover, the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR), which as stated earlier only focuses on rapes that have been reported to the police, found that in 1999 only 8% of all the reports of forcible rape were determined to be false (this percentage does not include case where the accuser failed or refused to cooperate with the police).[63] Although many studies differ with their numbers, ranging from less than 1% to 90% of false reporting, many of these studies are incredibly faulty, unfounded, and need to be taken with a very large grain of salt (Rumney 2006). Although there are other national statistics out there, I have chose to use the FBI's UCR statistics because of its fairly conservative nature. With a national 8% false reporting rate and no indication that the state of Michigan's reports for forcible rapes were unusual, [64] there is little reason to assume that the state of Michigan's interpretation of consent leads to false accusations of rape.

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[63] *FBI's Uniform Crime Report*, Section II of the Crime Index Offenses Reported, 1999.
[64] In fact according to the state-by-state breakup, Michigan's reports for overall forcible rape rates had actually *decreased* by 8.1%,

The state of Michigan is therefore a state with many feminists applauding its survivor-friendly interpretation of consent that seems to be both fruitful and fair. Through SAPAC, the University of Michigan abides by this interpretation of consent. Furthermore, with their definition, SAPAC stresses that consent is different from coercion, where with coercion the person is pressured in some way to say yes to sexual activity. Coercion includes any use of force, threat of force, or intimidation that forces a person to relent to sexual activity against their will. Acts of coercion such as underhanded threats like "If you don't sleep with me then I'm going to break up with you" constitute as sexual assault because the person didn't willingly engage in sexual relations without the presence of this threat. These threats can even verge on the mundane to the outside observer. In many workshops I have attended, one of the common examples I hear is that of a man taking off his jewelry (like a ring) as an implied threat that constitutes as coercion. While this may seem completely irrelevant to many, if the man has the habit of taking off his jewelry before he is physically violent with his partner (after all, rings leave marks), his partner is tuned into this physical action as a type of cue where they know if they do not do what the man wants then he will become violent. Instead of facing a scenario where they are physically abused, they relent to the man's wishes even though he never technically physically forced himself on them.

With this fairly complicated view on coercion versus consent SAPAC often relies on the "verbal yes" contention, where many argue that by actually saying "Yes" the person is giving "clear permission" when there are no outside forces pushing them to say yes. SAPAC makes it known that if a person does not vocalize this consent technically there is no sure way of knowing that the person is consenting. Furthermore, SAPAC argues that there needs to be clear yes

without coercion involved because it is often difficult to read a person's physical reactions, which can sometimes be different from their internal reactions.

These perceptions of consent are perhaps difficult for SAPAC to change. The idea of having a verbal "yes" rather than "no" is quite new for many and particularly problematic. I know for me, during my time in middle school and high school my classmates and I were told that if we were uncomfortable with a situation to say "no" and if the person persisted in their advances, we could charge them with sexual harassment. Even with anti-drug programs such as the D.A.R.E. campaign, the "Just Say No" slogan persists for many college-aged Americans.

Despite this yes/no conundrum, SAPAC volunteers insist on the verbal yes example in order to combat the perception that "When a woman says no, she means yes." As Rebecca told me,

> *Consent very basically is saying yes. That is the easiest way to get consent,* [it is] *the most basic,* [it is] *the most clear. Is to ask someone and have them say yes. We get asked this a lot in workshops: if you don't hear a yes, if you don't ask for consent, you might have consent anyways but you never know you never know for sure. Better safe than sorry. Why wouldn't you want to get consent, why wouldn't you want to be sure?*

Every single volunteer I interviewed understood this definition. Consent, in its most basic form, made sense to everyone and they could easily articulate it. No one had problems explaining the definition of consent and everyone seemed to agree with the SAPAC message that they were supporting. However, when SAPAC volunteers were asked to discuss consent in regards to the college hookup as well as with the role of alcohol, things did become a bit tricky. Although volunteers overall seemed to have a firm grasp on how to discuss consent in terms of the college hookup and with alcohol, there were times when a few volunteers seemed unsure of how it worked. In a way the minor issues that the volunteers grappled with illustrate the very different

ideas about consent that volunteers have seen with the reactions by the campus community.

These reactions can also be seen through the interviews that I conducted.

Consent and the Hookup

One of the questions I asked volunteers was how people actually gave this verbal consent: was

an actual, "Yes, I want to do this" and "Yes, I want to do that," really necessary? More

importantly, was it even reasonable? While in theory volunteers could tell me what consent was,

I wondered how they would apply and express it in real life situations.

I discussed the practicality of SAPAC's consent with Rebecca, one of the co-cord student

leaders for SAPAC. When I asked her how she thought couples verbalized and showed their

consent with one another, she replied,

> *Clearly it's situational: if I'm dating someone for four years, every time we want to engage
> in sexual activity I am not going to expect my partner to be like "Is it ok if we do this"–
> you're going to have cues with each other, you're going to be comfortable with each other.
> But until you reach that point like you should hear a yes- that is what consent is. And
> consent has to occur at every increased level of sexual intimacy.*

While Rebecca makes a good point about the importance of awareness and understanding within

intimate physical relations, there are nonetheless worries within the SAPAC community about

this. For instance, during her interview Ava noted,

> *Well I always tell people unless you get a clear yes, there is no consent, although in my
> personal practice I'm not sitting around going "Yes! Alright!" you know what I mean?*
> [laughs]. *But, a lot of times the reason a lot of people get nervous about this issue is
> 'cause they're afraid that they'll hook up with somebody, have a great night, and then
> they're afraid of the regretted sex…And – I'm not exactly sure – consent is such a blurry
> issue, you know?*

The concern around the adaptability of SAPAC's definition and how it applies realistically to

intimate settings is not uncommon. From both my interviews and from what I've seen during

my time at SAPAC, this has been a point that many have worried about. While the volunteers I

talked to all seemed to have a firm grasp of what consent was and how to make consent easy

within established relationships, many nonetheless struggled with the idea of how to present

consent in fledgling relations or in the college hookup. Concerns about making the situation

awkward, ruining the "moment," or causing the person to become nervous were all common.

During my interview with Jack, a member of the Men's Activism program, we discussed how

SAPAC presented the definition of consent to the Inter-fraternity Council this fall. It was within

this discussion that he made an important point.

> *It's not as awkward as it seems, it doesn't have to be as maybe robotic as saying you know, "Can I touch you here? Can I touch you in this way?" and that kind of thing. I think that this was part of the SAPAC literature before, but we gave them the analogy of condom use, and stuff like that, you ask because you're protecting yourself and you partner and that kind of thing. It's the same thing. And you can make it, I suppose, sexy. I think it's totally adaptable. But like, I don't think that people would necessarily make that step on their own, from, " I need to get consent, this is awkward" to "How can I make it – while keeping it clear – how can I make it maybe sexy? Or how can I weave into the fabric of the intimacy and such without necessarily interrupting it?" So I think it is adaptable, but I think we have to help them make it to that step.*

Although there were some struggles amongst SAPAC volunteers to describe the adaptability of

consent within casual relations, most nonetheless seemed to agree with SAPAC's message about

consent. For many, making the step as to how to not make it awkward was the most difficult

part for volunteers to explain. However, all volunteers across the board felt that consent was

necessary and agreed with SAPAC's definition.

While my interviews with volunteers showed a confident understanding of consent on a

very basic level, many students I interviewed had a much different view of this. Although

Rachel and Maya, the two self-identified feminists were comfortable defining consent and their

responses paralleled SAPAC's definition, the students who did not identify as active feminists

often struggled with this. One case in particular stands out. While interviewing Joni, a 22-year-

old engineer, I asked her what she considered rape. She replied,

Any sort of sexual activity that against another person's will. Or – I mean, as long as the person is vocally against it.

When I asked her to expand on this she seemed a bit confused so I said,

Okay, so you've just said that a person has to be vocally against the intimacy level, right? So what happens when the person isn't being vocal, like, they aren't saying no?

This is when she told me,

I mean, listen, I've done that. I did that this summer – I was tired and drunk and the easiest way to get out of it was to just give him what he wanted [laughs]. *I mean, but I don't consider that rape. I didn't want it – but oh well. I didn't try to fight him off or tell him off because I guess I just didn't care. But that's not rape.*

What struck me here was the severe disconnect between SAPAC's consent and Joni's consent.

Because Joni was not vocal with her dissent and did not show it through some sort of physical

manifestation like "try to fight him off or tell him off" she did not believe that what happened to

her was rape. SAPAC, on the other hand, would argue that this is a clear case of assault: she did

not want it but felt that she could not articulate this. This could in fact be called coercion

because Joni knew if she gave "him what he wanted" it would be "the easiest way to get out of

it."

Moreover, when asked if her situation last summer could apply to all women, Joni told

me that,

I mean, it depends on the girl's response to the situation. If she feels that she's been violated, then she's been violated.

While all the volunteers I interviewed argued that in the end, a survivor must be the one to define

her experience as rape – and indeed, even the state law with its mentalist approach reflects this –

Joni's response is also indicative of the fact that she recognizes that for everyone, consent is

different. Joni openly acknowledges that there are different boundaries for people. Although

SAPAC volunteers recognize this, I nonetheless believe that if many SAPAC volunteers heard

Joni's story, they would tell me "Well, she just hasn't processed it yet – but that was rape." Even

in my own head while interviewing Joni I kept thinking to myself, "Oh my God. This girl was

raped and she won't even admit it." Although I never told Joni this and never indicated to her

my feelings,[65] I believe that as SAPAC volunteer, my feelings were nonetheless indicative of

how volunteers treat and understand the SAPAC message of consent.

    Joni's response in a way parallels what Naafil told me during our interview. When we

were discussing why rape happens, he told me,

> *I think a lot of people – both men and women – are just not very good at talking to the
> other sex, perhaps specifically in sexual contexts. You know I think a lot of people are just
> afraid or nervous or whatever and aren't willing to have this kind of dialogue, and I think
> anytime you have something that's entirely dependent on physical activity to get your point
> across, there are going to be misunderstandings. So I think that if rape can happen
> innocently, I'm sure it does happen, and…I'm sure that a lot of the times it's something
> that there isn't the intention to rape, it just is an honest mistake, but at the same time it's
> still horrible from the women's perspective, because, well, you know, I don't need to get
> into the various reasons why, so yeah.*

Throughout the interview, Naafil kept on referring to the idea of "miscommunication." Much

like a few of the SAPAC volunteers whom I focus on in Chapter Three, many times Naafil felt

that because people were "nervous" and weren't "willing to have this kind of dialogue" that in

instances of sexual activity a verbal consent just didn't happen. This in fact reflects the very

concerns that many SAPAC volunteers had about people relying upon a verbal consent, such as

Ava.

    Moreover, because Naafil felt that students looked for a more physical sign of consent,

misunderstandings were natural because anything "that's entirely dependent on physical activity

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[65] During the interview (and in every interview that I conducted) I tried to keep as neutral of a stance as possible.
After Joni's response that it was up to every person to determine whether or not they had been violated, the next
question I chose to ask was, "So what if a girl says that she was raped but doesn't report it?" Although I do think
that I probably should have stayed on this topic a bit longer for a more solid and detailed response from Joni, I was
afraid that I might indirectly reveal my own feelings. Because of this, I chose to use this conversation as a bridge to
why people do and do not report.

to get your point across" is up to interpretation. During our conversation we began to focus on the idea that a person could accidentally rape someone because the signs for consent were never discussed or breached – for both consent and non-consent. According to Naafil, often in sexual activity there is a specific assumption that people go into certain situations with. If a person agreed to go home or into a room with someone then according to Naafil, many students feel that sexual activity is a given. This in fact reflects what the SAPAC volunteer, Jack, talked about when he discussed how sex for the American male was often seen as "tacit," where "that tacit understanding isn't necessarily universal but people assume it is.*" The problem then becomes because students don't agree with what the hookup is, there is a disconnect as to how far the sexual activity will go. To add to this, because in many of the interviews students had similar opinions to Naafil's comment that people don't like to talk about sex to the person they are "hooking up with," this disconnect is never breached. I think that Joni's case is a good example of this. While "hooking up" with a person during the summer, because she was "tired and drunk" (perhaps an indication or excuse that she did not want to talk about the situation to the person she was with), she gave "him what he wanted" even though it wasn't necessarily what she wanted. However, because she didn't try to fight him off, perhaps, by Naafil's argument, the person who was with Joni simply didn't know because they were either looking for a physical manifestation of consent or assumed that because of the intimate situation they were in, some sort of sexual activity was a given.

In both the case of Joni and Naafil, the definition of consent that SAPAC relies upon had little influence upon them. In fact, when I asked Joni if she would ever verbally consent to sex, she told me the only time that she would verbalize this is when she would be "really against it." To Joni, saying yes to sex seemed silly. With Naafil and Ava's observation that people are often

nervous about sex, I wonder if a verbal consent is something that most in the campus community would feel comfortable using when they are "hooking up." One of the problems is that while "hooking up" usually entails an acquaintance on some level, the term "hooking up" usually doesn't apply to established relationships. In fact, most students both in SAPAC and outside of SAPAC seemed to feel quite comfortable with the idea of talking about sex to their significant other. However, when it came to the "hookup" this seemed to get complicated, as exemplified by both the responses of Joni and Naafil.

Furthermore, because the "hookup" entails knowing the person (at least to some degree) with whom one is engaging in sexual activity with, the historical implications of how people view acquaintance rape have shown through during my interviews. For instance, while I was interviewing Rose we discussed how her hallmates in her dormitory are one of the micro-communities that she relies upon. We began to talk about how her hallmates would react to various situations that involved rape, such as what she thought would happen if one of her friends told their community that they had been raped. When I asked her if the circumstances of the rape would impact how her hallmates would react, she said that it would. I then posed a scenario where a person was raped on a deserted bridge while walking over to the dormitories at night versus at a party with people who they knew and asked her if both scenarios would be considered rape. The following is what happened next in our interview.

> *Rose: I mean both of them would be considered a rape, but I can see the bridge one seeming like more of a textbook rape because it was – like I mean are we saying that it's a stranger?*
>
> *Me: Yeah – or I don't know, like someone in their hall, but it was –*
>
> *Rose: Someone they had been hooking up with before?*
>
> *Me: Yeah.*

Rose: Yeah, I think people would definitely accept that.

Me: Do you think that it becomes harder when people have had relations with the person previously? Would that make it harder for people to accept it as an assault?

Rose: Like if they had been hooking up with them already? Yeah, that would make it harder.

This segment of my interview with Rose reveals that although Rose's friends would ultimately accept what happened to their friend was a rape in either scenario, the fact that "if they had been hooking up…would make it harder" for the hallmates to accept that their friend had been raped. Even within a close group of friends that Rose feels comfortable talking about very personal issues to, she showed that there would still be some degree of skepticism displayed by her hallmates if their friend was raped by a person they already knew. Although this micro-community would believe their friend, their opinions regarding whether or not it was rape – and therefore whether or not she consented – were affected by the circumstances that their friend found herself in, reflecting the previous contention made by Williams.

What is interesting is that within these interviews, the personal and social boundaries were often determined by the relationship that the two people in question had. The term consent implies a certain boundary. As Joan McGregor writes, "Consent gives permission or authorization to do what would otherwise be prohibited. That permission or authorization provides a new reason for acting," (2005: 114). Because we live in a culture that values autonomy, a person's body is their own territory where they may set the boundaries for exiting and entering. The body of an individual is determined by the idea of American individualism and personal identity. The consent of a person is therefore a sort of border crossing that is allowed and accepted within American culture. The lack of consent, however, constitutes both a violent disregard of this cultural norm and the very questioning of the existence of this boundary.

Although SAPAC argues for a static boundary that is determined by a person's vocal consent where they either do or do not give permission to cross this boundary, the students I interviewed seemed to believe that the boundaries surrounding consent were much more fluid and up to interpretation. Indeed, both personal and social boundaries are at stake with the different conceptions of consent. On a very basic level, the personal boundaries that SAPAC wishes to place for every student in the campus community is not necessarily embraced by the overall community. On a social level, the boundaries that are created within communities are often based upon how these personal boundaries are interpreted. Because many students believe that circumstances influence how consent ought to be interpreted, these beliefs create the boundaries for acceptable behaviors and attitudes towards consent and what constitutes as sexual assault. In turn, these boundaries create the spaces where people within their communities react to these opinions regarding sex, consent, and sexual assault. This can be further exemplified by the problems surrounding the role of alcohol.

Consent and the Role of Alcohol

Joni's experience is perhaps further complicated by the fact that she was "drunk." Michigan, the University, and SAPAC all state that when alcohol is involved, the intoxicated person does not have the mental capacity to make proper decisions – that when drunk, a person will not have subjective consent. Because of this SAPAC teaches volunteers to tell students that drunken sex isn't the safest bet. If someone does not have the proper state of mind then they can't technically give their consent. Volunteers like Elizabeth believe that SAPAC simplifies this problem a bit. During our conversation we talked about the various questions that students ask her regarding alcohol, I asked her what she thought of the "grey rape" concept with consent and alcohol.

Many argue that the split binary of "rape" versus "not rape" simplifies the matter a bit and that

often, particularly in the realm of consent and alcohol, there are often shades of grey, (hence the

term *grey rape*). Elizabeth told me that,

> *I think there is a grey area yet we try to make it black and white. And that's where I have*
> *trouble answering these questions. This is why. Because like if she is drunk and she does*
> *say yes then technically by the definition of consent it's a verbal yes and they did obtain*
> *consent. And maybe the perpetrator was drunk and they did think that that was consent,*
> *you know, maybe they weren't trying to do this forcefully. And how can you then label this*
> *as coercion when she did say yes? I think it's tricky. I know other people in SAPAC can*
> *definitely label it as black and white and can give you a right answer* [laughs] *but I'm still*
> *kind of unsure about it myself.*

While SAPAC teaches that by arguing shades of grey exist society only continues to place the

blame on the victim, volunteers nonetheless struggle with this concept when complicated with

additional factors such as alcohol.

Alcohol perhaps muddies this concept because of the cultural implications that are tied to

the act of drinking. On college campuses across America students go out to parties and bars to

let loose, to "kick back" with friends, and to meet potential partners. Many times the

consumption of alcohol goes hand in hand with the college hookup, and this is no different here

at the University of Michigan. As Rose told me, "I think you can expect people to be flirty if

they're going to be drunk. But I mean, also if you're going to be drinking you have to think

about the consequences." This sentiment, which was reiterated by many of the people I

interviewed including Henry, Naafil, and Joni, shows that many people expect that events with

drinking will often lead to sexual activity. For many, alcohol implies that the crossing of borders

between two people is a natural turn of events – that in a way, it is a given. Because the college

drinking culture has this connection to the college hookup, students are more inclined to feel that

consent isn't necessary when drinking because as so many asked, "Why else would they be

drinking?" During her interview, Isabel told me that,

> *People just can't accept that when someone drinks, they're not giving their body to the world. To whatever comes their way. People just cannot accept that idea. When I think of all the little alcohol questions that I get, I think they all come back to the same idea that if someone drinks, they're putting themselves out there no matter what.*

It could be argued that for many, the act of consent is given by merely picking up a drink. While this is clearly not the case since there are so many other reasons why people go out to parties and bars where alcohol is involved, drinking and sex in college are nonetheless tied together. For instance, numerous studies have shown a relationship between alcohol consumption and the decreased likelihood of labeling a rape as a crime by the survivor, people who hear about the case, and the American legal system (Menard 2005: 1). This can also be exemplified through my interview with Henry. During my interview with Henry he told me that he thought that if a girl was drinking and consented despite the fact that she was drunk, that "if she's drunk and stupid, that's her own fault." When I asked him why he thought this, he told me,

> *Okay, like, I have two friends who were raped. In both instances they set themselves up. The one was partying with people that she didn't know and they were drinking. She was shit-faced by the end of the night. And – she should've been smarter. She shouldn't have been drinking that much. And my other friend – well – she was – and is – an alcoholic. I mean, she had a drinking problem that left her incapacitated. For both of them, they wouldn't have been in that situation to begin with if they hadn't been drinking. They should've been more responsible. They wouldn't be in that situation to begin with. But they were.*

For Henry, the element of responsibility became an important part of our discussion. Henry told me that it was every person's responsibility to be safe and to not put themselves into dangerous situations. Although Henry never condemned women for drinking, he did tell me that if a girl was going to get drunk, then she had to take responsibility for her actions. If a girl had sex when she was drunk, then according to Henry she could perhaps be irresponsible. With Henry, he told me that both people engaging in sexual activity should be responsible to get consent. As if to reflect the very problem that Isabel sees, for Henry it seems as if because his friends were drunk,

it was their fault that they were raped and not necessarily that of the person who raped them. What is interesting, here, however, is that Henry was very protective of his female friends and during the interview called people who raped "sick bastards." Moreover, when alcohol wasn't involved, his reactions regarding rape were quite different, often sympathizing with people who were raped by strangers or in situations where they could not defend themselves. However, with alcohol, Henry placed the blame on the survivor. Instead of blaming the people for taking advantage of his friends in their drunken state, he blamed his friends for being drunk in the first place.

While Henry was by far the most extreme person whom I interviewed, I do believe that his views do need to be expressed. Although Henry didn't seem to be like the other students I interviewed, I do believe that his opinions are indicative of many in the campus community regarding alcohol and consent. Paralleling Henry's opinions, many SAPAC volunteers have noticed that many students often argue that drinking excuses bad behavior that wouldn't be accepted under different circumstances. Elizabeth noted that with students,

> *Because they think that as soon as they drink or they're intoxicated to a certain level that that excuses all of their behavior, and they can do whatever they want, they're invincible, whatever. But as we always say, people who do certain things when they're drunk, they've already decided to do that when they're sober. We use the karaoke analogy: their drinking does not cause karaoke. It takes your inhibitions away a little bit so that you will do something that you've wanted to do the entire time, you're just not as shy about it anymore.*

The argument that Elizabeth employs is a fairly simple one: people do not rape because they are drunk, they rape because they want to rape and by drinking they simply had their inhibitions lowered so they acted on their desire. It did not cause the person to rape. Rather, drinking allowed them to express a desire that they had *before* they were drinking. It's a fine line that SAPAC tries to distinguish. Although many students I interviewed were able to understand that

alcohol does not excuse a person for rape, such as Maya, Rachel, and Rose, other students like Henry and Naafil had different opinions.

Conclusion

Although SAPAC presents a clear definition of consent to the campus community, how to actualize this consent in real life situations often becomes difficult for SAPAC volunteers to explain. Although all the volunteers agreed with this definition, many volunteers nonetheless struggled to explain how someone can actually consent, particularly during the so-called college hookup or when alcohol was involved. Even with extensive training under their belt, many volunteers found it difficult to explain how consent works under these circumstances.

Furthermore, for many in the campus community this definition of consent was not applicable, understood, or used. Although the students I interviewed who considered themselves feminists (Maya and Rachel) employed definitions of consent that were similar to SAPAC's, these were students who shared similar views and boundaries that SAPAC did. However, those students who were not activists within the campus community employed very different definitions of consent, which had boundaries that were determined by both personal views as well as circumstantial views. Although it is difficult to argue which side is "right" and which side is "wrong," it is important to note that with this so-called "simple" definition, there is a severe disconnect between SAPAC and the campus community. This disconnect, or divide, is much in the same vein to the disconnect that I first spoke about with the now rather infamous "professor and the hooker thing." Through this one very definition, the different boundaries that are both assumed and that are being created are incredibly conflicted, creating a variety of voices and a variety of spaces for the dialogue surrounding sexual assault in the campus community.

Even within the micro-communities in the campus community, there are diverse and differing opinions. How Rose and her hallmates discuss sexual assault seems quite different than the discussion that Henry has had with his friends. The boundaries that each of these micro-communities create differ, and the spaces they in turn make are, in this specific case, completely opposite of one another.

Concluding Remarks   The Silenced Borderland

"You see things; and you say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say, 'Why not?'"
	-George Bernard Shaw, *Back to Methuselah* (1921), part 1 act 1

During the time spent at the University level students are supposed to expand their boundaries, broaden their horizons, and tackle issues that they previously had little connection to. It is a time of exploration, personal growth, and the development of a deep intellectual curiosity. While I do not argue that this is not the case at the University of Michigan, I do nevertheless worry how this works here in the campus community. With many students telling me that there is no accepted forum for an open voice in the campus community, I wonder how their boundaries and intellectual curiosity will grow. Although the micro-communities that students build allow students to develop an awareness and tolerance to issues that have perhaps never touched them before, these are issues that are limited by the interests of their friends who make up their micro-communities. Many contend that this intellectual growth will grow from the classroom experience in college, which I am sure is very true in regards to many subjects. However in the realm of activism and social justice students are rarely required to take more than just one class,[66] with many social justice concerns confined to those who make up special interest organizations and groups on campus. Throughout my research one of the questions I kept mulling over was with this situation and with this apparent apathy that students have complained to me about, how are social justice groups on campus ever to make a true impact on the campus community and the space that they live in?

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[66] Students are required to take one class to fulfill their Race and Ethnicity requirement. However, many of these classes only focus on so many social justice issues and are oftentimes limited by their curriculum and time restrictions.

This by no means is an attack on the University of Michigan. Rather, as in the words of a social activist before me, "You see things; and you say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say, 'Why not?'" This is a University of great accomplishments and of great potential, yet in order for this potential to be fully actualized the critical "Why not?" must be asked both within the student body as well as within the administrative level.

Perhaps this is why anthropology is so important to social efforts and activism. Barbara Burton (2000) writes that,

> I suspect ethnographers can help first by shading in the texture of this more dynamic concept of human rights with the color and poetry and syncopation of people's lives. That is, by exploring and representing what the negotiating of human rights can *feel* like (200: 140).

With ethnographies, anthropologists are able to show the complexities of people, their beliefs and opinions, and how their beliefs and opinions are negotiated within the cultural landscape that they live in. Although ethnographies tend to be deeply personal and therefore are at liberty for much debate, through the work of anthropologists problems that are hard to explain are nevertheless shown in complex and often multifaceted lights. As Burton argues,

> [In] America…mainstream commitments to rights, moral duties, and community responsibility are being intensely negotiated and reconfigured by the hour. In this context, it is important to acknowledge that discourses and practices surrounding rights, entitlements, and natural human dignity are not pure and static forms waiting in the wings to be implemented and integrated. They are and must be understood as active ingredients in the soup, themselves interwoven with conversation (200: 143).

For social activist efforts to truly have an impact on the current dialogue today in America, they must be given the space to do so, be this in academia, government, and in the everyday conversation of the student in the campus community.

With this thesis, I hoped in a small way to add an ingredient "in the soup" regarding the dialogue surrounding social activism, particularly with the problem of sexual assault. During my

time as a SAPAC volunteer I have heard stories from both volunteers as well as from the students whom I have tried to reach out to that I continue to be shocked and disturbed by. As a result I have often debated how this discussion needs to be created on this campus. With the feminist legacies tied to the anti-sexual violence movement it often becomes difficult to balance what needs to be emphasized in this dialogue. Should feminist ideals be more emphasized through radical efforts, or is the voice of moderation the better route to go despite worries that issues like "grey rape" or misguided "rape myths" may dominate the conversation? Admittedly, throughout my research I wondered if SAPAC, as reflective of the anti-sexual violence movement as a whole, tended to confine the debate within the dialogue of feminism and thereby alienated many people who have been – and statistically speaking, people who will be – affected by sexual assault. With problems revolving around networking and coalition building often coming up in my interviews with SAPAC, I wondered if SAPAC was limiting the dialogue in a manner that did not actively seek to help the entire campus community.

It is a fine line that is difficult to balance. On one hand, the need to empower survivors is very evident from the interviews I conducted. With students ranging from the empathetic Maya and Rachel to the more judgmental Henry, the students within this campus community negotiate their lives within a variety of voices. However, with only a significant few in the community who are truly educated to deal with survivors of sexual assault, (as SAPAC, through my research has shown, is relatively small with its 50 volunteers compared to the campus community) the need to understand feminist ideology is a very real one. On the other hand, however, with a variety of student opinions that are not necessarily acknowledged through SAPAC's teachings, many students (including volunteers) are excluded from a dialogue that needs to be heard, both on the micro level as well as the macro level.

In addition to this, the problem regarding the creation of an open space for information and dialogue compounds this concern. During my research I found that many students simply did not know of the resources provided to them, despite "mandatory" freshmen workshops and the numerous campus and University organizations. Many complained that sifting through all of the University's resources was simply too time consuming because the University was so large. With many in my interviews referring to the organization of the University of Michigan webpages as "A disaster" and "A nightmare," a large segment of the students I interviewed relied on what their micro-community of friends knew. Moreover, with interviews revealing that many micro-communities do not know of resources like SAPAC or CAPS, many students are missing out on vital support and guidance that the University does provide. The University's Crime Maps that are published every month by the University of Michigan's Department of Public Safety (DPS) can perhaps further exemplify this. Every month DPS makes a map pinpointing where all the crimes at the University have been reported to them. Although the students I interviewed (both SAPAC and non-SAPAC) knew of the DPS reports that are emailed to them, only *one* student (a SAPAC volunteer) knew about the existence of the Crime Maps. Perhaps this disconnect can be explained: while all of the students cited the fact that the University had actively advertised the DPS emails as a resource after the tragedy at Virginia Tech, no one had heard of these Crime Maps being advertised anywhere.

With the transitory nature of any university, maintaining and actively aware student population is difficult. This I both acknowledge and understand. However, the very nature of a University is one where students explore and expand their ideas: it is, by all anthropological definitions, a sort of borderland. Ideas are transferred and exchanged from group to group, person to person, with many constantly renegotiating their opinions and identities. Yet here at

the University of Michigan, particularly in the case of the dialogue on sexual assault, this exchange is simply not occurring. Although it may from time to time occur by students who take a stand for it within their micro-communities, this is not a widely accepted commonality within the campus community. It is, as I have unfortunately found, to be a silenced borderland. Many micro-communities act autonomously – indeed, SAPAC itself is often its own separate community – causing many dialogues regarding social issues to be segmented from group to group. When attempts to reach out to the great divide are made, SAPAC volunteers have complained to me that they are often "preaching to the choir" rather than actually crossing the line into the scary unknown. Rather than being able to reach out to the micro-communities that do not discuss these issues, SAPAC volunteers have told me that SAPAC more often than not reaches out to micro-communities that already share SAPAC's opinions on gender, sex, and identity. Moreover, even with those actively joining the dialogue on sexual violence, as my interviews have revealed most who work at SAPAC already had been impacted by this violence or knew someone who was. Those who actively talk about sexual violence a few and far in between, despite the fact that many people have been affected by it. Yet as Rebecca noted during the interview, there is a stigma attached to this dialogue that causes it to be stunted in most cases.

Despite the disheartening discoveries, I have hope for this campus community. Earlier last month SAPAC held a discussion series aimed at pro-feminist men through a lecture held by Byron Hurt. Mr. Hurt, who is a nationally recognized filmmaker and activist, spoke of how it was critical that men from all communities get involved in the eradication of sexual violence. As an African American man himself, Mr. Hurt talked about how it was easy for many men to ignore the issue and argue that it didn't affect them. While the lecture itself was wonderful and

reiterated many of the ideas that I had been thinking throughout my research, what caught my

attention was the sheer size of the audience, and more importantly, its diversity. Men and

women of all races and ethnicities were there, including many leaders within the African

American community. This was, despite what Nikita had noticed in the past, a group of people

who were not driven by simply SAPAC-related interests. Indeed, there was a diversity of

thought within this group that was both refreshing and uplifting. Although Mr. Hurt is unique

due to his identity the impact he made is nevertheless important to note. Both women and men

were given a space to express their opinions and both feminists and non-feminist voices were

heard. With his humor, warmth, and understanding, Mr. Hurt guided a conversation that, while

allowing for a diversity of opinions, nevertheless stayed on track with a pro-feminist, pro-

SAPAC sentiment. However it should be noted that Mr. Hurt wields power that many at SAPAC

do not have. As an ex-football college star, Mr. Hurt has a connection to many in the campus

community that those in SAPAC do not.

   While Mr. Hurt may be an extreme example, the need to reach out to the community is a

very real one. During my interview, Isabel, a SAPAC volunteer, she told me,

> *I took a creative writing class last semester. This blew my mind – blew my mind. Because I wrote a poem about sexual assault. And it was like very general, but he had encouraged to write – we had a really awkward GSI – but he had encouraged us to write about really controversial, political things. And so I wrote this poem about sexual assault. I was work shopping it in class, and I was totally prepared. I was totally on like PE-SAPAC mode, I'm going to educate them and this is going to be such a great opportunity…no one in the class got that it was about sexual assault. Not one single person. [Long Pause, looks at me with this "seriously?/for real?" look] I had hyped myself up so much and was ready to argue for my poem, and everyone was like, "You know, it's about violence. Or maybe not violence, but like aggression, you know, like sex." And I just – it was just so interesting to me. And a lot of people thought that it was about a young girl's first sexual experience.*

Although she never blatantly used the word "rape" in the poem, Isabel told me that she felt

confident that she had made her point clear in her first draft.[67] Yet as she told me during our

interview,

> *Yeah. Everyone was like, "Yeah, you know, every girl's first time sucks. So it's just about how much it sucks the first time." And then some people in the class were like, "You know it's about a hookup that like – you're just like 'oh, I didn't really want to hookup but oh oops'." And someone did say, "I think there might be an element of violence here," and someone else was like, "Uh, no. It's just like aggression, like manly." And then someone was like, "Well, I'm not a feminist, but if I were a feminist I'd say maybe she's critiquing that dynamic, but, I mean, I don't really know why she would do that." I mean it was ridiculous. And afterwards I told everyone that this was about sexual assault and violence, and everyone was like, "Ohh…like that's weird…" [laughs]. And my GSI, his advice – and the class's consensus – was "Well, if you're going to make it about sexual assault, then you're going to need to be more explicit. You need something small, like a small little bruise or cut or something." And they were like, "We know that you don't like to write about violent things, but you need a solid image like that."*

The dynamic given here is an interesting one: as a volunteer for SAPAC Isabel thought that she

was clear about what she wrote, yet no one in her class – not even a PhD candidate – understood

that her poem was about sexual assault. In a creative writing class where metaphors abound, it

does seem a bit alarming when students who are used to critical thinking cannot see a metaphor

and an image of sexual assault in front of their very own eyes.

Although it is an uphill battle that I know is hard and riddled with strife, the battle that so

many have fought for such a long time is still nowhere near done. It is as if the battlefield has all

the elements finally lined up: the armory, cavalry, and infantry are all in position waiting to

attack, yet the signal to attack has really yet to be heard. We have all the resources we need at

this University to work on this problem, yet the dialogue surrounding it is segmented and silent.

Indeed, with so many people I know who have been assaulted and yet who do not feel

comfortable with either reporting it or talking about it on *this very campus*, the University of

Michigan has still a very long way to go. Simply making an institution like SAPAC is not

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[67] Please refer to Appendix E for both Isabel's draft and final draft of her poem.

enough: now we must understand that the dynamics that SAPAC is working with and oftentimes creating. While SAPAC acts upon single-identity politics and indeed needs to be driven by this single pursuit, both SAPAC and the University must learn to reach out to the campus and create a dialogue that allows an exchange of opinions from all sides of the aisle. Admittedly, although through my research I realize that this is a difficult task to charge, it is one that is both necessary and urgently needed within this campus and indeed, within this nation.

Appendix A

Glossary

Consent: Consent is when someone gives permission to or says yes to sexual activity with another person. Consent in its most basic form lays out the boundaries of personal autonomy and where another person can and cannot go or enter, so to speak. It is the responsibility of the person initiating or increasing the sexual activity to receive this permission. Without clear permission, it means no. As SAPAC states, "Absence of clear permission means you can't touch someone, not that you can."

Empathy: Empathy is a way to "enhance each individual's abilities, style, and capacity to feel [for] another person," (SAPAC Training Manual, Winter 2007). The ability to feel for another person's plight and to listen to them without judgment is a skill that SAPAC tries to reinforce to its members on a regular basis. SAPAC argues that this is a skill that anyone can have and often tries to talk about how to respond to disclosure – how to respond to someone telling a person that they've been assaulted or hurt in some way. Often during workshops SAPAC tells students that when confronted with a survivor, the most important thing to do is to listen and not judge or "try to make it better." In an age where we are constantly told that we can have quick and easy fixes for most aspects of our lives, SAPAC argues that when people tell survivors that "they should do this, or they should do that" then the respondent takes away the survivor's choices. After already surviving an ordeal where the survivor's choices and power were taken away, SAPAC argues that the last thing anyone wants to do is to make them feel re-victimized. Empathy is a way to listen and to feel for a person's situation without hurting their healing process.

Grey Rape: Grey rape is a term used to describe a situation when the person is unable to demonstrate non-consent, even when the person may feel that something wrong happened to them. SAPAC and many activists argue that there is no such thing as grey rape because consent should always be clear, and that if a person feels that something wrong happened to them, then they were raped. However, many argue that with drinking or in events of miscommunication that there is a grey line where both the perpetrator and the survivor are unsure of where the boundaries were crossed. SAPAC and most anti-sexual violence activists argue that the term grey rape is a form of backlash against the activist movement that attempts to give back perpetrator power, rather than to empower the survivor.

Power and Control: The mainstream anti-sexual violence movement states that power and control is the reason why people rape. According to this argument, people do not rape out of sexual desire or because of a miscommunication between the two people engaging in sexual activity. Rather, people rape to fulfill a need to gain power over or to control their victim.

Proactive Bystanding: As a way to reach out to the campus community, SAPAC has developed the term proactive bystanding which suggests that anyone can help stop sexual assault and rape on campus. Many volunteers I interviewed told me that they worry about how to make sexual assault a discussion that everyone can be involved in. SAPAC often argues that stopping rape before it happens is one of the most active stands a person can take. For instance, an example that SAPAC likes to use is when someone sees a girl who is being harassed by person at a bar or

in a party situation where one of both of them might be drunk to simply go up and ask, "Excuse me, are they bothering you?" Another form of proactive bystanding is by not using the common "rape joke" that pervades this campus and many other campus communities.

Rape: Rape is a term where a person is forced against their will to engage in sexual activity. Rape is usually employed when there has been sexual penetration.

Rape Crisis Center (RCC): A Rape Crisis Center is a place where survivors, their family, and friends can go to get legal, medical, and emotional support. Every state in America has at least one Rape Crisis Center (although they continue to grow by the number). If you would like to know where the nearest RCC is to you or what resources your state offers, please visit the website for the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN). RAINN has the URL and phone number for every RCC in the country listed by their state. Please note that these RCC's do not include university and college RCC's (such as SAPAC), as RAINN is currently working on that project.

Rape Culture: Feminists use this term to describe a culture where sexual violence is common because of the prevalent attitudes, norms and practices that normalize, excuse, or encourage behaviors associated with sexual violence. For instance, many often cite that the sexual objectification of the female body in the media allows for a culture where women are seen as objects instead of people, thereby making it easier to express violent or sexist behavior towards them. Furthermore, rape culture also argues that because society places the responsibility of the rape on the survivor, *victim blaming* is often prevalent, exemplified by such as questions as "Why did she go home with him?" or "She knew what she was doing when she was drinking/wearing that short skirt/walking alone at night/etc."

Rape Myths: Rape myths, according to SAPAC are myths "in our society about sexual that serve to justify the offense." These are ideas that many Americans have grown up with, believing that they know what a rape looks like and can differentiate between a rape and a non-rape – that they can tell the difference between a "real rape" and other events (Estrich 1987). The details surrounding the assault often are the determining factors – was she drinking alcohol, did she know the person, what was she wearing, etc are all questions that often come up in these scenarios. As Burt writes, rape myths are "prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" (Burt 1980: 217).

Sexual Assault: Sexual assault is the legal term for rape. Although rape is included in the offenses that sexual assault encompasses, sexual assault can also include the unwanted touching of intimate parts or some sort of sexual contact.

Sexual Violence: Sexual violence is an all-encompassing term that includes any sort of physical or emotional abuse and violence that is either gendered or sexual in nature. This can include sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, and intimate partner violence.

Survivor: A term used to describe someone who has been sexually assaulted. It is the preferred term by SAPAC and most in the anti-sexual violence movement because of the empowering effect that many believe goes along with it. This is the term that SAPAC tends to prefer.

Victim: Another term used to describe someone who has been sexually assaulted. This is a term that is used in both the American legal system and in most statistics on rape. Victim is also used when someone has died as a result of his or her rape (i.e.: they were stabbed or murdered after or during their rape).
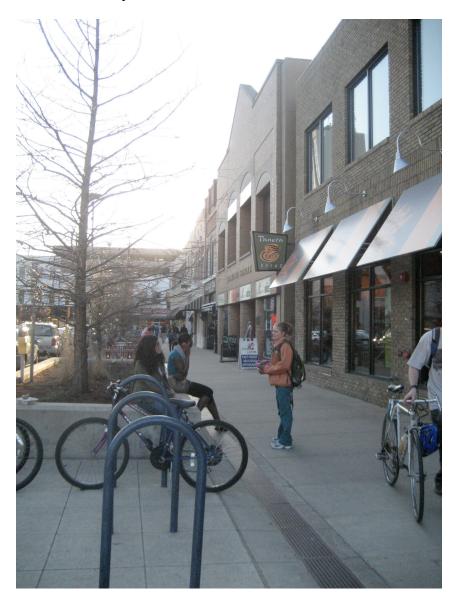
Victim Blaming: Victim blaming is when the person who has been assaulted is blamed for the attack. This can be with comments such as "Why was she wearing that outfit?" or "Why was she walking home alone at night?" Other forms of victim blaming can be personal in nature: a person who has been assaulted may blame himself or herself, particularly if they knew the perpetrator. In the end, although there are precautions that people can take, these precautions are not foolproof because it is not the victim who can ultimately stop the assault; it's the assailant who can. Victim blaming has been cited as a problem by both the government and in academic circles as the reason why many rapes go unreported.

Appendix B

SAPAC

(All photos taken by the author)

I) The block on North University where SAPAC is located

II) This is the building that SAPAC is located in (on the second floor).

III) The sign for SAPAC.

Appendix C

Michigan Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) Laws

(Courtesy of SAPAC)

<u>First Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct</u>

1. Sexual Penetration (sexual intercourse, cunnilingus, fellatio, anal intercourse, any other intrusion of a body part or an object into genital or anal openings); and
2. One of the following circumstances:
    Victim under 13
    Victim 14, 15, or 16 and one of the following:
        member of the same household
        related by blood or affinity
        assailant in position of authority over victim
    Occurs during commission of another felony
    Assailant is aided by another person, and one of the following:
        victim incapacity (victim is mentally incapable*, mentally incapacitated**,
            and/or physically helpless***)
        assailant uses force or coercion
    Weapon involved
    Force or coercion and personal injury (bodily injury, disfigurement, mental anguish,
        chronic pain, pregnancy, disease, or loss or impairment of a sexual or
        reproductive organ)
    Personal injury and victim incapacity
    Victim incapacity and one of the following:
        related by blood or marriage
        assailant in position of authority over victim

Punishable by up to life in prison

<u>Second Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct</u>

1. Sexual Contact (intentional touching of intimate parts or clothing covering intimate parts, for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification)
2. Any of the circumstances listed for 1st degree CSC

Punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment

<u>Third Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct</u>

1. Penetration (see definition under CSC 1), and
2. One of the following circumstances:
    Victim 13, 14, or 15
    Force or coercion

    Victim incapacity

Punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment

<u>Fourth Degree Criminal Sexual Conduct</u>

1. Sexual Contact (see definition under CSC 2), and
2. One of the following circumstances:
   Force or coercion
   Victim incapacity
   Assailant is employed by department of corrections in which victim is incarcerated

Punishable by up to 2 years imprisonment and/or fine of $500.00

Appendix D

Power and Control Wheel

(Courtesy of SAPAC)

Appendix E

(Courtesy of Isabel)

<u>Conquistador (Draft)</u>

We call them our bad
experiences, twisting, twisting, twisting
bad nights to stories.

Did you tell anyone?

Well mine was here
mine was there and there, here and here,
there and there.

Yours too.

Everywhere, I think.
Yes, I think everywhere,
feel everywhere.

I remember everywhere.

Fucked up? Who fucked
up? Was I fucked up?
We whisper in coffee shops.

Now I am fucked up.

We whisper in coffee shops
así que nadie escuche lo que pasó
that night, that day, yesterday.

Other women *que no saben nada*
will learn in bedrooms,
will learn in cars, bathrooms,
restaurants beds short skirts sweat pants
pain.

And where is he,
naming his conquest?

Conquistador (Final)

We call them our bad experiences.
We whisper in coffee shops
Refusing to pronounce the word.

Did you tell anyone?

Mira mami, mine was here
mine was there and there, here and here,
there and there.

Yours too, no?

Everywhere, I think.
Yes, I think everywhere,
feel everywhere.

I remember everywhere.

      Flailing arms cutting space limited by his unwelcome body above me in me finally beside
      me

Fucked up? Who fucked
up? Was I fucked up?
We whisper in coffee shops.

Now I am fucked up.

We whisper in coffee shops
así que nadie escuche lo que pasó
that night, that day, yesterday.

Other women *que no saben nada*
will learn in bedrooms, cars, bathrooms,
restaurants beds short skirts sweat pants
pain.

We stare out of the coffee shop's only window
      destructed dresses bruised breasts
simultaneously coaxing ourselves out of tears

And where are they,
naming their conquests?

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